

# Family Guidance and Support – Newlands Girls’ School

During this difficult time, it is important to reassure you that we are still here to support your daughter and your family.

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

- Acting out – behaviour such as picking fights with you or with siblings
- Becoming afraid to leave the house
- Distancing themselves from their friends and family
- Exhibiting intense emotions but being unable to talk about what they are feeling
- Expressing sadness, anger or fear
- Sharing false information that they are hearing from their peers or seeing online
- Wanting to talk about coronavirus all the time
- Not wanting to talk about the current situation at all
- Having trouble concentrating

We hope you will find the information below helpful. In addition to this, the school website provides further guidance.

## How to talk to your child about what is happening

No matter how calmly you manage the current environment, children are likely to be anxious, so it’s important to talk to them about what is happening.

Older children will have the same anxieties about their own health and that of their family and friends as younger children. But they are also likely to feel socially isolated, and worried about the result of school closures on their education and what life will be like after the pandemic is over.

In addition to the above:

- **Reassure them** that when more guidance comes from the school about how grades will be awarded, you will share this with them as soon as you have it – you could also check that they understand the information you have received so far, in case there are any points of confusion or worry that the school could help to clarify
- **Encourage them to maintain social ties** – relationships are especially important for older children, so give them room to keep in touch with their friends
- **Equip them with accurate information** – for example:
  - [Mythbusters](#) from the World Health Organization
  - [Data visualisation pack](#) from Information is Beautiful (regularly updated)
- **Share tools to help them manage anxiety**
  - YoungMinds: [practical steps to take if you're anxious about coronavirus](#)
  - Mind: [how to take care of your wellbeing when staying home](#)

### **If your child struggles with higher levels of anxiety**

Some children are naturally more anxious, such as those with existing phobias or obsessive-compulsive disorders. The current situation can make those anxieties worse.

- Get them to do activities such as counting, ordering and sorting tasks which can help them calm down
- Encourage them to use relaxation techniques such as controlled breathing

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- Look out for obsessive or compulsive behaviours and try to get ahead of them early by challenging unhelpful thoughts and assumptions
- If you’re worried about your child’s anxiety, **YoungMinds** is a charity dedicated to children’s mental health. They’ve opened a [parents’ helpline](#) for confidential, expert advice. You can reach them at 0808 802 5544

## Helplines and websites for children and young people

If your child would like to speak with someone confidentially, there are helplines and websites specifically for them.

ORGANISATION	CONTACT INFORMATION
<b>Shout</b> Free, confidential support via text, available 24/7	Text SHOUT to 85258 in the UK to text with a <a href="#">trained crisis volunteer</a> who’ll provide active listening and collaborative problem-solving
<b>The Mix</b> Free confidential telephone helpline and online service that aims to find young people the best help, whatever the problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call 0808 808 4994 for free (11am to 11pm daily)</li> <li>• Access the <a href="#">online community</a></li> <li>• Email <a href="#">The Mix</a></li> </ul>
<b>ChildLine</b> Confidential telephone counselling service for any child with a problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Call 0800 1111 any time for free</li> <li>• Have an <a href="#">online chat with a counsellor</a> (9am to midnight daily)</li> <li>• Check out the <a href="#">message boards</a></li> </ul>
<b>Kooth</b> An online mental health service	<a href="http://www.kooth.com">www.kooth.com</a>
<b>YoungMinds</b> A charity dedicated to children’s mental health	Phone: Parents' helpline 0808 802 5544 (Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 4pm) Website: <a href="http://www.youngminds.org.uk">www.youngminds.org.uk</a>

## Helplines and websites for parents

ORGANISATION	CONTACT INFORMATION
<b>Mental Health Foundation</b> Provides information and support for anyone with mental health problems or learning disabilities	Website: <a href="http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk">www.mentalhealth.org.uk</a>

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ORGANISATION	CONTACT INFORMATION
<p><b>Mind</b> A mental health charity</p>	<p>Phone: 0300 123 3393 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm) Website: <a href="http://www.mind.org.uk">www.mind.org.uk</a></p>
<p><b>Samaritans</b> Confidential support for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair</p>	<p>Phone: 116 123 (free 24-hour helpline) Website: <a href="http://www.samaritans.org.uk">www.samaritans.org.uk</a></p>
<p><b>SANE</b> Emotional support, information and guidance for people affected by mental illness, their families and carers</p>	<p>Website: <a href="http://www.sane.org.uk/support">www.sane.org.uk/support</a></p>
<p><b>Cruse Bereavement Care</b> Support for grief and bereavement</p>	<p>Phone: 0808 808 1677 (Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 5pm) Website: <a href="http://www.cruse.org.uk">www.cruse.org.uk</a></p>
<p><b>Refuge</b> Advice on dealing with domestic violence</p>	<p>Phone: 0808 2000 247 (24-hour helpline) Website: <a href="http://www.refuge.org.uk">www.refuge.org.uk</a></p>
<p><b>NSPCC</b> Advice on several topics related to supporting children during the pandemic including <b>online safety</b></p>	<p>Phone: 0808 800 5000 Website: <a href="https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/coronavirus-advice-support-children-families-parents/">https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/coronavirus-advice-support-children-families-parents/</a></p>
<p><b>Parent Support Worker (Lisa Mack)</b> Free, confidential advice and support for all parents and carers.</p>	<p>Phone: 07824 357988 e-mail: <a href="mailto:LisaMackiewicz@newlandsgirls.co.uk">LisaMackiewicz@newlandsgirls.co.uk</a></p>

Please do not hesitate to get in touch with the school if we can help in any way.