



★ **SPECIAL COVID-19 EDITION:** Dear parents and carers: in these extraordinary and challenging times that we find ourselves in, we thought it would be helpful to produce a special edition of the Safety Rocks newsletter to give you some tips and advice to help deal with the situation and keep yourselves and your families feeling safer. Of course things are also changing rapidly, so do follow the links for the most up to date advice.

★ Coronavirus special edition

Useful tips for talking with children about Covid-19:

We have previously written articles on how to talk with children on a range of difficult subjects that can feel very difficult to broach - like acts of terrorism and environmental issues - and in many ways, the Coronavirus is not that different in terms of advice given.

- 1. Get informed first** - Read about COVID-19 from trustworthy sources, The Brighton and Hove Council website has general advice at <https://bit.ly/2J10X8i>. Government advice: <https://bit.ly/2vJgz8> NHS advice: <https://bit.ly/2xcs3qg>
- 2. Ask your child what they already know** to find out what your starting point should be and help 'fact-check' what they know. Sometimes young children's thinking can take a different path to adults', and they can misunderstand the terms and words being used. This is a good opportunity to help clear up any misunderstandings they may have. Teenagers typically start to rely more on the opinions and views of their peers. Ask what their friends think or know about coronavirus. This can help make questions feel less probing and be a good way to start to unpick what they are thinking and how they are feeling about the topic.
- 3. Keep calm** - Answer their questions honestly and simply in a way that is age appropriate. A young child doesn't need to know upsetting details but also should be given honest, if cautious, information. Don't be tempted to make false promises which you cannot be sure of.
- 4. Don't overshare** - Think about whether information will make them more anxious - or less. Adults should be cautious about the amount of news a young child is exposed to. Unexplained news events and updates on coronavirus can be confusing and overwhelming for younger children.
- 5. Acknowledge feelings & reassure them** I know this is scary, but the risk is still low for most people, and there are lots of adults making sure we're well prepared.
- 6. Give lots of reassurance** and spend quiet time together if your child is distressed or seems upset.
- 7. Follow the latest advice, teach good hygiene and make it fun** - Sing a favourite short song while scrubbing hands.
- 8. Try not to check the news too much** during the day, limit yourself to checking your phone a couple of times during the day and watching or listening to a main broadcast, to keep anxiety levels in check.
- 9. Visit these websites** for some useful tips about how to manage your anxiety: www.annafreud.org/on-my-mind/self-care/ and www.heysigmund.com



SOAP

Teach good hygiene



Get informed first



Give reassurance

★ Teaching at home

With schools closed, families are trying to figure out how they can keep their children's education going at home. Sky News asked the experts. Tom Rose and Jack Pannett are qualified teachers and sports coaches and run an activity business that helps children learn. Here are their top tips...

★ **Plan and prioritise:** If you're not a teacher, give yourself some realistic goals - trying to cover the whole curriculum is probably going to make you and your child anxious (especially if you're juggling your work and this new teaching role). You don't need to reinvent the wheel, there are lots of free online resources, as well as those your child's school has sent you. Like any new job, the first few days will be about finding your feet and you can only do your best. For more information visit: www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize

★ **Starting home learning** Starting with 'why' is key. It helps children understand the purpose of the task and understand why they're being asked to do it. It could be "because when we go back to school, we need to be up to date with the learning," but try not to say "because I said so, or you're grounded". Let's be honest, we're all going to be grounded for a bit.

Giving children an element of choice can be a great motivator. You can include them in discussions about how to plan the day and set some 'school rules'. This could include phone use, use of calculators, rules on talking over one another and when to take breaks.

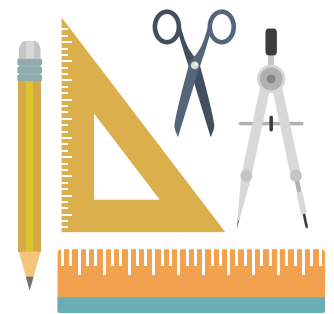
★ **Fresh start: Establish routines** Both children and adults react well to structure, especially a morning routine. If possible, allocate a specific work space for your child and you to work from, that way they will find it easier to switch off when in other areas of the house.

Try to stick to the idea of break and lunchtimes and have them together if possible. Make sure you take into account your own work commitments. Keep the evening for some downtime. If you can co-ordinate with other families, children could keep some of the social elements of break time by communicating with others and having some virtual playtime.

★ **Tips on keeping calm** Who was your favourite teacher at school? This is your opportunity to be THAT teacher. Try to see things from your child's perspective: this will shape a lot of your decision making. A great way to monitor progress and understanding is by getting children to teach you what they've learned.

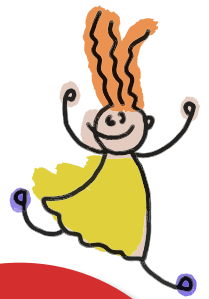
Cut yourself some slack, this is a stressful situation for everyone. If things aren't working out, don't be harsh on yourself or your children. Try to stay positive, it and then feel free to tweak things down the line if need be.

Adapted from: <https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-homeschooling-five-ways-to-keep-your-kids-learning-happy-and-healthy-11959988?dcmp=snt-sf-twitter>





for home schooling



We asked our staff who are now home schooling for their top tips...

