



Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2020

Dear Parents and Carers

How are you all? I hope you all had a good Easter despite the challenging times we all find ourselves in. The world is barely recognisable. So much has changed in a relatively short time in relation to a lot of things I certainly took for granted as the world we live in. We have an NHS working incredibly hard to deal with the worse effects of this crisis, Sport and Arts events prohibited, local businesses closed and people isolated, separated from loved ones and families. However, through all challenges we are facing which are significant and personal to every family, there are outstanding people who give us hope which is extremely precious at this time. There is a huge array of key workers, including those people working in the NHS and carer sector, who are continuing to deliver public services and in many cases put themselves in danger in the name of our safety and well-being in ways in which they never imagined when they started these jobs. Clapping on a Thursday night has become a ritual which rightly celebrates the endeavour and sacrifices made by all key workers and one which many of us have found extremely emotional for this reason. As well as this, there are people like Captain Tom Moore whose 100 laps around his garden to raise funds for the NHS has captivated the nation. Both groups of people offer hope to all of us and the belief that we will get through the enormous challenges we face and return to lives which will have changed but where the things we are currently unable to do for very important reasons we are able to do again.

### **Home learning during Covid-19**

The teachers have worked extremely hard during this period to provide a range of learning which is appropriate to children in their year group and where families can access this in a flexible way to help with the ways parents and carers may have to be working as well as juggling home schooling. The response to this learning from families has been wonderful. Parents have worked tirelessly to keep the education of the children going but also provide memorable experiences which are so important during times like these. Your efforts with the children's learning is enormously appreciated. Moreover, the children's response has been sensational. Their hard work and endeavour is evident in the many pieces of learning which the teachers have enjoyed seeing from their class. I would like to thank the children for this as learning away from their friends will have been very different for them. We will continue to deliver learning in this way as well as some personalised approaches when needed which Mrs Sandberg has organised superbly with our higher level teaching assistants and teaching assistants so that all our children get the correct learning resources to support their education during this period.

### **Family well-being**

How we deal with the challenges of this crisis will be personal to ourselves and our family. However, I wanted to signpost some ideas and resources which may be helpful during the continued period of Covid-19. They are written for children but many of the points can be related to us all.

**Listen and acknowledge:**

Children and young people may respond to stress in different ways. Signs may be emotional (for example, they may be upset, distressed, anxious, angry or agitated), behavioural (for example, they may become more clingy or more withdrawn, they may wet the bed), or physical (for example, they may experience stomach aches). Look out for any changes in their behaviour.

Children and young people may feel less anxious if they are able to express and communicate their feelings in a safe and supportive environment. Children and young people who communicate differently to their peers may rely on you to interpret their feelings. Listen to them, acknowledge their concerns, and give them extra love and attention if they need it.

**Provide clear information about the situation:**

All children and young people want to feel that their parents and caregivers can keep them safe. The best way to achieve this is by talking openly about what is happening and providing honest answers to any questions they have. Explain what is being done to keep them and their loved ones safe, including any actions they can take to help, such as washing their hands regularly.

Use words and explanations that they can understand and make sure you use reliable sources of information such as the GOV.UK or NHS website.

This book by Axel Scheffler is also great:

<https://nosycrow.com/blog/released-today-free-information-book-explaining-coronavirus-children-illustrated-gruffalo-illustrator-axel-scheffler>

It will not always be possible to provide answers to all the questions children and young people may ask, or to allay all their concerns, so focus on listening and acknowledging their feelings to help them feel supported.

**Be aware of your own reactions:**

Remember that children and young people often take their emotional cues from the important adults in their lives, so how you respond to the situation is very important. It is important that in front of children, you try to manage your own emotions and remain calm, listen to and acknowledge children and young people's concerns, speak kindly to them, and answer any questions they have honestly. See further guidance on [how to look after your own mental wellbeing](#) during the outbreak.

**Connect regularly:**

If it is necessary for you or your children to be in a different location to normal (for example, staying at home in different locations or hospitalisation) make sure you still have regular and frequent contact via the phone or video calls with them. Try to help your child understand what arrangements are being made for them and why in simple terms.

**Create a new routine:**

Routine and the need for routine is part of the human condition. Having a structure to each day helps us all.

**Limit exposure to media and talk about what they have seen and heard:**

Children, like adults, may become more distressed if they see repeated coverage of the outbreak in the media. A complete news blackout is also rarely helpful as they are likely to find out from other sources, such as online or through friends.

Try to avoid turning the television off or closing web pages when children or young people come into the room. This can actually stimulate an unhealthy interest to find out what is going on - and their imagination can take over. Instead, consider limiting the amount of exposure you and your family get to troubling media coverage.

Young people will also hear things from friends and get information from social media. Talk to them about what is going on and ask them what they have heard about. Try to answer their questions and reassure them in an age-appropriate manner, avoiding too much detail.

**Money worries**

You may be worried about supporting your family if you have to stay home - this can have a big impact on your mental health. For guidance on what your rights are at work, what benefits you are entitled to and what further support is available please see our [guidance for employees](#) or advice from [citizens advice](#) or the [National Debt line](#).

**Where to get further support**

If you are worried about your or your child or young person's symptoms, visit the [NHS self-isolation advice website](#) for information. If you are still worried, call NHS 111.

If you are worried about your child or young person's mental health, seek help from a professional. You may have services attached to your child or young person's school or college who can help. You could also contact your GP, or look up information on children and young people's mental health services on your local CCG website or on the NHS website.

During office hours, Monday to Friday, our school mobile can be contacted at any time. The number is 07379516752.

**The future**

At a time when there is a lot of discussion around children returning to school but no clarity yet, it would be wrong to speculate about when we will return to school and what it will look like. However, be assured that when we do return to school, we will do this with the safety of children, families and staff in mind and giving the maximum possible notice so that families can get ready for this return.

Take care and stay safe

Mr Beevor

WATH CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL  
Barnsley Rd, Wath upon Dearne, Rotherham. S63 6PY  
01709 760 471