

# HeadStart Middlesbrough Update

## COVID-19 Guidance and Support



Giving all Middlesbrough's children and young people the necessary support to build resilience and achieve good emotional health



@HeadStart\_Boro



[facebook.com/headstart-boro](https://www.facebook.com/headstart-boro)

### INTRODUCTION

In response to the current climate this special edition newsletter has been produced to provide access to a range of advice, support and resources for children and young people and families and professionals working with children and young people.

The world is currently a frightening and uncertain place for everyone but for children and young people their everyday life is very different as schools close and access to most leisure activity is no longer possible.

Links within the newsletter have only been provided for reputable sources.

The HeadStart team will produce regular newsletters with new and updated information. For further help and guidance please contact the HeadStart team who will be happy to support where possible. Contact details can be found at the end of the newsletter.

### COVID-19 GUIDANCE

Feeling concerned or overwhelmed by the current climate is understandable, especially if you are struggling with your mental health or you have a physical illness. It might be that children and young people are anxious about their own health or someone in their family and the impact the virus will have on their life.

<https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/what-to-do-if-you-re-anxious-about-coronavirus/>

<https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/how-teenagers-can-protect-their-mental-health-during-coronavirus-covid-19>

Many children and young people will be concerned about the impact on grandparents and older relatives and friends. Advice and guidance is available at the link below.

[https://www.ageuk.org.uk/discover/2020/03/ways-to-help-older-people-coronavirus/?utm\\_source=postcard&utm\\_medium=offline&utm\\_campaign=coronavirus](https://www.ageuk.org.uk/discover/2020/03/ways-to-help-older-people-coronavirus/?utm_source=postcard&utm_medium=offline&utm_campaign=coronavirus)

It may also be of benefit to your mental health to limit the amount of news and social media you are consuming at this time, due to an influx of misinformation and panic posting.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-51873799>

## COVID-19 Explanation for Young Children

It can be very difficult for young children to comprehend what Covid-19 is. The graphic below has been developed to aid explanation.

### HELLO!

I am a **VIRUS**,  
cousins with the Flu and  
the Common Cold



My name is **Coronavirus**

I love to travel...



Have you heard about me?



And how do you feel when  
you hear my name?



Sometimes adults get  
worried when they read  
the news or see me on TV



But I am going to explain  
myself...



So you can understand...

When I come to visit, I bring...



Difficulty breathing



Don't you worry!

The adults who take care of you

will keep you safe



But I don't stay with  
people for long, and almost  
everyone gets better



And you can help...

1  
By washing your hands  
with soap and water  
while singing a song

You can sing your favorite song,  
the happy birthday song, or the  
alphabet song

2  
By using hand sanitizer  
and letting it dry on  
your hands

Without using them, don't let  
them dry on your hands!  
How long does it take for you to get  
back to school?

## KOOTH



**kooth**

**Free. Safe. Anonymous.**

Kooth is an online Mental Health platform for young people. **Need to talk?** Chat to our friendly counsellors.

Articles & Advice   Live Chat   Live Forums

<https://kooth.com> go!

We're by your side when you need us most.  
for ages 11 - 18

available in your area

Kooth.com is a safe, confidential and non-stigmatised way for young people age 11 – 18 to receive advice, support and easy access to an online community of peers and a team of experienced counsellors. Staffed by fully trained and qualified counsellors who are available until 10pm each night, 365 days per year.

To find out more visit [www.Kooth.com](http://www.Kooth.com) where young people can register and others can find out more about the service.

You can also view a short video about the service at: <https://vimeo.com/318731977/a9f32c87de>.

Details of how to sign up for the service are detailed in the document below.



NEW kooth sign  
up- neutral (2).pdf

**“Great things are brought about and burdens are lightened through the efforts of many hands engaged in a good cause”- M.Russel Ballard**

## **Self-Care and Self-Isolation**

During the time you are away from colleagues, school friends or family due to social distancing or should you have to self-isolate as a result of coronavirus, it is crucial that you look after your mental health and wellbeing. Self-care involves those things we do to look after our own mental health. The resource hub in the link below was developed by Common Room and young people on behalf of Anna Freud.

<https://www.annafreud.org/selfcare/>

## **Relaxation and breathing techniques**

It can be normal to feel worried or stressed when you are unsure what will happen so look after your body and mind by trying some simple relaxation techniques.

