

Together



We can beat
this.

Staying Safe
Dealing with COVID-19
A booklet for post-primary pupils

The Cover

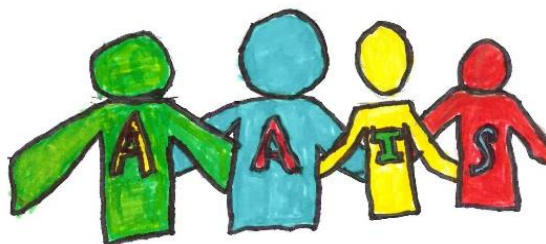
The Education Authority Autism Advisory and Intervention Service (AAIS) believe in showcasing the incredible talents of our amazing young people at every opportunity. We believe those that use a service are best placed to design it so all of our publications are designed in collaboration with our young people and their parents. We firmly believe by working together we can achieve more!

This incredible cover was designed by Leah Sloan, a Year 11 pupil at Portadown College. The inspiration of Leah's design is as follows: -

"I chose a lotus flower to symbolise strength, beauty, resilience and an awakened mind. Despite being born into dark, gloomy, challenging conditions, where hope for such beautiful life seems doubtful, the lotus grows and rises above adversity. If we, the human race, are to gain more understanding, more kindness and more compassion, we must also rise to the hardships and challenges we currently face, just as the lotus does."



AAIS Post-Primary Home Pack



Information for Parents

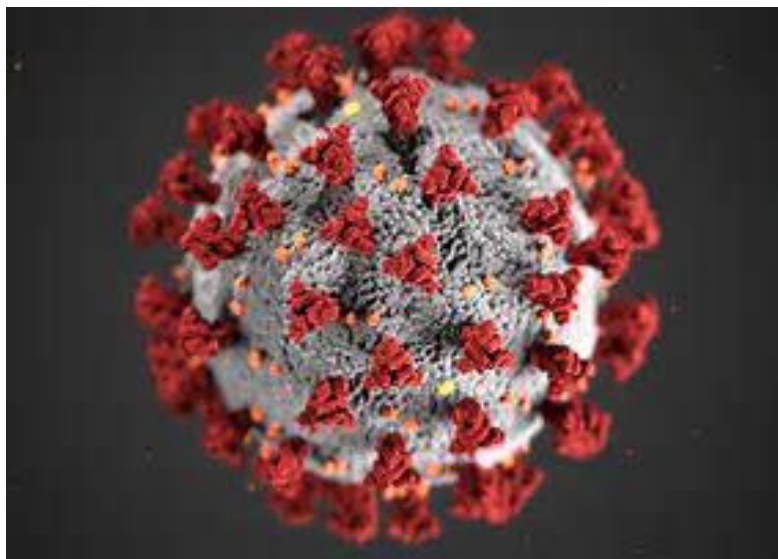
This online pack aims to address some of the concerns our young people may have at this challenging time during school closures and with the anxiety associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. The pack is designed as a pdf document with hyperlinks to videos and websites and is arranged into the following chapters: -

Chapter	Pages	Focus
Chapter 1	Pages 3 - 10	Understanding Novel Coronavirus and COVID-19
Chapter 2	Pages 11 - 14	Establishing a positive daily routine
Chapter 3	Pages 15 - 24	Accessing Remote Learning
Chapter 4	Pages 25 - 36	Looking after your emotional well-being
Chapter 5	Pages 37 - 48	Going Forward: 'The New School Day'
References	Pages 49 - 53	You may wish to omit this section if printing.

The pack is written specifically for our young people to read but you may wish to read it first and decide what content is most appropriate to share. AAIS respect your decision as the parent and know that you know your child best! We have signposted to some websites and apps which we have found useful but there are so many more online.....this is only the tip of the iceberg. We hope you find this AAIS Post-Primary Home Pack useful and, most of all, we hope you and your family stay safe!

Chapter 1

Understanding Coronavirus and COVID-19



Introduction

If you have been watching the news you have probably seen lots of stories about a new virus which is making some people unwell. This virus is known as 'Novel Coronavirus' and it can cause an illness known as 'COVID-19'. The governments around the world are working hard to address this and your school has been closed to keep everyone safe.



This booklet will explain what 'Novel Coronavirus' and 'COVID-19' are, will provide advice on taking precautions and how we can look after one another, will provide guidance on remote learning and will focus on the importance of emotional well-being during this challenging time.

What is a virus?

Viruses are tiny particles that cause disease in people, other animals and even in plants! Different viruses cause many of our common illnesses, some of which you may have had, such as the common cold, influenza (flu) and chicken pox. Viruses are so tiny that people can only see them with powerful microscopes. Some viruses have a spherical (round) shape and others are rod shaped. On its own, a virus is lifeless. It only becomes active when it enters a living cell of an animal or a plant. Once the virus enters a cell, it can then reproduce (like all living things). Usually the body's immune system is ready to fight the virus.



For example, one way your body can fight a virus is by raising your temperature. This is called a fever. This is useful as a fever can make lots of viruses inactive. The body's immune system also produces white blood cells and antibodies which can attack the virus. This prevents future infection by the same virus. Most viral illnesses already have a vaccine. When you were a baby and a young child you probably had vaccinations against a whole range of viruses and some of you may get the 'flu jab' every year! These vaccinations prepare the immune system to fight off active forms of these viruses and prevent us from becoming unwell.



What is Coronavirus (COVID-19)?

Coronaviruses are a large group of viruses that can cause illnesses, as minor as the common cold. Recently, there was an outbreak of a new strain of Coronavirus. This outbreak had not been previously seen in humans and was first reported in Wuhan, China in December 2019. It is known as the 'Novel Coronavirus' because the word 'Novel' means 'new'. The illness that it can produce is known as COVID-19.

'CO' stands for Corona

'VI' for virus

'D' for disease

19 represents the first year (2019) this strain was discovered in humans.



Some people are fearful of Novel Coronavirus because it is a new viral strain. We are still in the process of developing a vaccine so it is spreading around the world quickly. When this happens it is called a pandemic. The good news is the best scientists are currently studying this virus on a global scale and are in the process of making a vaccine which will be safe for humans. Until then, governments around the world have given advice for people to stay safe so that the virus cannot spread. The virus spreads from person to person so the best advice is to stay in our homes: - that is why workplaces and schools are temporarily closed (don't get too excited...they will reopen when it is safe to do so!)



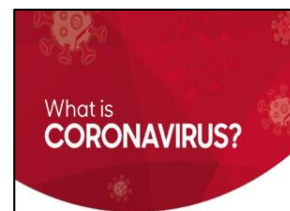
Video Clips

Here are some video clips which may help to explain it all in simple terms!

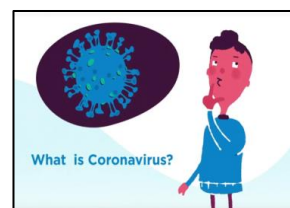
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JCKEhUflpAY>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gxwslU2eGH0>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IX3dpN91E1I>

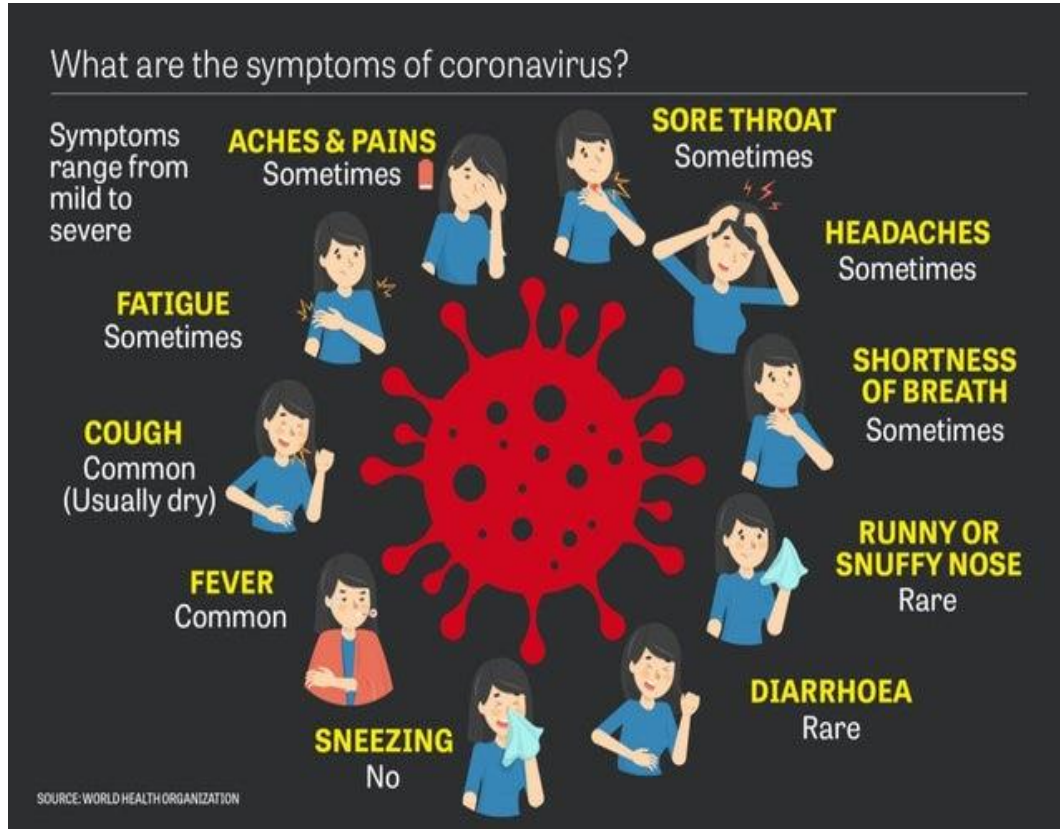


What are the symptoms of Coronavirus?

Even though the news sounds frightening, most people who catch Coronavirus will be OK. In fact, some children and young people may not even know they have it!



.....that is part of the problem! **YOU** may not show any symptoms but could be accidentally spreading it to an older person without even knowing. Just like the common cold, the Coronavirus is spread via droplets when a person coughs or sneezes. The immune system of older people, and some people with other conditions, can be weaker so we need to keep the virus away from them for a short time so that we don't accidentally spread it. If you are already poorly, or someone in your home is, you should take special care so that we all stay safe. Current governmental health advice states you must only leave your home for very limited purposes, such as buying food and medicine, exercising once a day and seeking medical attention.



What is the treatment for the Novel Coronavirus?

The World Health Organisation (WHO) and lots of renowned scientists are currently working on a new vaccination against COVID-19. In the meantime, there are lots of things we can do to stop infection in the first place.



1. WASH YOUR HANDS!

Wash your hands often with soap for **at least** 20 seconds.



Video Clips

Here are some videos to show you the right way to wash your hands (dancing and singing are optional!)



