



**From Jackie Waters-Dewhurst - Diocesan Director of Education -**

**We face a dilemma – one of many I know!**

On the one hand we are desperate to continue to educate our children – that is, after all what we do – who we are – educators. It's what we believe in and it's what we've been held accountable for. The thought of all of those hours of effort ensuring that children are 'ready', working at the right levels and making progress, ending in the cliff edge of non-attendance.

We have tried relentlessly to prepare for this; we have prepared packs of age appropriate work, we have put together whole catalogues of useful online resources, we have tried podcasts and videos, we have tried to put systems together so that pupils can send us work for us to mark and send back....

And all of these are commendable and none of them are wrong.

But this week, as I work from home in my new conservatory office (and yes, it is too cold in the morning and too hot in the afternoon, thank you for asking!) I have seen, via Team and Zoom and WhatsApp, parents trying to work from home with their children in the background and parents struggling to become 'teachers'. I have listened to the concerns of school leaders across the diocese about the strain on teachers who are also at home trying to parent as well as work, of the pupils who they know will not access anything and of the worry for the mental health of children and adults. The term 'home educators' is used a lot but the parents of our children in this situation are not 'home educators'. Home educating is a life style choice, a life time commitment. It is something that you prepare your whole life around, something that you have prepared for, something that includes visits to the library and museums and galleries. We cannot expect our parents to be home educators or teachers.

We have all seen valiant efforts of desks set up in the corners of kitchens with well-prepared timetables on the wall and of course some of our pupils will relish learning at home and some of our secondary pupils need to learn the art of independent learning. But we have also seen our Facebook pages full of posts that talk of tantrums and melt downs and arguments as parents try to do what we have asked them to do because they too want the best for their children and love them.

And then there are those who we know will have no encouragement to do school work, who may have no access to all of the rich resources out on the internet...

I think we need to acknowledge that this is a different time. Our children are isolated from all of their friends, they are stuck in houses with a total loss of their usual routine and they are scared and upset. (The BBC put out a wonderful post with Dr Who this morning – really worth a look.)

At this time to do anything that could cause further tension in the home, further upset and melt downs, seems counterproductive. If we want our pupils to return to school in a good place mentally; resilient, calm, positive, then we need to support family harmony not add to family anxiety.

So, put out all the fabulous resources that are out there, keep in touch with pupils through whatever medium you can, support them in learning where they ask, but make them suggestions for preventing boredom, for occupying children whilst parents try their best to work efficiently from home, make them positive activities make them optional, as hard as that seems.

Encourage families to get through this together – enjoying each other's company, playing together, cooking together, and partaking in daily PE with Joe Wicks together!

Now is the time to try to support calmness, love and togetherness – to celebrate and support 'family'.

**Lynsey Norris** our Education Development Officer is a trained Youth Mental Health First Aider and has put together a list of resources to support child mental health.

# MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

Action for Happiness – Provides a section for Schools and an app that provides daily and monthly wellbeing tasks for children. This month there is a 'coping calendar'.

<https://www.actionforhappiness.org/calendars>

**ACTIVE COPING CALENDAR: APRIL 2020**

"Everything can be taken from us but one thing: the freedom to choose our attitude in any given set of circumstances" ~ Viktor Frankl

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			<b>1</b> Make a plan to help you keep calm and stay in contact	<b>2</b> Enjoy washing your hands. Remember all they do for you!	<b>3</b> Write down ten things you feel grateful for in life and why	<b>4</b> Stay hydrated, eat healthy food and boost your immune system
<b>5</b> Get active. Even if you're stuck indoors, move & stretch	<b>6</b> Contact a neighbour or friend and offer to help them	<b>7</b> Share what you are feeling and be willing to ask for help	<b>8</b> Take five minutes to sit still and breathe. Repeat regularly	<b>9</b> Call a loved one to catch up and really listen to them	<b>10</b> Get good sleep. No screens before bed or when waking up	<b>11</b> Notice five things that are beautiful in the world around you
<b>12</b> Immerse yourself in a new book, TV show or podcast	<b>13</b> Respond positively to everyone you interact with	<b>14</b> Play a game that you enjoyed when you were younger	<b>15</b> Make some progress on a project that matters to you	<b>16</b> Rediscover your favourite music that really lifts your spirits	<b>17</b> Learn something new or do something creative	<b>18</b> Find a fun way to do an extra 15 minutes of physical activity
<b>19</b> Do three acts of kindness to help others, however small	<b>20</b> Make time for self-care. Do something kind for yourself	<b>21</b> Send a letter or message to someone you can't be with	<b>22</b> Find positive stories in the news and share these with others	<b>23</b> Have a tech-free day. Stop scrolling and turn off the news	<b>24</b> Put your worries into perspective and try to let them go	<b>25</b> Look for the good in others and notice their strengths
<b>26</b> Take a small step towards an important goal	<b>27</b> Thank three people you're grateful to and tell them why	<b>28</b> Make a plan to meet up with others again later in the year	<b>29</b> Connect with nature. Breathe and notice life continuing	<b>30</b> Remember that all feelings and situations pass in time		

**ACTION FOR HAPPINESS** [www.actionforhappiness.org](https://www.actionforhappiness.org)

30 actions to look after ourselves and each other as we face this global crisis together. Keep Calm · Stay Wise · Be Kind

## Mentally Healthy Schools bank of resources

[https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/media/1960/coronavirus-mental-health-and-wellbeing-resources.pdf?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=coronavirus&utm\\_content=toolkit](https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/media/1960/coronavirus-mental-health-and-wellbeing-resources.pdf?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=coronavirus&utm_content=toolkit)

## Apps

### Positive Penguins

For 8-12 year olds

Positive Penguins: an app to teach you how to catch your thinking and challenge it to be more optimistic, resilient and mindful?

<https://positivepenguins.com/>

### **Mindshift**

Mindshift is designed to help teens and young people cope with anxiety by teaching them how to relax, develop more helpful ways of thinking and identify active steps to help take charge of anxiety

<https://healthyyoungmindspennine.nhs.uk/resource-centre/apps/mindshift/>

### **SAM**

This is a self-help app for anxiety which includes a personal toolbox, negative thought buster, colouring exercise and information.

<http://sam-app.org.uk/>

## **Books for children and Young People**

### **The Huge Bag of Worries**

Jenny begins to worry about lots of different things and these worries build up and get out of control. She just can't get rid of them, until she meets the old lady next door who helps her feel better. A lovely story with fun illustrations encourages children to talk about their worries.

### **Starving the Anxiety Gremlin**

For Children aged 5-9 or for Young People

A cognitive behavioural therapy workbook on anxiety management

**There are also resources here for staff to help look after their wellbeing, and we will be developing our own resources to help with this. Look out for details to come.**

<https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/my-possible-self/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/feeling-good-positive-mindset/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/chill-panda/>

<https://web.nrw.nhs.uk/selfhelp/#anxiety>

[https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/your-mind-plan-quiz/?WT.tsrc=Search&WT.mc\\_id=Brand&gclid=EAlaIqobChMlxKyE-u236AIVWeDtCh1ZfgUxEAAAYASAAEgliXvD\\_BwE](https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/your-mind-plan-quiz/?WT.tsrc=Search&WT.mc_id=Brand&gclid=EAlaIqobChMlxKyE-u236AIVWeDtCh1ZfgUxEAAAYASAAEgliXvD_BwE)