

# Coronavirus – Resources for Families

## **Coronavirus: Parental Information**

COVID-19 is a new disease that can impact your lungs and airways. It's caused by a virus called coronavirus. Symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) are:

- a cough,
- a high temperature and
- shortness of breath.

Practical measures like washing your hands often, for at least 20 seconds, with anti-bacterial soap and water can help stop viruses like coronavirus (COVID-19) spreading. At present, treatment for coronavirus aims to alleviate the symptoms until recovery. It's not currently clear how coronavirus (COVID-19) spreads amongst humans, but similar viruses are spread in cough droplets.

### **Information about Coronavirus for Parents, Carers, and Professionals**

- The Scottish Government provides information and updates on Covid-19 including updated guidance and advice for schools and other groups.
  - o See <https://www.gov.scot/coronavirus-covid-19/>
- The WHO has recently published considerations to support mental health and wellbeing during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak. This guidance has specific recommendations for health care workers, caretakers of children, caretakers of older adults and people in isolation.
  - o See <https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/>
- Latest guidance about COVID-19 from NHS Scotland and the Scottish Government, including social distancing and stay at home advice can be found at <https://www.nhsinform.scot/>
- South Ayrshire Council also provide local information on the impact of Covid-19 on services and businesses – see <https://beta.south-ayrshire.gov.uk/coronavirus>

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## Coronavirus *Latest NHS Guidelines Translated into 34 languages*

- [This link](#) provides accessible, reliable coronavirus information in 34 languages.

### **SUMMARY GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCEMENT 23/03/20**

UK citizens should leave home only for:

- *Shopping for basic necessities*
- *One form of exercise a day*
- *Any medical need/care for vulnerable person*
- *Travelling to and from work, only if absolutely necessary.*

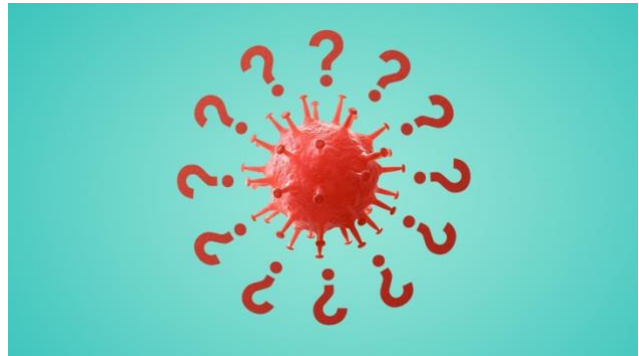
Source: HM Government

This adds to the recent announcement that schools will be closed to **most** children with the exceptions of:

- *Children with EHCPs*
- *Children of key workers (e.g. nurses, police – see the governments published list of jobs that constitute 'key workers')*
- *Vulnerable children – broadly defined as children with a social worker, i.e. those children classified as 'Children in Need', on a Child Protection Plan, or in local authority care.*

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The government has also indicated that there will be provision for children who are eligible for free school meals. Gavin Williamson, Education Secretary, announced that schools will have the flexibility to provide meals or vouchers to children eligible for free school meals.



Source: <https://axios.com>

## What this means for children?

Most children will be out of school for an unspecified amount of time, with limited access to the outdoors and social spaces. This can put additional strain on families living in overcrowded conditions or living in close proximity. Some older pupils may be able to manage their emotions and anxieties, however this may prove difficult for younger children. Parents/carers may be required to support younger pupils with strategies to manage their anxieties, label their emotions and understand the facts regarding the Coronavirus. Children may need extra attention from you and may want to talk about their concerns, fears, and questions. It is important that they know they have someone who will listen to them; make time for them.

### 1. Explaining Coronavirus to your Child

With social media and easy access to the internet, children may be in the position whereby they are able to research Coronavirus online. There is however a wealth of information available, from a number of resources, published every day. This can leave children confused regarding misinformation and overwhelmed by the sheer volume of advice. In such circumstances, it is useful for parents and carers to find out what their child's understanding of the Coronavirus is and how to talk to them about it in an effective and positive manner.

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This may seem a little daunting for parents, but it can be supported via the use of reputable and useful online resources and websites. These can better help your child to understand the facts. Such websites are below.

Adults should be aware of their stress responses, and remain calm when discussing the Coronavirus with their child. Children are very perceptive to when their parents/carers are anxious and can mirror this response in turn. Displaying as calm and confident when discussing the virus will support your children to remain calm and confident.

