



Dear Parents/carers,

3.4.20

We hope this update finds you well and staying home to stay safe. We said when we closed that we would continue to stay in touch, and we are trying to do this through email, text and by using Twitter. If you do not currently have a Twitter account, please do join and follow us www.twitter.com/hesledenprimary and some of you have started to share, via Twitter, some of the activities the children have been doing. We are also using Twitter to retweet useful and important links and messages. **This is our primary way of sharing news with our school family and community and it would be very useful for all parents / carers to follow us on Twitter** [please note, Twitter users must be 13 or older].

While we adhere to government guidelines on staying home, school continues to open to provide care for children of key workers, **only** in the event that there are no alternate arrangements available. Thanks go to all of those key workers who have been able to make other arrangements and keep our numbers low, this has allowed us to reduce our staffing levels and keep our adults safe too. These arrangements will continue throughout the Easter break and our Key Worker parents have been contacted separately. May I take this opportunity to thank all Key Workers for supporting everyone in our community; your work is very much valued and appreciated.

As a reminder, our contact details are: ☎ 01429 836376 or 💻 hesleden@durhamlearning.net (left messages /emails **will be** responded to). We will be in contact with our families again after the 'Easter break', but if you want to get in touch about anything else, please do.

We have updated our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy with additional guidance covering the period where the school is closed as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. Please follow the link to our website to read this new document.

<http://www.hesleden.durham.sch.uk/wp-content/uploads/sites/51/2020/04/2020-COVID19-Additional-Safeguarding-Guidance.pdf>

Guidance has also been updated regarding keeping children safe when they are working online. We have been tweeting links to sources we know and trust, but it is very important for parents and carers to be aware of what the children are doing online. If you choose to supplement our school links with support from other online companies, please ensure that the support offered online is from a reputable organisation/individual.

The following websites provide support for parents and carers to keep children safe online includes:

- [Internet matters](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [London Grid for Learning](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [Net-aware](#) - for support for parents and careers from the NSPCC
- [Parent info](#) - for support for parents and carers to keep their children safe online
- [Thinkuknow](#) - for advice from the National Crime Agency to stay safe online
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - advice for parents and carers

Children can also get age appropriate practical support from the likes of:

- [Childline](#) - for support
- [UK Safer Internet Centre](#) - to report and remove harmful online content
- [CEOP](#) - for advice on making a report about online abuse

The Government has updated their guidance on supporting young people and children with their mental health. This can be found on: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing?utm_source=198a9e75-a418-4442-9102-7c714bd37c3c&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications&utm_content=immediate

One of the documents from the link above is an 'easy-to-read' guide, and it is illustrated for easy access. There are also a couple of posters attached to the end of this letter which might help to explain how to manage your own and your family's well-being, and how to interpret children's behaviour during this difficult time.

For families in receipt of benefits-related Free School Meals, we are aiming to move to the Voucher system after the Easter holidays, and Mrs Medcalf has already been in touch with relevant families about this. If any family is now in receipt of benefits and think that they may now be entitled to Free School Meals, please contact Mrs Medcalf on the normal school number.

We have already said that we do not expect you to have a school-like timetable, or to be stressed about completing school work, especially when you can get outdoors or do more interesting activities like yoga or baking, and we definitely do not expect children to be completing school-work over the Easter holidays.

If children are reluctant to complete school-type-work after the break, please encourage them to keep reading – it doesn't matter what they read, just read (there are lots of links to different kinds of reading on our Twitter feed). Please keep in mind that this is an extremely unusual and difficult time and the single most important thing is keeping positive relationships in the family home. We will catch children up on return to school, whenever that may be.

As a final plea, if you have not yet joined us on Twitter, please make time to do so. The instructions are at the top of this letter. We communicate several times daily via Twitter, sharing news and interesting activities (including from famous people, reliable, educational sources and other schools) and this is really helping our school community stay together and support one another.

If we can do anything to help your child or family, please do not hesitate to email or ring us and we will do our utmost to support.

Mrs Dunn

HOW FAMILIES CAN SUPPORT EACH OTHER'S MENTAL HEALTH DURING SELF ISOLATION



01

Check in with each other on a regular basis. How are you feeling today? Is there anything I can do to help?



02

Engage in some physical activity together. Doing this in a group can increase connectedness and is great for reducing stress.



03

Get some really simple healthy rules in place that you can all follow (E.g. We will make sure to sit down and eat dinner with each other every night)



04

Set a challenge to learn a new coping skill each week. Spend 5-10 minutes each day to practise using it.



05

Organise and plan your week together. Make sure everyone understands what work or school related activities are coming up over the next 7 days.



07

Schedule in time during your week where you can all engage in some activities that provide you with a sense of pleasure and achievement.



08

Work together as a team. Be a strong unit that supports, cares and encourages.



06

Spend 5 minutes each morning when you wake up to engage in some breathing exercises as a family.



