

Dear Parent/Carer,

Below are common concerns which children in our community have around Coronavirus.

Underneath I have suggested the sorts of things we might say in support.

Supporting anxious children is not easy and as a parent myself, I know only too well how difficult it is to always have the right words or things to say. I hope some of it is of use.

Best wishes,

Mrs Ruth Reynolds.

"I'm worried about brother because he has asthma."

- Do not dismiss this worry. It is real to them!
- If your child says this or something similar-take their worry seriously.
- Listen carefully and validate their worry by saying something like:

"I have listened to you and you have told me you are worried about your brother/sister/mum/friend...because they have asthma."

Ask them what they understand about asthma and the Coronavirus. Listen carefully to what they tell you and correct any misconceptions they may have surrounding this. Visit: <https://www.asthma.org.uk/advice/triggers/coronavirus-covid-19/> to separate fact from fiction. Make sure any information you share with them is filtered by you, factually correct and age appropriate.

You might say things like:

"Asthma is something some people have. It means that at times they have difficulty in breathing. They take special medicine or inhalers that help them to breathe."

"If someone with asthma got the Coronavirus, it may set off their asthma symptoms. It may make it more difficult for them to breathe."

Reassure them by saying something like the following:

"Doctors know a lot about asthma and how best to protect people with it from the Coronavirus."

"There are a lot of things people with asthma can do to manage their asthma."

“There are lots of things they can do to reduce their chances of becoming ill with the Coronavirus, such as taking their inhalers and medicines regularly, keeping their inhalers with them at all times, avoiding contact with other people and (like all of us) regularly washing their hands.”

“Asthmatics (people with asthma) know about this and know to ring for medical help if they feel they need it. They can ring 111 and get help straight away”

“I'm worried about missing out on my learning.”

- Do not dismiss this worry. It is real to them!
- If your child says this -take their worry seriously.
- Listen carefully and validate their worry by saying something like:

“I have listened to you and you have told me you are worried about your learning.”

Reassure/explain by saying things like:

“I understand you are worried about this but you will need to stay off school for a while.”

“At the moment we don't know how long school will be closed for. In time, you will be able to go back to school.”

“The school will be open for some children. It will be open for the children whose parents are working hard to look after those who is unwell or need help.”

“The teachers have put work online for you to do to keep your brains active and learning!”

You could also say:

“Let's turn this into a positive opportunity. We can use the time at home to enjoy being together or learn other things, like how to cook, bake, grow things....”

“I'm worried about running out of food that I like and having to eat foods that I don't like.”

- Do not dismiss this worry. It is real to them!
- If your child says this-take their worry seriously.
- Listen carefully and validate their worry by saying something like:

"I have listened to you and you have told me you are worried about running out of food you like and having to eat the foods you don't like."

Reassure/explain by saying things like:

"Important people (Government Ministers) have told us that there isn't a food shortage in this country because of Coronavirus."

"It might look like the country is running out of food when we go to the shops and see empty shelves, but this is only because some people have been panic buying or perhaps buying more than they really need."

"For a short while there may be some favourite foods we can't buy but there will always be something in the shops you like to eat!"

"There is a new law now which means lorry drivers can work around the clock to deliver food to the shops and supermarkets."

"Even if we have to self-isolate, we have friends and family who can help us with food supplies. There are also kind people at school and in the community who can help us to get food."

"I'm worried about my grandparents self-isolating."

- Do not dismiss this worry. It is real to them!
- If your child says this-take their worry seriously.
- Listen carefully and validate their worry by saying something like:

"I have listened to you and you have told me you are worried about your Gran/Grandad/self-isolating/being alone."

Reassure/explain by saying things like:

"I understand your concerns but at the moment it is best for them to be in isolation. They are following the advice they have been given"

"If they are at home they are less likely to get the Coronavirus."

"After a while, he/she will be out of isolation and you will see them again!" (Some young children may think this measure is for ever!)

"There are other ways we can keep in touch with them. We could ring, text or skype them! Would you like to do that?"

"They will contact us by phone or text if they need anything or simply want to chat! They have our phone number"