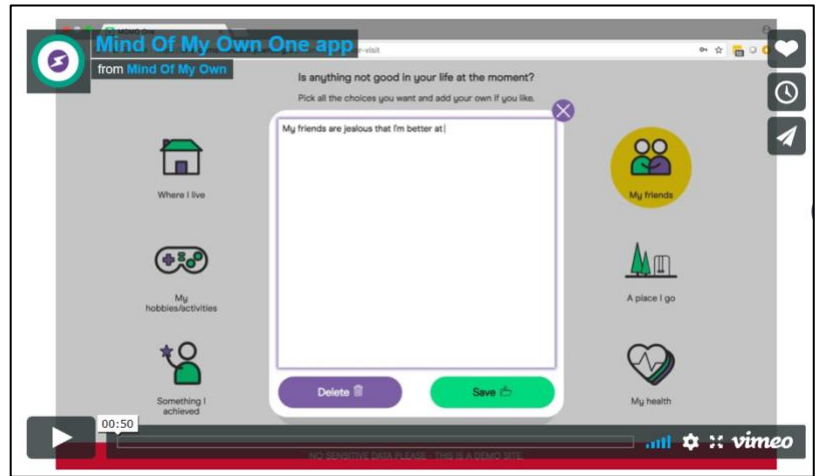
It's good to talk, as parents and carers, we can give the right information to our children and help them feel safe. Key aspects to remember include:

- **Try not to overwhelm your child with too much information** - be truthful but remember your child's age. Younger children may comprehend better with the use of visuals or a picture.
- **Allow children to ask questions.** This is natural, give them space to ask. For some questions, you may not have an answer, don't worry – it's okay to say there are some questions we don't have answers to at the moment.
- **Try to manage your own worries.** Ensure you also have someone to talk to – an adult who can support you. Distractions at home can help i.e. music, relaxation and family time – model good coping mechanisms.
- **Give practical guidance** e.g. how to wash your hands.
- **Try not to be reactive to any future announcements.** Acting in a responsive way is more effective than reactive.

Source: adapted from - DECP Position Paper on the Government's Announcement

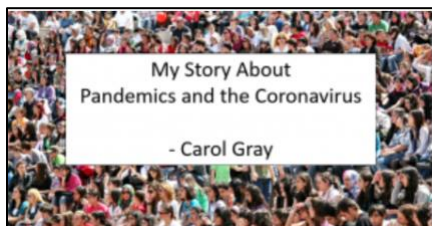
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Within schools, children would typically be able to speak with a close classroom teacher, pupil support assistant or a member of the guidance team. If your child would still like someone to check-in with they can use Mind of My Own (<https://mindofmyown.org.uk>). They can download the app from the app store, input a query and a teacher from the virtual pupil support team will reply to their concerns.



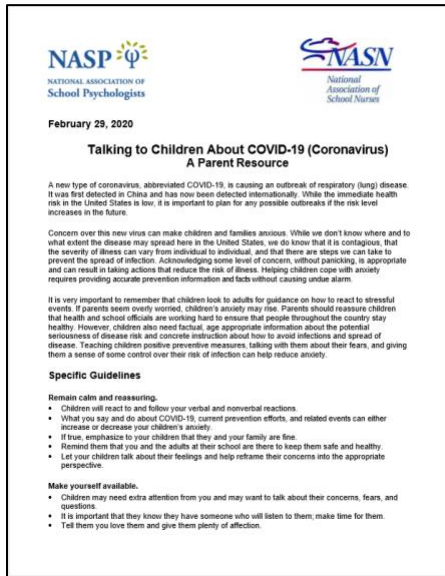
## Resources:

Dr Marie J Hill, an educational psychologist, has produced a handy guide on how to talk to your child about the Coronavirus outbreak (see <https://getpsyched.co.uk> )

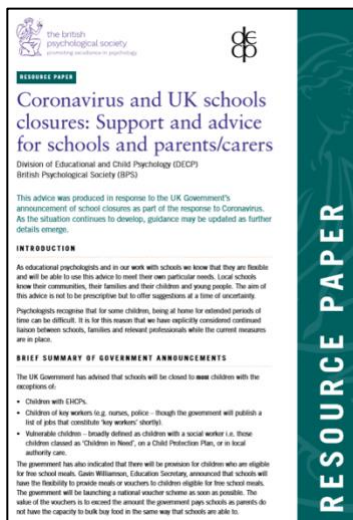


Carol Gray has also written a useful document that helps parents to tell their child about the Coronavirus, washing hands and school closures. (see <https://carolgraysocialstories.com/> )

