

Brinsley Primary and Nursery School, Moor Road, Brinsley, Nottinghamshire. NG16 5AZ

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## Mental Health and Wellbeing – Miss Croft – 28 May 2020

### Summer Term 2 – Returning to School

#### Parental support

In light of school closures due to Covid-19, we have created a guidance document. It aims to support parents and carers in the phased reopening of schools. In times like these, our mental and physical wellbeing is... The Most Important Thing.

When children return to school, the most important thing is for us to focus on our wellbeing for the whole school community.

#### Supporting your child

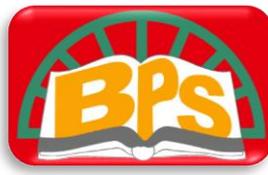
Returning to school and responding to change may be hard on multiple levels (and joyful to others). Some children may respond to the change well; others may find it difficult. When schools reopen, some of the things you might see in the coming weeks include:

- Reluctance or refusal to go to school
- Increased clinginess in the morning
- Increased tearfulness
- Poor sleep on nights before school
- Temper tantrums on school mornings
- Feeling sick – especially stomach aches, headaches and any other ache related to muscle tension (sore legs, jaws)

We might be tempted to see these behaviours as signs of being naughty, attention seeking or just wanting to stay home because it's easier than school. Children may see the outside world as dangerous, stimulated from lots of different medias. The most sensible thing their bodies can do is react to the invisible danger. Here is a list of recommended strategies, which you may find useful to support your child during this time.

- Start a normal morning routine a week before school starts
- Visit school before it starts
- Start using the language 'When you go to school...' rather than 'if you go to school' (Even if you have chosen for your child not to return yet, your child will be returning to school at some point in the future)
- Use visual aids such as calendars to count down to school starting
- Give emotions names. (sad, angry, worried, excited).
- Check in with the kids before school starts. Validate any fears and correct any misconceptions
- Problem solve – if something is a particular worry, work with kids to help come up with a few solutions. The Worry waterfall or worry jar may help.
- Practise self care ourselves
- Communicate with your class's teacher
- Go for outside - regular walks
- Practise mindfulness and breathing
- Share books about worries





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- Remain positive
- Laugh – tell jokes
- Focus on what is good/ and their strengths
- Make plans for the future – big plans or little plans

## **How can my family stay mentally well? – Dr Pooky Knightsmith**

### **Find a new normal**

Human beings thrive on routine. It reduces our cognitive load.

Set a daily routine. Do not over structure your day as this can cause pressure. Try to get into a new rhythm around blocks of time. It will bring you a sense of comfort knowing you can control something.

### **Exercise good self-care**

It is the most important thing you can do for yourself. Get good sleep. Eat as well as you can within the current limitations. Take exercise or go outside in a safe way. Be kind to yourself. Find something that you enjoy. Think about physical and emotional well-being.

### **Stay connected**

Actively make connections (virtually) with the people who are important to you. Have a few, deep connections. Build your sense of purpose. Sound off to a friend. Focus on solid connections.

### **Take time out from corona virus worry.**

Give yourself a time to worry and think about what is going on in the world then set it aside. Have corona virus worry free time. Set yourself ‘golden time’ and turn off all notifications/news streams during this time.

### **Name your worries to tame them**

An effective strategy is to name your worries. ‘Name it to tame it.’ Once they are named, you can do something with them. Make a list of all the things that are worrying you. It is then possible to work through and take control of it. In your mind, it is chaotic but on a list it is ordered. Is there anything you can change or control? Some of the worries you will not be able to change. Accept that you cannot change some things but see if there is someone you can share them with.

### **Make positive plans for the future**

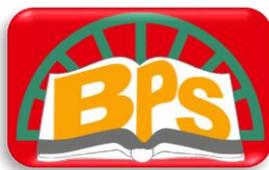
Big plans and little plans.

### **Self soothe regularly**

Allow yourself to calm. Use breathing strategies. Collect your thoughts. Do not let it become overwhelming. Reset your body and mind throughout the day.

Social distancing does not mean we aren’t together!





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1. Keep active
2. Immerse yourself in nature
3. Focus on the present
4. Laugh
5. Practise kindness
6. Focus on what's good
7. Keep learning
8. Connect
9. Concentrate on strengths

### Useful resources

- Anna Freud - Supporting parents and carers through disruption  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZnANLAcPRZ4&feature=youtu.be>
- Kindness Calendar – <https://www.actionforhappiness.org/calendars>
- Anna Freud – Self Care tips <https://www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/self-care/>
- Mind – Covid-19 and your wellbeing <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/#collapse842d2>
- Headspace – Mediation apps
- Young Minds - What to do if you're anxious about coronavirus- <https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/what-to-do-if-you-re-anxious-about-coronavirus/>
- Return to school: A trauma informed approach – Raft Psychology - <https://www.raftpsychology.com/news/gvid0efdmvmjw4r9xxly04rwrjd0o>
- Samaritans - Having a difficult time with your mental health during coronavirus- <https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/support-and-information/if-youre-having-difficult-time/if-youre-worried-about-your-mental-health-during-coronavirus-outbreak/>
- BBC - 5 ways to keep your children occupied and learning at home - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/five-ways-to-keep-your-kids-learning-at-home/z4966v4>
- BBC - Helping children to cope with life without school - <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-51959957>
- Books Beyond Words - Beating the virus - A short wordless story, that will help people to understand what to do if you have Coronavirus and how to keep yourself and those who you care about safe (empowering people through pictures - shared by one of our Special Schools) - <https://booksbeyondwords.co.uk/downloads-shop/beating-the-virus>
- Save the Children - 7 simple tips on how to talk to children about the coronavirus - <https://www.savethechildren.org/us/what-we-do/emergency-response/coronavirus-outbreak/coronavirus-outbreak-how-to-explain-children>
- Place2Be - Coronavirus: Helpful information to answer questions from children <https://www.place2be.org.uk/about-us/news-and-blogs/2020/march/coronavirus-information-for-children/>
- Story about Covid-19 - <https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/coronavirus-story-for-children/>

