



Well-being Pack

Welcome to the Mile Oak Well-being Pack. Our Well-being and Inclusion Team have compiled this resource pack to assist families through the coming days and weeks during the period of reduced social contact. The pack contains useful information on important areas such as behaviour management, ways to support children's emotional and mental health, and contact details for other support services. We hope you will find the information helpful.

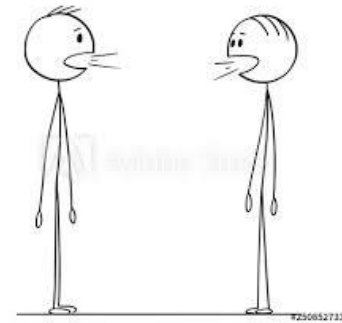
Contents

1. Conversations: advice on how to talk to children about the virus without causing panic
2. Social Story: to help with conversations
3. Top Tips for managing children's anxiety
4. Top Tips for managing children's behaviour
5. Fun activities for in the home
6. Helpful numbers for local and national support services

Conversations

Most children will now be aware of the coronavirus situation, through discussions at home, in the community, TV and social media, and through information shared at school by their peers or in the classroom.

They may be feeling very confused or frightened right now, and it is important to give them clear and factual information without causing alarm.



We would therefore advise the following:

- Be mindful of the conversations between adults in the household; children are very good at ‘listening in’ on the adults around them, and they may pick up on your own fears and anxiety without you realising.
- Choose a calm, quiet, uninterrupted time to explain to children the essential facts only, using language and a depth of information appropriate for your child’s age and stage of development. Try to keep

conversations factual and accurate, but focus on the positive information rather than the worst case scenario.

- For infant children you could say “*there are some nasty germs around that can make some people poorly, we all have to be extra careful to wash our hands well and catch our coughs and sneezes in a tissue*”. Make a game out of practicing hand-washing correctly while singing a favourite song.
- Junior children will have a greater knowledge of coronavirus already, but try not to assume they fully understand all the facts; there is a lot of misinformation and misconception spread through the media and children may use words and phrases they have heard but don’t really know the meaning of. You could ask them what they already know in their own words, and work through any muddles together.
- Upper KS2 children will be able to understand more scientific language, for example you could say “*coronavirus is a pandemic, which means it is a virus affecting people around the whole world. It is contagious, which means it can be passed on through the coughs and sneezes of infected people. Most people will get over it, and it looks like most children don’t get very sick from it, but some people can get very poorly. We can all protect ourselves and each other by washing our hands and catching our coughs and sneezes in a tissue*”. Explain any unfamiliar terms and again work through any muddles.
- Many children are likely to have heard alarming statistics on infection or death rates and may be worried about the more vulnerable people in their own families. Try to offer as much reassurance as possible, but avoid making promises that may be unrealistic. You can reassure them by saying “we

are lucky to have fantastic doctors and nurses who are helping people if they do get ill”; “we will keep you safe”, and “we are all looking after each other”.

Social Story

This short Social Story is very useful to support or initiate a conversation with young children and particularly those with additional needs such as autism. It presents the facts in a child-friendly way that most children will be able to understand. Social Stories are useful to refer to over and over again, so please keep this handy and go back to it whenever needed.

We have included a Social Story with this pack.

Managing Children's Anxiety

This is a time of heightened anxiety for us all, and children are particularly vulnerable to becoming anxious or even panicky when their sense of security comes under pressure. How adults around them act and respond can make a huge difference to how much anxiety a child may feel during stressful times.

Signs your child is feeling anxious:

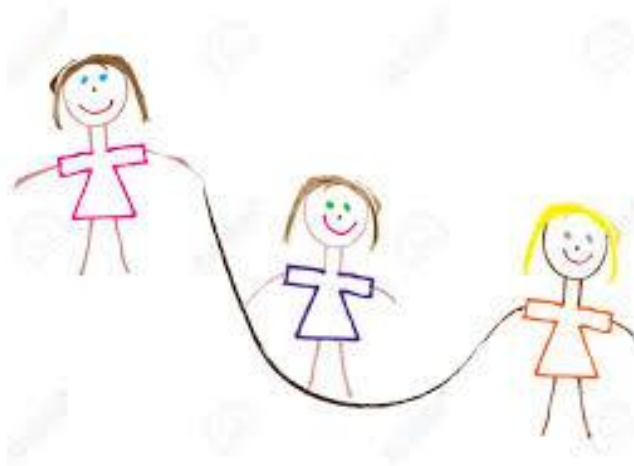
- They may be tearful, withdrawn or angrier than is usual for them
- They could become much clingier than usual, or become very restless
- They may want to eat more than usual, or lose their appetite
- They may complain of physical illness such as stomach pains or headache, without there being a medical cause
- They may have difficulty sleeping, or wake during the night
- They may have vivid or bad dreams
- They may start bed-wetting when they were previously dry
- Some children may say they feel scared, nervous, worried or apprehensive
- They could complain of intrusive, repetitive thoughts such as worries about loved ones dying