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The National Association of School Psychologists has put together a useful parent document available online regarding Talking to Children about COVID-19. (see <https://www.nasponline.org/> )



The British Psychological Society has also published an informative online resource for parents/carers and schools regarding COVID-19. (See <https://www.bps.org.uk/sites/> )

## 2. Providing Structure in Times of Uncertainty

Young people will potentially worry with schools closing and feel anxious about the level of concern regarding the current situation. They may also start to reflect regarding people they know within family and friends etc. who have underlying health conditions or may be vulnerable to the virus. Images and video clips on TV and the internet may further add to the children's sense of anxiety. Parents/carers can support

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their children by helping them to understand these feelings are normal. The following may also ease anxiety in times of Coronavirus uncertainty:

- **Provide a normalised structure and routine:** set times for getting up and going to bed for your child. Consider a variety of activities (learning and fun) and times for break. Don't try to replicate the full school timetable. Make a daily plan of tasks with your child and discuss with them the night before, visuals may be useful for children with additional needs. Consider the structure of the normal school week i.e. Monday to Friday should be different from the weekend.
- **Remain Active:** build in time for fresh air and exercise as far as this is possible. There are also good online exercise videos for young people to undertake whilst in the house (e.g. Joe Wicks).
  - o Fitness youtuber Joe Wicks has announced he will start online PE lessons to help keep children fit and healthy during the school shutdown. Find an example and his YouTube channel below:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4wzoy\\_J3l\\_c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4wzoy_J3l_c)



- **Limit time on social media:** decide when and for how long your child will have access to electronic devices and for what purpose. Isolation may bring an

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increase in social media for some children, so it is beneficial to ensure this is managed positively.

- **Set regular times for meals:** it may also be a useful for children to be involved in making the meals and/or the meal planners as an activity. Building in new activities and learning a new skill may help your children to stay positive.
- **Create a sense of accomplishment:** review the day's activities and discuss the achievements/learning aspects with your child – this will build their confidence and give them a sense of accomplishment.
- **Staying connected:** it is important for your children to stay in contact with others during the period of isolation. They may be concerned about elderly relatives, so it may be beneficial for them to contact them to put their mind at ease. You may also want to support them to stay in contact with positive peers via technology. Children will undoubtedly miss their friends they are used to seeing every day.
- **Reassure children if their exams are cancelled:** some children may feel like all their hard work and study efforts has not paid off. It may help to remind them that the government and Department for Education are working on a plan and young people will get the qualifications they worked towards.





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- **Don't forget practical safety measures:** Remind them how they can protect themselves and others by washing their hands. You may want to support via visuals (below) to explain to your child or by using a timer. Also remind them what to do if they cough or sneeze.



### 3. Things to do at Home

Remember not to put pressure on yourself to recreate the full school timetable. At present there is a sense of national urgency, during such times adults can feel stressed and tired. Adults who are dysregulated will find it difficult teaching children and focusing on connections. Do not try to put too much focus on academia. Stirling Council have put together an example daily schedule for children and young people below with a mix of learning and fun (below) - this can be adapted.

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Time	Activity	Description
9am-9.30am	<b>MOVEMENT TIME</b>	e.g. online yoga, dance class, or PE activity such as Joe Wicks online PE class
9.30-10.30	<b>FOCUSED LEARNING TIME</b>	Age appropriate numeracy/literacy or other learning activities either using tasks set by your child's school or your own activities
10.30- 11am	<b>BREAK</b>	Snack and free choice time
11am-12pm	<b>CREATIVE TIME</b>	Cooking, baking, drawing, painting, construction, crafting etc
12-1pm	<b>BREAK</b>	Lunch and house tasks
1-2pm	<b>MOVEMENT AND WELLBEING TIME</b>	If possible, get some fresh air or do some movement in the home. e.g. online yoga, relaxation activities, mindfulness etc
2-3pm	<b>FOCUSED LEARNING TIME</b>	Age appropriate learning activity e.g. educational games, online activities, science activities, virtual museum tours etc.
3pm-5pm	<b>FREE TIME/QUIET TIME</b>	Free time/own choice Free play/reading/music
5-6pm	<b>BREAK</b>	Dinner and house tasks
Until bedtime	<b>CONNECTION TIME</b>	Catch up with family, chat, play games, relax

Schools have put together online learning packs for children, accessible via their twitter feed, webpage or school GLOW page. Remember to go at your child's pace, bearing in mind their age and stage. All parents will be mindful at present of the change to their child's learning – remembering that schools will be ready to support learners when they return will offer reassurance.

