



# Northumberland County Council

## Things to think about if your child will not be attending school

The government has now announced that the majority of children and young people will not be able to attend school. This will create lots of difficulties for families making sure they are able to be at home with their children. Once these arrangements are in place it may be useful to think about :

**1. Agreeing family rules for these strange times** – consider having a family meeting - it is important to set ground rules and expectations for the duration of this situation. Children and young people will find it easier following new expectations if they have been involved in designing them and so understand why they are in place. Ask all to participate and look into what is their understanding of the situation, what this means and why are we doing this...it will give everyone a sense of purpose and meaning. Acknowledge all emotions expressed as children may feel like things are not fair.

Think about creating a poster / list with ground rules, like how many hours of devices and games are allowed, who will help with what household jobs, how people will be involved in meal preparation.



**2. A Daily Routine** – Having a calendar or a schedule outlining different activities may help create a routine and establish predictability. It will also ensure key activities such as exercise / physical activity are done regularly. It does not need to be as fixed as a school time table - it needs to suit your family and fit with all the demands in your home. It should also try to fit in any work / tasks set by your child’s school and take any deadlines set by schools into account ([Editable Visual Timetable](#)). The schedule here is very fixed - yours might be a number of activities that are going to happen on weekdays but not weekends. It has to work for you!

It is important to recognise the worry and uncertainty adults and children are feeling at the moment, along with the novelty / excitement children and young people might feel about school being closed. Children might not be feeling ‘ready to learn’ and need time to work through the current situation with adults they trust before they are ready to be focussed back on more purely academic work, so while schoolwork might have been set it may not have their (or your) full attention! Teachers’ priorities will be your child’s wellbeing not their work being completed.

**3. Deciding on Different Activities** – When discussing different activities, it is important to ensure that all family members’ needs are met. For younger children, this may need play and unstructured times, as for older children, it may mean learning online with structured educational activities set by the school. For parents, it may be time to work and communicate with colleagues. Remember it is also important to allow for self-care and time for you, like putting the oxygen mask on you before someone else!

It is important to focus on children’s emotional wellbeing during times of uncertainty and plan activities to support this. Talk with children about how they are feeling and provide activities which promote reflection and resilience. Some ideas for managing difficult feelings; practice breathing techniques, provide mindfulness activities, complete a feelings diary or make a worry box. A worry box is a special place where children can store notes/drawings about their worries, this can be easier than explaining feelings verbally to adults and provide a starting point for talking about them.

# COVID-19 DAILY SCHEDULE

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Before 9:00am	Wake up	Eat breakfast, make your bed, get dressed, put PJ's in laundry
9:00-10:00	Morning walk	Family walk with the dog Yoga if it's raining
10:00-11:00	Academic time	NO ELECTRONICS Sudoku books, flash cards, study guide, Journal
11:00-12:00	Creative time	Legos, magnatiles, drawing, crafting, play music, cook or bake, etc
12:00	Lunch	
12:30PM	Chore time	A - wipe all kitchen table and chairs. B - wipe all door handles, light switches, and desk tops. C - Wipe both bathrooms - sinks and toilets
1:00-2:30	Quiet time	Reading, puzzles, nap
2:30-4:00	Academic time	ELECTRONICS OK Ipad games, Prodigy, Educational show
4:00-5:00	Afternoon fresh air	Bikes, Walk the dog, play outside
5:00-6:00	Dinner	
6:00-8:00	Free TV time	Kid showers x3
8:00	Bedtime	All kids
9:00PM	Bedtime	All kids who follow the daily schedule & don't fight

This also might be an opportunity to do family activities that normal circumstances don't allow. It is important to allow ourselves to make positive use of this unusual situation where we can.

Schools will be providing work and suggested activities for their pupils. If you are looking for other things for your young people to do there is a wide range of online resources providing everything from creative activity ideas to detailed lesson plans. A selection of [online resources](#) is shared at the end of this document.

**4. Maintaining friendships** - for many children and young people the best thing about school, and the thing they will miss most, is the social time with their friends. With schools and most social activities being closed down it will be more difficult to maintain social relationships, which are supported by frequent interaction.



Find ways for your children to connect with their friends. For primary children is it possible to exchange phone numbers / email / messaging contact and liaise with parents of friends. Can online gaming equipment be used to have broader conversations. Would they enjoy writing and posting letters / pictures or cards?

**5. Think about yourself and talk to people** - Staying connected and seeking the support you might need is vital. While there will be lots of lovely family times there will likely be many fraught stressful times ahead. Keep in contact with friends and family. Share ideas and experiences.

