



Bolton Parent Carers & Bolton Information Advisory Service

Working together for Bolton's SEND families

Joint Bulletin 13 - 19th June

What has happened this week?

It's been a drizzly, grey week hasn't it! Where has the sun gone? Hopefully it will make a welcome return soon! IAS and BPC have been busy bees. We have also hosted two webinars this week for parents and carers of early years children who are moving to primary school, it was lovely to be joined by parents from the comfort of their own homes!

The government have released further guidance on schools and special needs, and announced some extra measures for groups of those children who still haven't been able to get into school. We have tried to make some sense of it for you here. Read on, and we will be back next week!



Schools- U-turn on primary schools opening for all children before the summer holidays

Previously, we told you that the government were hoping to bring back all primary school age children for a short time, before the summer break, to allow children access to some of their usual structure and routine, before finishing for the summer. However, this week it has been made clear that this will not happen as planned, and, unless your child is already in one of the groups able to access school now, or are in a special school where the wider opening is based on individual needs rather than year group, children will remain at home, until the new academic year.

We have been asked lots recently about our thoughts and opinions on whether September will see all children back in their schools, and a level of normality resuming in our education system. Put simply, we just don't know. Although it is anticipated that educational settings will open for all students from September, there are some who are sceptical about how possible this will be. We will be no doubt guided by infection rates, safety, numbers wanting to take up a place, and how individual schools can manage. We will have to wait and see how things develop between now and the summer break, and will of course, update you when we are able to say more on this.



Government boost to 'fill in the lost learning gaps'

Gavin Williamson, the Education Secretary, is due to announce today, that schools are going to get funding from the Government to help children and young people, at both primary and secondary age, with the effects Coronavirus has had on their education.

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Government boost to 'fill in the lost learning gaps' ...continued

Mr Williams said, "This package will make sure that every young person, no matter their age or where they live, gets the education, opportunities and outcomes they deserve, by spending it on measures proven to be effective, particularly for those who are most disadvantaged. The plan will be delivered throughout the next academic year, bringing long-term reform to the educational sector that will protect a generation of children from the effects of this pandemic."

The funding will be made available directly to the schools, who are best placed to identify the support children and young people will need to 'catch up'.

As we are now becoming accustomed to after announcements from the government, further information will follow to explain more about how it will actually work. We'll obviously be looking out what this will look like for SEND children and will report back!



Is your child heading towards Secondary School

Do they have special educational needs, but you don't have an EHC plan?

We are holding two **virtual workshops** on the legal framework SEN support and we will be focusing on children starting secondary school this September, it will also be very useful if your child is in year 5 or year 7.

There will be a daytime and evening session. As always, they are free to all, and delivered by Cheryl from IAS and Nan from BPC. We will be holding these on **Tuesday 30th June at 11.00am** and **Wednesday 1st July 7:30pm**.

Webinars allow you to join our session from your home. We use Zoom webinars, this means you can see and hear us, but we can't see or hear you—so you can relax and not worry! They are still interactive and you can submit questions for us to answer as we go along!

To book your place visit www.boltonparents.org.uk/webinar3



Bolton Council Educational Psychology Service Helpline

The Educational Psychology service helpline continues to operate. You can call them to discuss, for example, any concerns or questions you may have about your child and their education, or any matters regarding supporting them, meeting need, helping with emotional health in children..

The numbers for the helpline for the next 2 weeks, starting Monday 22nd June, are as follows:

Monday 9.00am - 12.30pm – 07768353621

Wednesday 9.00am - 12.30pm - 07580036439

Friday 9.00am – 12.30pm – 07768352728

We also have this week's newsletter from Bolton's educational psychology team for you at the end of the bulletin. This week's they have teamed up with CAMHS and the topic is anxiety.



Clinically vulnerable, and extremely clinically vulnerable children

We are aware that some of you are still home with children who are shielding. The guidance for these specific groups, changes dependent on the advice from government in relation to risk. However for those of you who are still in clinically vulnerable situation, we wanted to do a Q and A on some frequently asked questions.

Q - What is the difference between 'clinically vulnerable' and 'extremely clinically vulnerable'?