Spending family time together where possible with engaging and fun activities can act as a distraction and bring a little normality back to a child's life during uncertain times.















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Both informal and formal activities can be helpful to engage children in learning at home, for example:

- Playing board games together,
- Undertaking simple household chores,
- Preparing meals,
- Spending time gardening,

Activities such as these support young people to use their literacy and numeracy skills in context. Each family will have scheduled based on their children and their circumstances. Sharing activities with your friends can be very useful – but remember not to put too much pressure on yourself regarding the routines of others'

Some younger children may require more of a visual timetable to help structure their day, examples for morning and afternoon are included below:

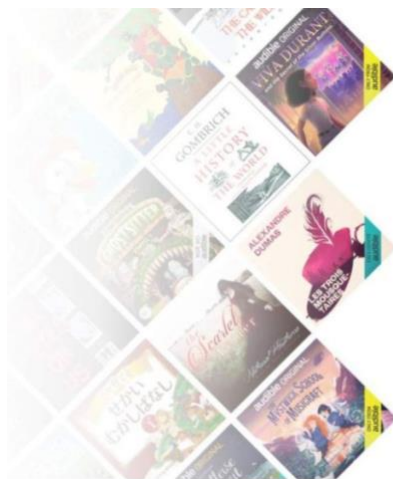
 Morning Schedule		 Afternoon Schedule	
 Wake up!	Eat breakfast, make bed, get ready for the day.	 Quiet Time	Colouring, reading or a jigsaw on their own. Try to enjoy a coffee in peace!
 Exercise	Family walk, play in the garden or Cosmic Yoga online	 Work Time	Give your child access to a tablet/phone/computer to support their learning.
 Work Time	No electronics at this time. Use activities provided by school.	 Exercise	Family walk, play in the garden or Cosmic Yoga online
 Creative Time	Lego, drawing, crafting, play music, cook or bake	 Dinner	Encourage your child to sit with you and help prepare or tidy up
 Lunch	Encourage your children to help prepare or tidy up	 Free Time	Time for your child to play or watch TV. Hopefully some free time for you too!
 Jobs Time	Give your child a simple household task	 Bed Time	Consider a later bedtime as a reward for following the schedule

Source (Widgit online resources)

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Audible Stories aimed at younger audiences, are offering numerous online audible childrens' books for free - and you don't need an account to listen to them. The books are grouped into categories, including Littlest Listeners, Tween and Literary Classics, with firm favourites such as Winnie the Pooh and Alice in Wonderland available. These are available to listen to on a laptop, desktop, smartphone or tablet. The website informed: "Stories will be here so kids everywhere and of all ages can stream incredible content to keep their minds engaged while daily routines are disrupted in these unprecedented circumstances."

(see <https://stories.audible.com/start-listen> )



## Stories help.

They entertain. They teach. They keep young minds active, alert, and engaged.

For as long as schools are closed, we're open. Starting today, kids everywhere can instantly stream an incredible collection of stories, including titles across six different languages, that will help them continue dreaming, learning, and just being kids.

