School closure:
Looking after your wellbeing

As you will be aware, following Government guidance, we have been asked to close the school due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Looking after your mental health while self-isolating:

If you are self-isolating or social distancing because of coronavirus (COVID-19), it is important to look after your mental health. Here are some tips that may help.

1. **Staying connected:**

   - **Phone calls** are amazing, and are a great way to stay connected. But seeing someone's face really can make a huge difference on a phone call. It can lift your mood and make you feel less lonely. There are lots of free video calling services you can use, and if you can connect to Wi-Fi this will help if you're worried about your data allowance. **Remember to stay safe on line!**

     https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/looking-after-yourself/social-media-and-mental-health/

   - **Reach out**
     You're probably not the only person feeling worried, bored or frustrated. It's a good time for a catch up, so don't be afraid to make the first move and reach out to someone you haven't heard from in a while. They'll probably be very grateful to hear from you. Send them a message and let them know you care.

2. **Staying calm**

   - **Mindfulness**
     There are lots of great free apps you can use to guide you through breathing techniques and meditation that can help ease your anxiety and clear your mind of anxious thoughts. We like to use **Headspace.**
   - Why not also try some **yoga** as a way to relax and also get some gentle exercise which can boost your mood? There are lots of YouTube videos you can use to suit your ability and level of mobility.
   - **Take a break from the news**
     It can be tempting to constantly check the news during times like this, but if you notice this is having a negative impact on your mental health. Try limiting how often you check the news.
   - **Read a book**
     Getting away from screens and reading a book can help you escape for a bit. Why not re-read one of your favourites, or get your friend to recommend

one? It might be difficult to get a new book, but you can access lots of books online.

- **Plan your days**
  Your normal routine might be disrupted and that can be stressful. Take some time to write down how you want to spend your day. Creating and sticking to a new routine will give you a sense of order and normality. Decide on your new routine and make sure you build in time to do things you enjoy. If you live with other people, you could ask them to help you.
- **Feel productive**
  Make a list of all those things you said you would do but never get round to. It could be sorting out your wardrobe, doing some gardening, fixing things around your living space etc. These tasks can make you feel productive and give you a sense of accomplishment. Tidying your living space can also make you feel calmer and more positive. If you want to take the time off to rest and not be productive, that's also fine too. Listen to your body.

3. Dealing with stressful situations at home

- **Walk away from tense situations if you can**
  Being cooped up with other people will naturally be frustrating and might create tension between you and those you live with. You can defuse difficult situations by walking away from arguments until everyone starts to feel calmer.
- **Create a rota**
  If you're in a situation where lots of people are fighting over who gets to decide what you watch on TV, who cooks and cleans, or anything else, you might find it helpful to create a rota. This can help you agree a fair system and help avoid arguments.
- **Reach out for help**
  If your living situation is difficult, please don't struggle in silence. Speak to someone you trust. Call a friend or a helpline. If you're worried about being overheard, you could try texting or emailing instead. There are lots of helplines which also offer text and online messenger support.

Young Minds – March 2020

See below for a list of helplines and other resources.
Get urgent help

Young Minds Crisis Messenger service
Save our Crisis Messenger number on your phone. Text YM to 85258 for free 24/7 mental health support if you are having a mental health crisis.

Emergency services (999)
If you or someone you live with is seriously poorly, call 999.