- Very rarely, children may suffer panic attacks - signs of panic are an overwhelming sense of something bad happening, a loss of control, light-headedness, 'tunnel vision', incontinence, ringing in the ears.

Top tips to reduce anxiety in children

Prevention: model 'not being anxious'; even if you have worries, keeping them hidden and *not sharing them* with children can reduce the chances of them sensing that there is something to worry about.

Physical exercise is highly effective in reducing those anxious feelings in our bodies – this is due to the 'fight or flight' response; when we think anxious thoughts, our bodies produce hormones to prepare us to 'fight, flee (run away), or freeze', to protect ourselves from harm. If we take physical exercise, our bodies sense that we have 'flown', and the stress hormones reduce. Any exercise that raises the heart rate will help; try running up and down the stairs until you're out of breath, or skipping!



Relaxation and meditation are also highly effective in reducing anxious feelings; spend a few minutes with your child lying down in a quiet room, listening to soft music (there are lots of good examples of ‘quiet piano music’ available through you tube), and engaging in mindfulness breathing. Bringing breathing under conscious control reduces the heart rate, and in turn helps reduce those stress hormones and associated anxiety. You could even try some yoga together by following some online tutorials!



Distraction: if your child is becoming panicky, try to distract their thoughts away from their anxiety before they become overwhelming; humour can sometimes help, or reading a good story, colouring or drawing.

Reassurance: using a gentle, nurturing tone of voice and physical comfort can help instil a sense of wellbeing in anxious children; they may need frequent reminders that you are there for them, and normal life will be restored in due course. Try to help children keep things in perspective, and focus on all the positive things in their lives such as family, pets, favourite toys, books, games and activities.

Top Tips to Manage Children's Behaviour

Fun activities to reduce boredom at home

Directory of useful numbers and local support

Local

The Amaze helpline will be open to provide families children who have special educational needs with up to date information, advice and support. Parents can email, text or phone. See website: amazesussex.org.uk or call 01273 772289 or email helpline@amazesussex.org.uk

Parents can send enquires to the Brighton and Hove Inclusion Support Service (BHISS) can be emailed to : BHISS@brighon-hove.gov.uk . This inbox will be checked on daily basis and be followed up by an Educational Psychologist, Specialist teacher or practitioner. Alternatively, parents/schools could call the generic BHISS telephone number 01273 293481 and leave a message.

If you need advice about children's behaviour or mental well-being, a new shared mailbox for the BHISS Schools Well-being Service is now available so that parents/professionals can make an enquiry and seek advice from a Primary Mental Health Worker: SWSConsultationLine@brighton-hove.gov.uk or call 01273 293481 and leave a message and someone will respond as soon as possible.

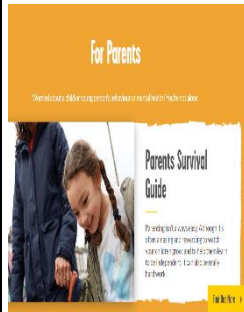
National

NSPCC	Tips on boundaries and positive parenting
-------	---

<https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/1195/positive-parenting.pdf>



Young Minds



<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/>

Parent's survival guide with helplines and web page information

Family lives

Lots of info and parent forums

We build better family lives together

need it

Advice How we can help **Get involved** About us **Visit our forums** **Donate now**

- Donate now
- Volunteer for us
- Fundraise for us
- Become a corporate supporter
- Meet our corporate partners
- Leave a gift in your will
- How your support helps

Let's sing together
Watch our range of guided videos to help you sing with your young child

Can you help?
We're doing some research
Have you recently tried to call our helpline but weren't able to get through? We're looking for people to interview to help improve our services
[Read more >>](#)

Volunteer for us
Make a difference
Our volunteers are a lifeline to so many families, check out our roles across the country and help us reach more families.
[click here >>](#)

BullyingUK For advice and support on dealing with bullying
Cyber bullying, workplace bullying, advice for parents

Parent channel.tv Watch our videos for all sorts of advice on parenting issues