NHS Washing Hands Gangnam Style

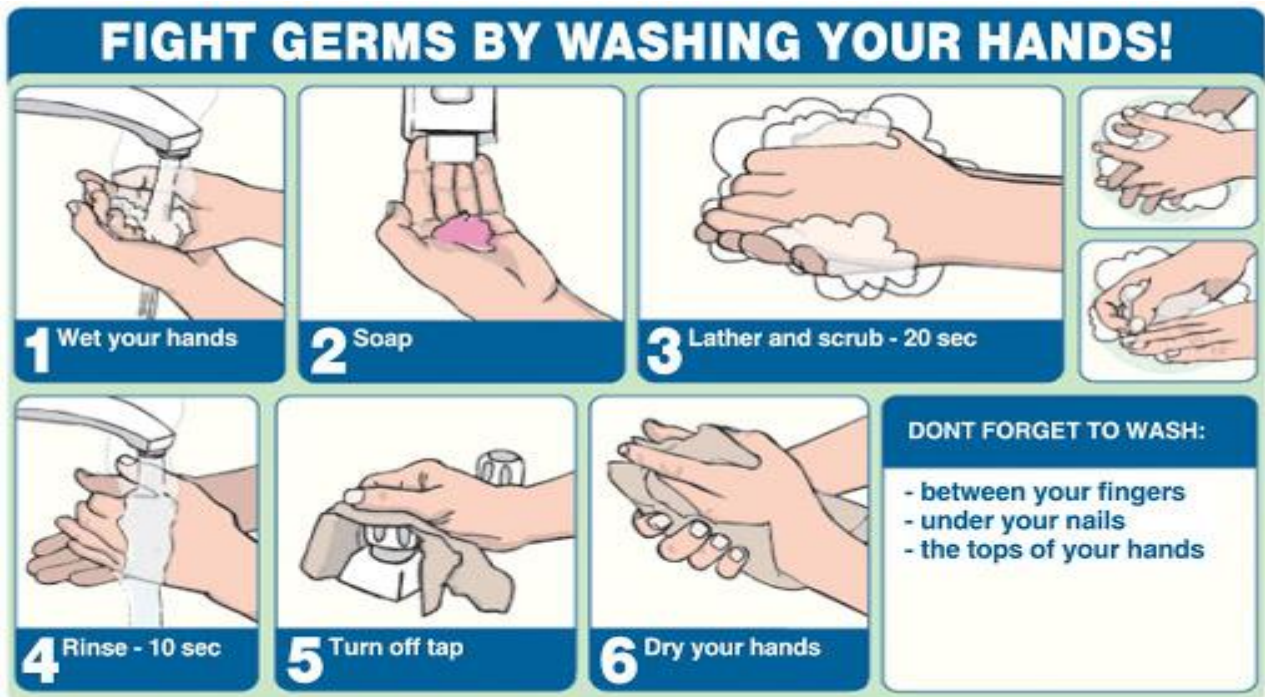
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TGddyTW5eMc>



NHS Advice on Hand Washing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ij1I0OB2hk>





TOP TIPS

2. KEEP YOUR DISTANCE!

Apart from your family, avoid close contact, where possible. This is known as **Social Distancing**.



3. STAY HOME!

If you have a dry cough and/ or fever, you **MUST** stay in your home for at least 7 days. This is known as **Self - Isolation**. If someone in your home has a dry cough and/ or fever, you must stay in your home for 14 days, even if you don't have symptoms!





middletowncentreforautism

Middletown Centre for Autism

1



Coronavirus is like a germ which is spread from person to person.

2

Wash your
hands for
around 20
seconds or
more



It is important to stop the germ spreading by washing your hands

3



and keeping your distance from people.

4



We should stay at home with our family and usually only go outside to play when an adult says it is safe

5



If we go out for a walk in public or to the shop we need to keep a distance of 2 metres from people. The last person in this queue is too close.

6



If we keep our distance we will help to stop the germs spreading.

Chapter 2

Establishing a Positive Daily Routine



We all thrive when we have a sense of purpose and when we have a plan for the day. Particularly, in times of uncertainty this can help you feel less anxious, more in control and more safe and secure. Your teachers may have given you work to complete but it is also very important that there is a balance between online learning, written and practical activities, being physically active and free time. Although it may be tempting to spend time on your devices and gaming all day, it is important to keep a balance. We would recommend you plan a 'daily schedule' each morning with a good balance of work and free time. Just jot down your plans for each day. A written checklist that you can stroke off on completion tends to work best.

COVID-19 DAILY SCHEDULE

Daily Schedule

Before 9:00 AM	Wake up!	Make your bed, eat breakfast, brush teeth, get dressed
9:00-10:00	Outdoor Time	Family walk or outdoor play
10:00-11:00	Academic Time	No Electronics! Reading, homework, study, puzzles, journal
11:00-12:00	Creative Time	Creative play, drawing, Legos, crafts, music, cooking, baking
12:00-12:30	LUNCH	
12:30-1:00	Home Chores	Clean rooms, put away toys, take out garbage, pet care
1:00-2:30	Quiet Time	Reading, nap, puzzles, yoga
2:30-4:00	Academic Time	Electronics OK! Educational games, online activities, virtual museum tours
4:00-5:00	Outdoor time	Family walk or outdoor play
5:00-6:00	Dinner time	Family dinner, help with clean-up and dishes
6:00-7:00	Bath time	Bath or shower
7:00-8:00	Reading/TV time	Relaxing before bedtime
9:00 PM	Bedtime	Put on PJs, brush teeth, clothes in laundry

Even though you are not physically at school, try to maintain a similar wake up and sleep/ bedtime routine. Before bed turn off all devices and have some 'down time'. Our minds can be filled with worries, especially when watching the news and during uncertain times. If you are having difficulty maintaining your sleep routine, there is an online bank of resources, accessible free of charge, from the Sleep Scotland website. Here is the link to relaxation exercises which can aid sleep: - <https://www.sleepscotland.org/new/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Relaxation-techniques.pdf>



Step 1: Breathing Slowly

- Make yourself comfortable in your bed.
- Lie on your back and just let your body go as floppy as possible.
- Rest your arms by your side
- Think about your breathing.
- Take a deep breath in, hold and count to three – then let your breath out slowly.
- Take another deep breath, hold it and count to four – then let your breath out slowly
- Take another deep breath, hold it and count to five – then let your breath out slowly.

