**Short Breaks Assessment Team – BULLETIN No.1**

**Covid-19**

We know that Coronavirus (COVID-19) is very worrying for all families. In particular families who need additional support to meet the needs of children with complex care needs. We cannot predict the full impact of this pandemic on services, and will need to remain in regular contact with you to update you of any changes to services. We are aware that this crisis will be causing additional stress and anxiety on you and your children, and that many young people can no longer access their education provision. We hope to use this bulletin to share information and to provide useful guidance and ideas for support.

You can contact SEND Team (01924 306065) or Short Breaks Assessment Team (01924 307403) to discuss your family circumstances.

Your Short Breaks Practitioners aim to prioritise your calls as we are aware family situations will change depending on whether anyone becomes ill or depending on changing Government advice.

The Short Breaks Assessment Team will continue to be working and are contactable daily. Monday- Thursday 8.30 – 5.00 and Fri 8.30 – 4.30 tel. 01924 307403. Individual Short Breaks Practitioner will share their contact details with you.

Keeping children active – Most children may struggle if they feel confined to the house. Here are some ideas to keep the whole family active

* Joe Wicks – PE lesson at home each day on YouTube 9.00
* Play loud music and dance together
* Water play
* Get some bubbles to blow together
* Try to keep to the usual routine
* One form of exercise a day, for example a run, walk, or cycle - alone or with members of your household.
* ‘Chase the Rainbow’ campaign – draw, paint, glue a picture of a rainbow and stick it in the window. When families manage to go out for a walk try to find rainbows in other houses windows.

**10 top tips**

1. Try not to shield your child from the news, as it’s likely they will find out somehow from school, being online or from friends.
2. Talk to your child about what is going on. You could start by asking them what they have heard.
3. 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 can help them feel calm.
4. Reassure your child that it is unlikely they will get seriously ill, and if they do you feel ill you will look after them. Your child might be concerned about who will look after you if you catch the virus. Let them know the kind of support you have as an adult so that they don’t feel they need to worry about you.
5. Give some practical tips to your child about how they can look after themselves. For example, show them how to wash their hands properly, and remind them when they should be doing it.
6. Keep as many regular routines as possible, so that your child feels safe and that things are stable.
7. Spend time doing a positive activity with your child (e.g. reading, playing, painting, cooking) to help reassure them and reduce their anxiety.
8. Encourage your child to think about the things they can do to make them feel safer and less worried.
9. Be aware that your child may want more close contact with you at this time and feel anxious about separation. Try to provide this support whenever possible.
10. Remember to look after yourself too. If you yourself are feeling worried, or anxious about coronavirus, talk to someone you trust who can listen and support you.

**Learning at home: Apps – for tablets or phones**

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Otsimo – Educational game developed for individuals with learning disorders, attention deficit, autism, downs syndrome, Asperger’s, and other special needs.



Sensory Magma – Magma is a simple calming and relaxing visual app for people with special/complex needs of ALL ages.

Autism nonverbal therapy game – Create your very own artwork using assorted shapes and materials.



Touch Follow FREE – Touch Follow Shapes, Touch Follow Alphabet, Touch Follow Number.

Build it up ADHD & Autism – Build it up app helps with visual perception skills and fine motor skills among toddlers aged 2.5 + years old. It also helps concepts such as size, top and bottom, before and after.

**Websites**

Twinkl – Free for the month offering support with home learning packs. Learning videos.



TheSchoolRun – 14 day free trial offering support and home learning for children with SEN.



Sky Badger – Offers resources and advice about home learning for children with SEN.

**Self-Care in the Time of Coronavirus**

For parents, prioritising your own well-being benefits your whole family

When you’re a parent, self-care often slips to the bottom of the list. But taking care of yourself isn’t a luxury. It’s essential. And during this difficult time, when children are home and stress is running high, it’s more important than ever.

**Make time for yourself:** This could look like taking a shower or bath, walking around the block alone (or with your dog), or designating time to read or simply zone out after the kids have gone to bed

**Prioritise healthy choices:** Make sure you’re eating properly, try to get enough sleep (but not too much!), and create a routine that includes physical activity

**Be realistic:** Avoid burnout by setting realistic expectations and giving yourself grace if you can’t meet them. Practice forgiveness and self-compassion**.**

**Set boundaries:** If you have a friend or family member who’s in the habit of sending worst-case-scenario news or is prone to sending anxiety-provoking text messages, practice a little emotional distancing. Let them know you sympathise but that you’re taking a break from worrying news, or simply hit the **“Do Not Disturb button”**

**Reconnect with things you enjoy:** Think proactively of things you can do with this enforced time at home. Get back in touch with hobbies or activities you enjoy but rarely have time for, or make the choice to learn a new skill.

For more information please click on link - <https://childmind.org/>

Even though school, Early Years provision or college might be closed for your child to attend, please remember school staff are available for support in this time. They will be happy to help with resources that you might need.

Public Health England has issued some guidance to parents and carers on looking after the mental health and wellbeing of young people during the COVID-19 outbreak. The guidance can be accessed through these link:

**COVID-19: guidance on supporting children and young people’s mental health and wellbeing**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing>

**COVID-19: Guidance for the public on mental health and wellbeing aspects of the corona virus**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-for-the-public-on-mental-health-and-wellbeing>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others/full-guidance-on-staying-at-home-and-away-from-others>

[Coronavirus (COVID-19): what you need to do](https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus)

**Stay at home**

* Only go outside for food, health reasons or work (but only if you cannot work from home)
* If you go out, stay 2 meters (6ft) away from other people at all times
* Wash your hands as soon as you get home

Do not meet others, even friends or family.

You can spread the virus even if you don’t have symptoms.

If any families are aware of any resources or ideas that may help other families please email these ideas to: EPS@wakefield.gov.uk and we can include in the next bulletin

If you would prefer to receive the bulletin by email please email: EPS@wakefield.gov.uk