



Aspiring to achieve our best: moving forward together!

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## Pastoral Team Newsletter

As news about coronavirus (COVID-19) dominates the headlines and public concern is on the rise, Heathcoat Primary School would like to remind all parents, carers and children that taking care of your mental health is as important as looking after your physical health. Good mental health and positive wellbeing can help you better cope with the COVID-19 threat and the uncertainty it's creating.

We understand that many parents and carers will naturally feel anxious about not only the virus itself, but the impact it will have on the economy, financial security and everyday life.

We hope this newsletter will help you by offering advice and information on how to help look after your mental health and useful contacts and websites to provide you with additional help and support.

### Caring for Yourself & Others

#### Look after yourself

Self-care in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak includes focusing on things you can control (like having good hygiene) instead of those you cannot (stopping the virus). Where possible, maintain your daily routine and normal activities: eating healthy meals, getting enough sleep and doing things that you enjoy. Activities, like taking a walk or exercising, can help you to relax and will have a positive impact on your thoughts and feelings.

[Read Mental Health Foundation's advice for staying mentally healthy during the COVID-19 outbreak >>](#)

Reach out to others and support people around you  
Keeping in touch with your friends and family may ease anxiety. Talking through your concerns and feelings may help you find ways of dealing with challenges, whilst support and care from others can bring comfort and stability. Assisting other people in their time of need and reaching out to someone who may be feeling alone or concerned can benefit both the person receiving support as well as the helper.

Many people may also wonder what to do if they are put under quarantine. Although the idea of self-isolation may seem daunting, keep in mind that this is only temporary and that there are still many ways to regularly connect with others digitally.

### Getting Accurate Information

Seek accurate information from legitimate sources

Limit yourself to reading information only from official sources like the [World Health Organisation \(WHO\)](#), the [European Commission](#) or reliable national sources.

These credible sources of information are key to avoid the fear and panic that misinformation may cause. Media coverage and social media can be inaccurate and confusing.

[Watch WHO's Q&A on mental health during COVID-19](#)

Set limits around news on Covid-19

Try to avoid excessive exposure to media coverage. Constant monitoring of news updates and social media feeds about COVID-19 can intensify feelings of worry and distress. Consider turning off automatic notifications and taking a break from the news. Setting boundaries to how much news you read, watch or listen will allow you to focus on your life and actions over which you have control, as opposed to wondering 'what if?'

[Read WHO's mental health considerations during COVID-19](#)



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## Talking to Children about Coronavirus

It is important to help children cope with stress and protect them from any coronavirus hysteria. Answer their questions and share facts about COVID-19 in a way that children can understand. Respond to your child's reactions in a supportive way, listen to their concerns and give them extra care, attention and support. Reassure your children that they are safe. Let them know it is OK if they feel upset. Share with them how you deal with your own stress so that they can learn how to cope with you.

[Read WHO's recommendations on how to help children cope with stress during COVID-19 >> >>](#)

## [Explaining Coronavirus to Children](#)

### Keeping Positive!

Try and focus on things that are positive in your life. Reading positive stories and images of local people who have experienced illness and have recovered or who have supported a loved one through recovery and are willing to share their experience.

[Words matter. Read our tips on how to be mindful when talking about mental health >>](#)

### Acknowledge your feelings

It is normal to feel overwhelmed, stressed, anxious or upset, among a wide range of other emotional reactions, in the current situation. Allow yourself time to notice and express what you're feeling. This could be by writing them down in a journal, talking to others, doing something creative, or practising meditation.

[Find tips how to relax and stay creative>>](#)

Obviously, whilst families are in a period of self-isolation it may not be possible to get outdoors and we are mindful to follow the current government guidance on this. Hopefully however, there will be opportunities to get outdoors and access nature.

Remember - our children will learn lots from how we stay centred and manage our own anxiety so it's important to take time to look after ourselves!

### Knowing our Toolkit

As adults we need to know our own toolkit for maintaining a healthy, resilient frame of mind. Take time to reflect and gather the things that support your own mental health and wellbeing. How do you have fun, nurture your health and relax?

Here are some ideas for your own tool kit to keep calm and manage anxiety:

- Getting Outdoors and being active: Hikes, Bike rides, camp fires
- Getting creative: Baking, sewing, clay, painting, drawing, knitting, felting
- Mindfulness, meditation, yoga, sport and exercise
- Listening to favourite music & podcasts
- Connecting with friends - phone calls, writing cards and letters, facetime,
- Focus on your gifts, talents and passions
- Read a book, magazine or newspaper
- Study and learn about a subject you have always wanted to
- Keep a sketch book
- Spending time with pets and animals
- Jigsaws, Sudoku, mindfulness colouring books, puzzle books



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## Resources to help at home

Many parents will be worried about staying home with children for a long duration. If you feel concerned about wellbeing or keeping young minds active and healthy, the following resources could be helpful for advice on helping your own wellbeing and may give inspiration to keep children active.

[Mind - Coronavirus and Your Wellbeing](#)

[Change4Life - Keeping Children Healthy](#)

[Pinpoint - Community Services in Devon](#)

[Cosmic Kids - Yoga and Relaxation](#)

There are lots of great websites and resources online and on social media to provide ideas and support.

[Home with the Kids](#)

[Family Lockdown with Tips and Ideas](#)

[Children's Mental Health Rocks](#)

## Keeping Connected

Whilst we are experiencing an uncertain time of social distancing there are things we can do to keep connected with friends and family to communicate and help ease our anxiety.