A - Children and young people who are clinically vulnerable have an underlying health condition. However, there is evidence to suggest that children in this category are at a much milder risk of clinical illness due to coronavirus. This is determined by the type of health condition they have.

Children and young people who are extremely clinically vulnerable, will have received a personalised letter advising them to shield. They have been identified as being at a very high risk of contracting severe illness if they were to be infected by Coronavirus. This too is determined by the type of health condition they have.

Q - Can these children attend school?

A - The government advice is that children who are clinically vulnerable should continue to attend school/ return to school, as the evidence is that these children are less at risk, and that appropriate risk assessments should be carried out by the school, in conjunction with parent carers, to minimise risk. There should also be good observing of personal hygiene and social distancing.

Children who are considered *extremely clinically vulnerable*, will have been sent a shielding letter, and are *advised* not to attend school for their own safety at this time. Shielding advice will change based on infection decline within the community.

Q - If my child is in one of these groups and I am offered a school place, do I have to take it up? I am worried about my child.

A - No. There is currently no duty on parents and carers to take up a school place for any child. This can be slightly different if there are concerns about managing the child safely at home.

Q - Can my school ask me to provide medical confirmation from a health professional?

A - No. The guidance very clearly says that schools cannot ask you to do this. The only time this advice may be sought is for informing how best to meet the child's need generally.

Q - My child should be in one of the groups allowed in school but school have said because they are clinically vulnerable or shielding, they cant attend. Is this right?

A - No. The guidance says that where a parent/ carer or young person themselves, ask for a place, schools cannot take the clinically vulnerable status as a reason to refuse a school place if they would have otherwise readmitted them. Again, appropriate risk assessments will be carried out to ensure risks are minimised. The decision to keep clinically vulnerable and shielded children at home is entirely voluntary, and so requesting a place is parental/ young person's right.

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Q - My child is in one of these groups and I don't want them to attend school. Should school be doing something for them at home?

A - Yes. The guidance says that schools should continue to ensure that there are opportunities to engage in learning as far as possible, through remote education, and with an increasing focus put on the preparation of their return to school. Further, if your child has an EHC plan, you should refer to the letter sent by the LA in June to discuss aspects of the plan provision you feel needs to be considered whilst they are not in school.

Q - If I am shielding, or someone in my house is, but my child is not clinically vulnerable, can they go to school if they are in one of the groups allowed in?

A - In most cases, yes. Children who live with someone who is shielding, in most cases, should be allowed to attend school if they are in one of the groups allowed in. The only exception would be where the child is not able to observe robust social distancing measures. A risk assessment in conjunction with family should be completed to determine whether or not this is safe.



Need support?

Our COVID 19 community response line is now open offering vital help to people who need food or essential items

01204 337221

8.30am – 5.30pm Mon – Fri and Sat 9am – 1.30pm

The Team Bolton community of volunteers, partners and council staff are offering vital help to people who need support (including food and essential items such as medication), particularly if:

- you have received a letter from the NHS advising you are at high risk and should stay at home
- you are medically vulnerable and according to the government criteria you should stay at home
- you are self-isolating due to illness (no matter your age)
- you are experiencing financial hardship
- you are experiencing food poverty

Call handlers will provide advice and tell you how you can best access support. This includes local support for those who are feeling isolated and alone.

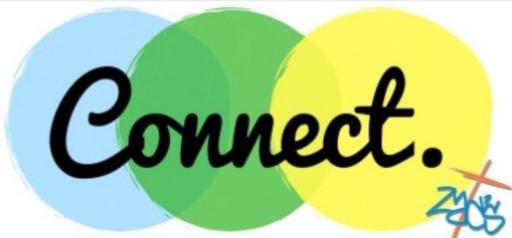
Social Stories

Do you have a child with social communication needs who is struggling to adjust to some of the changes Coronavirus has brought about?

Autismlittlelearners.com has some great mini social stories that explain lots of these changes in a pictorial way. Includes; social distancing, why people wear masks, why the doctors are dressed differently, and greeting people differently.

