

# COMMUNICATION, ROUTINE AND STRUCTURE

## ADVICE FOR SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH SEND

This guide will provide advice on communication, routine and structure specifically aimed at the parents/carers of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).



### HOW TO COMMUNICATE WITH CHILDREN ABOUT CORONAVIRUS

- Allow children to ask questions: It is natural that children will have questions and worries about Coronavirus. Giving them the space to ask these questions and have answers is a good way to ease anxiety.
- Non-verbal or younger children might understand a cartoon or picture better than an explanation.
- It is ok to say you don't know - at the moment, there are questions we don't have answers to about Coronavirus.
- However natural and tempting it is, try to avoid saying everything will be ok and 'the adults will look after you'. You will of course, but the point here is to remain hopeful without promising things that you cannot provide - this is a difficult balance to strike.
- Maybe your child has an idea too - let them tell you or draw them.
- Give practical guidance: Remind your child of the most important things they can do to stay healthy but find motivation for keeping going, e.g. thinking of a song they want to sing while washing their hands.



Colouring



K'Nex



Crafts



Shoes On



Coat On



Car



Computer



Drawing

### HAVE A ROUTINE AND STRUCTURE

- It is important to remember that your new home routine will be very different to a school routine and your normal home routine; this can be difficult for children with SEND to understand as they often think of school as school and home as home.
- Having a plan and a predictable routine for the day can be very reassuring. As adults we like to know what is going to happen, and children like this too. A consistent routine lets everyone be 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 the plan being imposed on them. You could display the routine using a timeline, or maybe pictures and visuals. Encourage children to develop independence by referring to their own routine/plan themselves.
- Don't worry if the routine isn't perfect - Remember, this isn't a normal situation. If you find that planning and sticking to the routine is causing more stress, friction or conflict, then it's OK to be more 'free-flow'. Perhaps be guided by the activities that children want to do.



## CONTROL ACCESS TO ELECTRONICS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

### Reduce access to continuous news

It is important to keep up to date with new developments and announcements, but it can be hard to switch off from the constant stream of news from media outlets and social media. Reduce the time spent hearing, reading or watching news – at the moment it might be overwhelming for adults and children. Try to protect children from distressing media coverage.

### Supervise children with screens

It is likely that children and young people will be using screens more often over the coming weeks e.g. phones, tablets, gaming consoles and the internet. That is okay, as long as that isn't ALL they do; try to ensure all children have a balanced range of activities each day. If this is the case make sure that younger children are supervised where possible and older children's use is monitored as appropriate. Ensure appropriate content filters are active – the UK Safer Internet Centre offers guidance on setting up parental control:

<https://www.saferinternet.org.uk/>

## SHEFFIELD CITY COUNCIL ADVICE

Sheffield City Council have produced some information about education for children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) during the national lockdown. Please click on the following link.

<http://www.malinbridgeprimary.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/advice-from-sheffield-city-council-family-send-information-21.01.2021.docx>

## SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE RELATED TO CORONAVIRUS AND SEND

### Speech, language & communication needs

Get free access to the Speech Link parent portal. This site gives parents with children SLCN lots of information and support/guidance: <https://speechandlanguage.info/Parents>

**mindfulness & relaxation** to help with managing anxiety:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/cosmickidsyoga>

<https://www.headspace.com/meditation/kids>

<https://mindfulnessforteens.com/guided-meditations/>

### information on coronavirus for children

The BBC Newsround site has a comprehensive section on Coronavirus with text and video guidance focusing on tips if a child is worried, how to wash your hands, and what self-isolation means: [www.brainpop.com/health/diseasesinjuriesandconditions/coronavirus](http://www.brainpop.com/health/diseasesinjuriesandconditions/coronavirus)

### STORY BOOKS FOR CHILDREN ABOUT THE VIRUS

<https://www.eisa-support.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/STORY-ABOUT-CORONAVIRUS.Pdf>

[https://660919d3-b85b-43c3-232d-3de6a9d37099.filesusr.com/ugd/64c685\\_319c52cf38d34604b5372c9fae37fc80.Pdf?fbclid=i](https://660919d3-b85b-43c3-232d-3de6a9d37099.filesusr.com/ugd/64c685_319c52cf38d34604b5372c9fae37fc80.Pdf?fbclid=i)

### Social stories

can be a helpful way of sharing information in an accurate and reassuring way. The following links are to two Social Stories which may cover the main issues surrounding Coronavirus. These stories are meant as templates from which parents and carers can adapt to suit their child.

<https://caroigraysocialstories.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/learning-about-the-corona-virus-by-dr.-siobhan-timmins.Pdf>

<https://caroigraysocialstories.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Pandemics-and-the-coronavirus.Pdf>

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