

Being at Home During School Closures – a guide for young people

These are very unusual and uncertain times for everyone. For young people having no school may feel like a relief, for others it might feel worrying or upsetting. There might be times when you are feeling safe and happy, or other times when you feel overwhelmed, anxious or low. For many of us feelings can change from day to day, hour to hour, or minute to minute. There is a lot of information about Coronavirus or Covid-19, and what can help people to cope with the situation. This leaflet provides key messages and recommended resources which you might find helpful.

These are some key ways to help you cope with the situation:

1. **Talk to someone you trust**
2. **Create routines**
3. **Keep learning**
4. **Keep active & plan regular movement time**
5. **Stay Connected: Talk and listen to your friends and family, and have fun together**
6. **Take care of yourself the best you can**

1. TALK TO SOMEONE YOU TRUST



- Do you have questions about Coronavirus and how it is affecting you, your friends and your family?
- How much of what you know and understand do you think is factually correct?
- Are you worried about yourself, your friends or your family?
- Do you have people you trust who you can talk to?

It can feel good to talk to family or friends about the situation and your feelings. It can be helpful, sometimes, to talk to someone you don't know.

Childline – Tel: 0800 1111 www.childline.org.uk Has lots of information about Coronavirus and you can call, chat or email to talk to someone, confidentially, from 9am to midnight.

Young Scot - <https://young.scot/campaigns/national/coronavirus> Information about Coronavirus, how to stay safe and how to support yourself and others.

2. CREATE ROUTINES

Relaxing and chilling for a few days might be good, but after a while it can affect how you feel. Having a routine in your day can help you to feel good.

Setting Daily Routines

- Set times for going to bed and getting up in the morning
- Maintain self-care routines e.g. showering, changing into daytime clothes
- Have regular times for meals
- Have regular opportunities for fresh air and exercise, as far as this is possible
- Try and limit time on electronic devices, where possible
- Make Monday to Friday different from the weekend by structuring activities along the same timings as a normal school day
- Think about a range of activities you could do through the day, such as school tasks, on-line learning, games, art activities, music, chores and time to talk to friends



You may want to limit how much time you spend listening to the news as this could be increasing your levels of anxiety.

3. KEEP LEARNING



Your school will be providing learning resources for you to use at home. When planning learning and educational activities at home it might help to:

- Think of a good place to work in the house. This might mean you have to move to different rooms, at different times, depending on your family
- Gather together things you will need; paper, books, pens, pencils, IT equipment, snacks or a drink
- Think about what helps you to concentrate such as music, little movement breaks, headphones or working alongside another family member
- Have realistic expectations – learning happens when we feel calm and comfortable
- Notice when you have worked well or achieved a goal
- Stay positive, if things have been difficult today, you can have a fresh start tomorrow

If you are looking for further information or help with learning you could ask your school, family or friends. Here are a few key websites you may find helpful:

Information about exams or qualifications. SQA Guidance for Learners, Parents and Carers - https://www.sqa.org.uk/sqa/files_ccc/020420-SQA-NQ2020-Parent-Carer-covid-19-FAQ.pdf

BBC Bitesize – www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize Revision and home learning for secondary and Post-16 learners.

Online Safety - <https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/advice-centre/young-people/resources-11-19s> Resources and advice for keeping young people safe online

4. KEEPING ACTIVE



Moving around and being physically active is something which is important for **everyone**. It can help improve our mood and how well we can learn and manage our emotions. Because we are all spending so much extra time inside right now, it will be harder to be active in the ways we would be normally. Here are some ideas for keeping active inside and outside:



Gym-free exercises - www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/gym-free-exercises

Dance - try your own moves to your favourite tracks or link in with friends or family using social media



Joe Wicks' Youtube Channel: daily workouts for children, young people and adults: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCAxW1XT0iEJo0TYIRfn6rYQ>

Walking
Cycling
Running
Skipping with a rope



5. STAYING CONNECTED & EMOTIONALLY HEALTHY



Young people need to feel connected to feel emotionally healthy. When we are not able to see our friends and loved ones in the way we are used to it is unsettling, especially during a time of uncertainty. We can:

- Plan different ways to stay connected to the important people in our lives
- Try to stay connected to things that we miss, such as important parts of our usual routine and interests
- Connect to our hopes for the future, even if we're not sure when they will happen.