Step 2: Relaxing Your Body

- Breathe normally in and out
- Clench your fists – then unclench your hands so that you feel all the muscles in your fingers relax
- Tense all the muscles in your arms, right down from your shoulders and then hold for one breath in and out.
- Relax your arms
- Tense all the muscles across your chest and hold for one breath in and out
- Relax your chest
- Tense and hold all the muscles in the lower half of your body and hold that for one breath in and out
- Relax your lower body
- Clench your toes and feet and hold for one breath in and out
- Relax your toes and feet.

Step 3: Relaxing your mind

- Think about a place where you usually feel happy and relaxed
- It can be somewhere that you have already been like
 - Where you went on holiday
 - Your granny's sofa, watching TV
- Or you can make up a place in your imagination – somewhere peaceful like
 - A beach
 - A dark green forest
 - A fluffy cloud in the sky
 - Floating on an inflatable in the middle of a swimming pool
- Make the picture as clear as you can in your mind
- Let your body relax even more
- When you breathe out you can think of the word "calm."

<https://www.sleepscotland.org/>



Some other helpful hints are to: -

- try to schedule for snacks and meals the way you would normally do on a school day
- set aside a quiet workspace for you to complete schoolwork and get into the habit of completing your daily school assignments each day
- allow for natural breaks, while doing school work, throughout the day but keep these to a time period of approx.. 20 minutes. Use a timer (<http://timeglassapp.io/>) to time your breaks so that you stick to your routine. This time can be spent relaxing, listening to music, reading for fun, engaging in a hobby or exercising (see next sections for ideas!)

Chapter 3

Accessing Remote Learning



Your school should have ensured you have an updated C2K username and password in order to access C2K software and online resources from home. Please remember the SMART rules when using the internet to access learning and when keeping in contact (remotely) with your friends.



Further Resources

Further information on staying safe online is available from the 'Think U Know' websites.

https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/11_13/ (Ages 11 years old – 13 years old)

https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/14_plus/ (Age 14 + years old)

Remote Learning: - Ten Top Tips for successful completion of school work at home!



1. Plan your day



Having set times for work and for breaks is very important. **Remember:** You spend approximately 6 hours a day in school and would be expected to complete 1-2 hours of homework per night. Scheduling this into your day will ensure you are allowing yourself enough time to complete the work that your teachers are setting for you (<http://timeglassapp.io/>)



During your breaks try to do activities that you enjoy such as reading, walking, going outside, having 'Skype' or 'Zoom' calls with your friends, doing crafts, playing computer games or watching your favourite TV programme. It can be helpful to use a timer so that you stick to your times (for work and for breaks).

2. Start your work early



Try not to leave all your work until the afternoon. You will enjoy your afternoon more knowing that you have completed all your tasks for the day.

3. Dress appropriately

Ready for work



Even though you are not leaving the house, it is still important to get up, washed and dressed. This sets you up for the day ahead plus you will look a lot better when skyping your friends!

4. Eat Healthily



Just as you would when at school, try to eat healthy snacks and meals throughout the day and ensure you stay hydrated by drinking water. This will help you to concentrate on the tasks that need to be completed.

5. Stay in Contact



It is important that you log on to your My School account each day as your teachers will be setting you work to complete and to upload. Try to do this at set times of the day rather than spending all day refreshing the page. You will also need to be online if your teacher is doing an online video lesson for your class.

6. Avoid Distractions



Have set times for going onto your phone / social media and consider switching your phone off or leaving it in another room until it is time for your break. This can be a really good way to motivate you to get set amounts of work done in each of your work slots.



Sometimes it can be difficult to have a quiet space to work. Consider wearing headphones when you are working as a way to block out other distractions. Another idea might be to schedule time for you to have quiet work space and time for any siblings to have their quiet work space.

7. Have a dedicated work space



Try to have a dedicated space in the house where you do your work. This way you will know where you are going to go to do your work and it also means that you can have all your supplies on hand.

8. Sleep is important



You may not have to go to school each morning, but you still have school work to do. It is important, however, that you try to ensure that you get a good rest each night so that you are ready for the next day (just as you would if you were going to a school building) www.sleepscotland.org

9. Write a 'To Do' List



'To Do' Lists are a very good way to remind you what you need to accomplish each day. You also get to enjoy crossing completed tasks off your list. Try to write your 'To Do' List for the next day at the end of your work time so that you will be ready to get started on your tasks when your work time begins the next day.

10. Enjoy this new way of working



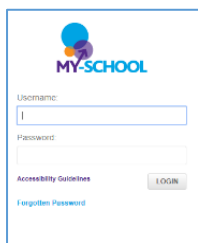
You have a great opportunity to learn lots of new skills over the next few weeks and months. You could learn cookery skills, how to bake, gardening, a new language, etc. Everyone is adjusting to a new way of working and living and now would also be a good time to help out at home where you can.



Useful Websites

Below you will find links to some useful websites. Your school and your teachers will also give you links to many useful websites which are relevant to your courses. Look these up where you can as they are all there to help you.

General



My School

(You need your c2k username and password to log in). When you log into My School you can access materials / tasks that your teachers have set you

<https://ids.c2kschools.net/nidp/idff/sso?id=3&sid=0&option=credential&sid=0>



Google Classroom

Use your c2k username and password to log in to access resources

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uFBoYMjS9vrWSDwq6djRKKlwlReN5vnG/view?fbclid=IwAR30KBO9H7h8l-biP8qEXioFr9vZ1l_2fMx9rFV3JAbereAGgkqQQ1wseRQ



CCEA website

This link to the CCEA website will get you access to the specifications for exams that you may be taking. This website also contains information on the exams situation at present <https://ccea.org.uk/>

Revision



Crash Course

Lots of short courses on a range of topics

<https://thecrashcourse.com/courses>



BBC Bitesize

A wide range of materials on key topics and subjects (at every level) that you will be studying in school <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize>



The Dublin Academy of Education

A range of free online courses during school closure

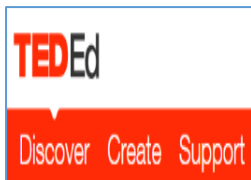
<https://dublinacademy.ie/>



The Khan Academy

Offers free online learning courses for young people in a range of subject areas, especially useful for Maths and Computing

<https://www.khanacademy.org/>



TED Ed

A range of useful online talks and videos

https://ed.ted.com/lessons?content_type=animations+talks&direction=desc&sort=publish-date&user_by_click=student



SENECA

Provides a wide range of learning materials and courses for GCSE and A Level students: - some resources are free!

<https://www.senecalearning.com/>

History



Big History Project

Examines our past, explains our present

<https://www.bighistoryproject.com/home>

Science & Technology



The Kids Should See This!

This website has lots of interesting videos

<https://thekidshouldseethis.com/>



Mystery Science

Provides a range of questions and experiments

<https://mysteryscience.com/>



The Crest Awards Programme

Provides science and technology projects that young people can complete at home

<https://www.crestawards.org/>

Computers / Programming



Scratch

To learn more about computer programming and coding

<https://scratch.mit.edu/explore/projects/all/>



iDEA Mini courses

Online courses in a range of topic areas including coding

<https://idea.org.uk/>



Tinker Cad

A website where you can learn about coding and making things work

<https://www.tinkercad.com/>



Blockly Games

Teaches computer programming via gaming <https://blockly.games>

Geography



World Geography Games

This website contains a range of geography based games

<https://world-geography-games.com/world.html?fbclid=IwAR2can9XGJjMOZa37-UitgJXHqV8Ts-88va4c9jPe0eRbS1b3anRHAFEjIE>



National Geographic and National Geographic Kids

A variety of useful and interesting articles, videos and tasks

<https://www.natgeokids.com/uk/> (kids)



<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/> (all)

Maths



Corbett Maths

This website is excellent for maths practice and revision

<https://corbettmaths.com>

For Parents



ALN Home School

This website signposts to other websites which you may find useful over the next few weeks

<https://sites.google.com/bridgend.ac.uk/alnhomeschool>



Parent Info

A website with information and advice for families in a digital world

<https://parentinfo.org/>



Net Aware

This is an NSPCC website and explains how to keep children and young people safe online <https://www.net-aware.org.uk/>

Chapter 4

Looking after your

Emotional Well-being



At stressful times, it is even more important to be kind to yourself and to look after your emotional wellbeing. This chapter will signpost you to a range of apps and online resources which focus on physical exercise, hobbies and interests, relaxation tools and connecting with friends.

1. Physical Exercise

Daily exercise is important for both our physical and emotional well-being. Here are some ways of getting that daily burst of exercise when you are stuck inside the house!.



Joe Wicks YouTube channel

PE with Joe: Log on to this every morning at 9.00am for a personal training session with Joe Wicks! A burst of physical exercise and a positive start to your day

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLyCLOPd4VxBvQafyve889qVcPxYEjdSTI>



YMCA Health and Fitness Videos

This site allows you to stream daily exercise, including Yoga, Tai Chai and Bootcamp! <https://ymca360.org/>



Core NI

Live Family Workout every day @ 11.00am (available via Facebook and Instagram) <https://www.facebook.com/corenicorekids/>

2. Pursuing a hobby or interest

Now that you are in one place this might be the ideal time to pursue a hobby or interest. During the school closures many websites are offering free trials and free resources.

Libraries NI

Libraries NI

'Borrow' online books and magazines, free of charge. All you need to have is your library card! <https://librariesniuk.overdrive.com/>



Blue Peter Badges!

Did you ever think that you might want to earn a Blue Peter Badge....– well, now you can! <https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/joinin/about-blue-peter-badges>



Duolingo

If you would like to learn a new language or practice a language that you are learning in school you should consider checking out the duolingo web page <https://www.duolingo.com/>



Minecraft

Minecraft tutorials.... free for one month!

<https://education.minecraft.net/class-resources/trainings/>



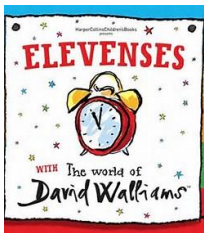
Amazon Audible

Currently offering free access to loads of books during school closure

<https://www.audible.co.uk/>

Celebrity Teachers!

You might now have an opportunity to learn from the best! During these school closures, many celebrities are giving their time and providing online resources for remote learning at home.



English with David Walliams

David Walliams reading a story, daily at 11.00am

<https://www.worldofdavidwalliams.com/elevenses/>



Home Economics with Jamie Oliver

Recipes to try from Jamie Oliver

<https://www.jamieoliver.com/features/category/get-kids-cooking/>



Myleene's Music 'Klass'

Subscribe for remote music lessons!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jCRXAErag8U>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8XXmBITadys>



History with Dan Snow

Free trial for 30 days!

<https://tv.historyhit.com/signup/package>

3. Be mindful of your emotions

Dr Russ Harris, author of *"The Happiness Trap"* presents a number of emotional regulation strategies using the anagram: - **'FACE'**. Here's a quick summary of the key steps: -



FACE COVID: **FOCUS** ON WHAT IS IN YOUR CONTROL!

