



Aylesford School

Thursday 2nd April 2020

Dear Parents/Carers

We want to ensure that our students are supported as well as possible during this difficult time. We fully appreciate that some students will cope better than others. For those who may find this extended period of time away from school, friends and their usual structure unsettling, I wanted to send this letter to parents and carers. It is based on suggestions from the mental health charity, Mind and I hope that it is of some use.

Please be reassured that you can contact the school should you need any help or support as well as the support organisations listed in this letter

Top Tips for looking after your mental health

Engage with people we care about in a safe way (it helps to calm the stress) e.g. on the phone, Facebook video chat or FaceTime. You can set up group calls and stay in contact with people who can support you. Isolation does not mean being alone, it just means for now we need to find different ways to communicate.

Limit the time watching or reading about the media as there is a lot of false information going around at the moment. Still stay informed but during a particular time so we are able to calm down and relax afterwards. The most useful thing to pay attention to is the daily press conference, this is based on our governments decisions and how we move forward and will give the most clarity at an uncertain time.

Use social media positively. There are several musicians playing live Instagram gigs for you to watch and stories of kindness in this uncertain time that can help boost optimism and hope

Build a new routine. We are all used to routine and this helps to keep us mentally well. If you are now working from home, in self-isolation or home-schooling, try and create a routine or plan each day as it comes. Allow yourself rest breaks, keep a lunch break, and be more flexible in putting in activities like watching the tv and doing household activities.

Keep active. Avoid sitting down for long periods of time any form of physical movement will help. Simple actions like walking around the house or garden will help use some energy and prevent feelings of restlessness. Fresh air and natural light is a great way to boost mood. Joe Wick's is holding live P.E classes Monday-Friday at 9am on his YouTube channel. There are also lots of videos on YouTube for Yoga.

Grounding exercises Use these if you are feeling panicked or anxious, such as focusing on the five senses; list 5 things you can see, 4 things you can hear, 3 things you can feel, 2 things you can taste or smell and 1 big breath. This should bring us back to reality and let us focus on something more enjoyable and relaxing.



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Mindfulness on a morning or evening can help us to relax and feel less anxious, some useful apps are: Smiling mind, Worry time, Clear Fear, Calm and Headspace.

List of support organisations

Young Minds	https://youngminds.org.uk Useful website with lots of information for young people. Provides free, 24/7 crisis support across the UK if you are experiencing a mental health crisis – all texts are answered by trained volunteers, with support from experienced clinical supervisors and texts are free from EE, O2, Vodafone, 3, Virgin Mobile, BT Mobile, GiffGaff, Tesco Mobile and Telecom Plus	Call – 0808 802 5544 Text: text YM to 85258.
Kooth	https://www.kooth.com/ Free, safe and anonymous support for young people	Contact them directly through their website
The Mix	www.themix.org.uk You can talk to The Mix for free on the phone, by email or on their web chat	Freephone: 0808 808 4994 (1pm - 11pm daily)
SHOUT	www.giveusashout.org Shout is a 24/7 text service, free on all major mobile networks, for anyone in crisis anytime, anywhere. It's a place to go if you're struggling to cope and you need help.	Text: Shout to 85258
Childline	www.childline.org.uk Anyone under 19 in the UK with any issue they're going through. Trained counsellors.	Tel: 0800 1111 – FREE
Papyrus	https://papyrus-uk.org The prevention of young suicide	Call - 0800 068 41 41 Text - 0778620969 7
The Calm Zone	www.thecalmzone.net The Campaign Against Living Miserable – A useful website with tips, strategies and support.	Call - 0800 58 58 58 5pm – 12am



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Thirteen	www.thirteen.me.uk Online support for young people about a range of current issues that young people may face.	Contact them directly through their website
NHS (111)	https://111.nhs.uk/?utm_source=nhsuk&utm_campaign=home page 111 Online	Call – 111
School Safeguarding Contacts – If you have a safeguarding concern about a student at Aylesford during this time you should contact one of following Designated Safeguard Leads at the school		
Miss T Kelvie – Head Teacher	Tanya.kelvie@aylesford.kent.sch.uk	
Mrs N Land – Deputy Head Teacher	Niamh.land@aylesford.kent.sch.uk	
Mr D Wright – Assistant Head Teacher	Dave.wright@aylesford.kent.sch.uk	
Mr P Neeve – Progress Leader	Phil.neeve@aylesford.kent.sch.uk	
Mrs N Severn – Pastoral Manager for Year 7/8 and 6 th form	Nikki.severn@aylesford.kent.sch.uk	
Mrs T Hodgson – Pastoral Manager for Year 9/10/11	Tracy.hodgson@aylesford.kent.sch.uk	

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you to follow all government guidance regarding self-isolation and social distancing. Please remember the only priority at this time is ensuring that you and your families continue to stay safe and keep healthy.

Your sincerely

Miss T Kelvie - Head Teacher

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RESPECT SELF-DISCIPLINE **COURAGE**
OPEN-MINDEDNESS **MOTIVATION**
RESILIENCE CONFIDENCE **INTEGRITY**
COMPASSION **CURIOSITY**