

Coronavirus: Supporting children and staff wellbeing



Wellbeing tips for schools:

- Give some time to talk and process what is happening, with children and as a staff group too. But also make sure that Coronavirus is not the *only* thing being talked about. Some people may wish to talk a lot about this, and others may not.
- Consider asking about what children have heard about the virus and the situation so that you can correct possible misconceptions and reassure them.
- Remember to keep things positive and give children hope. For example, tell children that now many people are working to make this better and that even though it is serious, everyone is doing their best to help people.
- Remember that people react differently to significant events. Some people – children and staff – may feel worried, some excited, some nothing much at all. Reassure pupil and staff that this is all normal and okay.
- Staff will need to model calmness, but it is also important to talk honestly and not pretend that things aren't different and worrying for some.
- Keep to daily school routines as much as possible. Well-known routines in everyday life provide security and stability. Routine during unrest can be therapeutic, and changes particularly unsettling for some. If there are changes to routine, consider which children may need some extra help with this.
- Identify colleagues whose wellbeing may be more at risk. For example, there may be people who have experienced anxiety in the past.
- Identify children whose wellbeing may be more at risk. For example, those who may have relatives with health conditions or recent bereavements, and some SEN groups such as those prone to anxiety; those with learning difficulties; those with Autism; and those with tendency for obsessive or repetitive behaviours.
- Stay informed by sticking to trusted sources of information. Avoid being too immersed in media coverage. Be mindful of the amount of things you are reading and watching, including social media – as this may add to worry and anxiety. Consider a few updates every day from trusted sources.
- As an adult you may be concerned yourself. Take care of yourself and make sure you have breaks, time to relax, and ask for help from others if you need.

Acknowledgement to Harrow Educational Psychology Service

West Sussex Educational Psychology Service,
People Services, West Sussex County Council, County Hall, Chichester

Some useful links:



1. Talking to children about Coronavirus

There is currently a lot of uncertainty and worry around the coronavirus outbreak and children and young people will be affected by the huge changes that are going on around them - regardless of their age or any additional needs. It is really important that adults explain what is happening to children and young people in an age appropriate way so they understand what is happening. Some useful links are:

Talking to children about Coronavirus (British Psychological Society):

<https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/talking-children-about-coronavirus>

Talking to Children (Childmind): <https://childmind.org/article/talking-to-kids-about-the-coronavirus/>

How to talk to your child about coronavirus (Unicef):

<https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/how-talk-your-child-about-coronavirus-covid-19>

Tips and guidance on supporting preschool children (Zero to Three);

<https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/3210-tips-for-families-coronavirus>

Talking to children (National Association of School Psychologists)

[https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-\(coronavirus\)-a-parent-resource](https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-(coronavirus)-a-parent-resource)

2. Stories about Coronavirus for children

Visual stories are a useful way of helping children to understand the Coronavirus. Here are some links to some good examples:

ELSA: Coronavirus Story for Children: <https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/coronavirus-story-for-children/>

Hello! Story about Coronavirus for young children: https://660919d3-b85b-43c3-a3ad-3de6a9d37099.filesusr.com/ugd/64c685_319c5acf38d34604b537ac9fae37fc80.pdf

A social story about pandemics (Carol Gray): <https://carolgraysocialstories.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Pandemics-and-the-Coronavirus.pdf?fbclid=IwAR23zxNIbEumpw4oKIM7Xy3VIKnA25b8Gi53N6YiFIeKB9Vx0LQypSPYzzg>

A Social Story about the coronavirus: <https://www.ppmd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/The-Corona-Virus-Free-Printable-Updated-2-The-Autism-Educator-.pdf>

A comic exploring coronavirus to help young people understand:

<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/02/28/809580453/just-for-kids-a-comic-exploring-the-new-coronavirus?t=1584464333506>

3. Information Videos for children about the Coronavirus



Information video on Coronavirus for Primary age children (KS2) (Brainpop):

<https://www.brainpop.com/health/diseasesinjuriesandconditions/coronavirus/>

Information video on Coronavirus for older children/adults (WHO):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mOV1aBVYKGA&feature=youtu.be>

4. Promoting Children's Wellbeing

Advice for young people who are feeling anxious about Coronavirus (Young Minds):

<https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/what-to-do-if-you-re-anxious-about-coronavirus>

Helping children cope with stress (WHO):

https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/helping-children-cope-with-stress-print.pdf?sfvrsn=f3a063ff_2

Advice for older pupils and adults about looking after their emotional well-being.

