

Acorn Psychology Services

Here we are again! We hope that you are adapting once again to our ever-changing reality and are certain that, once again, you are doing an amazing job at supporting your school communities, children, parents and staff with the current situation. We wanted to remind you that we are here to support you in any way we can and again signpost some resources which are out there which may be useful.

As school staff we are sure that you will again have concerns about the emotional wellbeing of the children and young people from your setting will cope as well as how families are coping with their children having another extended period of time off school. All of the members of our school communities will be experiencing different emotions around this time and these may have intensified as the pandemic has gone on. It may be helpful to reflect on these feelings and again consider the loss we all continue to face in terms of our normality, a fear of the future and the continuing lack of social contact.

We wanted to remind you of some resources that can be found online which you may find helpful, as a school to support staff and the children who are still attending and to provide for parents. We have also tried to give you an idea of what we can do to help support you during this time.

Dealing with children and young people's emotions	Anna Freud Resources Looking after your feelings resource Government advice for supporting children and young people Children's society information International Play Association – Play in crisis resources British Psychological Society Coronavirus Resources National Autistic Society Resources
Planning for home learning, routines and curriculum	Government list of online education resources Teachwire links to online learning and resources https://www.mathematicsmastery.org/free-resources Oak National Academy

Staff wellbeing and mental health	British Psychological Society Teacher Resilience Resources Government mental health and wellbeing during coronavirus advice Educational Psychology Insight resources on managing stress Free online resources for mental health and wellbeing How to Stay Calm in a Global Pandemic (very highly recommended!)
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How Acorn Psychology Services Can Support You During This Time:

We hope that we will be able to continue to support you during this challenging period. Below we have listed some of the services we are offering during this time:

- Usual, in school working.
- Remote consultations
- Staff supervision/support on an individual or group basis
- Support for parents/vulnerable families (free of charge) – see email below
- Support for staff on managing the impact of the pandemic in the school community
- Virtual training (more to follow)
- Support around returning to school.

We have attached a resource bank you can provide for parents below.

If you feel that you, school staff or one of your families would benefit from talking to an Educational Psychology professional via phone consultation during this time, then feel free to contact us on the number/email below or provide these for the parent concerned:

Office: 01254 686397 or on helpline@acornpsychology.co.uk

Information for Parents During the Covid-19 Lockdown – January 2021

We know that the situation around the outbreak is constantly changing and that our everyday lives have changed dramatically. It is normal to feel anxious, worried and scared and we need make sure we are taking care of our mental health. This document is designed to give you some information to support this and help you to support your children in doing this too.

The following organisations are offering support and advice:

www.mind.org.uk

www.familylives.org.uk

www.family-action.org.uk

This link is to a wonderful ebook written by Dr Emma Hepburn about coping in the current situation, it includes lots of helpful advice : [How to Stay Calm in a Global Pandemic](#)



Helping your children with their anxiety/worry around the situation:

It is important at this time to help our children recognise and talk about the ongoing situation, this will hopefully help to reduce any feelings of anxiety they may be having. Supporting them may involve things like, allowing them to talk about any worries or concerns, supporting communication with family and friends and setting up routines, including time for play and exercise. The following websites have advice and support:

www.keep-your-head.com

www.kooth.com

www.youngminds.org.uk

Talking to Children about Coronavirus

We need to continue to talk to our children about what is happening, answer any questions they have and address any worries they have. The pandemic has been part of our lives for a lengthy period of time and our children will continue to have questions, worries and concerns. The links below will help you to do this in a child friendly way:

0-3 years:

www.zerotothree.org/resources/3210-tips-for-families-coronavirus

<https://cdn2.hubspot.net/hubfs/4019268/Lessons/Home%20Learning%20Hub/Coronavirus/Coronavirus%20Storybook.pdf>

Primary School Age:

<https://carolgraysocialstories.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Pandemics-and-the-Coronavirus.pdf>

<https://nosycrow.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Coronavirus-A-Book-for-Children.pdf>

<https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Childrens-story-about-coronavirus.pdf>

All Ages:

www.unicef.org/coronavirus/how-talk-your-child-about-coronavirus-covid-19

<https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/how-teenagers-can-protect-their-mental-health-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

Some Tips for Home-Schooling

- You can't pour from an empty cup – please make sure you are looking after yourself as parents first and foremost. Make time for yourself, have a bath, take a walk, go to bed early with a book etc.
- Set up a routine that works for you and your family is important. You know your children best and know what will work for them. Don't worry if you can't keep the routine up and please don't keep trying to put a routine in place if it is stressful. Remember to keep a balance between active, nice family activities such as games and learning activities. Structure and routine are important in terms of maintaining our mental health.
- If your children (or you) are feeling stressed with school work have a break. It is ok to take a break, not all work must be completed and work certainly does not need to be completed in one go. If you are worried about not all work being completed speak to your child's teacher and ask them to prioritise learning tasks so you know which pieces of work are most important.
- Break learning up into small chunks and if you can use visual cue or a now and next board like the one below that shows your child what they need to do and in what order.



- If it helps use a timer so your child has a clear start and finish time for each activity. You can find timers online at www.online-stopwatch.com.
- Make sure your children get some downtime to relax and some exercise every day.
- If your child is struggling with their emotions support them to talk about what is bothering them, there are some ideas below of ways you can do this.
- Sensory or calming resources may be useful, this could include simple things like blowing bubbles or playing with playdough or water or more expensive things like sensory cubes or tangle toys.

- Don't struggle alone, ask for help if you need it, contact your child's school or you can contact one of our team on the email below.

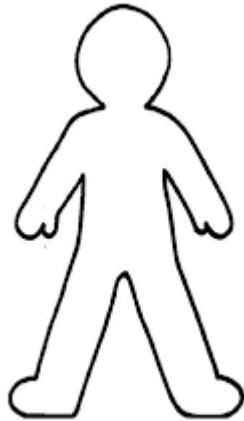
If you feel you would benefit from talking to an Educational Psychology professional via phone consultation during this time, please speak to your school who can arrange this.

You can also contact our office on 01524 686397 or on helpline@acornpsychology.co.uk

Ideas to Support Children and Young People During the Coronavirus Pandemic

Managing Feelings and Emotions

- Person activity – Fill your outline with your current emotions. How do they feel? Where are they?



- Create a worry or question box where children can post things that they would like to talk about. Or create a worry monster – link [here](#)
- Positivity journal/diary – Make a diary of some of the things you are enjoying each day e.g. today I enjoyed going for a walk in the woods, playing a game with my family etc.
- Make a 'Things to look forward to' jar or box – Post things in the jar that you miss and are going to do when you can as something to look forward to.



MANAGING BIG *emotions*

1. Allow them to feel
 - hold space for their feeling
 - move their body if they aren't safe
 - hold their hands if they are hurting themselves or someone else
 - don't rush them to calm
2. Connect with them
 - Empathise with their feeling 'you worked so hard on that and it got broken, that's really upsetting
 - Validate their emotion 'I can understand why you felt like that, I would feel like that too'
3. Offer Coping Strategies
 - Offer two choices e.g. would you like a hug or to stomp your feet to help you feel calm
 - If they aren't ready for this return to allowing them to feel
4. Problem solve
 - Don't attempt this until the child is calm
 - Support them to problem solve with you e.g. 'You want to play with the scooter and Jack is using it. What could we do?'

Mindfulness (for children and adults)

Mindfulness involves maintaining a moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts and feelings, body sensations and external environment. It helps us to tune in to what we are sensing at that moment rather than reliving the past or worrying about the future. Research has found mindfulness to be effective in reducing anxiety and depression. Below are some links to mindfulness type activities that can be found online.

[Mindfulness support from Mind](#)

[Smiling Mind Mindfulness Resources](#)

[Kids relaxation techniques – Guided Imagery](#)

<https://www.cosmickids.com/>

[Positive Psychology – Mindfulness for Children](#)

[Puppy Mind by Andrew Jordan Nance](#)

[Mindfulness Colouring](#)

[Mindfulness Rainbow Walk](#)

[Star Breathing](#)

[Headspace app](#)

[Calm App](#)

[Ten Percent Happier Meditation App](#)

Coronavirus and Wellbeing

[Responding to Coronavirus, Resources for Mental Health and Wellbeing](#)

[Supporting the Mental Health and Wellbeing of Pupils and Students During Periods of Disruption](#)

[Young Minds What to do if you are Anxious about Coronavirus](#)

[Newsround Advice if you are Upset by the News](#)

[World Health Organisation – Helping Children Cope with Stress During the Outbreak](#)

Some Ideas for Learning Activities:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-online-education-resources/coronavirus-covid-19-list-of-online-education-resources-for-home-education>

<https://www.tes.com/news/coronavirus-free-resources-home-learning>

<https://lessonplanned.co.uk/free-teaching-resources-coronavirus/>

<https://mailchi.mp/talk4writing/home-school-booklets>

The Education Endowment Foundation have created a comic strip about ways to support your child with reading at home. It is attached at the bottom of this document.

Physical Activity to Support Emotional Wellbeing

As well as support for children and young people's emotional wellbeing during this time, it is important to maintain physical activity as much as possible. This can be a good way to support emotional wellbeing for all the family. Here are some links you may like to use:

[P.E. with Joe Wicks](#)

[Parent Club Ideas to Keep Active](#)

[NHS Activity Ideas](#)

[Keep the Kids Active at Home](#)

Planning for the Future

It can be helpful to remind children and young people that this is temporary, and we can still plan for the future. This may help them see beyond the situation and begin to consider setting goals for their future. Some families have enjoyed creating a jar of activities which they wish to do after the pandemic is over including people they want to see, things to do and places they would like to go.

Helpful Books

- *Something Bad Happened: A Kid's Guide to Coping with Events in the News* by Dawn Huebner
- *The Day the Sea Went out and Never Came Back* by Margot Sunderland
- *Badger's Parting Gifts* by Susan Varley

- *Always and Forever* by Debi Gliori and Alan Durant
- *The Invisible String* by Patrice Karst and Joanne Lew-Vriethoff
- *Have You Filled A Bucket Today? A Guide to Daily Happiness for Kids* by Carol McCloud
- *Sad Isn't Bad : A Good-grief Guidebook for Kids Dealing with Loss* by Michealene Mundy
- *Muddles, Puddles and Sunshine: Your Activity Book to Help When Someone Has Died* by Diana Crossley
- *No Matter What* by Debi Gliori

Grief and Bereavement

[Winston's Wish \(supporting children through bereavement\)](#)

[Child Bereavement UK](#)

[Rainbow Trust Supporting UK Families with Bereavement](#)

[Hope Again](#)

[Cruse Bereavement Care](#)

Enjoy reading with **TRUST**

T Take turns to make predictions



R Recap to check ideas & understanding

U Use encouragement and praise

S Share prior knowledge & past experiences

T Tune-in and listen. Be curious with your child