- Your own breath can be an anchor to help you feel calm and settled
- You can try lying on your back, knees bent and soles of feet on the floor, gently close your eyes and place the palms of your hands on your tummy and watch how the breath moves the hands. Try this for 5 minutes or more to help you feel relaxed and calm
- If you think some guided meditations will help you there are plenty to choose from online and cosmic kids is a great resource for younger children:

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

## **Support for Parents and Carers**

### **CRUSE Bereavement Care**

Due to the current situation around coronavirus (COVID-19), CRUSE have taken the decision to move to telephone support, until it is safe to return to normal working practices.

- For existing clients receiving one-to-one support Local Services will be in touch to offer telephone support. New referrals willing to accept telephone support will be taken.
- Group support, Understanding Your Bereavement, Groups and Training are all postponed until 1<sup>st</sup> May 2020. Cruse will continue to review the situation in line with government's advice.
- For a bereaved person who is self-isolating, they can contact the Helpline on 08088081677.
- If people are bereaved by the virus then can contact help on 08088081677. The helpline is open Monday-Friday 9.30 – 5pm (excluding bank holidays), with extended hours on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings, when Cruse are open until 8pm.

CRUSE have put together some resources to share how bereavement and grief may be affected by this pandemic. It covers some of the different situations and emotions bereaved people may have to deal with. They will be adding to and updating this information as the situation develops.

[www.cruse.org.uk/coronavirus](http://www.cruse.org.uk/coronavirus)

## Online Safety

As children and young people will be spending more time than normal at home due to school closures and effective social distancing to help limit the spread of the coronavirus, many of them will be increasing the time spent online or on electronic devices.

To support parents and carers in keeping their children safe online while they are off school, Thinkuknow have produced two help sheets (one for primary school children, one for secondary school children) with advice and links to Thinkuknow resources they can use at home.

[https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/professionals/our-views/parents-helpsheets/?utm\\_source=Thinkuknow&utm\\_campaign=11c85df25c-TUK\\_GLOBAL\\_MAR\\_2020\\_MESSAGE&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_0b54505554-11c85df25c-64722045](https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/professionals/our-views/parents-helpsheets/?utm_source=Thinkuknow&utm_campaign=11c85df25c-TUK_GLOBAL_MAR_2020_MESSAGE&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_0b54505554-11c85df25c-64722045)

## The Importance of Sleep

Even if children and young people are at home due to the closure of schools, it is important that they maintain a healthy sleeping pattern and night time routine.

### Why we sleep:

Sleep is essential – it is as important to our bodies as eating, drinking and breathing and is vital for maintaining good mental and physical health. Sleep plays an important role in the function of the brain by forming new pathways and processing information. Research has shown that adequate sleep helps to improve memory and learning, increase attention and creativity and aid in making decisions. Sleep plays a vital role in good health and wellbeing throughout your life.

How to check if you are getting enough sleep;



## How much sleep is enough?



Age	Recommended Amount of Sleep
Infants (4-12 Months)	12-16 Hours/Day (including naps)
Children (1-2 Years)	11-14 Hours/Day (including naps)
Children (3-5 Years)	10-13 Hours/Day (including naps)
Children (6-12 Years)	9-12 Hours/Day
Teens (13-18 Years)	8-10 Hours/Day
Adults (18+ Years)	7-8 Hours/Day



National Heart, Lung,  
and Blood Institute

[nhlbi.nih.gov](http://nhlbi.nih.gov)

### In the time before sleep;

- ✚ If possible, keep regular bedtimes. Check average sleep needs (see table above). Regular exercise and meals but not too close to bedtime.
- ✚ Do not put pyjamas on too early, this gives the brain confusing messages.
- ✚ Have a warm bath before bed.
- ✚ A light snack (e.g. a bowl of cereal, fruit, yoghurt) 30 mins before bed can help prevent disruption from night time hunger, but avoid evening 'grazing'.
- ✚ Minimise use of caffeine, particularly in the evening period. Avoid cola, chocolate, tea and coffee especially at this time. Fruit juices and squash can cause night time urgency.
- ✚ Minimise electronics use for the 60 minutes before bed, consider relaxation strategies to wind down. A soothing bedtime story works well.
- ✚ If your child is unable to sleep, help them get out of bed and do a quiet/relaxing activity.

