

The Oak-Tree Group of Schools

**Mental Health and Wellbeing
during Coronavirus:**

A Guide for Pupils



Braeside

Coopersale Hall

Normanhurst

Oaklands

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Coronavirus has changed life for us all. We are aware of the impact that Coronavirus is having on young people in the UK. Your schooling has been affected, your families have been affected, your experience of life has been affected. These changes are challenging. We recognise that Coronavirus is affecting young people's mental health and wellbeing.

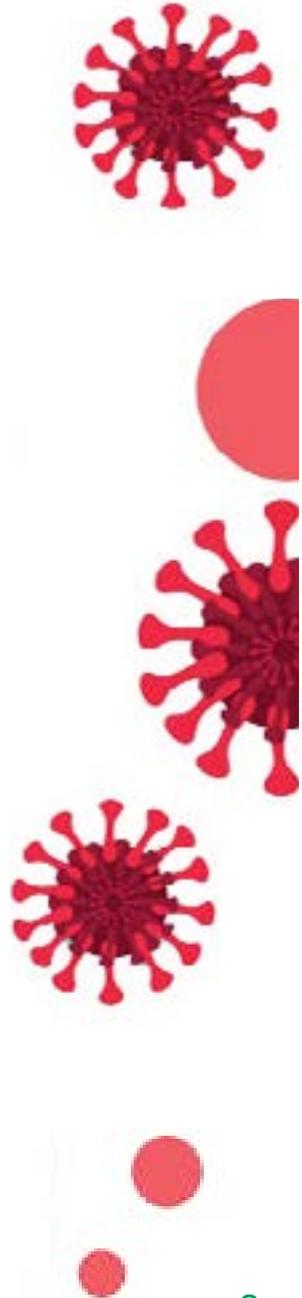
You are highly likely to feel concerned or anxious about the situation and about what the future might look like for you.

If you are in Year 10 or Year 11, you may well have immediate concerns about what will happen to your GCSEs or what will happen about Sixth Form and university. If you are in Year 7, 8 or 9, you may be thinking ahead and feeling uncertain about what the future will be like.

Your feelings, emotions and thoughts will be mixed. This is to be expected. You may experience feelings of isolation, you may be concerned about mixing with other people, you may have fears about relatives and loved ones. These feelings are understandable. But if those feelings become overwhelming they can have a significant impact on your wellbeing.

The aim of this booklet is to provide information and support for you, so that you know where to go for guidance and help. We want to support you, as far as we are able, to have positive mental health and wellbeing. We hope it is useful.

Please also remember that there are teachers and members of staff in school who are available to talk to you about any concerns you have. We value you. We want to support you through this challenging time, and into the future, as you continue your journey through the school.



Websites to go to if you have concerns about your Mental Health and Wellbeing

There are many websites offering online support to young people through Coronavirus. One of them is the charity 'MIND' which has the tag line 'for better mental health'. There is helpful and interesting information and advice there which you can access on the links below:

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/difficult-feelings-about-the-coronavirus-pandemic/>

The Anna Freud Nation Centre for Children and Families has some excellent support for young people, including some videos where young people talk about their experiences through Coronavirus. It has practical and helpful advice directly aimed for young people like you:

<https://www.annafreud.org/coronavirus-support/support-for-young-people/>

Young Minds is an organisation with a mission to 'make sure all young people can get the mental health support they need, when they need it, no matter what.' They have an excellent advice page for young people on coping through Coronavirus, including: coping with the second lockdown, dealing with anxious feelings and struggling with isolation:

<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/looking-after-yourself/coronavirus-and-mental-health/>

The Children's Commissioner published a guide to Coronavirus specifically aimed for children. It is in the form of a PowerPoint presentation, which you might find helpful to see. It also contains an informative embedded video:

<https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/cco-childrens-guide-to-coronavirus.pdf>

Barnado's is a charity which offers support to families and young people. They have a section of their website dedicated to Coronavirus, as well as having a page where you can self-refer if you would like to talk to someone about your thoughts or feelings.

<https://www.barnardos.org.uk/c19>

<https://www.barnardos.org.uk/support-hub/emotional-wellbeing>

<https://www.barnardos.org.uk/see-hear-respond/self-referral>

The NHS has a website called Every Mind Matters. It is focused on helping young people look after their mental health. It is not just for Coronavirus, but includes a section specifically aimed at support through the pandemic. It includes lots of practical tips and activities for dealing with stress and anxiety:

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters>

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/youth-mental-health/>



Strategies to cope with self-isolation and lockdown

There is a simple graphic that suggests 5 ways to stay emotionally healthy through isolation or lockdown:



One website has expanded these 5 things with some more ideas:

Stick to an active daily routine (e.g. creating your own daily programme including three meals a day, activity time slots, self-care opportunities and bedtime routine)

Do some physical activity - stretch and home workouts (e.g. yoga, dance, cleaning the house)



Keep up hobbies that keep you moving (e.g. baking, reading, writing, making music, running, walking the dog etc)

Engage in creative activities (e.g. journal writing, art, scrap book making, junk modelling, restoring furniture, create music, redecorating)

Learn a new skill (e.g. look online for a myriad of ideas)

Keep connected to others (e.g. phones, email, skype, websites, helplines & online counselling)



Spend some time outdoors if you can (e.g. going for a walk or run, exercising, spending time in the garden)

Try meditation and relaxation (e.g. Apps and free YouTube videos such as headspace)

Work in a specific place at home with planned short brain breaks. Put your work away when you have finished your school work for the day.

Think about what you eat (eat healthily, and avoid too many sugary or caffeine filled snacks)



Do things you enjoy doing (e.g. watch a boxset, paint your nails, listen to podcasts, reading etc)

Keep hydrated and drink plenty of water

Put some self-care into your day (this is any activity that we do deliberately which helps us feel mentally, emotionally, and physically healthy)

Where to go for Support with Grief and Bereavement

One of the tragic realities of lockdown is that many, many young people have lost loved ones (either family or friends). Dealing with grief and bereavement can be very difficult. There are some organisations which offer support to young people, to help them through these difficult times.

Grief UK offers some excellent posts about how to cope with feelings of loss and grief. This might be because someone you love has died, or it might be because you are worried about someone you love dying in the future. This is a thoughtful and sensitive website to look at:

<https://www.griefuk.org/articles/living-with-uncertainty-and-not-knowing/>

It also has practical advice on how to support a friend who has experienced loss:

<https://www.griefuk.org/articles/grief-supporting-friends-after-loss/>

Child Bereavement UK is a charity that helps children and young people who are grieving. They have a specific part of their website dedicated to Coronavirus, with useful tabs to click on to find support. They are currently providing the Coronavirus resources for BBC Bitesize and BBC Newsround:

<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/pages/category/coronavirus>

There is information and a short film specifically for young people on this link:

<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/coronavirus-resources-for-young-people>



Where to go for help if you or someone you know has suicidal thoughts

There are times when stress and anxiety means you might lose sight of who you are and you might even begin to question why you are here, and whether your life really matters.

If you have suicidal thoughts, it is really important to talk to someone about it. Someone in school whom you trust, a friend or a member of your family. Rather than talk directly to a person you know, there are other places to go for support or where you can talk.

You might not need one of these websites for yourself; if you know someone who does have suicidal thoughts you can signpost them to any of the sites below. You will be helping them greatly, if you do. These websites provide information and support for young people:

<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/lets-talk-about-suicide-by-isabelle>

<https://www.papyrus-uk.org/> (prevention of young suicide)

<https://www.papyrus-uk.org/im-thinking-about-suicide/>



We hope that you will use this booklet: save it on one of your devices so that you can click on the links and access the support and information in it whenever you need to. Please remember we are here to support you. There are adults in school who are trained and equipped to listen to you and to advise you about what you might do to receive the help and support you need.

Our aim is to support the mental health and wellbeing of each and every individual in school. We want you to know that you are valued and supported during Coronavirus, and beyond.

OUR WELLBEING