09

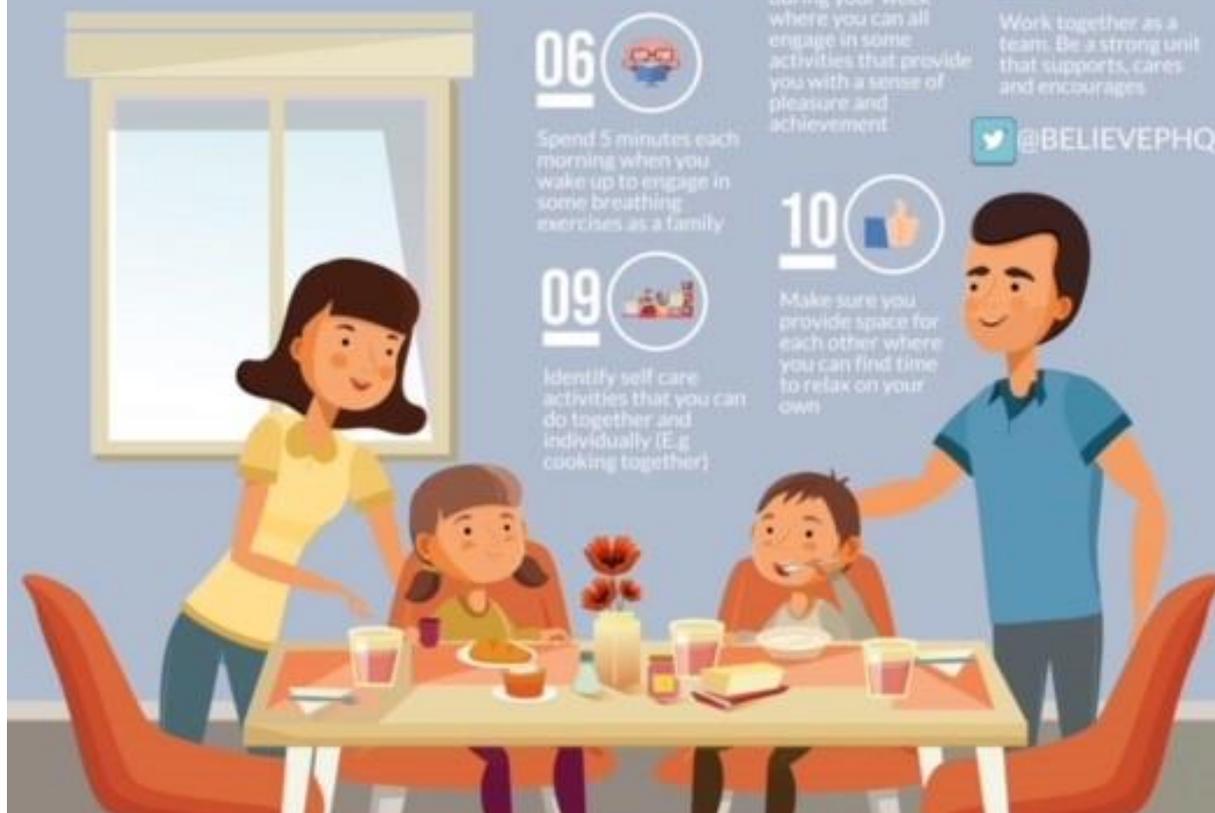
Identify self care activities that you can do together and individually (E.g. cooking together)



10

Make sure you provide space for each other where you can find time to relax on your own.

 @BELIEVEPHQ



8 WAYS A CHILD'S ANXIETY SHOWS UP AS SOMETHING ELSE

1. Anger

The perception of danger, stress or opposition is enough to trigger the fight or flight response leaving your child angry and without a way to communicate why.



4. Chandeliering

Chandeliering is when a seemingly calm person suddenly flies off the handle for no reason. They have pushed hurt and anxiety so deep for so long that a seemingly innocent comment or event suddenly sends them straight through the chandelier.



2. Difficulty Sleeping

In children, having difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep is one of the hallmark characteristics of anxiety.



5. Lack of Focus

Children with anxiety are often so caught up in their own thoughts that they do not pay attention to what is going on around them.

FOCUS

6. Avoidance

Children who are trying to avoid a particular person, place or task often end up experiencing more of whatever it is they are avoiding.

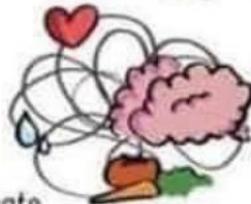


7. Negativity

People with anxiety tend to experience negative thoughts at a much greater intensity than positive ones.

3. Defiance

Unable to communicate what is really going on, it is easy to interpret the child's defiance as a lack of discipline instead of an attempt to control a situation where they feel anxious and helpless.



8. Overplanning

Overplanning and defiance go hand in hand in their root cause. Where anxiety can cause some children to try to take back control through defiant behavior, it can cause others to overplan for situations where planning is minimal or unnecessary.

