



WOOLGROVE SCHOOL

Special Needs Academy

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Headteacher

Mrs Lisa Hall



04/05/20

Dear parents and carers,

RE: Safeguarding and Well-Being Newsletter

I do hope this letter finds you and your family well during this difficult and unprecedented time. I wanted to let you know that, even though our school is currently closed to all but a few children, we're still here to support your child and your family in whatever way we can. Staff continue to be at school at this present time so please do call if you need support or if you need a chat!

You might be noticing signs of increasing anxiety in your child as they're spending more time indoors and outside of their normal routines. These might include:

- Regressing to behaviour they've outgrown, such as thumb-sucking or bed-wetting
- Showing greater fear at being separated from you
- Tantrums
- Trouble sleeping
- Expressing sadness, anger or fear
- Wanting to talk about coronavirus all the time
- Not wanting to talk about the current situation at all
- Having trouble concentrating

Tips to help support your child at home:

1. Routine and structure – *"I know what is going on!"* A daily timetable (broken down into manageable chunks) helps focus children and can help reduce anxiety and boredom
2. Clear boundaries - *"I know what the rules are!"* Set clear boundaries of what is and is not acceptable at home.
3. Catch me being good – *"I know what good behaviour is!"* Children LOVE being praised. Seek out and "catch" positive behaviour/choices by giving immediate praise.

Tips to help us stay in charge and in control:

1. De-escalation/Low arousal - Try and keep your home environment calm and organised. Use a calm voice (if possible!!) to de-escalate behaviours
2. Tactical ignoring - try and ignore low level behaviours, focus on the positive things your child is doing.
3. Distraction – Not addressing the negative behaviour but distract to a more positive option

4. Keep calm and take care of yourself!

If you have any concerns about how your child is coping or you need any other support from us, please let us know by contacting the school.

Take care of yourself

It's really important right now to take care of your own physical and mental health. Children are very perceptive, and they react to what they sense from the adults around them.

Here are some things you can do to help keep yourself healthy:

- **Connect with others** – maintain relationships with people you care about through phone and video calls
- **Exercise** – take some time every day to move. You could go for a walk or run (taking into account social distancing measures). You'll also find lots of fitness videos online for everything from yoga to dance. Find something you enjoy and that makes you feel good
- **Eat healthy meals** – try to keep a well-balanced diet and drink enough water
- **Get some sleep** – being anxious or worried can have a big impact on your sleep. If you're struggling to get a good night's sleep, try to develop a calming bedtime routine – for example, do 10 minutes of yoga or listen to calming music. There are also apps you can download that provide guided meditation to help you get to sleep more quickly
- **Turn off the news** – it's important to keep up to date, but the 24-hour news cycle can make you more anxious. Limit your exposure to the news to only a small amount of time, just enough to know what the latest government guidance is
- **Do things you enjoy** – now that we're all spending more time at home, we can finally take up that hobby we've always meant to learn. Try baking or gardening or learning to knit. These are also great activities we can share with our children
- **Set goals** – it's easy to lose track of the days in our current situation, so it can be helpful to set daily and weekly goals to give us a sense of control and purpose. Examples might be setting a goal of walking for half an hour at least 3 times this week or reading a new book
- **Connect with the outdoors** – depending on where you live, it may not be possible to spend time outside. If you don't have a garden or terrace, you can still open a window to let some fresh air and sunlight in. Put a comfortable chair by the window so you can look outside and get some air as you read a book
- **Talk to someone** – during this difficult time, sharing with family and friends how you're feeling and what you're doing to cope can be helpful for both you and them. There are also helplines you can call for support – we've included a list at the end of this newsletter

Everyone has a responsibility for safeguarding children and young people. At Woolgrove School the safety of our pupils is paramount.

If you have any concerns or you require support of a safeguarding nature please contact:

Children's services: 0300 123 4043

Call **999** if you're in immediate danger or if a crime is being committed.

Woolgrove Safeguarding contact:

dsp@woolgrove.herts.sch.uk

We're extremely grateful for all the support you've shown us as we've adapted to these new circumstances, and we want to reassure you that we are still here to support you too.

We can and will get through this together.



Kind regards,



Mr Pritchard

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

USEFUL CONTACTS:

ORGANISATION	CONTACT INFORMATION
 <p>Safer Places Support and Guidance with Domestic Abuse</p>	<p>a new live chat service to support those experiencing, or at risk of abuse.</p> <p>The new service enables anyone experiencing abuse to chat directly with a member of the Safer Places team.</p> <p>The service provides information and supports individuals to make choices about how to increase their safety, the safety of their family and make decisions about their future. Research tells us that more and more of us go online to find information and look for answers. Safer Places online chat service is available both day and night and enables those who feel safer seeking support online to chat to a qualified professional to get confidential support and advice when, where, and how they want it.</p> <p>Website: https://www.saferplaces.co.uk/</p>
 <p>Families First Portal; Information, Support and Guidance for Parents and Carers</p>	<p>Website: https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/families-first/families-first.aspx</p>

ORGANISATION	CONTACT INFORMATION
<p>Cruse Bereavement Care Support for grief and bereavement</p>	<p>Phone: 0808 808 1677 (Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 5pm) Website: www.cruse.org.uk</p>
<p>Healthy Young Minds in Herts</p>	<p>Information on emotional health and well-being for young people in Hertfordshire Website: https://healthyyoungmindsinherts.org.uk/</p>
<p>Mental Health Foundation Provides information and support for anyone with mental health problems or learning disabilities</p>	<p>Website: www.mentalhealth.org.uk</p>
<p>Mind A mental health charity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical advice for staying at home • Taking care of your mental health and wellbeing • Support for work, benefits and housing • Checklist for staying at home 	<p>Phone: 0300 123 3393 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm) Website: www.mind.org.uk https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/#collapse22cfa</p>
<p>Samaritans Confidential support for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair</p>	<p>Phone: 116 123 (free 24-hour helpline) Website: www.samaritans.org.uk</p>
<p>SANE Emotional support, information and guidance for people affected by mental illness, their families and carers</p>	<p>Website: www.sane.org.uk/support</p>
<p>YoungMinds A charity dedicated to children's mental health</p>	<p>Phone: Parents' helpline 0808 802 5544 (Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 4pm) Website: www.youngminds.org.uk</p>