Anxiety is a normal, natural response to an uncertain situation. It's all too easy to get lost in worrying and ruminating about all sorts of things that are out of your control: what might happen in the future; how the virus might affect you or your loved ones or your country or the world – and what will happen then - and so on. Although it's completely natural for us to get lost in such worries, it's not useful or helpful. Indeed the more we focus on what's not in our control, the more hopeless or anxious we're likely to feel. So the single most useful thing anyone can do in any type of crisis – Corona-related or otherwise - is to: **Focus on what's in YOUR control.**

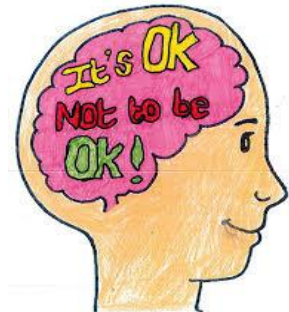
(Harris, 2020)



<https://www.baps.org.uk/content/uploads/2020/03/FACE-COVID-by-Russ-Harris-pdf-pdf.pdf>

F **A**CE COVID: **ACKNOWLEDGE** YOUR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS

It is important to acknowledge your thoughts and feelings and to talk to someone if you are feeling overwhelmed.



F **A**CE COVID: **CONNECT** WITH YOUR BODY

Even though it may be challenging to control your feelings, it is important to gain as much control as possible over your physical actions. These are known as grounding exercises. For example, you may try to slowly: -

- push your feet hard into the floor
- straighten up your back and spine
- press your fingertips together
- stretch your arms or neck
- breathe.



F **A**CE COVID: **ENGAGE** YOUR SENSES

It is important to get a sense of where you are and refocus your attention on the activity you are doing. For example, you could: -

- Look around the room and notice 5 things you can see; notice 3 or 4 things you can hear etc.

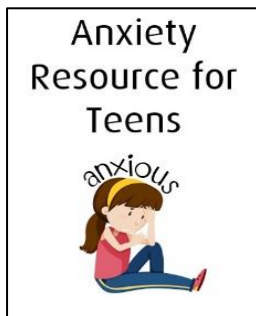
Grounding exercises are available via: -

<https://youtu.be/9XyxqWiqLk0>



Online Resources and Apps

There are loads of online resources and apps, many of which are free of charge at present. Please see below some apps/websites which may be helpful at times when you are feeling anxious.



Autism NI Anxiety Resource Pack for Teens

Autism NI have created an 'Anxiety Resource Pack for Teens' which includes a list of coping tools, a list of useful Apps and an Anxiety Trigger Chart <http://www.autismni.org/anxiety-resource-pack-for-teens.html>



Breathe to Relax

You will be able to use this app for relaxing your mind and relieve physiological and physical stress



<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/breathe2relax/id425720246>



Stop, Breathe and Think

Guided meditations, breathing exercises and mindfulness

<https://www.stopbreathethink.com>



Head Space

Mindfulness for everyday living

<https://www.headspace.com/>



Chill Panda

Uses the camera on your mobile to detect your heart rate and provides relaxation and calming exercises

<https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/chill-panda/>



Mind Shift: Healthy Young Minds

Free app designed for teens and young adults to cope with anxiety

<https://healthyyoungmindspennine.nhs.uk/resource-centre/apps/mindshift/>



Beat Panic

Designed to guide teens and young adults through a panic attack or raised anxiety using their mobile

<https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/beat-panic/>



Insight Timer

App and guided meditations for addressing sleep, anxiety and stress

<https://insighttimer.com/>



The Free Mindfulness Project

Mindfulness-based stress reduction

<http://www.freemindfulness.org/download>



Calm

Strategies for sleep, meditation and relaxation

<https://www.calm.com>



Mindfulness Colouring App

To provide a sense of peace and focus

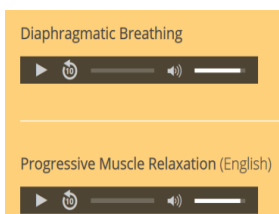
<https://www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/self-care/>



The Counseling Teacher

Journal for teens, growth mind-set and mindfulness

<https://thecounselingteacher.com/>



CHOC

This website provides free guided imagery to assist with diaphragmatic breathing and progressive muscle relaxation

<https://www.choc.org/programs-services/integrative-health/guided-imagery/>



Reach Out

Includes practical support and advice on dealing with COVID-19

<https://about.au.reachout.com/>



Smiling Mind

A non-profit, app-based meditation and mindfulness programme

<https://www.smilingmind.com.au/>



Autism 5-Point Scale EP

This app provides individuals with ASD a means of communicating their personal level of anxiety and providing specific guidance <https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/autism-5-point-scale-ep/id467303313>



The Worry Box App

An app used to address anxiety and self-help

<https://www.appbrain.com/app/worry-box-anxiety-self-help/com.excelatlife.worrybox>



Anti-stress Anxiety Relief Games App

Stress-relieving games on your mobile and/ or i-Pad

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/antistress-anxiety-relief-game/id1438709018>



Anxiety Canada

Strategies to relax, be mindful and take charge of your anxiety

<https://www.anxietycanada.com/learn-about-anxiety/anxiety-in-youth/>



Anna Freud

Self-Care breaks throughout your day

<https://www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/self-care/>



Middletown Centre for Autism (MCA)

Online training programme and bank of online resources and research bulletins for parental advice and support

Teenage Resource <https://teenage-resource.middletownautism.com/>

Life Skills Resource <https://life-skills.middletownautism.com/>

Building Capacity Resource <https://capacity-resource.middletownautism.com/>

Best Practice Resource <https://best-practice.middletownautism.com/>

Sensory Processing <https://sensory-processing.middletownautism.com/>



ChildLine

Online counselling service <https://www.childline.org.uk/>

4. Keep in contact with your friends

It is important for you to schedule time to connect with your friends. It is important to share how you are feeling, to provide peer support and to have fun! Thankfully, in this increasingly technological world there are so many ways to do so! This can include video conferencing, text or social media. Please remember the SMART rules discussed in Chapter 2 when connecting with your friends. Some apps that may be useful include: -



