

SUPPORT FOR THE FAMILY DURING COVID-19

Dear parents/carers,

During a time when we are all feeling anxious, confused and concerned about our loved ones, we felt that it is important to remind you that we are all in this together and therefore there are many support avenues and strategies available.

We are aware that, as the Government guidance is to stay home, pressures within the home may be starting to feel more obvious but there is support available. Information has been sent weekly and we are very much in touch with families regularly. However, we thought that you may find it more convenient and helpful to have some of the ideas, advice and signposts in one place; this document should therefore hopefully be welcome read!

ISOLATING – Require Assistance?

If you and your family are self-isolating or shielding and don't have family or friends to call upon for support then you can request support. Fill out the online form at <https://corona19.vast.org.uk> or call 0800 561 5610 lines are open Monday – Sunday 9am-5pm.

#StokeonTrentTogether
 Stoke-on-Trent Covid-19 Support Network



This is a challenging time for us all and our priority has to be to support those people who are not able to support themselves.

Where you have a family network, friends or neighbours that can support you please call on them to help you in the first instance.

The more people who are able to source help for themselves the better able we are able to support those who don't have a support network around them.

If you don't have any other support and need the help of Stoke-on-Trent Together then please call **0800 561 5610**

We can help with:

- Collecting a Prescription
- Emergency Food Parcels
- Contacting energy suppliers to top up gas or electricity meters
- If you're feeling anxious and lonely and need someone to talk to
- Finding someone to walk your dog

corona19.vast.org.uk

YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

BE KIND TO
 yourself

The saying is true that you can't pour from an empty glass. These are unprecedented times which are placing strain on everyone's mental health and wellbeing. If you feel that you require some support services are still running across the city.



Changes are offering an adult service which can be viewed at www.changeshere4u.org.uk or call on 01782 411433 or 07983 437747 to discuss support options available. Support includes access to online support groups, 1-2-1 counselling over the phone. They are also offering courses on Improving Mental Fitness, Living Life to the Full, Managing Stress, Anxiety and Depression and Mindfulness sessions.

You can still call your GP to access appointments and support.

MENTAL HEALTH - USEFUL TIPS

1. Keep in touch with family and friends.
2. Help others – it can make you and them feel good.
3. Look after your body – Eat healthy, drink plenty of water, exercise. Avoid alcohol.
4. Look after your feelings – talk to someone you trust or seek advice online at www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/
5. Keep a routine for you and the children remembering sleep is crucial for us all.
6. Make time to do things you enjoy.
7. Get outside – we can exercise for 1 hour per day.
8. Look after yourself – mental health is as serious as physical health.

FINANCIAL DIFFICULTIES

Many families are experiencing financial difficulties at present and support is available.

BENEFITS - To find out whether you are entitled to any Employment or Benefit Support visit -
www.understandinguniversalcredit.gov.uk/employment-and-benefits-support/

FREE SCHOOL MEALS – if there is a change to your financial circumstances you may now be eligible for free school meals. During the school closure we are providing families with a supermarket voucher for £15 per week and a credit of £2.30 per day on their thumb print on return to school. To check eligibility, ensure all benefits have been processed and then check using the link www.cloudforedu.org.uk/ofsm/sims

FOOD BANK – During this period you are able to self-refer into the food bank confidentially.

IMPORTANT MESSAGE

Stoke on Trent Foodbank is a faith based organisation that has been working since 2012 to give food support to those in need in our city. We are here for you now, to help get you through any unexpected food crisis that is a result of financial difficulty. No one plans to struggle, but it can happen to any of us. You will receive support, kindness and basic foods to get you through the tough days. If you would like some temporary help to provide food to feed your family or yourself, please email us in strict confidence at vouchers@stokeontrent.foodbank.org.uk providing us with a full name, postcode and contact phone number, we aim to call you within 24 hours.

Alternatively you can leave a private message on our facebook page and leave the same information as above.
We are committed to being here for you when you need us.

FOOD AND TOILETRY PARCELS – Contact school if you are struggling as we are delivering parcels of food and toiletries donated by staff on a weekly basis.

