



# looking after our mental health

Dear Parents/Carers,

Below are just a few ideas we have put together for you to think about how you can look after your own and your family's mental health at this difficult time. There is so much online at the moment we have condensed a few key messages for you.

**Keep in mind that this intensely difficult time will change and will be replaced by a different perspective.**

## Stay active

Lots of us have been enjoying Joe Wicks' workouts and it gives structure to our days. Other things like a daily local walk (keeping social distance of course); can help us to stay active. Yoga is a good a way to relax and also get some gentle exercise which can boost your mood. There are lots of YouTube videos you can use to suit your ability and level of mobility.

## Plan your days

Our normal routines are disrupted and that can be stressful. Creating and sticking to a new routine will give you a sense of order and normality. Decide on your new routine and make sure you build in time to do things you enjoy. Balancing keeping children entertained and doing schoolwork with working from home can be difficult. Be kind to yourself.

## Mindfulness

If your child is feeling angry, upset, stressed, anxious or worried deep breathing can really help to calm and soothe. At school we use the 5-star breathing exercise using the star breathing chart or our hands. Below are some activities and links you can explore with your child.

## Take a break from the news

It can be tempting to constantly check the news during times like this, but if you notice this is having a negative impact on your mental health. Try limiting how often you check the news.

## Read a book

Getting away from screens and reading a book can help you escape for a bit. Why not re-read one of your favourites, or get your friend to recommend one? It might be difficult to get a new book, but you can access lots of books online.

## Talking about coronavirus with your child

There are lots of visual stories and poems online that you might have used to talk to your child about what is happening. Attached to this newsletter is an example of a social story you could read with your child if they are feeling unsure or anxious. This young minds link below has lots of useful tips for talking with your child about the current situation.

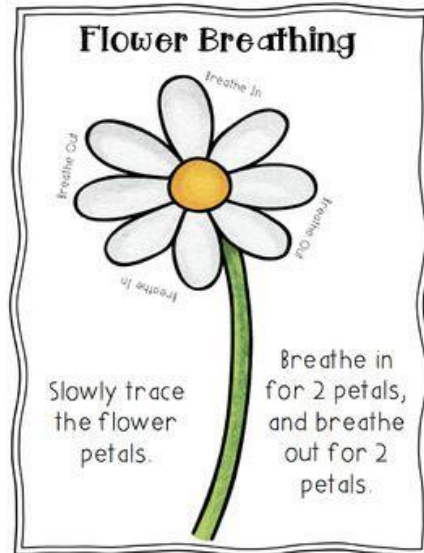
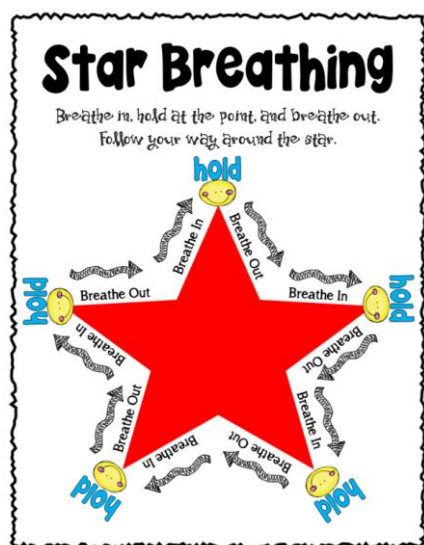
<https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/talking-to-your-child-about-coronavirus/>

<https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Childrens-story-about-coronavirus.pdf>

Some children really struggle to tell their parent/carer about what is upsetting them. We have found that when sitting next to a child, working on an art project, that they will often open up and let us into how they are feeling. Here are some art projects that have caught our eye recently...



Another great way of finding some calm in the chaos is to teach children how to breathe deeply and purposefully. Here are three ways you could try as well as a website with more ideas.



A good website for breathing exercises for children:

<https://www.cosmickids.com/five-fun-breathing-practices-for-kids/>



There are also some great ways of being 'mindful' to root ourselves in our current surroundings to feel safe. There are also some more mindful games on the link below:

<https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=mindful+games+for+kids&docid=607998245792124417&mid=99A7634D2B5E043BFAA399A7634D2B5E043BFAA3&view=detail&FORM=VIRE>



### Make a jar of wishes!

Every time you wish you could do something, go somewhere, visit a friend or relative, write it down and put it in the jar.

When this is all over you can work your way through the jar and be even more grateful for all the little and lovely things in your life. Until then, enjoy watching your jar fill up!

We hope that you and your families are safe and that this helps with some ideas of how to look after mental health during this difficult time.

Best wishes,

*Vitarana*

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Headteacher