



3rd April 2020

Dear Parents, Carers and Students,

I hope you and your families are keeping well and safe, whilst we are all living in challenging and uncertain times. It is more important than ever that we all come together as a community to support one another. Although our school building is 'closed', our school community is very much open and adapting to the changing environment.

I feel it is particularly important at this time to recognise and say thank you for the essential contribution that each and every member of our school community is making.

My thanks particularly go out to our parents and carers. Without your support it would make the school work being set more difficult for your child to complete, which in turn would create more challenging circumstances for our staff. It is important that your child has a routine with their work on each school day. The home learning timetable we issued is designed to help you achieve this routine and structure. Our feedback so far demonstrates that the vast majority of you are welcoming this routine to support the continuation of your child's education. We appreciate your efforts and commitment.

Please do not feel restricted by the timetable, you can adapt the framework to suit your circumstances. Staff will be using their judgement to assess whether students are making sufficient effort or whether they are avoiding completing work that has been set. Time outlined to a specific subject can also be revised depending on the work provided. If you feel your child is struggling to complete work, please email their teacher who will be able to support you. School work is not compulsory over the Easter holidays however, with everyone restricted to their homes, you can continue with your studies if you so wish.

We also wish to extend a thank you to our students. Once again, the vast majority of you are working hard at home, which is crucial so you do not fall behind in your education. We understand that you have been taking responsibility and emailing teachers for additional support. Thank you for the pride, perseverance and maturity you are showing.

We really appreciate the kindness that some students have shown in writing letters of thanks to some of our key workers. As one of our core values at Marshland, kindness is something we all need to show more than ever at this time.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all our staff who are working incredibly hard to secure the education our students deserve. Many staff are doing this from their home whilst also juggling the challenges of supporting their own families during the day. I would also like to thank those staff who are keeping our school open to the children of key workers, including those that are in school over the Easter holidays to continue this vital work. My thanks also go to my senior team who have shown resilience, character and strong leadership as this crisis has unfolded.

Please refer to our letter emailed on behalf of Norfolk County Council on 2nd April that details help for families who may need support. At a time when good mental health is more important than ever, below you will find information on support with mental wellbeing. We will continue to email you and update our website to keep you informed wherever possible.

Please ensure you continue to keep your family safe and well, and I hope you all can still find happiness and joy during the Easter break.

Yours faithfully

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Looking after your mental health while Coronavirus is in the community

Advice below issued by Norfolk and Suffolk NHS Foundation Trust:

With Coronavirus (Covid-19) in the community, the Under 14's Child and Family Mental Health Service have developed some key points about looking after mental health during this time. The uncertainty of the current situation may feel worrying, and there are things that you will not be able to control. However, there are things that you CAN do to promote good physical and emotional health. We have given some ideas below of how you can keep doing these things while Coronavirus is around.

There are also a number of sources of support for mental health if you are finding it hard to cope. All of these services are likely to be working with less staff, so it will be best to make the most of their website resources rather than contacting them by phone.

Just One Norfolk website: <https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/>

A local resource providing advice on all aspects of life for a child/ young person. Specific information about emotional health for young people and parents. An App is also available.

Young Minds website: <https://youngminds.org.uk/>

Lots of information about young people's mental health, with various resources available. Parents' helpline also available.

Childline website: <https://www.childline.org.uk/>

Lots of advice for children, young people and parents/ carers. Plenty of ideas for activities too.

Routine. Humans tend to like routine. Our bodies appreciate it, and our minds can be calmed by the predictability of it. With schools closed, it might be tempting to treat every day like a weekend. It is important, though, to create a new routine that includes the important daily activities, such as those below. Make one together that works for you.

Eat Well. Being at home more might mean easier access to treats. These can make your mood and energy levels fluctuate. Try to keep a routine to mealtimes and choose foods that will nourish the mind and body. See www.nhs.uk/change4life for tips and ideas.

Sleep well. Good quality sleep promotes emotional wellbeing, and helps your body stay healthy too. Try to keep a good bedtime routine throughout the week. If you are struggling with sleep, see www.youngminds.org.uk/find-help/feelings-and-symptoms/sleep-problems for tips and advice.

Keep active. Meaningful activity (doing things that you enjoy and/ or get a sense of achievement out of) is important for mental health. This can be anything from creating your own board game to having a home disco or making a rocket out of junk. Schedule in some physical activity every day too. Even if you are at home a lot, you can still get your 60 minutes of daily exercise, e.g. dancing, or exercise videos (e.g. see YouTube or www.bbcchildreninneed.co.uk/schools/primary-school/joe-wicks-work-out-videos/).

Keep learning. Schools will provide work for children to do whilst they are closed. Learning is good for confidence and can reduce boredom. Plan learning into every day. Perhaps you could develop your own learning community with your school friends through a daily video call (Facetime/ WhatsApp/ Skype) where you can set each other quizzes or ask for help with any school work you don't understand.

Keep in touch with friends and family. Social distancing (i.e. reducing contact with other people) is recommended by the NHS and is very important at the moment. However, there are many ways to continue communication safely (e.g. share photos and messages through texts, calls, email or social media). Keeping in touch with friends and family will be good for your mental health as well as theirs.

Stay informed, not overwhelmed. The media is focussing a lot on health updates at the moment, and our conversations, social media and emails are too. Whilst it is important to keep updated, it may feel worrying to be hearing so much about it. Notice urges to keep checking, and if you're feeling overwhelmed perhaps restrict your use of social media/ the news and encourage alternative conversations with friends/family.

Other Useful Links:

www.mind.org.uk always has helpful support and includes a page on COVID-19 alongside support specifically for young people - <https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/for-children-and-young-people/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/>

Coronavirus: Explained Using Images & Makaton

A [video can be used to explain Coronavirus](#) to children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND) with a Special Educational Needs Advisor using Images and Makaton: