



Parkfield School

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Executive Principal: Mr. Ian Golding

Wednesday 6th May 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

As we are now into our seventh week of school closure, I know from speaking to some of you that you are finding managing your child's anxiety during this time difficult. We are aware of this and are working on ways in which we can support both you and your child to maintain good mental health during this period. The overwhelming message we would like to give you is that your family's positive mental health is the most crucial outcome we are hoping for when we return to school. Spend time as a family, spend time exercising, spend time playing, spend time talking and spend time focusing on maintaining positive relationships. We will pick up the education side of things when schools reopen so please don't spend time worrying about what learning you have managed to get your children to do or not do!

There is a vast amount of information available on the Internet about anxiety and I would suggest you start with the Young Minds website (youngminds.org.uk) which is an excellent resource and has a wealth of information in their Parent's Guides. They also have a parent phone-in helpline you can access by calling 0808-802-5544.

Please don't hesitate to get in touch with either myself or any other member of staff from school if you become increasingly concerned about your child's mental well-being. We are all here to support you as a family and are keen to offer any support and/or advice that we can. You can contact staff via Microsoft Teams, via email or you can phone the school office directly and our staff in school can put you in touch.

Very best wishes,

V. Monk

Victoria Monk
Acting SENCO





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Anxiety in children

It's normal for children and young people to feel worried or anxious at the moment. We've all experienced sudden changes in our lives and routines – and we're living with lots of uncertainty about the coming weeks. For some young people, the coronavirus pandemic may also worsen or trigger anxieties they were already struggling with.

Here are five things you can do to support your child:

1. Talk to them about what's going on. Find out how they're feeling and what they're thinking about, let them know it's okay to feel scared or unsure, and try to answer their questions and reassure them in an age appropriate manner. Remember, you do not need to know all the answers, but talking things through can help them feel calmer.
2. Help them to reflect on how they're feeling and encourage them to think about the things they can do to make them feel safer and less worried.
3. Reassure them that this will pass, you're there for them, and you will get through this together.
4. Spend time doing a positive activity with your child (such as reading, playing, painting or cooking) to help reassure them and reduce their anxiety. This is also a great way of providing a space for them to talk through their concerns, without having a 'big chat'.
5. Keep as many regular routines as possible, so that your child feels safe and that things are stable.

These are things that can really make a difference:

1. Talk to your child about anxiety, what is happening in their body and why it happens. Many children and young people don't know what they are feeling when they are anxious, and it can be very frightening and overwhelming. They might even think they are very ill or that they are having a heart attack.
2. Help them to recognise anxious feelings so they can tell when they are becoming anxious and can ask for help.
3. Tell your child it will be okay, and the anxiety will pass. It can be helpful to describe the anxiety as a wave to ride or surf that gets smaller after it peaks.
4. Get your child to [breathe deeply and slowly](#), in through their nose for three counts and out through their mouth for three counts.
5. Distract them by focusing on something else.
6. Give them a cuddle or hold their hand if they will let you - touch can be soothing.
7. It can help to talk to your child about finding a safe place in their mind - somewhere that they feel relaxed and happy. It may be a grandparent's or friend's house or a holiday beside the sea which they can picture when 'wrong thoughts' come into their head or they are feeling anxious. Sometimes holding a memento, like a seashell or pebble, can help.