

Dear parents and carers,

The outbreak of coronavirus disease has raised many difficulties for all of us. Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions for adults and children alike. Pupils at SJP benefit from structure, routine and consistency; factors which we believe not only support them in their learning but also in their mental wellbeing too.

These times of uncertainty are bound to unsettle our young people, as they adapt to the profound changes in their school and home life. We have prepared them by sharing our plans to deliver their lessons via Google Classroom, however it is understandable they many may feel worried and anxious about the times ahead.

Consequently, I wanted to share with you some strategies to support your child's mental wellbeing while they are working from home, and direct you to some support services which are available if needed.

1. Take breaks from watching, reading, or listening to news stories, including social media. Hearing about the pandemic repeatedly can be upsetting. Remember to regularly assess your social media activity. Are there particular accounts or people that are increasing your worry or anxiety? Consider muting or unfollowing accounts or hashtags that cause you to feel anxious. Plan to have some 'no screen' time.
2. Take care of your body. Take deep breaths, stretch, or meditate. Try to eat healthy, well-balanced meals, exercise regularly, get plenty of sleep.
3. Make time to unwind. Try to do some other activities you enjoy.
4. Connect with others. Talk with people you trust about your concerns and how you are feeling. Remember, being worried or anxious or sad at difficult times like this are a part of being human! These are very normal emotions. You are not alone! We will all get through this together by looking after ourselves and doing our best to take care of each other.
5. Decide on a routine and try to keep to it. Get up at a certain time, get washed and dressed. Staying in your pyjamas all day may sound great at first, but eventually you'll feel sluggish and unproductive.
6. Be organised. Time management is a great way of increasing productivity and reducing pressure. By keeping organised, you will save time looking for things and will have more time to work on important tasks. Try to set up a 'work station' if you can.
7. Write 'Three Good Things' that have happened during the day. It could be that you logged on to Google Classrooms for the first time, or you spoke to an elderly relative on

the phone. Either record this in a journal or download the 'Three Good Things' App. This is a proven strategy to improving wellbeing and positivity.

8. If you feel anxious, remember to show your breathing down. Try 'bubble breathing'. https://youtu.be/9tOJZQhO_Uw
9. Download one of the following recommended Apps. Some offer opportunities for mindfulness and other breathing techniques.



Apps to support Mental Health and Wellbeing

<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"><p>SAM SAM offers a range of self-help methods for people wanting to learn about anxiety and how to manage it, including physical relaxation and mental relaxation.</p></div>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"><p>ThinkNinja ThinkNinja is an App designed to educate 11-18 year olds about mental health, emotional wellbeing and to provide skills young people can use to build resilience and stay well.</p></div>
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"><p>Rootd An App which offers support to understand and overcome panic attacks and anxiety the moment they strike. Includes lessons, a breathing tool and exercises.</p></div>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"><p>ThreeGoodThings A happiness journal enabling you to record three good things that happen each day. A proven strategy to increase happiness and positivity.</p></div>
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"><p>MyPossibleSelf An App designed to improve the mental health and wellbeing of people living with stress, anxiety and low mood. It contains learning modules and a mood tracker.</p></div>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"><p>MindShift Offers strategies based on Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, helping you to shift your thinking, help you to relax and be mindful.</p></div>
<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"><p>ForMe Advice and support on many topics such as exam stress or friendship issues. Watch self-help videos, track your mood, or even talk to a trained counsellor.</p></div>	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;"><p>Calm An App for meditation, relaxation and aiding sleep. Offers guided meditations, sleep stories, breathing programmes, stretching exercises and relaxing music.</p></div>

"You are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think."

For Further information or resources for children's mental health and wellbeing:

www.mymind.org.uk

www.kooth.com

<https://www.annafreud.org/what-we-do/anna-freud-learning-network/coronavirus/>

<https://www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/self-care/?sort=rnd>

For further support and information from the Health and Social sectors:

- National Autistic Society – guidance and helpline for parents', young people and staff: [https://www.autism.org.uk/services/nas-schools/vanguard/news/2020/march/coronavirus-\(covid-19\)-advice.asp](https://www.autism.org.uk/services/nas-schools/vanguard/news/2020/march/coronavirus-(covid-19)-advice.asp)

- Mencap – Easy Read guide to Coronavirus: <https://www.mencap.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-03/Information%20about%20Coronavirus%20ER%20SS2.pdf>
- Place2Be – Guide to helping parents answer questions from their children and to support family wellbeing: <https://www.place2be.org.uk/about-us/news-and-blogs/2020/march/coronavirus-information-for-children/>
- Young Minds – Talking to your child about Coronavirus and 10 tips from their Parents Helpline to support family wellbeing: <https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/talking-to-your-child-about-coronavirus/>
- Carers UK – Guidance for carers: <https://www.carersuk.org/help-and-advice/health/looking-after-your-health/coronavirus-covid-19>
- Covibook – an interactive resource designed to support and reassure children aged 7 and under, designed to help children explain and draw the emotions that they might be experiencing during the pandemic: <https://www.mindheart.co/descargables>
- Amaze – information pack for parents <https://amazesussex.org.uk/faqs-about-the-coronavirus-for-parent-carers-of-children-with-send-brighton-hove/>

For more specialist advice if you are concerned about your child's mental health:

CAMHS advice line: 0151 488 8453

CAMHS Out of hours: 01244397644

Or alternatively speak to your GP.

You can also email me via the school office (schooloffice@stjohnplessington.com) and I will be more than happy to advise.

Yours Sincerely

Mrs Dakers

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