



Mental Health and Wellbeing During School Closures

Many young people and their families may be feeling anxious and worried during school closures. It can feel scary and isolating but you are not alone. Remember that it is as important to take care of your mental health as well as your physical health. Here are some tips that might help:

- **Avoid over exposure to social media and the news and try to fact check what you hear if you are worried** - It helps to be prepared and know what is going on but spending too much time looking at the same or incorrect information can fuel anxiety and make us feel much worse.

- **Keep to a routine**- Decide on a schedule and do your best to stick to it where possible. Try to stay on top of any school, homework or general jobs you need to. It helps to take control and avoid feeling overwhelmed.

- **Stay in touch with other people** - by phone, email, social media, video calls. Keep up to date with your friends and family even when you can't see them in person. If you're not sure what to talk about, how about arranging to watch the same film or read the same book then calling afterwards to talk about it? Or playing a game of guess who over the phone?

- **Set yourself goals** - Have you ever wanted to learn the guitar? Or how to sew? Have you been meaning to take up a foreign language? Now might be the time to start. Big or small, having goals is a great way to keep focused and feel like you are achieving something.

- **Stay active** - Even if you have to stay at home you can still stay active. How about learning a new dance routine and practising it at home? Or in the garden?

- **If you feel overwhelmed give yourself a break**- Do something you know makes you feel better and distracts you for a bit; watch your favourite show, bake some biscuits, do some colouring, have a bath. If you're not sure what to do and can't stop worrying, grounding or mindfulness activities (like the one below, 5,4, 3,2,1) can be really helpful.

There are many other ways that we can take care of ourselves such as eating well, getting enough sleep, talking to someone you trust, writing a journal or learning a new skill. It helps to actively look for some self help strategies that help **you** as an individual. We're all different and different things work for different people.

If you're not sure where to start the Anna Freud website has a great section for young people on self care which is full of ideas.

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

Please remember that though schools are closing to many pupils and staff will continue to monitor their emails during school hours wherever possible. General questions can be asked through the contact section of our website. Pupils can use their school email account to contact their teachers too.

If you would like further signposting on wellbeing and mental health please feel free to contact us at mentors@group.ashtonpark.net.



Here are 2 short videos produced by the Anna Freud National Centre for Children and families which talk about how to maintain wellbeing at a time of uncertainty.

For Parents and carers

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZnANLAcPRZ4&feature=youtu.be>

For Pupils

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ME5IZn4-BAk&feature=youtu.be>

More support and advice is available online, here are further links that you may find helpful

For Parents and Carers

Coronavirus specific advice

<https://childmind.org/article/talking-to-kids-about-the-coronavirus/>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/#TakeCareOfYourMentalHealthAndWellbeing>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-51873799>

General Parenting Advice and Support

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

<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/>

For Pupils

Coronavirus Specific Advice and Support

<https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/what-to-do-if-you-re-anxious-about-coronavirus/>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/z4qphbk> - keeping calm in difficult situations

General Advice and Support

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

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/support>

<https://www.childline.org.uk/>

<https://www.otrbristol.org.uk/>

<https://www.creativeyouthnetwork.org.uk/>