

Family Support Guide

With current routines disrupted and families having to stay at home, some families may feel overwhelmed and unsure of what to do for the best. Current advice suggests there are a number of things families can do to make the situation a little better.

Here are a few helpful tips:

Be open and honest

- Don't be afraid to discuss the Coronavirus – children will have heard lots of people talking about it and might have seen people wearing face masks. Not talking about it can sometimes make children worry more.
- Listen to your child's concerns, empathise with their worries and try to reassure by giving factual information and explain what you're doing to keep safe.
- Answer questions as honestly as you can but in an age-appropriate manner. Try not to give too much information as it can be overwhelming.
- Keep communication open so they can talk to you whenever they need to. Allow children to tell you what they know and how they feel.
- There are lots of online support clips that can help you explain what Coronavirus is and can open up conversations. 'Dave the Dog' is a simple online book that helps children understand what Coronavirus is and reassure young children's concerns.
- Be aware of your own anxiety as children will pick up on how we are feeling – so if we are calm, children will be calm.

Keep to a routine

Children are used to structure, so start the day with your normal routine, including getting up at a regular time, getting washed, dressed and having breakfast. Try and keep to a schedule of daily activities, but include a good mix of both school learning and downtime. If both parents work from home, try and take turns to supervise the children and set aside time to talk and listen to each other's concerns. Structure regular mealtimes and try to keep to bedtime routines to keep the children happy and healthy.

Suggested downtime activities for 5-11 year olds

- Art and craft activities: drawing, painting, junk modelling, clay modelling
- Outdoor activities: walking, scooting, cycling, roller skating, hopscotch, obstacle courses, skipping
- Eye Spy
- Make play-dough
- Treasure hunts (hide a favourite toy somewhere in the house, give clues where to find it)
- Making music – singing and making musical instruments. Listening to music.
- Board games, party games and charades
- Puzzles and card games
- Construction play – Lego, Meccano, Knex
- Exploring science – magnetic sets, plan and carry out experiments
- Imaginative play – performing their own shows, dancing, karaoke, dressing-up
- Cooking with family – have a bake-off
- Reading: favourite comics/magazines and books
- Computer games
- Watching TV and favourite films

- Helping with household chores
- Gardening (if you have one)
- Planning a project together – building something or making a den.

- **Keep moving**

At present families can still go out once a day to exercise as long as they stay at a safe distance from others (2 metres) however for families who are well but self-isolating, there are also ways in which they can build exercise into their daily life.

Some suggestions are:

- Mini circuits
- Bear crawls
- Dancing
- Yoga
- Make up a workout and do it together (10 star jumps, hop like a bunny, running on the spot, leg raises, planks)
- Online children's exercise sessions
- If you have a garden – skipping, running, cycling, jumping/hopping, scooting, throwing and catching a ball.

Adults need around 30 minutes of exercise per day and children need 60 minutes.

There are many benefits for why children should exercise daily, these are:

- Help strengthen bones and muscles
- Promotes healthy growth and development
- Improves child's cardiovascular fitness
- Improves concentration and thinking skills
- Less likely to become overweight
- Helps maintain positive well-being
- Increases self confidence
- Learn new skills

- **Give each other space**

Self-isolating may be difficult for families who are used to having their own space. Try and create spaces within your home where people can have some time on their own. This does not have to be in a different room, it can be a chair or bean bag in a specific part of the room where children can go to do a quiet activity away from others including listening to music/stories using a headset, looking at a book or playing with a toy.

- **Stay in touch**

Staying in contact with family and friends can be essential for our well-being. There are a number of different ways to connect with people and share experiences without having physical contact. These include;

- Phone calls
- Video calls
- Group chats
- Letter
- Email
- Texts

- Adults can use social media such as, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter.

Self-Isolation may be challenging for many families, unfortunately we cannot magic the situation away but we are here to listen and talk through any concerns and worries that you have. Sam Ansell (Family Liaison Officer) will be around during school hours to support families, she can be contacted on 07884866105 or by email sansell@downs-view.kent.gov.uk. Please do not hesitate to get in contact.

Other support agencies that may be of help during these difficult times are:

Fareshare – charity aimed at getting food to vulnerable people.

Monday-Friday 9am-9pm

Saturday 6pm-9pm

Sunday and Bank Holidays 2pm – 9pm

Contact No: 01316080967

Support@fareshare.org.uk

[Regional Centre](#)

[01233 502 355??](#)

fskent@fareshare.org.uk

Ashford Vineyard -

The Warehouse

Ashford

Cobbs Wood

Brunswick Rd

Ashford

Kent

TN23 IEH

01233 331919

info@ashfordvineyard.org

Salvation Army

115 Cudworth Road

Ashford

01233 643480

Ashford.corpse@salvationarmy.org.uk

Samaritans

Contact no: 116 123

jo@samaritans.org