<https://afsp.org/taking-care-of-your-mental-health-in-the-face-of-uncertainty/?fbclid=IwAR3ScDBfuhV5INKyutAG9IPNm4JnjjLOmHxv5w8SR9pBbDDU-8Hhy1QH-L8>

5. Special Needs and the Coronavirus

Parent-focused ideas from Special Needs Jungle about how to support children with anxiety around coronavirus, including an easy-read explanation for children and adults with learning difficulties: <https://www.specialneedsjungle.com/calming-coronavirus-anxiety-children-everyone-else/#Update>

See social story in the appendix.

6. Looking after your own wellbeing

How to protect your mental health (BBC): <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-51873799>

Coronavirus and your wellbeing (Mind UK): <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>

5 ways to wellbeing (Mindkit): <https://www.mindkit.org.uk/5-ways-to-wellbeing/>

7. Health Advice

NHS advice: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Mental Health Considerations during COVID-19 Outbreak (WHO)

https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/mental-health-considerations.pdf?sfvrsn=6d3578af_2

8. Government advice about coronavirus for education settings

Guidance to educational setting:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/guidance-to-educational-settings-about-covid-19>



Note: as the situation and sources of information are developing, the above tips and links may be updated.

18th March 2020.
West Sussex Educational Psychology Service

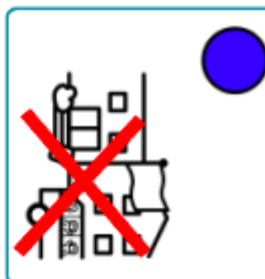
Appendix. A Social Story about Coronavirus
(acknowledgement to Southend Educational Psychology Service)



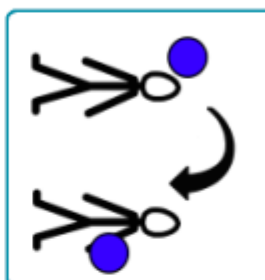
**west
sussex
county
council**

School is closed

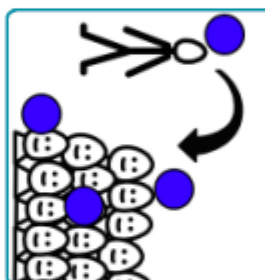
School is closed because of the Coronavirus.



Coronavirus can pass from one person to another.



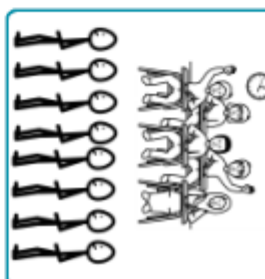
Coronavirus can pass more in big groups.



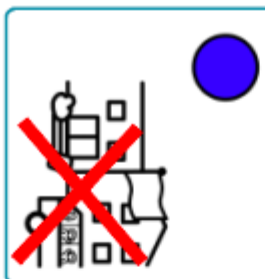
It is best to NOT be in a big group.



We have big groups at school.



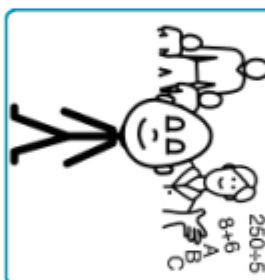
So school is closed.



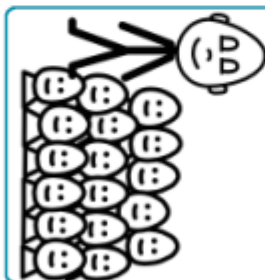
I will stay home for many days.



My family and my teachers want me to be safe.



When it is safe, I can be in big groups again.



When it is safe, school will be open again.