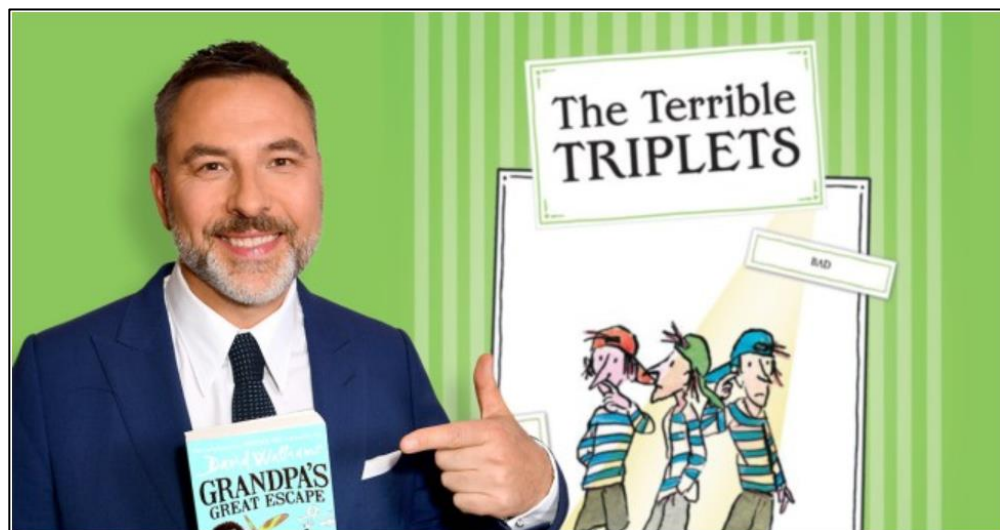
All stories are free to stream on your desktop, laptop, phone or tablet.

Explore the collection, select a title and start listening.

It's that easy.



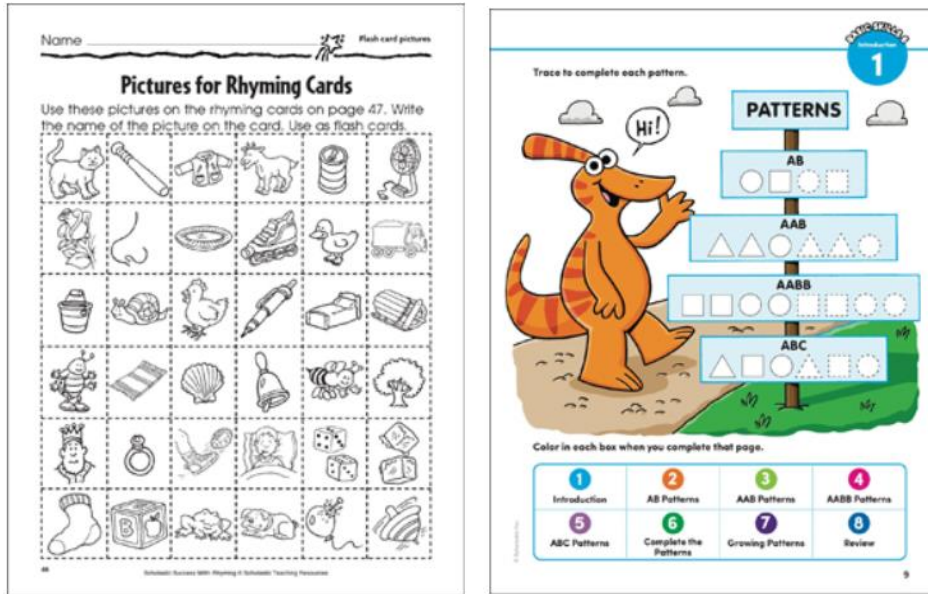
David Walliams, author and comedian, has also confirmed he will be releasing a free audio story each day for the next 30 days to help keep children entertained amid the coronavirus lockdown.



Listen here for free: <https://www.worldofdavidwalliams.com/elevenses/>

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Scholastic's website has a number of online literacy and numeracy resources and worksheets to keep children engaged and learning at home. Such resources include:



See <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/teaching> or

<https://shop.scholastic.co.uk/homelearning> for more information.

With early learning centres closed, Harvard Graduate School of Education have gathered ideas for parents regarding maintaining structure, routine, and healthy habits for learning and growing at home -

<https://www.gse.harvard.edu/news/uk/20/03/caring-preschoolers-home>

For younger children four easy indoor activities perfect for breaking up the day also include:

**Box Road** – Flatten out a box and draw a road in marker. Add blocks, trucks and other toys for kids to build a city.

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**Toy-Washing Bin** – Let your kids wash their plastic toys. Add tear-free bubbles, sponges, towels and other supplies.



**Trash Art** – Find some recycled materials and let your kids paint them. Kids love painting random objects and making beautiful creations from them.

**Sticky Match-Up** – Draw shapes, letters, numbers, words or math problems on sticky notes and hide them around the house for your child to find. Then have the child match them up on a “key” that hangs on the wall.



(Source: <https://time.com/5803373/coronavirus-kids-at-home-activities/>)