Zoom

Free video meetings for up to 100 people <https://zoom.us/>



Skype

Allows free calls and chat, up to 50 people at a time
<https://www.skype.com/en/>



Face Time

Video call your friends from an apple device
<https://www.facetime.org.uk/>



House Party

Allows friends and families to stay in contact and play games together <https://www.houseparty.com/>



Whats App

Face time calls, chatting with friends, individually or as part of a group <https://www.whatsapp.com/>

Chapter 5

Going Forward



Going Forward

In March 2020, in a response to COVID-19, most school buildings in Northern Ireland closed on a temporary basis. At the time, this was in line with guidance from the government and from the Public Health Agency and the main aim was to keep everyone safe and well. For many of you, this was a sudden change to your normal routine and you may have been expected to complete your school work at home. You may have really enjoyed working at home or you may be looking forward to returning to school to see your friends (and maybe even your teachers!)

The government are now working with school staff to decide when they think it will be safe for everyone to return to school. Not everyone will be going back at once and your school will let you know when they think it is the right time for you to return. To keep children and teachers safe there may be some changes to how school is organised. This is why we have decided to name this chapter *Going Forward to School* rather than *Going Back to School*. Advice that schools are being given means some things will need to change for you to go forward in school, feeling safe and ready to learn.

Mixed Feelings

You may have mixed feelings about returning to school. Perhaps you like routine and are looking forward to seeing all your friends again or you might feel nervous about the changes or have mixed feelings. When we feel uncertain or anxious about things this sends a hormone called adrenalin from our brain into our body and gives us additional energy in case we need to fight, run away or hide from something that frightens us. It is normal for our brains and bodies to respond in this way. If you feel this way, there are lots of helpful website links in Chapter 4.



The 'New School Day'

As we return to school in the new term, there may be some changes in how your school operates. The Department of Education is currently working on a project named 'Education Restart'. This project is based on government guidance and sets out a number of recommendations on how schools should operate safely. As a consequence, there may be some changes when you initially return to school. Many of these changes are to decrease unnecessary social interaction and to ensure we all stay safe and well. These changes will be continually reviewed and are expected to change in accordance with updated government advice. It is expected, however, that your school may make some of these changes and that this is what your 'new school day' may look like when you return to school.

What to expect!

The 'Education Restart' programme has made the following recommendations in June 2020. Your school may put some, or all, of these in place for your safe return to school. Please be mindful: - these recommendations may change, in accordance with changing governmental guidance.

1. Start of term

The start of term may be different this year. All students who are moving into Primary 7, Year 12 and Year 14 will start the term on 24 August 2020. Some other pupils from other year groups may also start on the 24 August 2020. Your school will let you know if this includes you. Other pupils will start on different dates but it is expected that we will all return to some form of schooling by September 2020.



2. Blended Learning

The government advice is that there should be a physical distance of 1 metre between students and a distance of two metres should be maintained between students and adults. If your school thinks it will be difficult to keep these distances in place, your school may need to deliver a programme of Blended Learning. Blended Learning means that part of your teaching will take place in school and part will take place remotely at home. This will depend on your school and will not be the same for everyone.



3. Arrival to and Departure from School

Your school may ask you to arrive at a different time than usual and arrangements may be in place for you to go to an area where there are a smaller number of students than your usual class. At the end of the school day, your school may arrange for you to leave the school building in small groups too and may stagger pick-up times. It is expected that parents will only come into the school if they have an important reason for doing so. Your school will tell you more about these changes before you return.



4. Personal belongings

Your school may ask you only to bring in things from home that are necessary. Your teachers may ask you not to share your personal belongings with anyone else in your classroom and may request school items remain in the school.



5. Protective Bubbles

You may hear people in school talking about being in a protective bubble. Do not worry this does not mean a real bubble! It means that Year 8, Year 9 and Year 10 students may be required to stay in the same small group of people all through the school day. You may need to stay together to work and to eat your snack and lunch. Your group may be required to use the same bathroom facilities. It is good to remember that washing your hands, staying apart from other 'bubbles' of children and not touching your face will be important to keep everyone in your 'bubble' safe. It is also possible that people in your bubble will have their own desk and these will be spaced apart more than usual.



6. School meals

School meals may be arranged differently in your school. In order to maintain a safe distance between students and staff, you may need to collect your school dinner from a hatch or your dinner may be delivered to your classroom for you to eat using disposable containers and cutlery. It is likely that you will eat your lunch at a different time from other people that are not in your 'bubble'.



7. Hygiene

It is important to remember to wash your hands throughout the school day. The government advice is to wash your hands with soap and warm water for twenty seconds regularly throughout the school day and to dry your hands with either disposable paper towels or with a hand dryer. When you return to school, there may be hand sanitiser at the school entrance. Good hygiene and use of hand sanitiser is important to keep you and others safe.



8. Catch it, Bin it, Kill it

You may hear the slogan “Catch it; Bin it; Kill it” used in government advice, on signs around school and even on TV advertisements. Scientists know that we can stop the spread of the virus by trying not to touch your face, eyes, nose and mouth regularly. Scientists also know that it is important to remember to cough or sneeze into your elbow if you do not have a tissue or paper towel. We can ‘bin’ the virus if we cough or sneeze into a tissue or paper towel and then immediately place the used tissue or paper towel into the nearest bin immediately. This will help us all to stay safe.



9. Classroom Layout

There may be some physical markings to show seating positions in your classroom and / or your desks may be spaced one metre apart. Some classes may take place in breakout spaces, such as in the school library.



10. Pupil Movement

Whilst in school, you may be asked to remain in one classroom for part or all of the day and the teachers may be asked to move to you. This is a precautionary measure to minimise contact with frequently touched surfaces (such as door handles) and this will help reduce the spread of the virus. If this is the case, your school will provide you with a timetable and some information on how this system may work.



11. One-way Systems and the Bell

Your school may also adopt a one-way system to avoid too many pupils in the corridor at one time. If this is the case, your school will put visual signs in place to help you to remember. Some schools may also choose not to ring the school bell and to stagger periods. Your school will explain more to you on what they plan to do.

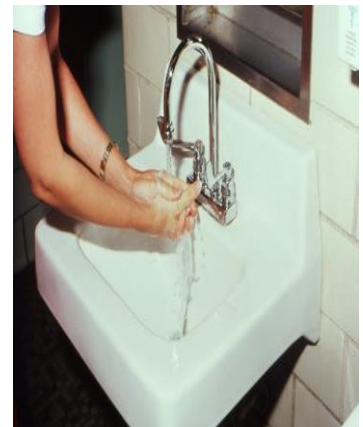


'Top Tips' for Going Forward

The following 'Top Tips' will help you to stay safe and well.

1. Safety

The top priority for your school is to ensure you feel safe and well. Scientific evidence shows that children and teenagers rarely catch the virus and it usually has less impact on their health if they do. Scientists know that washing your hands for 20 seconds is a great way to kill the virus. Therefore, washing hands as you move from home to school and school to home is essential. Keeping distance between you and others is important too. Scientists are recommending a one-metre distance between you and other students and two metres between adults that work at your school.



2. New Rules

There will be new rules in school, based on government advice, which everyone needs to understand. As this is a new virus, scientists are working hard to offer advice and rules may change as they learn more about it. It will be important to ask your teacher if you are not sure about any of the rules that are different when you return to school. Everyone will understand that there may be uncertainty and teachers can help to explain the rules.



3. Sensory Sensitivity

Returning to school, there will be certain smells and sounds that you will need to readjust to. At first, you may feel overwhelmed at first but take your time and allow yourself to adapt to the new surroundings. Always let someone in school know if these smells or sounds are overwhelming for you: -they will understand and be able to help.



4. Trusted adults

Your teachers and classroom assistants are aware that it will take time to get used to coming back to school again. It might be helpful to talk to a trusted adult about your feelings. You are not alone in feeling uncertain or anxious as this is a challenging time for everyone. If you find it hard to discuss your emotions, you could perhaps do this through a creative method such as drawing, writing or sculpture. It is important not to become overwhelmed with strong emotions.



5. Routine

Sometimes uncertainty can make things harder to manage. If routine makes you feel more in control, remember to go over your new routine before returning to school. Your teachers know that you might not be able to manage everything all at once and will understand this. Write down your new routine and consider things you might find easier to try first before trying to do everything at once. If you do not manage everything at once, that is OK.



6. Coping strategies

Take care of yourself, enjoy your interests and do things that make you happy. Physical activity may help to manage anxiety and release tension. Using deep breathing exercises can also be helpful and there are many useful apps in Chapter 4 which will help alleviate anxiety and self-regulate your emotions. Think about the coping strategies that have helped you to cope with big changes in the past and use these with this change too. Make sure you are eating regularly and trying to sleep and relax as much as possible.



7. Positive Routines

During this time of school closures, you may be in the habit of staying up late at night and sleeping in. In August, it will be important to gradually start to go to bed a little earlier each night so that you get prepared to return to an early school start. It is easier if this is done in a gradual process so that your body gets used to your new sleep routine. This may also mean changing the times you are gaming or on social media, especially if you are now in the habit of staying up late, gaming and chatting to friends. Chapter 2 has some useful tips on establishing a positive routine.



8. Finally...

It is normal to have mixed emotions and concerns about 'going forward' to school but please do not put pressure on yourself. Plenty of people will understand how you are feeling and are there to support you. Good luck in your return to school!



Useful Websites

Here are some links to the REACHOUT ASC website which may help you.



About my Feelings

<https://www.reachoutasc.com/attachments/article/13/About%20my%20feelings.pdf>

My Lockdown Experience

<https://www.reachoutasc.com/attachments/article/13/My%20lockdown%20experience.pdf>

What is a School Bubble?

<https://www.reachoutasc.com/attachments/article/13/School%20Bubble%20SS%20.pdf>

Autistic Teenager's Guide on Returning to School

<https://www.reachoutasc.com/attachments/article/13/Teenager%20Guide%20by%20OT%20.pdf>

Thank you to our fantastic co-producers!



Leah Sloan: -

Design and Illustration of 'Staying Safe' cover and logo

Saoirse McNamee: -

Design and Illustration of 'My Voice' co-production logo

Heather Elliott: -

For her amazing artwork included in Chapter 5

Stephanie McMichael: -

For her amazing artwork included in this Chapter 5

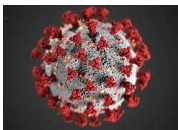
**Input from our AAIS Pupil Forum and from our AAIS Parent
representatives**

**Post-Primary Team Members from the Education Authority
Autism Advisory and Intervention Service (AAIS)**



Reference Section

Image References

Page	Image	Reference
1		<i>"Staying Safe: - Dealing with COVID-19. A booklet for post-primary pupils"</i> logo and cover. Designed by Leah Sloan, Year 11 pupil at Portadown College.
2		Logo for the Education Authority Autism Advisory and Intervention Service (AAIS). Designed by Nathan Gallagher, Year 10 pupil at City of Armagh High School.
3		https://www.ecfr.eu/article/commentary_seven_early_lessons_from_the_coronavirus
4		https://www.freepik.com/premium-vector/newsreader-is-broadcasting-tv_2319570.htm
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Page	Image	Reference
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