Coronavirus:
Wellbeing support from Bridgend Educational Psychology Service for families

Wellbeing tips for families:

- Talk to your children, and answer their questions. Ask about what they have heard about the virus and the situation so that you can correct possible misconceptions and reassure them.

- Avoid being too immersed in media coverage. Be mindful of the amount of things you are reading and watching, including social media – as this may add to worry and anxiety. Consider a few updates every day from trusted sources.

- Remember that people react differently to significant events. Some people – adults and children – may feel worried, some excited, some nothing much at all. Be reassured that different reactions are normal and ok.

- If your child seems worried, it may be good to distract them with something that takes their mind off their worries. You might also want to set aside 10-15 minutes each day for them to talk about any worries, and to reassure them.

- Remember to keep things positive and give children hope. For example, tell children that now many people are working to make this better and that even though it is serious, everyone is doing their best to help people.

- Try to keep familiar routines. Well-known routines in everyday life provide security and stability.

- Do nice things together, and keep active. Make a plan and suggest some regular family times where you can play games, do some exercise together, or do other things that you know most of you like. Try to find a good balance between time together, and screen time.

- Keep in good contact with family and friends (via Facetime, Skype WhatsApp etc.; following NHS guidance on 'social contact'). This will help children connect with others and know that others are thinking about them. It will also reassure them that others are well.

- As a parent you may be concerned yourself. Take care of yourself and make sure you have breaks, time to relax, and ask for help from others if you need.

Prepared by Bridgend Educational Psychology Service with acknowledgement to Harrow Educational Psychology Service

Some useful links:

1. **Talking to children about Coronavirus**

   There is currently a lot of uncertainty and worry around the coronavirus outbreak and children and young people will be affected by the huge changes that are going on around them - regardless of their age or any additional needs. It is really important that adults explain what is happening to children and young people in an age appropriate way so they understand what is happening. Some useful links are:

   Talking to children about Coronavirus (British Psychological Society):
   https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/talking-children-about-coronavirus

   Talking to Children (Childmind):
   https://childmind.org/article/talking-to-kids-about-the-coronavirus/

   How to talk to your child about coronavirus (Unicef): https://www.unicef.org/coronavirus/how-talk-your-child-about-coronavirus-covid-19

   Tips and guidance on supporting preschool children (Zero to Three);
   https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/3210-tips-for-families-coronavirus

   Talking to children (National Association of School Psychologists)
   https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources-and-podcasts/school-climate-safety-and-crisis/health-crisis-resources/talking-to-children-about-covid-19-(coronavirus)-a-parent-resource

2. **Stories about Coronavirus for children**

   Visual stories are a useful way of helping children to understand the Coronavirus. Here are some links to some good examples:
   ELSA: Coronavirus Story for Children:
   https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/coronavirus-story-for-children/

   Hello! Story about Coronavirus for young children:
   https://660919d3-b85b-43c3-a3ad-3de6a9d37099.filesusr.com/ugd/64c685_319c5acf38d34604b537ac9fae37fc80.pdf

   A social story about pandemics (Carol Gray):
   https://carolgraysocialstories.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Pandemics-and-the-coronavirus.pdf?fbclid=IwAR23zxNIbEumpw4oKIM7Xy3VlKnA25b8Gi53N6YiFIeKB9Vx0LQypSPYzzg

   A Social Story about the coronavirus: https://www.ppmd.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/The-Corona-Virus-Free-Printable-Updated-2-The-Autism-Educator-.pdf

   A comic exploring coronavirus to help young people understand:
   https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/02/28/809580453/just-for-kids-a-comic-exploring-the-new-coronavirus?t=1584464333506

3. **Information Videos for children about the Coronavirus**

Information video on Coronavirus for Primary age children (KS2) (Brainpop):
https://www.brainpop.com/health/diseasesinjuriesandconditions/coronavirus/

Information video on Coronavirus for older children/adults (WHO):
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mOV1aBVYKGA&feature=youtu.be

4. **Promoting Children's Wellbeing**

Advice for young people who are feeling anxious about Coronavirus (Young Minds):
https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/what-to-do-if-you-re-anxious-about-coronavirus

Helping children cope with stress (WHO):
https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronaviruse/helping-children-cope-with-stress-print.pdf?sfvrsn=f3a063ff_2

Advice for older pupils and adults about looking after their emotional well-being.
https://afsp.org/taking-care-of-your-mental-health-in-the-face-of-uncertainty/?fbclid=IwAR3ScDBfuhV5INKyutAG9IPNm4JnjjLOmHxv5w8SR9pBbDDU-8Hhy1QH-L8

5. **Special Needs and the Coronavirus**

Parent-focused ideas from Special Needs Jungle about how to support children with anxiety around coronavirus, including an easy-read explanation for children and adults with learning difficulties:
https://www.specialneedsjungle.com/calming-coronavirus-anxiety-children-everyone-else/#Update

See social story in the appendix.

6. **Looking after your own wellbeing**

How to protect your mental health (BBC):
https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-51873799

Coronavirus and your wellbeing (Mind UK):
https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/

5 Ways to wellbeing (Mindkit):
https://www.mindkit.org.uk/5-ways-to-wellbeing/

7. **Health Advice**

NHS advice:
https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/

Note: as the situation and sources of information are developing, the above tips and links may be updated.

Appendix. A Social Story about Coronavirus (acknowledgement to Southend Educational Psychology Service)

