

## Information for Parents & Carers: Supporting Children and Young People, Wellbeing & Mental Health Brief<sup>1</sup>

As well as thinking about the children or young people in your care, it is important to take care of your own mental health and wellbeing. When parents and carers deal with a situation calmly and confidently, they can provide the best support for their children and young people.

Key actions to support your child or young person's mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic:

- **Listen to and acknowledge their concerns** - look out for any changes in their behaviour, they rely on you to interpret their feelings.

[MindEd for families](#) is a free online educational resource on children and young people's mental health for all adults, which can support parents and carers through these exceptional circumstances.

- **Provide clear information about the situation** - one of the best ways to help your child to feel safe is by talking openly about what is happening and providing honest answers to any questions they have, using words and explanations that they can understand.

The [Children's Guide to Coronavirus](#), by the Children's Commissioner, and a [storybook developed by and for children around the world affected by coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) may help you to provide clear and appropriate information.

- **Be aware of your own reactions** – try to remain calm, speak kindly, and answer any questions honestly.

For further information on how to look after your own mental wellbeing during the pandemic, see the [guidance on how to look after your own mental health and wellbeing](#) or visit [Every Mind Matters](#).

- **Connect regularly** – if it is necessary for you and your children to be in different locations to normal, make sure you still have regular and frequent contact via phone or video calls. Try to help your child understand what arrangements are being made for them and why, in simple terms.
- **Support safe ways for children and young people to connect with their friends** – maintain social distancing; if this isn't possible they can connect online or via phone or video calls.

For more advice on helping your children stay safe online, see this guidance on [staying safe online during the coronavirus \(COVID-19\) pandemic](#)

- **Maintain a routine** – routine gives children and young people an increased feeling of safety in the context of uncertainty, so think about how to develop a new routine, even within these changing times. Try to have a plan for each day, and for the week. Ensure there is time for learning, playing and relaxing. Encourage a balance of time on and off line. Keep regular bedtimes.

<sup>1</sup> For additional information see the [DfE guidance for parents & carers on supporting children and young people's mental health and wellbeing](#)

If your child is not at school ask teachers what you can do to support continued learning at home. The Department for Education has [published a list of recommended online educational resources for home schooling](#). The [Children's Commissioner guide](#) signposts to some ideas to help fight boredom Plan time outside if you can do so safely or see [Change4Life](#) for ideas for indoor games and activities

- **Limit exposure to media and talk more about what they have seen and heard** - like adults, children and young people may become more distressed if they see repeated coverage about the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic in the media. Where possible try to maintain a balance, consider limiting the amount of exposure you and your family have to media coverage<sup>2</sup>.

#### Resources which may assist you in supporting your family:

[Children's Guide to Coronavirus](#), Children's Commissioner

[Coping with Coronavirus, a guide for young people](#) Mental Health Foundation

[Coronavirus, supporting children's mental health](#) Mentally Healthy Schools

[Coronavirus, a book for children](#) input from Professor Graham Medley of the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, the book addresses key primary aged questions

[My Hero is You, How Kids can Fight Covid-19](#) Storybook by and for children around the world, developed by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee

*Resources specially developed for people with special educational needs and disabilities:*

[Books without words to help people through Coronavirus](#), Beyond Words

[Easy read guide: Coronavirus](#) Mencap

[Easy read guide, Coronavirus, Looking after your feelings and body](#) Public Health England

#### Wellbeing Support & Information

[Healthy Surrey](#) information on local and national services incl. domestic abuse, alcohol, drug and smoking services, weight management, sexual health services and mental health services. **(adults & young people)**

[Surrey Information Service](#) Centralised online directory of Surrey services for families.

[Anna Freud](#) Mental health advice, support and guidance **(young people, parents and professionals)**

[Bereavement Support](#), Jigsaw SE **(support for families and young people)**

[Every Mind Matters](#) – Public Health England; practical advice to get a healthier mind and get more out of life – from how to deal with stress and anxiety, to boosting our mood or sleeping better. **(adults)**

[Mental Health Foundation Coronavirus section](#) information, guidance and resources. **(adults and young people)**

[Qwell](#) online support for emotional wellbeing for **parents and carers** of children and young people with special educational needs and disability in Surrey.

[ThinkUknow](#) advice about staying safe on a phone, tablet or computer. **(infant, junior and secondary aged young people, parents and professionals)**

[Young Minds](#) provides advice about mental health and behaviour problems in **children and young people up to the age of 25**. You can call the [Parents' and Carers' Helpline](#) on 0808 802 5544.

[ChatHealth](#), a confidential school nurse messaging service. Young people can contact their school nurse in confidence by text. The Chat Health text number is: 07507 329 951. Young people can also call our [advice line](#) to get in touch with a school nurse. **(young people aged 11-19)**

Free confidential support for young people, from Government-backed voluntary and community sector organisations by:

- texting [SHOUT](#) to 85258

- calling [Childline](#) on 0800 1111

- calling [the Mix](#) on 0808 808 4994

<sup>2</sup> [Coronavirus Information-NHS](#)