Dear Parent/Carer,

I hope that you and your family members are well and settling into a new weekday routine at home. I trust that all students have now started to access their lessons on Insight and are managing well. In order to support you to protect the mental health of your child I would like to take this opportunity to share some support information and useful hints tips.

**Pastoral Support**

Although students are not able to attend school physically we do still have our pastoral support available for families who need advice or may be struggling. We have a member of the pastoral support team on call every day and they will be happy to talk to you to discuss any concerns that you may have. If you would like a call from someone from the pastoral team please email the relevant member of the team from the list below and ask them to give you a call. If the pastoral team is unable to support you then they will signpost the correct support/service matched to your needs.

Year 7 and Year 8 students: XXXXXXXX

Years 9, 10, 11 students: XXXXXXXX

If you concerns are of an urgent nature and it is outside of school hours then you will be able to find help and support here:

**Please not that if you are worried about a child and you think they are in immediate danger or at risk of severe harm, call 999**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Useful Telephone Numbers** | **Useful Website** |
| The Samaritans116 123 | [www.YoungMinds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk/) |
| Off The Record01225 312481 | Kooth is a FREE, anonymous, confidential, safe, online Wellbeing service, offering counselling, information, and forums for children and young people accessible 365 days a year[www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com/) |
| NHS111 | [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk/) |

**Hints and Tips**

* + It won’t be possible to replicate a full school timetable for a variety of reasons. If your child is struggling to keep up with the volume of work set please do not worry about this and just do the best you can.
	+ Stress and anxiety are normal responses to this unpredictable situation. Young people may show an increase in stress without being able to say why. Keep them updated on the coronavirus so that they do not have to ‘wonder’ but be mindful of how you discuss it so that it is not fear inducing. Reduce access to rolling news so that they can switch off and provide lots of reassurance.
	+ Friendships are a key resiliency factor for young people. Help them to maintain some contact with their friends via telephone or some other form of media such as whatsapp. It is important to be mindful of the risks of social media and monitor this use. E Safety support for parents can be found at [www.thinkuknow.co.uk/](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/) or [www.internetmatters.org/](https://www.internetmatters.org/)
* A consistent routine/predictable plan helps young people to feel secure about the plans for the day. It is often useful to involve children in creating this routine, so that they feel part of the plan, rather than having a plan imposed on them. You could display a routine using a timeline, or maybe pictures and visuals. It is important to encourage children to develop independence by referring to their own routine/plan. I have included a toolkit that can be used to support routine but young people often enjoy making their own more suitable versions if necessary.
\*The search term, *Printable Visual Timetables* , when typed into google, allows you to access a range of different visual timetable resources that you/they may find useful
* Life skills are an important part of a child’s development and this time at home could provide a great opportunity for your child to spend time with family members, sharing the workload and learning valuable life skills. The following is a list of suggestions; it is useful to note that almost any activity that you engage in with your children can incorporate life skills work.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Life Skill** | **Activity** |
| Communication | Lots of conversationsReminding them to take turnsReminding them to listen to other people’s contribution and responding directly about that |
| Decision Making | Create their own visual timetable that includes all of the essential elements of the day |
| Creative Thinking | Story Telling, Art and Crafts, Summarising, Compare and contrast conversations, Maths word problems |
| Problem Solving | Can be done at any time when there is a task or chore that needs to be thought through. Simply talking through the process of defining a problem, analysing the cause and evaluating the solution will give the young person a system or process that they know they are able to use.  |
| Coping with Stress | Relaxation techniques, exercise PE with Joe (Daily at 9:00am on You Tube)Keep Active tips[www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/10-minute-workouts/](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise/10-minute-workouts/)  |
| Cooking | Supporting parents to prepare meals understanding what makes a healthy menu Creating meals from basic store cupboard ingredients |
| Shopping | Writing shopping lists, online shopping, costing, budgeting |
| Planning | Use of calendar/schedulePlanning menu for the week |
| Housekeeping | Cleaning rota, helping with laundry |

* The following General Wellbeing Apps have been shared by our Safeguarding Lead

[**CALM**](https://www.calm.com/)

App for Mindfulness and Meditation. (Available on iOS, Android & Web)

**Breathe2Relax**

The relaxation app trains you on the “belly breathing” technique that has proven benefits for your overall mental health. (Available on iOS and Android)

**Stress Check by Azumio**

This app takes you on a deep breathing exercise to promote calmness and can bring your heart rate down in five minutes. The app provides instant feedback with breath and pulse monitoring and tracks long-term progress. (Available on Android)

[**Happify**](https://www.happify.com/)

The Happify app is a way to make a game of all the positive psychology tricks you know might work, but make you feel kind of silly when you actually do them. You'll start by taking a quick test that assesses the areas of happiness you should work on. Then, you're presented with a few "tracks" that can help get you to your goals. (Available on iOS and Android)

[**Thrive: Feel Stress Free**](https://thrive.uk.com/)

When you log in it gives you different tips to help you relieve stress/anxiety. There are tabs for meditation, deep relaxation, self-hypnosis, and more. (Available on iOS and Android)

anxiety at different times and in different situations we can be less fearful. (Available on Android)

[**Smiling Mind**](https://www.smilingmind.com.au/)

Trying to incorporate mindfulness into your daily life? This app can help you launch into a regular practice of mindfulness meditations. (Available on iOS and Android)

**I love Hue**

When you feel like you have no control, this app can help sooth you by creating simple visual harmonies from mosaic tiles. (Available on iOS and Android)

[**Worry Watch**](http://worrywatch.com/)

This journaling tool has a simple user interface where users can log instances of worry, fear, and anxiety. They can also add the outcome of each situation, which provides a comparison between expectation and reality that helps reduce anxiety over time. (Available on iOS)

[**WELLMIND**](http://www.dwmh.nhs.uk/wellmind/)

WellMind is your free NHS mental health and wellbeing app designed to help you with stress, anxiety and depression. The app includes advice, tips and tools to improve your mental health and boost your wellbeing. (Available on iOS and Android)

**Cove**

Free, personal music journal to help you with your emotional and mental health. Trusted by the NHS. (Available on iOS)

**Reflectly**

A personal journal and diary driven by AI to enable you to deal with negative thoughts, make positivity louder and to teach you about the science of well-being. (Available on iOS and Android)

**Happy not perfect**

Backed by science, designed for you, Happy Not Perfect is your go-to place for everything you need to look after your mind in a fun new way. (Available on iOS and Android)

Finally, please remember that I am available for any questions, queries or concerns via my school email address:

xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

Yours Faithfull

xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx