



# The Bishop's Stortford High School

## Parent Advice & Tips for Supporting Children during the continued 'Lockdown' due to COVID-19



Being out of school for an indeterminate length of time is likely to be difficult for many children. Families living in close proximity for extended periods are likely to find this to be stressful. Children may be exhibiting signs of stress and these will vary for every child. Some may verbalise their worries, others may withdraw in to themselves, others may engage in challenging behaviours. Some children and young people, particularly those who are older, may be able to self-manage their stress, but this may more difficult for others.

### Schools have not 'shut down'

– Although most children will not be able to physically attend school you will still be able to communicate with staff at school, e.g., tutors, teachers etc. Encourage your child to seek help for himself – they may need you to facilitate this by helping them identify their concern or how to construct an email etc.

### Try not to expect learning from home will be exactly the same as school.

– It won't always be possible to replicate a full school day for a variety of reasons. Giving yourself and your children permission to accept this can be a big weight lifted.

### Expect stress

– This is an uncertain and unpredictable situation, stress and anxiety are normal.

### Reassure children

– Children can sometimes believe they are responsible for things that are clearly beyond their control. Reassure children that it is the adult's job to make sure things are OK and to keep them safe.

### Help children stay connected to their friends

– Friendships are a key resiliency factor for children and young people. Most children see their friends nearly every day of the week and so not being in contact with them for some time might be upsetting.

### Normalise the experience

– Normalising the experience is likely to reduce anxiety for many children. Reassure children that lots of adults and other children are in the same situation.

### Have a routine and structure

– Having a plan and a predictable routine for the day can be very reassuring. As adults we like to know what is going to happen, and children like this too. A consistent routine lets everyone be secure about the plans for the day. It is often useful to involve children in creating this routine, so that they feel part of the plan, rather than the plan being imposed on them. You could display the routine using a timeline, or maybe pictures and visuals. Encourage children to develop independence by referring to their own routine/plan themselves.



### Don't worry if the routine isn't perfect

– Remember, this isn't a normal situation. If you find that planning and sticking to the routine is causing more stress, friction or conflict, then it's OK to be more 'free-flow'. Perhaps be guided by the activities that children want to do in a negotiated time slot.

### Avoid putting too much pressure on academic work

– Most parents and carers aren't teachers and so it's OK not to be doing 'school work' for six hours a day. It might be more important to be spending time together, building relationships, enjoying shared activities and reassuring children, as opposed to replicating the school timetable.

### Try to keep work in one place

– If children are doing school work or project work at home, try to keep it all in one place so that it doesn't spread out over the house. This can help to maintain a work/home boundary. We know that people live in different circumstances that might mean this isn't always possible, so perhaps there might be other ways to 'signal' the end of working e.g. putting away the work and then enjoying a favourite song or shared dance!

### Reduce access to rolling news

– It is important to keep up to date with new developments and announcements, but it can be hard to switch off from the constant stream of news from media outlets and social media. Reduce the time spent hearing, reading or watching news – at the moment it might be overwhelming for adults and children. Try to protect children from distressing media coverage.

### Supervise children with screens

– It is likely that children and young people will be using screens more often than usual e.g. phones, tablets, gaming consoles and the internet and supervision of this can be extremely challenging. This doesn't necessarily mean watching them working or playing continuously, but ensuring your child understands you will check their mobile phones or other digital material they are accessing. Ensure appropriate content filters are active – the UK Safer Internet Centre offers guidance on setting up parental control. Try to ensure all children have a balanced range of activities each day, including time 'away from the screen'. Involve children and young people in these discussions so that they feel part of the plan.

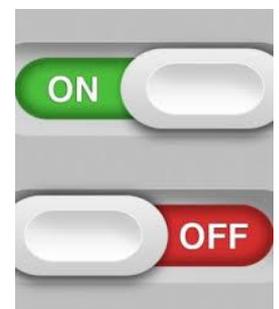


### Play

– Play is fundamental to children's wellbeing and development – children of all ages! It's also a great way to reduce stress in adults.

### Connect with the outdoors

– After a long period of being inside or limited to accessing outdoor spaces, children may have anxieties or concerns about leaving their home or going to parks etc. Encourage your child to take regular exercise and where possible, take exercise together beyond their immediate surroundings, whilst following Government advice.



*The information presented above has been gathered utilising the expertise from the Division of Educational and Child Psychology (DECP) and British Psychological Society (BPS). Should you wish to read more on 'Coronavirus and UK schools closures: Support and advice for schools and parents/carers please visit: [www.bps.org.uk](http://www.bps.org.uk).*