We also heard that Jo Wicks is going to be starting free online PE lessons from Monday 23rd March on his YouTube channel 'The Body Coach TV' at <https://bit.ly/39e084l>

★ "Stick to routines, keep lunch and breaks the same time as usual, and get outside if you can if you have a garden."

★ "My son has a really strict timetable and he actually seemed to enjoy it!"

★ "We parents were talking about this and thought flexibility is important and finding time for yourself. Don't drag a tired child out of bed to make them work at a desk if you can start a bit later and then you can grab a bit of worktime for yourself."

★ "It's important that we are all gentle with ourselves, including our kids and allow them to find a rhythm and routine that suits them over the coming weeks."



Let's get creative!

As we are spending so much time at home, there's never been a better time to flex our creative muscles! Why not encourage children to spend time drawing and creating positive messages about the coronavirus, like this one on the right?

We would love to see any other pictures that children have drawn. Please email pictures to newsletter@safety-net.org.uk.



Picture by Sadie age 7



Lighten up

We heard that in one street all the neighbours are putting fairy lights up in their windows as a sign of hope. Are you doing anything in your street to keep spirits up?



Education and entertainment

- ★ A list of free, online, boredom-busting resources! by ChatterPack: <https://bit.ly/3df8qhX>
- ★ 150+ educational shows on NETFLIX by Homeschool Hideout : <https://bit.ly/2UuDpOa>
- ★ Stuck at home? These 12 famous museums offer virtual tours you can take on your couch: <https://bit.ly/2Ut5CoQ>

★ Local services and useful resources

Support for parent carers of children and young people

Community Works, the local infrastructure support organisation for community and voluntary sector organisations, has produced this useful list of resources and information...

- ★ **Mencap** - Easy Read guide to Coronavirus: <https://bit.ly/3amK0AY>
- ★ **Place2Be** – Guide to helping parents answer questions from their children and to support family wellbeing: <https://bit.ly/2QBVTLT>
- ★ **Young Minds** - Talking to your child about Coronavirus and 10 tips from their Parents Helpline to support family wellbeing: <https://bit.ly/2Qwiw4f>
- ★ **Carers UK** - Guidance for carers: www.carersuk.org
- ★ **Amaze** - information pack for parents: <https://bit.ly/3ab9T6X>



- ★ **Local charity AMAZE**, which supports families with children who have special needs, have produced some really useful links and resources for their parents and carers but will also be useful for families generally: <https://bit.ly/2WBwhSP>



Benefits and finance

- ★ **A guide to coronavirus and claiming benefits** by Understanding Universal Credit can be found at <https://bit.ly/2UpXxMN>
- ★ **Moneyworks financial advice** - 0800 988 7037 or 01273 809 288. This partnership of local charities supports residents with financial issues and is free to use.

Transport

From Friday 20 March Brighton & Hove Buses and Metrobus will be accepting all older and disabled person's concessionary passes for travel 24 hours a day. This is to support passengers who may choose to get to the shops early to buy essential supplies. From 23 March they will be operating a vacation timetable on routes 23, 25, 25X and N25, following the decision by the Universities of Brighton and Sussex to suspend face-to-face lectures on campus. To view a revised bus timetable [click here](#) or visit <https://go.aws/2UpXryl>. All other services are currently running as normal for those who need to travel.

★ Ideas: things to do & places to go

Visit www.compasscard.org.uk/news-and-events/leisure-learning-and-lock-down/



★ Songs to wash your hands to

The advice is to wash your hands for at least 20 seconds. One way to do this is to sing Happy Birthday twice, but when that gets boring, there are a number of other songs you could try with a 20 second chorus. These are some of the suggestions, but I'm sure you could have your own or time yourself singing a variety of children's nursery rhymes.

- "Love on Top" – Beyoncé
- "Landslide" – Fleetwood Mac
- "Raspberry Beret" – Prince
- "Jolene" – Dolly Parton
- "Africa" - Toto



Staying connected tips Social distancing doesn't have to mean being completely cut off from the world. With the internet at our fingertips and phones to hand it's never been easier to stay in touch with family members and friends. Here are a few ideas for parents to help their families stay connected and sane...

- ★ **Connect with family** - give them a call or send an uplifting text message.
- ★ **Create a WhatsApp group** - it's such an easy way share videos and photos with friends and relatives.
- ★ **Send an email** or design homemade cards to photograph and email over to cheer up your friends!
- ★ **Videocalling** - Skype, Zoom, Facetime, WhatsApp etc are all a great way to see each others' faces!
- ★ **Revisit family photo albums** - it's a great time to remind yourself of family, fun and outings.
- ★ **Keep an eye out for your neighbours** - a note through the door or a text to say you can run errands in times of emergency is a nice way to show support for each other.
- ★ **Join your local Covid-19 support group** - there are lots you can join for local support and morale boosting. Details can be found by researching online (e.g. Facebook) or detailed on local news, posters and leaflets.

★ **Safety Net needs YOU!** As a registered charity, Safety Net depends on people just like you. Please donate what you can to help us keep children safe.

★ You can donate instantly and securely via our website at
www.safety-net.org.uk/supportus/donateonline

★ Or by **text to 70070** saying, SNet41 (space) followed by the amount, e.g. SNet41 £10

★ **We would love to hear from you!** If you have a question, suggestion or article, please email newsletter@safety-net.org.uk.