BPS offers advice to schools, parents and carers to help children through the uncertainty of school closures

19 March 2020

**The British Psychological Society’s Division of Educational and Child Psychology (DECP) has published tips for schools, parents and carers dealing with the unprecedented school closures.**

This follows the announcement that schools in the UK will close for all bar a small number of children from Friday 20 March.

Being out of school for what is an open-ended period, with restricted access to their usual social spaces, is likely to be difficult for many young people.

But schools, parents and carers can take steps now to manage this difficult period, look out for signs of stress in young people, and meet their needs over the coming months.

**Tips for schools include:**

* Make plans to keep in contact with some children. Some children need a consistent relationship with an adult in school, and will benefit from consistency, reassurance and connection of key adults at school keeping them in mind.
* Make time to talk during this week’s timetable. Create the opportunity for children to talk about their thoughts and feelings ahead of the final day of school, which can help to normalise feelings of worry and concern.
* Psychological wellbeing is paramount during this period, and this may mean that focusing on wellbeing and mental health is vital.
* Schools should support parents and carers to address their children’s concerns and signpost them to the DECP’s [advice on talking to children about coronavirus](https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/bps-highlights-importance-talking-children-about-coronavirus).

**Tips for parents and carers include:**

* Stress and anxiety in such an unusual and unpredictable situation is normal.
* Children can sometimes believe that they are responsible for events that are beyond their control – reassure them that it is the adults’ job to keep them safe.
* Friendships are key to maintaining resilience for children, so help them to maintain these relationships through phone calls, online communication, and writing letters.
* Having a routine and structure helps children to feel secure in uncertain times.
* Restrict access to rolling news coverage.
* Play is fundamental to the wellbeing and development of children of all ages, and a great way to reduce stress in adults.