

Advice and Ideas for Parents/Carers when Home-Schooling

Top tips for home-schooling

- Be aware of emotions – acknowledge this can be a difficult time for children and young people and parents to recognise emotions, and be ready to explore these feelings
- Emotional well-being is key –it is important to understand that it is an unprecedented situation with many emotions for adults and young people, particularly where there is uncertainty, and for emotional well-being to be the priority. Spend time connecting and communicating, and look for ways to promote well-being, reduce stress, and to be realistic and flexible about workload. Seek support if needed
- Organise and plan – work together to create routine, expectations and boundaries, with visual reminders and prompts, to enable your child or young person to feel secure with the routine. Having a specific space ready with everything they may need, and clear routines can reassure a child
- Communication – we may not have all of the answers right now but allow opportunities for discussion, problem-solving together, manage our feelings, and explain honestly where you can connect with your child
- Be creative – look for opportunities to practice and reinforce school learning within your home, such as baking, exercise, helping at home, practical activities, and using games to practice key skills

What can I do when home-schooling is challenging?

Engagement

- Plan the timetable of work together to help children to have control over which work they complete first
- Offer assistance and support at the beginning of difficult tasks to get them started and generate ideas
- 'Check in' with them for difficult tasks
- Find creative ways to practise skills linked to their interest, such as board games for counting skills or reading about their favourite game online if reading is the focus
- Have a clear, pre-planned routine and set place to complete work with the equipment needed

Communication and regulation

- Use an emotion coaching approach to recognise emotions and identify opportunity for discussion and learning
- Listen to your child's feelings & emotions
- Label or repeat back the emotions you see or hear
- Help to problem-solve ways to regulate emotions and set limits for your child, such as 'I can see you are angry because you have hit me. I hear you and will help but it is not ok to hit me. Lets find another way for you to show me'
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pcdQfC3pCU4> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J2oTdr-3jYw>

Ideas/ways to support

<https://www.partnershipforchildren.org.uk/what-we-do/childrens-wellbeing-activities-for-teaching-staff-and-families.html>

Well-being

- Recognise your child's emotions are communication and talk to your child about their feelings. Acknowledge your own emotions and needs
- Increase connections, using technology if required, to support their network of support and relationships
- Add in fun activities and activities linked to their interests into the day
- Notice positives and successes to be able to highlight these
- Talk with staff to communicate how your child is feeling
- Find ways to build in exercise into their day
- Provide a balanced diet

Further advice can be found here:

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus/>
<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-guidance-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing/guidance-for-parents-and-carers-on-supporting-children-and-young-peoples-mental-health-and-wellbeing-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak>
<https://www.ghll.org.uk/mental-health/yoga---emotional-health-and-wellbeing/>

School work at home

- Remember that you are not expected to be teachers, use your knowledge of your child to complete the work offered and creative and fun ways to secure learning using items at home. Be realistic in managing workload
- Don't be afraid to talk to someone at school - they are there to help!

Anxiety

- Recognise behaviours as communication and listen to your child's concerns
- Connect with them to understand and empathise with how they are feeling but relating it to times you have felt anxious
- If done sensitively, you may share times that you have felt anxious before and how you have managed this
- Problem-solve ways to support your child, such as identifying triggers and using breathing exercises to calm them

Further advice can be found here:

<https://www.ticplus.org.uk/>
<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/supporting-your-child-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/>
<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/coronavirus-advice-support-children-families-parents/>

Sleep

Some children may have been experiencing difficulties with their sleep. Try to keep a good routine, reduce use of screens at least an hour before bedtime, and use calming strategies such as breathing exercises.
(<https://www.sleepfoundation.org/article/s/sleep-hygiene-&>
<https://www.ghll.org.uk/resources/counting-sleep/>)

Advice and Ideas for Parents/Carers for the Return to School

Top tips for the return to school

- Be aware of emotions – acknowledge this can be a difficult time for children and young people and parents to recognise emotions, and be ready to explore these feelings. Every emotion is normal in this abnormal situation and recognise that all behaviour is communication, sometimes leading parents to have to ‘detect’ what may be an issue for their child and respond with empathy and understanding of this. Be curious about what you may feel are your child’s concerns and wonder about these with them to be able to offer support
- Emotional well-being is key –it is important to understand that it may be welcome news to return to school however there may be worries and anxieties about being away from parents, friendships and completing school work. Talk with your child about the return and any worries they have and help to ‘normalise’ these feelings by helping them to know they are not the only young people feeling this way and problem-solve together how to manage these feelings, such as an agreement to spend time together after school, having a plan for communicating they are still in your thoughts or having a transition toy, and/or practicing breathing or calming techniques. Share concerns with staff to allow them to help reassure the young person
- Organise and plan – talk together about new routines, school expectations and boundaries, with visual reminders and prompts, to enable your child or young person to feel safe and understand any changes. Preparing the night before with their bag having everything they may need and sharing who will take or collect them may help them to feel safer
- Communication – we may not have all of the answers right now but allow opportunities for discussion, problem-solving together, manage our feelings, and explain honestly where you can connect with your child
- Be creative – look for opportunities to practice and reinforce school learning within your home, such as baking, exercise, helping at home, practical activities, and using games to practice key skills

What can I do when the return to school is challenging?

Engagement

- Talk to your child about the return to school and share any information you have about access or changes to the school
- Talk about any worries they have and answer questions about returning and share with staff any concerns you have about engaging with their learning
- Explain about the importance and reasons for schooling
- Have a clear, pre-planned routine for the return to school to avoid last minute panic or forgetting equipment
- Talk about the return and remind them that the school will plan for any gaps in learning so pupils and families are not having to organise or worry about this

Friendships

- It may be a worry about managing friendships on the return to school. Share concerns with staff & talk with your child
- Encourage opportunities to have connection with peers, using technology if needed
- Model interactions & practise managing these

Well-being

- Recognise your child’s emotions are communication and talk to your child about their feelings. Acknowledge your own emotions and needs
- Explore any concerns about their friendships when they return to school with them
- Add in fun activities and activities linked to their interests into the day to spend some quality time with adults at home
- Notice positives and successes from the school day to be able to highlight these to reinforce positives of school
- Have good communication with school staff to be able to share concerns and apply support at home and school
- Find ways to build in exercise into their day
- Provide a balanced diet

Further advice can be found here:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/YfRzhXDKS2QxFVn30TIXBj/your-mental-health-toolkit>
<https://www.ghll.org.uk/Parent%20Support-Health%20%26%20Education%20offer.pdf>
<https://www.ghll.org.uk/covid19/wellbeing-packs/>

Anxiety

- Recognise behaviours as communication and listen to your child’s concerns
- Connect with them to understand and empathise with how they are feeling but relating it to times you have felt anxious
- Help to explain that others may be feeling the same and validate these feelings
- Problem-solve ways to support your child, such as identifying triggers and using breathing exercises to calm them
- Once the causes are identified helping school and home to plan ways to help to manage these situations and feelings
- Support can be gained through:

<https://www.ticplus.org.uk/parents-carers/>
<https://www.ticplus.org.uk/parents-carers/parent-freephone-helpline/>