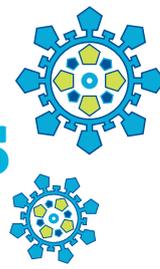


# Coronavirus crisis

## What you need to know:

### Child mental health and wellbeing



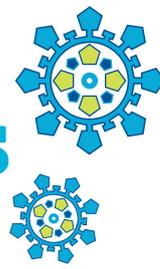
## 10 points on the role of primary schools in supporting child mental health and wellbeing

- 1** During this period of change and school closures, many children will feel anxious, upset and worried about the future. We know that schools play a huge role in supporting pupil wellbeing and resilience. The NEU thinks that ensuring all children (those at home, at school or at a school hub) feel safe and supported should be the main priority after the Easter break and during the summer term.
- 2** Children still attending school may experience behavioural and emotional difficulties as a response to this stressful situation. Staff should, where possible, think about the underlying reasons behind behaviour change in order to support the child. Schools should follow usual processes if it's thought a child needs specialist mental health support or to report any safeguarding concerns.
- 3** Schools should let students (at school or at home) and their parents/carers know how they can contact the school and who to reach out to if they are struggling to cope. Head teachers should negotiate with appropriately trained staff about who can be key contacts for pupils and parents/carers. Members of staff who may be able to support could include the mental health lead, DSL, heads of years, behaviour mentors, school counsellors, pastoral leads, learning mentors or SENCOs. Work phones or online calling facilities like Call Hub must be provided to support safe contact.
- 4** Some students will be more affected than others for a variety of reasons, such as if they have an existing mental health condition or additional needs which make changes in routine difficult. Primary schools know families well and will know which students may need additional emotional support. We advise schools to set up a Communication with Vulnerable Families Policy. See our advice on [vulnerable children](#) for more information on how to support them at school or at home.
- 5** Let students and parents/carers know how your existing pastoral support services will be accessible or about any changes you have made to operate support systems remotely. For example, how you want people to contact the school counsellor or school nurse.
- 6** Signpost national helplines that support both child and adult mental health. We have put together a list [here](#). Where possible, schools should work with their Local Authority (LA) or CAMHS to work out what local mental health services are still available, including digital, virtual, text-based and telephone services.
- 7** Let parents/carers know about other places besides the school that can provide advice and support. [Place2be](#) and the [Anna Freud Centre](#) provide excellent advice on how to talk to children about the coronavirus. For support on how to talk to a child about death, or the loss of a loved one, visit [Winston's Wish](#).

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- 8** Children will understandably have questions about coronavirus and people they know who are vulnerable. Schools can reduce anxieties by providing factual information about the virus and encouraging children to take steps to stay safe, or take part in positive activities that help others, like the Clap for the NHS, or (safely) helping their neighbours. Providing information about positive progress made around coronavirus will reassure children who are anxious.
- 9** This is not education as normal and keeping up 'standards' cannot be the goal. Among other reasons, home learning environments are too unequal for this. Home learning should not demand too much from pupils or parents as this will only increase stress and anxiety. See our advice for schools on home learning [here](#). As schools plan their home learning for the summer term, the aim must be to support children's mental and physical health. The NEU thinks project work and activities that encourage children to read, be creative and physically active are really important.
- 10** No one member of staff can, or should, be responsible for supporting student mental health. We are asking head teachers to negotiate with their staff what remote arrangements are realistic and feasible. Staff and student wellbeing are inevitably interlinked and it is really important that both receive attention.