

***Model good hygiene behaviour and emotional response.***

A good way of supporting your child is to model appropriate behaviour. This behaviour should include hygiene behaviour (such as regular hand washing, maintaining social distance, travelling only if essential) as well as emotional responses. Be aware we may become stressed ourselves and this may result in a lack of patience. If this happens be honest with your children and explain your reactions and behaviour.

***Keep yourself up-to-date with the news regarding the virus.***

It is important for you to be as well informed as you can be. If you are to provide your children with accurate and honest information you need to be aware of the current situation.

***Answer any of your children's questions - make yourself available to them - make time.***

At times of raised anxiety and stress, children are likely to seek the comfort and proximity of parents and carers. It is important to recognise these behaviours as a natural need and make time to allow your child to be with you. These times are opportunities for conversations and reassurance.

***Be honest and open with your children appropriate to their age.***

Children of different ages require different explanations. Older children (secondary school age) may respond well to discussions about the facts around the virus and its impact. Younger children (primary school age) may worry excessively if the same information is given to them. You know your children and will adjust your explanations accordingly, but be sure to give them the right information.

***Maintain social links as far as possible (use of phones, internet to keep in contact with children's friends and relatives).***

Supporting your child's social network through the use of the internet, smart phones and other devices may be found helpful (done with your guidance to keep them safe online). Discussions with friends and family can help to support your child.



**TALKING TO CHILDREN ABOUT  
CORONAVIRUS - A GUIDE FOR  
PARENTS/CARERS**

***Monitor your children's television viewing and use of social media.***

There are many rumours and inaccurate information on social media and the internet. Check what your children are seeing as some of this false information can increase anxiety. In addition, constantly watching updates on the status of the virus can increase anxiety.

***Maintain access to information from your child's school***

Although your child is not attending school your child's school is not "closed". Access to teachers and other professionals who support children (particularly those with special educational needs and disabilities) is available through your child's school. If you have any concerns or worries regarding your child's education or wellbeing please contact their school. Your school will also be a source of important information regarding your child's education and in future weeks and months.

***Remain calm and reassure your children.***

The role of a parent/carer is to contain your child's anxiety - not to remove it. If you become anxious and worried your child will see this and will assume this is the right way to deal with their feelings.

***Keep to as normal a routine as possible - or begin a routine at home.***

Children feel more contained and are less anxious when there is a regular routine. For example, regular periods of work - a set period every morning for academic work, set "play" times and times for discussion, meals and so on. At times of crisis and high anxiety routine can often be one of the first things to disappear.

***Support your child's social distancing and hygiene.***

Remind your child about the reasons for social distancing and hygiene. Also remind them about hand washing with soap and water, sneezing into a tissue than disposing of the tissue and avoiding close contact with people who may be sick. Modelling good hygiene, for example, cleaning and disinfecting things regularly helps to emphasise that we are all taking the situation seriously. This is likely to support children's compliance.