If you are finding things difficult there are many support structures currently available should you need to talk to somebody outside your situation. A few examples are given at the end of this document under '[sources of support](#)'.

## **Online Resources**

### ***Educational Resources***

- List of [Educational Websites](#)
- [Twinkl School Closure Help](#) - Resources and packs for parents to use during school closure.  
To support teachers and parents during this period, Twinkl is offering access to all resources with a one month membership, totally free of charge. To set up go to [www.twinkl.co.uk/offer](http://www.twinkl.co.uk/offer) and enter the code UKTWINKLHELPS

### ***Resources for Emotional Wellbeing***

- [25 Fun Mindfulness Activities for Children and Teens](#)
- [Deep Breathing Exercises for Kids](#)
- [Parents Guide To Support: Helping Your Child With Anxiety](#)
- [Beditation](#)
- [Five minute mindfulness meditation](#)
- [Responding to the coronavirus: resources for mental health and wellbeing](#)

## **APPS**

### **Clear Fear**

<https://www.clearfear.co.uk/>

The app 'uses the evidence-based treatment CBT to focus on learning to reduce the physical responses to threat by learning to breathe, relax and be mindful as well as changing thoughts and behaviours and releasing emotions.'

### **In Hand**

<http://www.inhand.org.uk/>

'The app allows you to focus yourself in a moment of stress or low mood.' Includes activities such as talking to someone, reading inspirational quotes, taking pictures, listening to songs.

### **Headspace**

<https://www.headspace.com/>

Guided meditation sessions on stress, sleep, anxiety and focus.

### **MindShift CBT**

<https://www.anxietycanada.com/resources/mindshift-cbt/>

MindShift uses strategies based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) to help you learn to relax and be mindful, develop more effective ways of thinking, and use active steps to take charge of your anxiety.

### **SAM**

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

SAM will help you to understand what causes your anxiety, monitor your anxious thoughts and behaviour over time and manage your anxiety through self-help exercises and private reflection.

### **Smiling Mind**

<https://www.smilingmind.com.au/smiling-mind-app>

Mindfulness app

### **Stress & Anxiety Companion**

<https://www.nhs.uk/apps-library/stress-anxiety-companion/>

There are three categories: Breathe, Relax & Reframe, which include breathing exercises, relaxing music and games, as well as reframing negative thoughts using CBT methods.

### **Books**

<https://reading-well.org.uk/books/books-on-prescription/young-people-mental-health>

Recommended books available from local libraries.

## Sources of support

### **General – for parents**

#### Mind UK

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/support-community-elfriends/>

UK Mental Health Charity with information and an online mutual support community

#### Young Minds - For Parents

Contains advice on supporting a child's mental health, support for parents & parents helpline.

**SAMARITANS:** 116 123 / [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

### **General – for young people**

[www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)

[www.youngminds.org.uk](http://www.youngminds.org.uk)

[www.keep-your-head.com](http://www.keep-your-head.com)

If you need to speak to someone right now, you can contact one of the following 24 hour services:

**SAMARITANS:** 116 123 / [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

**CHILDLINE:** 0800 1111 / [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

**YoungMinds Crisis Messenger: Text YM to 85258 /**

<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/get-urgent-help/youngminds-crisis-messenger/>

### **Parenting pressures**

#### **Family Action**

Telephone: 0808 802 6666

Text message: 07537 404 282

<https://www.family-action.org.uk/what-we-do/children-families/familyline/>

The FamilyLine service supports people who are dealing with family pressures in a new and innovative way by using a network of volunteers from across the country to support family members over the age of 18 through telephone calls, email, web chat and text message.

#### **Family Lives (previously Parentline)**

Call: 0808 800 2222

<https://www.familylives.org.uk/how-we-can-help/confidential-helpline/>

Family Lives offers a confidential and free helpline service for families in England and Wales (previously known as Parentline). for emotional support, information, advice and guidance on any aspect of parenting and family life. The helpline service is open 9am – 9pm, Monday to Friday and 10am – 3pm Saturday and Sunday.

#### **Gingerbread**

Single Parent Helpline: 0808 802 0925

[gingerbread.org.uk](http://gingerbread.org.uk)

One Parent Families/Gingerbread is the leading national charity working to help lone parents and their children.

**Grandparents Plus**

Call: 0300 123 7015

[grandparentsplus.org.uk](http://grandparentsplus.org.uk)

Grandparents Plus is the only national charity (England and Wales) dedicated to supporting kinship carers - grandparents and other relatives raising children who aren't able to live with their parents.