Who Will You Connect With?

Think about what you value as a family.

Your values might include love, respect, humour, patience, courage, honesty, caring, openness, kindness.

Plan one thing you can do each day that uses one of your values.

Video calls through Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp, Zoom

Try planning a quiz, having a virtual exercise or dance class, taking up a craft or hobby, watching the same film then meeting a friend virtually to talk about it.

Writing and drawing:

Letters

Emails

Making cards, which can tell people we are thinking about them.

Making plans for the future

Spend some time thinking about what you are looking forward to when you don't have to stay at home.

Ideas can be drawn or written and posted in a hopes jar, scrap book, pinboard, collage so that you can share with friends or family.

What will be good about these plans? What can you do now that might make you feel a similar way?

Avoid focussing on when you think these things will happen because we can't be sure for a while.

Friends Teachers Family outside your home

Extended family Group leaders Neighbours

If you are feeling anxious or worried some of the following ideas might be helpful:

Ways to feel calmer – Breathing exercises, yoga videos, games/activities, Ways to Cope videos - ChildLine Calm Zone - www.childline.org.uk/toolbox/calm-zone/

Advice on mental health – Low mood, anxiety, eating problems - <https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/looking-after-yourself/coronavirus-and-mental-health/> or Tel 0808 808 4994 (Monday to Friday, 4 – 11pm)

Try grounding exercises - www.tothegrowlery.com/blog/2017/4/18/six-different-types-of-grounding-exercises-for-anxiety-intense-emotions

Learn about Mindfulness – at Headspace <https://www.headspace.com/> or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LgXZW6Xqokw>

Mindshift app - <https://www.anxietybc.com/resources/mindshift-app> Free, 13+ App to help you cope with anxiety

6. LOOKING AFTER YOURSELF

Kindness and Compassion



At times when many people are feeling anxious and uncertain, it is important to try to increase our levels of kindness and compassion, towards ourselves and other people. While everyone is at home for a long period, relationships can become strained and taking the pressure off yourself and others can be helpful.

How to be kinder to ourselves and other people

- Do kind deeds for your family, friends and community
- Avoid judging others
- Practice gratitude – reflect on things in your life you appreciate and notice things that are going well
- Cut yourself some slack, forgive yourself if you think you have made mistakes and give yourself little treats and rewards
- Have realistic expectations about what you, your family or other people are able to do at this time. It is OK to feel overwhelmed and be unproductive

Having a Positive Mindset



Thinking about what we can do, and not what we can't do, can help us feel more in control of the current situation.

How to have a positive mindset

- Start the day with a positive statement or plan
- Focus on the good things, however small
- Change negative self-talk into positive self-talk e.g. Instead of saying I am missing out on going out with my friends, think about saying I'm getting more time to get to know them online or on the phone
- Listen to positive friends or family or when seeking advice
- Accept the changes to your life and recognise what you can and are doing to manage

Asking for help

When things are feeling very difficult it can make a big difference to speak to someone about the problem. This could be trusted friends, family or someone at school. Other contacts for help include:

- City of Edinburgh Psychological Services for advice on home learning and wellbeing. Tel: 0131 469 2800 (Monday to Thursday – 9am to 5pm) to leave a message with your name, number and school and an Educational Psychologist will phone you back as soon as they can. Alternatively you can email us at Psychologicalservices@edinburgh.gov.uk
- ChildLine – www.childline.org.uk Tel: 0800 1111
- If you or someone in your family is unwell, further information on what to do can be found on <https://www.nhsinform.scot/self-help-guides/self-help-guide-coronavirus-covid-19>

If you have experienced a loss or bereavement and would like particular help with this contact:

- Child Bereavement UK - <https://www.childbereavementuk.org/> Tel: 0800 02 88840

If you are care experienced the following supports might also be helpful:

- **Care Experienced** – CELCIS - <https://www.celcis.org/knowledge-bank/spotlight/covid19info/>
- **Care Experienced Young People** - <https://www.whocaresscotland.org/>