

Pupil wellbeing and the provision of home learning activities

During this time schools remain responsible for the education of their children and young people. Learning materials and support must therefore be provided by teaching staff. However, supporting the health and wellbeing of pupils is paramount. It may be that some children and families will be experiencing significant levels of anxiety at the moment, and focusing on health and wellbeing must be well-balanced with educational activities.



BE RESILIENT

The following guidance is intended to support teaching staff to provide educational activities for pupils while prioritising psychological and emotional wellbeing.

1. Do not attempt to provide children with a ‘full school timetable’– Schools should be sensitive to the fact that setting a child a ‘full timetable’ of work, as if they were at school, risks leading to conflict and heightened stress within families at an unsettling time.

2. Ensure that children, young people, and parents are aware that completion of all school activities is not essential if it is affecting their wellbeing. Some families will welcome being provided with lots of activities and this structure will be helpful and reassuring to them. However, for other families, especially those with a number of children in different stages of school, this might seem overwhelming and cause additional stress. Families should be encouraged to think first and foremost of the wellbeing of their whole family before deciding which activities to undertake.



TAKE A MOMENT



GET ACTIVE

3. Think about the type of activities being provided. Consider providing activities that families can share together, that encourage them to spend time together and build relationships.



LOOK ON THE BRIGHT SIDE

4. Fun! Play is fundamental to children and young people’s wellbeing and development – children of all ages! It’s a great way to reduce stress in adults too. Consider if there are activities that you can provide that will support families to play and have fun



CHALLENGE YOUR MINDSET

5. Don’t put too much emphasis on academic success, or make activities academically challenging. Most parents and carers aren’t teachers, and so it is important that activities can be completed easily by the pupils with the resources readily available to them. It is also worth recognising that stress and anxiety can act as a barrier to effective learning, and therefore children and young people who are under pressure will not be able to learn new concepts, and it is better to provide them with familiar work, even if this does not challenge them academically.

6. Consideration should be given to young people who ordinarily require work to be differentiated or have additional adult support in class – work provided for them should be at an appropriate level where they can easily experience success. A sense of achievement is an important factor in wellbeing.



7. Stay connected – look for ways to personally connect with children and young people. Many children have key relationships with adults in school, and direct communication can be reassuring and helpful at this time. This might be, for example, a class group video conference where the teacher reads to the pupils (for those with iPads), or by giving teacher email addresses and encouraging pupils to stay in touch, or by recording encouraging messages/advice and posting on your school's social media page.



8. Encourage children and young people to stay connected to their friends – Friendships are a key resilience 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. Think about activities that encourage friendships – for example using a class blog and asking children to make activities for one another to do, or to write to each other.



9. Look after you own mental health and wellbeing. Teachers will be experiencing the same stress and uncertainty that many parents and those in the wider community are feeling just now. While it is important to be providing educational activities for your pupils, this should not be at the expense of your own health and wellbeing. Consider which activities might give you pleasure to develop, which ones will be enjoyable for you to do with your pupils, which ones will help you to stay connected in a way which is helpful for your own well-being. These do not need to stick to the curriculum in the way it

would ordinarily be delivered in school. Have fun for yourselves too! If you are experiencing additional stress at this time through trying to provide materials for your pupils, please do speak to your line manager.



10. Line managers should be ensuring that the overall expectations of children and young people are balanced against the need to safeguard pupil and staff wellbeing.

The illustrations used in this briefing are from the 'Building Resilience' resource, part of the Growing Confidence work which all schools have engaged in. This provides practical strategies for our children and young people to use when they experience difficulties, frustrations and challenging times. All parents are being sent a briefing, complementing this one, which uses these illustrations to highlight key wellbeing messages that we want to emphasise at this time.



SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION

When you are working with children and young people it is important to remember the key safe guarding and child protection messages which you will be aware of. If you have any concerns, contact and discuss them with your base school child protection coordinator if you are working from home, or there will be an identified child protection coordinator within each Hub, if you are working within one.