

Mental health and wellbeing support

2021 has started in a way like no other and we are acutely conscious of the challenges that you are facing whilst your child/ren are learning from home. We know that this third lockdown may have left you and your family feeling high levels of uncertainty and stress. With this in mind, this newsletter is focused on managing emotions along with sharing some useful links to websites that offer support. We hope these resources can provide some additional support during these unprecedented times. Most importantly, there is always someone available from the Alport team if you need to discuss any of these matters further.

Looking after yourself

Below is a daily reminder to be kind to ourselves, we cannot help and support others if we are not feeling emotionally regulated:



The infographic features a purple cloud at the top containing the text "A little bit of rain is okay" in yellow. Below the cloud are several colorful raindrops in shades of orange, purple, blue, and pink. In the top right corner, there is a circular logo for "YOUR MINDS 360° schools". Below the raindrops, a paragraph explains the R.A.I.N. process. At the bottom, the letters R, A, I, and N are displayed in large, bold, colored fonts, each with a corresponding description below it.

A little bit of rain is okay

We understand the toll the last year has taken, and you may feel like you have to be a superhero all the time. Remember **R.A.I.N.**, the four-step mindfulness process to help you acknowledge your emotions and stop being hard on yourself.

R Recognise what's going on

A Allow it to be there, just as it is

I Investigate with kindness

N Natural awareness, these feelings will pass

It is important to build in some time for yourself each day and to not be hard on yourself if things haven't gone to plan or things haven't got completed.... there is always tomorrow.

Supporting your child maintain engagement with home learning.

Almost overnight, the way our children learn, and the way they are taught, has changed again. They no longer have to get out of bed so early, get in the car or walk and make their way into school. This can be a good thing in some ways but as we all know, learning full-time from home can bring with it some big challenges and, for some people, it can take a big toll on their mental health. The longer we are in this situation, the harder it can become to maintain motivation, to be resilient and to stay positive. We find this hard as adults so our children will certainly be feeling it to. You may have noticed that it harder to get your child to engage in their schoolwork or there may be a change in their mood or behaviour. Here are some tips to help look after their mental health and how to help them stay motivated while they are learning from home.

Form a routine:

If you haven't already, come up with a timetable/routine and help your child to stick to it. Make sure that there is a balance between regular breaks, some fun time, and some work time. That can help your child to stay focused. On average, it is said that a child can concentrate for 2-5 minutes per year old they are. For example, a 10 year old should be able to focus for a minimum of 20 minutes a time whereas a 5 year old would be for around 10 minutes. It may also be helpful to think about setting a goal to achieve for each learning session. Your child doesn't need to work from 9am - 3pm every day. Nobody is expecting them to work for the same amount of time as if they were in school - the teachers are setting the expected amount of learning and work but this does not have to be completed at set times and may not always get completed. Think about setting a goal to achieve for each session and decide with your child what they must complete and what they might come back to. Think also about what your child wears and where they work. They might love wearing a fluffy dressing gown and working in their bed. However, getting out of bed and putting on different clothes, and sitting at a desk, or the kitchen table, helps them to differentiate between work and free time.

Continue to exercise and be active.

Encourage your child to go outside, for at least one form of exercise per day. It's well reported that exercising and getting fresh air helps to look after our mental health and wellbeing. While they're out, take a moment to encourage your child to look at what they can see in front of them...What colour are the leaves? What can they hear?

Stay connected with friends and teachers.

Now more than ever, your child's teacher is interested in looking after your child and making sure that they are ok. They will engage with your child throughout the day and they love to hear how your child is getting on. Therefore, it is important that your child uses 'Seesaw' our school's virtual learning environment (VLE) to keep in touch with them. With older children, encourage them to ask questions about the work, explain how they got on and to tell their teacher how they are. For younger children in Foundation and pre-school, help them stay connected through 'Evidence Me' and share what they have been busy doing. Encourage your child to make full use of video messages and verbal and recorded feedback they are given along with joining in any 'Zooms' which are organised. This will also help them keep in touch with friends. Remind your child that they might not be in the room, but their friends and teachers are still there.

Finally, We're all in this together.

It is important to remember that every single person in the world is currently being affected in one way or another by what's going on with the coronavirus. Which means that lots of people are worried, scared and anxious. Reassure your child that it is ok to feel this way. Encourage them to talk to you, their friends, or teachers about how they are feeling; sharing how we feel and talking about it helps everyone.

Here is a link to the parent support resources from 'Young Minds' where you will find much more information and support:

[Supporting Parents Helpfinder \(youngminds.org.uk\)](https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parents/parent-support-resources)

Other useful websites:

<https://www.mindful.org/mindfulness-for-kids/>

<https://cosmickids.com/>

<https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/childrens-mental-health/>

When emotions explode

Last year and the start of 2021 has been extra stressful and, understandably emotions may be heightened at home. It is normal to feel frustrated, worried, or angry about the situation, but it can be hard to know how to communicate in these very emotional or angry moments.

The pyramid below is a useful guide for if your child has angry feelings or outbursts. It might help you know how and when to start a conversation and talk about each other's feelings.



(the information and resources in this newsletter are mostly taken from 'Young Minds')