### Creating a good sleep environment;

- ✚ Make sure that the bedroom is quiet and dark. Keep the room a restful and peaceful haven. Black out blinds will make the room darker if necessary.
- ✚ Is the bed comfortable? Is the bed too small? Regularly change the bedding.
- ✚ No TV's, I-pads or phones to be used ideally in the hour before bed, especially in the bedroom. The blue light emitted from electronics suppresses the production of melatonin – our hormone that helps us sleep.
- ✚ Keep room temperature between 16-18 degrees Celsius. High temperatures disturb sleep. Is the bed linen/duvet too much or too little?
- ✚ Have water beside the bed to drink if needed in the night. Build in a light snack before bed.
- ✚ Make sure your child gets a good dose of daylight first thing. In the winter months you could use a Lumie clock (or similar). You could use a simple alarm clock to prevent early risers getting out of bed.

## Support for Schools and Staff

### Resilience Resources

The HeadStart team have a limited number of resilience games for a range of ages. Please contact the team if you wish to borrow resources.



### Guidance for School Communities

Anna Freud have released the following guide for schools and colleges to best deal with the impact of the coronavirus on their school community

<https://www.annafreud.org/media/11160/supporting-schools-and-colleges.pdf>

## **How to Cope with Working from Home**

### **The space where you work...**

- Create a space for the work that you can tidy away or close off so work isn't around you all the time.
- Find somewhere where you can maintain confidentiality and concentration.
- Get a headset or use earphones when making calls.
- Make time to get familiar with other IT options such as video calls.
- Prioritise your internet access.
- Think about your posture, the chair you use
- Make sure you have enough light.

### **Boundaries and connections....**

- Let people know if you are in isolation and what times you are available and an alternative contact in an emergency.
- Sound off to colleagues about the strains, find practical solutions, be tolerant and use humour.
- Check in on your own stress levels and ask for help if you need it.  
If you are having a good day, then offer support to others.
- Encourage teams to have communication groups (group text chat – which includes all staff)
- Need to work flexibly but keep to limits
- Keep supervision slots in place, phone in if working from home and regular check ins
- Try to give oneself breaks between calls, especially those that are high threat



### **For managers....**

- Daily Huddles to include conference call option for those working in isolation
- Make sure staff at home are contacted informally by others. Basic compassionate connection may prevent added stress or a referral on for support.
- Allocate a Staff responder to support others but swop regularly
- Recognise that there will be a number of difficulties for staff – swift changing of roles, parenting, work etc – colleagues will be adapting ways to work that they have not experienced before
- Watch out for signs that someone is struggling.
- Accept that some staff may react in ways that you would not but that should not automatically be pathologised.

### **The basics....**

- Get dressed for the day
- Try and create a routine – especially if children are home. It may not be realistic to be able to work 9-5.
- Agree your working schedules with other adults at home.
- Regular drinks but not too much tea and coffee (caffeine)!
- Don't forget meal times and breaks!
- Move about/ stretch – make use of online exercise or meditation programmes, sing or go and walk the dog
- Check in with family and friends, especially those alone or more at risk.
- Find activities that help distract from news, anxiety and work.

### **The household balance....**

- Agree a homeworking / schooling structure with family
- Accepting more 'screen time' may need to be allowed for children
- Be kind to self especially if you can't live up to your expectations
- Be aware of own limits
- Take breaks so you and your children / partner/ friends know what's happening and you get time together (and apart)
- Getting out of the house if you are not self-isolating (remember social distancing)
- Finding time on own
- Check in with work colleagues verbally – be mindful of those who may not have any social contact at home.

- Be mindful that people might be more reactive and not behave in their usual way, try to not take it personally.
- Avoid watching too much news or getting regular news updates where possible, try to limit or set times.
- Talk about something different than work
- Self-care has never been so important – what can you do that you enjoy
- Recovery college online has lots of resources and information for us and our communities <https://www.recoverycollegeonline.co.uk/>
- Find ways of managing the household tension.
- If there are relational difficulties (or domestic abuse) at home, then try to seek help for this
- Have things around you that help you when you feel stressed or overwhelmed
- Be mindful of alcohol use

## Young Minds 360 Schools

Young Minds 360 Schools have postponed their previously planned content and instead are responding directly to the issues that have been raised by the school staff community. By focusing on how we can help each other to cope in these unprecedented circumstances. These resources, tips and information can be accessed via the link below.

[https://mailchi.mp/4060b6fcc2a9/ym\\_covid-519223](https://mailchi.mp/4060b6fcc2a9/ym_covid-519223)

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