

# Mental health and wellbeing

During Coronavirus and self isolation



The current situation with COVID-19 (Coronavirus) is a scary and uncertain time for everyone. In this leaflet you will find ways to try and reduce anxiety and support you and your child through this difficult time. School are making regular phone calls to families to check on wellbeing and if there is anything you are struggling with or that you think we could help you with please do ask. We want everyone in our Swalwell family to stay well and stay safe.

## Keeping healthy

**Exercise** – Keeping active is good for your body and mind. There are lots of online videos that you can do or you could play games in the house such as hide and seek, treasure hunts, Simon Says or musical bumps.

**Fresh air** - Getting out in nature can boost your mood and it can help to have a change of scenery. Remember you can go out for daily exercise if it is safe to do so but stay 2 metres from other people.

**Eating** – Try to keep a set routine for meal times. To reduce snacking try having a daily basket of snacks that children can have and once they have gone they understand it doesn't get refilled until tomorrow.

**Drinking** – Remember to stay well hydrated by drinking 2 litres of water a day and reducing fizzy or sugary drinks.

**Sleeping** – Keeping a set routine for going to bed and getting up is also important. Aim for 8-10 hours of sleep a night. Try to have no digital technology for 30 minutes before bed, instead you could read a story, talk about the day or write a diary.

## Stay connected

Although we can't be with our friends and family at the moment it is good for you and them to keep in touch. You can do this through phone calls, texts, video calls and social media. You could also try writing letters to some family members and send pictures to brighten their day. Why don't you try to arrange a regular meeting with family through apps such as 'house party'. You could talk play a quiz together, share good news or show off new skills you have learnt or been practising. You could arrange to watch the same film or read the same book so you could discuss it.

## Limit news

It is understandable to want information and updates on COVID-19. However, some news sources are not reliable and there is 'fake news'. These can cause increased stress and confusion. Try to limit how many times you check the news, and make sure you are using reputable sources. BBC Newsround has child friendly news stories or look at our First News paper on our website.

## Relaxing and mindfulness

Focusing on the present, rather than worrying about the future, can help with difficult emotions and improve wellbeing.

**Colour breathing** – Imagine a colour that feels good to you. Close your eyes and as you breath in imagine this colour spreading through your whole body. Give you worries a colour and as you breath out slowly let this colour leave your body.

**Tummy breathing** – Lie conformably with your hand on your tummy. As you breath in through your nose feel your tummy filling like a balloon. Then breath slowly out of your mouth, releasing any worries.

**Calming box** – Fill a box with things that calm you, for example a fidget spinner, paper and colouring pencils, happy photos, your favourite snack. When you feel anxious look for something in your box that would help.

**Journaling** – Writing or drawing about how we feel can help us to stop the thoughts going through our minds.

## Talk about your feelings and worries

It is good to talk about worries and listen to children's concerns. Try to make time and space for children to talk to you. They won't always let you know that they want to talk so look out for signs, such as them staying closer to you than usual.

You can help them by acknowledging their feelings and worries. Ask open questions 'What makes you feel that way?' and try not to minimise their feelings e.g. 'You'll be fine.' Instead try to work through a solution together. Reassure them that we all feel that way sometimes. It can be useful to model good behaviours by openly talking about them e.g. When I feel scared I like talk to someone. When I feel angry I like to sit on the sofa to calm down. Correct any misunderstandings they may have and remember it's perfectly fine to say 'I don't know, shall we find out together.'

Some children may need help to identify their emotions and it may be easier to draw or write about them instead.

## Further information and useful websites

<https://www.camhs-resources.co.uk/coronavirus>

<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/coronavirus-calm.html>

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-anxiety-tips>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8GmQijmU\\_rkk&app=desktop](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8GmQijmU_rkk&app=desktop)

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/10-minute-workouts/>

<https://www.gatesheadssp.org.uk/activities-for-all/activities-for-allhealth-wellbeing-resources>

## Learn new skills

It is easy to get bored or stop doing things when we feel anxious. Why not use this time to do something that you enjoy like art, dance or reading. You could try to learn new skills such as another language on Duolingo or take up new hobbies such as sewing. You could try learning to cook something new for your family. Doing these thing will boost your self-confidence and self-esteem.

On our school Facebook page you will find activities, news and support.

[www.facebook.com/Swalwellprimaryschool](http://www.facebook.com/Swalwellprimaryschool)