



Education Resources
Executive Director **Tony McDaid**
Udston Primary School
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Learn together, Laugh together, Achieve together
Trust ~ Teamwork ~ Respect ~ Effort ~ Kindness

18th March 2020

Home Learning Advice

We are currently living in uncertain and worrying times but we continue to be uplifted by the sense of positivity and team spirit within the Udston community. With many families already self-isolating and with schools expected to close at the end of this week, we are aware that continuing learning at home is at the forefront of everyone's mind. Whilst academic learning is important, our priority as a school community first and foremost should be the Health and Wellbeing of all children. Children who are stressed, anxious or worried do not learn; they do not take in or process information well. When emotions overwhelm them, they are not as able to remember all the information relevant to the task at hand. The main focus of 'home learning' over the coming weeks should therefore be providing experiences to help your child remain calm, talk about and process their feelings.

For a child to be able to think clearly, they will need an adult who is not overwhelmed themselves to provide a 'containing experience' that helps them process their feelings. This can happen in a variety of ways in the things that are said and in the actions of the adult. They may be as simple as letting the child know that you have recognised that they are overwhelmed by saying something like *"I think you are upset and it would help if you sat down to help you calm down and then we can..."* or some children will benefit from going with an adult to a quieter room. Again the way the adult communicates with the child should show that the adult is sensitive and thoughtful to that individual child's needs. A useful way to think of our role is to compare it to the cabin crew on a flight. When there is turbulence, we look to the crew for a reassuring smile. If they are calm, we are calm.

Some practical tips for helping your child manage their feelings include:

- Starting your questions with "I wonder...?" can be very helpful as there is no pressure on the child to provide an answer and it helps them name their feeling, e.g. *"I wonder if you are feeling scared?"*. Often they don't have the answers to give and this can add to their worries.
- Keep it factual and name what you can actually see, e.g. *"I can see that you are worried"*.
- Show understanding and empathy, e.g. *"I can understand that you are feeling worried"*.
- Helping your child find a solution, e.g. *"I wonder what you need right now to help you feel a bit better/calmer/happier/safer/etc"*.

Why not try...

Some ideas from *'What to do When You Worry Too Much'* by Dawn Huebner:

- Draw/write something that you are worried about
- Draw people with different facial expressions, e.g. worried, sad, happy, etc

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**Healthy
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- Set up a 'Worry Time' - a time slot during the day for you to share your worries with an adult, with no interruptions.
- Create a sign to display during 'Worry Time'
- Draw/create a 'Worry Box' where you will store your worries
- Draw a character to represent your worries, what will it look like?
- Make a list of things you can do while you are ignoring the worry
- Draw the 'Worry Character' giving up and going away
- Draw or make a list of the active and fun things you can do to relax and stay healthy
- Draw or write about a special memory
- Draw yourself doing something you are good at
- Draw yourself without your worries

Some other ideas to help your child relax (we are aware, however, that not everyone has access to all of these resources):

- Mindfulness/relaxation (www.relaxkids.com has some free resources)
- Mindfulness colouring/drawing
- Read a book
- Listen to music/stories (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/radio>)

A child can't be both relaxed and anxious at the same time. Staying involved in something fun is a powerful way to forget about our worries. Distraction is one of the most useful tools a child can use to break free from worry. When a child is engaged in an activity, there is less room for the worry, even if nothing about the feared situation has changed. Please see our school website and Twitter over the coming days/weeks where we will aim to share links and ideas for fun suggestions to do at home. We will communicate any updates or changes, in line with SLC's guidance, via the school app.

On a final note, please don't have a battle with your child/ren over school work. It is not what anyone needs right now. Instead, cuddle up together and read, read, read! Take turns reading. Read them your favourite story. Do a puzzle. Build a den. Bake. Watch a film together. Build Lego. Look at photographs. Please do not worry about formal school work, learning happens in many different ways and through many different day to day activities. This is a time for families to just 'be' together.

Although school as we know it will change just now, we want families to know that you have our continued support and we will be thinking of everyone. We would urge you all to continue to follow NHS guidelines to keep your families safe and healthy. You can contact us via the School Office email address gw14udstonpsoffice@glow.sch.uk.

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