

## **Help for parents and carers supporting the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people affected by Covid19.**

As well as their own concerns and mental wellbeing, parents and carers may be worried about how to help their children whose lives are also greatly impacted by the rapidly changing situation. Some children and young people will be feeling very anxious about the virus itself and how this might affect them and their families. Others may be fearful of being isolated from friends and activities. Older children are likely to be very worried about the impact of school closures and exams cancellations. It is very hard to handle the uncertainty especially if you are a child or a teenager.

The following advice has been taken from Young Minds and other related sources.

You can help children and young people by: -

- Doing everything you can to maintain your own mental health and wellbeing during the outbreak. Ideas on how to do this can be found on [Mental Health Foundation's webpage](#) and [Mind's 'Coronavirus and your wellbeing' webpage](#).
- Talking openly about Covid-19 with your child or young person in an age appropriate manner, answering their questions. You don't need to know all the answers but talking can help them feel calm. You can find up to date information on Covid-19 on the [NHS website](#)
- Reassure your child that it is unlikely they will get seriously ill, and if they do fall 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
- 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. See [NHS Handwashing advice](#)

- Keep as many regular routines as possible, so that your child feels safe and that things are stable. It maybe that they have schoolwork to complete and that you are also trying to work from home or support other family members. Depending on the age of your child a timetable for the day may help all of you to get things done in as calm a way as possible
- Spend time doing a positive activity with your child to help reassure them and reduce their anxiety. This is also a great way of providing a space for them to talk through their concerns, without having a 'big chat'. Young Minds provide some helpful ideas on how to do this [starting a conversation with your child guide](#).
- Encourage your child to think about the things they can do to make them feel safer and less worried.
- 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

If you would like to speak to a B&NES School Nurse about your child's wellbeing a telephone service has been set up to cover this period of disruption. Details of this service can be found here



School Nursing  
Service.docx

Below are some links to some initial sources of help for parents and carers that have been reviewed for their relevance. This will be added to over the coming week as new resources become available: -

Young Minds Parent Support : [10 Tips for Talking to Your Child about Coronavirus](#)  
The British Psychological Society [Talking to Children about Coronavirus](#)

Anna Freud Centre – short series of films

- [Supporting parents and carers through disruption](#)
- [Supporting young people through disruption](#)

Place to Be: [Coronavirus: Helpful information to answer questions from children](#)

Information for teenagers : The Mix [Understanding Coronavirus](#)

For more general advice and links to national and B&NES services also see the leaflet [Mental health problems in children and young people: guidance for parents and carers](#)