SUPPORT WITH MORTGAGES AND BILLS ETC – visit www.moneysavingexpert.com/. Martin's money tips has a section titled MSE Coronavirus Guides offering guidance on support with finances.

SUPPORT AS A FAMILY



The YMCA Family Support Team are able to:

- Provide support to families requesting help. This support for families may address concerns such as:
 - o Domestic Abuse
 - o Parenting (teenagers/younger children)
 - o Conflict between family members
 - o Managing social isolation – strategies to cope with self-care and caring for others
 - o Ideas for children of all ages
 - o Advice on childcare, routines and behaviour
 - o Strategies for ensuring families can remain under the same roof and can manage their relationships.
- Deliver family resource and activity packs free of charge

If you feel that support may be beneficial for your family please contact the school and we can seek support.

WORRIED ABOUT YOUR CHILD?

You can always call us to discuss concerns and we will direct you to the right support. Alternatively:

- * Visit www.combinedwellbeing.org.uk – An excellent portal offering self-help guides around all mental health topics with a section for young people and parents.
- * Younger Minds offer a Parent Support Line to discuss concerns and to seek advice on 0800 0051 445.
- * For support via text your child can text 'YM' to 85258
- * Stay Well CYP Service is offering peer support groups, 1-2-1 counselling and 3 week courses around Aner Management, Managing Worry, Understanding Stress, Helpful Thinking and Positive Self-Image. To access these services call 01782 418518 or email staywell.here4u@changes.org.uk
- * Mental Health Support Team – Our Mental Health Practitioners within school are still accepting referrals and will complete 6-8 week programme of support. To refer in contact your child's Student Support Officer.
- * If it is a CRISIS – call 0300 123 0907 (Option 1) for the crisis care team at the Harplands.

KEEPING YOUR CHILD SAFE ONLINE

With online learning and students using phones and online platforms to stay connected managing safety online is more important than ever. Catch-22 offer great advice on keeping your child safe online. As a parent or carer you can set parental controls and prevent certain apps being downloaded. The most effective ways to keep a child safe are to ...



FINAL NOTE

Above all else, be kind and forgiving to yourself.

Many parents will be facing seemingly impossible situations. Perhaps you are trying to work from home with your young children running around. Perhaps you are caring for an elderly parent and are worried about spreading the illness to them. Or, perhaps someone in your family has caught the virus and is critically ill.

In these situations, you may not have the time or energy to attend to many of the suggestions above. The most important thing you can do is to show love and caring for your child and to provide reassurance that you and your family will get through this somehow. Do your best to keep your child safe and cared for during the day. Create some structure you can realistically commit to and mostly achieve. Your child will be okay if you need to rely on screen time give yourself some personal time for exercise or alone meditating time.

These are unusual times, and there is not a protocol for this. It is important to try to take care of yourself, so try to find someone to share your worries with, ask for help from anyone who might be able to support you, and hang in there.

WE ARE HERE

If you require support or guidance with anything we have some key contacts who can point you in the right direction. You can email them directly, request a call back or call the office on 01782 882900 and they will pass on a message:

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) – Mrs Stubbs – jstubbs@stmca.org.uk

Assistant DSL – Mrs Staton – astaton@stmca.org.uk

Heads of Year & Student Support Officers

Y7 HOY – Miss Nuttall – knuttall@stmca.org.uk

Y7 SS - Mrs Britton – dbritton@stmca.org.uk

Y8 HOY – Mrs Powell – dpowell@stmca.org.uk

Y8 SS – Mrs Williams – kwilliams@stmca.org.uk

Y9 HOY – Miss Beasley – lbeasley@stmca.org.uk

Y9 SS – Mrs Martin – jmartin@stmca.org.uk

Y10 HOY – Mr Growcott – agrowcott@stmca.org.uk

Y10 SS – Mr Blank – ablank@stmca.org.uk

Y11 HOY – Mr Harvey – rharvey@stmca.org.uk

Y11 SS – Mrs Hopkinson – ehopkinson@stmca.org.uk

Head of Sixth Form – Mrs Bradbury – adonbavand@stmca.org.uk