**Take 20** – Try to schedule 20 minutes 1:1 time with your child without distractions and allow them to take the lead on the activity so that they feel listened to.

**Games Night** – Turn off the TV and dig out any board games. Make new party games and let children make the resources.

**Keep Talking** – If it's not possible to meet up in person use the wonders of technology to support you to stay connected with important people. Phone them, email, Whatsapp video call, you could even hand write a letter to tell them how you are.

## Help and Support

Young Minds

[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

Parents helpline 08088025544 (parents and children)

Talk works

Improving your mental Health and wellbeing 03005553344

[Talkworks.dpt.nhs.uk](http://Talkworks.dpt.nhs.uk) (parents)

Childline

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

Mind

[www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)

Action for Children

[www.actionforchildren.org.uk](http://www.actionforchildren.org.uk)

Family Lives

[www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk)

Samaritans

[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

24hr helpline 116 123 FREE

[Rethink - Mental Health Support](#)

[Headspace - Mindfulness for your everyday life](#)

[Kooth - Free online support for young people](#)

School Nurse Hub Number:

Hub number 0333 234 1903

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

If you are concerned about a child or young person and would like to talk to someone call 0345 155 1071 or email [mashsecure@devon.gov.uk](mailto:mashsecure@devon.gov.uk) and give as much information as you can



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# 100 Things to do indoors

[www.spreadthehappiness.co.uk](http://www.spreadthehappiness.co.uk)



21. Make cards for everyone at home
22. Get some sheets to flap and pretend they are the waves and jump in
23. Make cakes
24. Get material or cardboard and make mermaid or merman's tails
25. Get all the chairs together and make a bus, play conductors and drivers
26. Make a camp in your bed
27. Make a dark den and use a torch
28. Write a letter to a neighbour or friend
29. Colour in a colouring book or draw a picture
30. Make wool or string hair over a chair
31. Have a pamper day
32. Have a scrunched up paper fight (from recycling)
33. Make ice lollies with cordial and water
34. Make sandwiches in strange shapes
35. Make a pretend car from boxes/furniture
36. Learn a rhyme or poem
37. Make paper aeroplanes
38. Have a pirate adventure, make boats from boxes or furniture
39. Blow bubbles and catch them
40. Make a number frieze for the wall, decorate



61. Play I spy
62. Open your windows and sing out a song
63. Learn Days of the Week Song
64. Play musical statues
65. Learn a Beatles song
66. Learn a Queen song
67. Make an indoor restaurant and serve your family
68. Have a toy's tea party
69. Roll balls down the stairs
70. Be superheroes with capes
71. Eat cereal with a gigantic spoon
72. Have an ice cream party
73. Enter an online competition to win a prize
74. Vacuum your home
75. Polish your home
76. Fold up sheets
77. Use a sheet as a parachute to fluff up and hide under and play parachute games
78. Make binoculars with toilet rolls and look out the window at the birds
79. Make yoghurt pot telephones
80. Make a junk model rocket as large as you can



[www.spreadthehappiness.co.uk](http://www.spreadthehappiness.co.uk)

1. Make non-cook playdough, then have a Dough Disco
2. Paint 'our families' portrait
3. Write and make a book
4. Draw flowers or the fruit bowl
5. Learn some laughter yoga [www.roberttrivest.com](http://www.roberttrivest.com)
6. Finger paint
7. Make a band from kitchen pots and pans
8. Footprint paint
9. Have a dance alarm every 30 minutes
10. Have a karaoke
11. Send a video message to family and friends to get them busy
12. Have a birthday party for a pet or cuddly toy
13. Have an indoor picnic
14. Discover your favourite story and share it together
15. Order books alphabetically
16. Have an indoor treasure hunt
17. Dress up in adult shoes
18. Find a fairy door in your house or garden
19. Do the Hokey Cokey
20. Take a selfie through a toilet roll tube and pretend you are on the moon



41. Read Pirate George series available on Kindle
42. Make a papier mache sculpture over a balloon
43. Keep a balloon up in the air game
44. Play a board game
45. Play hide and seek
46. Play dominoes
47. Learn a card game
48. Make smoothies
49. Perform a puppet show
50. Make shadow puppets
51. Make finger/sock puppets
52. Choreograph a dance or learn a dance routine
53. Have an upside down meals day, lunch for breakfast etc.
54. Learn a sing-along for Spread the Happiness TV
55. Learn to cook something new
56. Learn Brilliant Beast Song on Spread the Happiness TV YouTube Channel
57. Leave happy notes all around the house
58. Make a fitness routine and put your family through their paces
59. Using vegetables, make characters
60. Dance and sing to Knees up Mother Brown



81. Create a comedy show
82. Pretend to conduct an orchestra to music
83. Hike up your stairs like it is a mountain, so so high
84. Roll around a large space in your home
85. Hop around like a bunny
86. Learn to play sleeping bunnies
87. Learn and act out 5 Little Monkeys
88. Find as many collections of 10 things in your home as you can
89. Dance in the shower
90. Sing in the shower
91. Squirt shaving foam in your hands
92. Make a scrap book of your favourite things, people
93. Play Jack in the Box in a large cardboard box
94. Have a themed party
95. Stay up late to look at the stars with a night time picnic
96. Play apple bobbing
97. Jump on the bed
98. Bash a pinata
99. Do coin rubbing with paper and crayons
100. Play pass the parcel

