



Resources for Mental Health Support

How can you support your child's mental wellbeing in the current situation?

For the most part, children will need what they have always needed: love, attention and opportunities to learn.

The following tips will help to maintain positive mental health as young people try to navigate this new situation:

- Try to keep to a structure and routine that suits you and your family. Keep bedtime routines as normal as possible and encourage children to get up and dressed each morning.
- Keep boundaries firm and make it clear that behaviour expectations are the same as they always have been. Boundaries will give children a sense of grounding, making them feel safe as they have the understanding that those who care for them are still in control of the situation.
- Expect your children to do some learning every day, following a timetable such as the one provided below will be helpful to maintaining a sense of normality and routine. Find opportunities for your children to interact with their peers. In the same way that adults may benefit from thinking about 'physical distancing' as opposed to 'social distancing' children will too. Please be mindful of the platforms your children are using to communicate with their peers and keep access to these supervised.
- Give children an opportunity to have a say. Family meetings are a good opportunity to allow children to feel involved, they may currently feel angry or confused about these changes, so by having a voice they are more likely to be willing to adapt to new rules you need to put in place within the household.

How do you talk to your children about COVID-19?

Although it is tempting to protect your children from such a difficult topic, it is something which they will have seen in the media and discussed with their friends. Being open in conversations about the current situation will cause less anxiety and worry as they will not feel in the dark.

The following tips may be helpful for talking to your children about the situation:

- Try to answer questions openly and honestly but keep them in context and developmentally appropriate.
- Provide reassurance about risk and underline how helpful they are being by doing their bit to limit spread through good hygiene and following the government guidelines to maintain physical distance. Give positive messages about the things you are doing as a family to stay safe.
- Give children the opportunity to talk about their feelings, tell them that what is happening is not normal, but their feelings about the situation are.

Where can I seek further support if needed?

The following table outlines a variety of support channels which may assist you in maintaining positive mental wellbeing as an individual and seeking support for your children if needed. You can also talk to a member of Grace College staff by ringing the school number and choosing the option relevant to your son or daughter's year group.

Focus	Detail	Contact
Mental Health support for adults.	General support for adult mental health. Providing an option to talk through the situation with someone.	Telephone: 116 123 Website: www.samaritans.org/how-can-we-help/contact-samaritan/
Mental Health support for adults.	General support for adult mental health. Providing an option to talk through the situation with someone or access to mutual support communities.	Website: www.mind.org.uk
Supporting Mental Health whilst at home.	Tips from the NHS on how to maintain positive mental wellbeing in the current situation.	Website: https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-staying-at-home-tips/
Parenting support.	Free and confidential helpline for emotional support, information, advice and guidance.	Telephone: 08088002222 Website: www.familylives.org.uk

Parenting support.	Free and confidential helpline for emotional support, information, advice and guidance.	Telephone: 08088026666 Website: www.family-action.org.uk
Taking about Coronavirus	A website which provides information about the current situation for young people with additional needs.	Website: www.mencap.org.uk/advice-and-support/health/coronavirus
Mental health support for young people	Kooth is a web-based confidential support service available to young people. Kooth provides a safe and secure means of accessing mental health and wellbeing support designed specifically for young people	www.kooth.com