Find them here- www.autismlittlelearners.com





Broadening young peoples' social circles

Connect is a FREE 10-week course open to young people ages 10-18. We aim to bring young people together through fun activities such as music, theatre and outdoor pursuits. All activities are designed to strengthen young peoples' social and communication skills, broaden their friendship circles and build confidence.

Activities adapted to run online include: Creative Art, Drama Workshop, Cooking Skills, Games Night, Young People Takeover & more

TUESDAYS 6-8pm
13-18 Years
Online via Zoom

WEDNESDAYS 6-8pm
10-18 Years (SEND)
Online via Zoom

THURSDAYS 6-8pm
10-12 Years
Online via Zoom

Registration now taking place for the next Connect course
13-18 starts 30TH JUNE | SEND starts 1ST JULY | 10-12 starts 2ND JULY

To enquire or book a place (limited number of places per course)
Email ethan.clare@zacsyouthbar.co.uk / emma.kidd@zacsyouthbar.co.uk
Telephone 01204 706 200 Text 07434598426

Zac's Youth Bars | The Sycamore Project Ltd | Charity Number 1050020
Farnworth: 71 Market Street, Farnworth. BL9 7NS
Prestolee: 8 Crompton Road, Prestolee. M26 1HL



Zac's Youth Bar launch "Connect" - a free 10 week course helping young people to increase social skills, try new things, and build confidence. Starting online from 30th June.

There are limited places available, so get in touch soon to refer a young person.

Call 01204 706200/ 07434598426 or email emma.kidd@zacsyouthbar.co.uk



Reminder on support available to you

Both the IAS and BPC websites have a wide range of resources and information to keep you up to date and busy throughout this time. You can find us at

www.iasbolton.com and www.boltonparents.org.uk

IAS and BPC are holding coffee mornings by Zoom. Each one is hosted by Frankie from Bolton Parent Carers. These are every Monday, Wednesday and Friday, from 11.30am until 12.30pm. For more information visit www.boltonparents.org.uk/join-in

Our IAS 'natter and listen' service is still here for anyone who needs it- whether you just need some adult conversation, need to let off some steam, want some advice or reassurance, or just someone to call a friend to talk about your day, we are here. Simply text 07467943495 and we will arrange a call back for you whenever you want to talk. Cheryl, Nan, Mike and Karen are happy to help wherever we can.



You must wear a face covering if you're visiting hospital.

In line with recent recommendations from the World Health Organisation, Bolton Royal are introducing new measures at Bolton NHS Foundation Trust to keep visitors, patients, and staff safe. For more info about this visit www.boltonft.nhs.uk/



Positive approaches to support website

This website is for families who care for children, young people or adults with a learning disability or developmental difficulty (including those who are autistic). You will find information about positive approaches for supporting your own wellbeing and supporting choice, independence and communication for your relative. You will also find information about how to support your relative if they display behaviours that challenge.

There is a mixture of reading material, videos and printable tools, with links to other resources and organisations. Everything has been created by experienced family carers and professionals working together. <https://www.positiveapproachestosupport.co.uk/>



Spectrum Gaming

If your child is autistic, between the ages of 12 and 18 and loves gaming, take a look at Spectrum Gaming. Spectrum Gaming was set up by a group of autistic advocates who wanted to create a friendly and accepting community for autistic people who have a shared passion for gaming. Their main focus is for autistic gamers to have some fun, make some friends and show off what they can do! Visit <https://www.spectrumgaming.net/>



Face masks on transport... At the time of writing we have just heard that

Transport for Greater Manchester have announced they will be creating an exemption card for public transport users re face masks. No more info as yet, but as soon as we have it we will share it with you! GM covers Bolton, Wigan, Bury, Rochdale, Manchester, Stockport, Trafford, Salford, Tameside and Oldham, so this will be useful for lots of journeys!



We will be back next week. In the meantime, please do make use of the joint IAS/BPC support package mentioned. All past copies of our 12 bulletins can be found [online](#)

Stay well and look after each other, Cheryl and the IAS team, and Nan and BPC



Bolton Educational Psychology Service and CAMHS

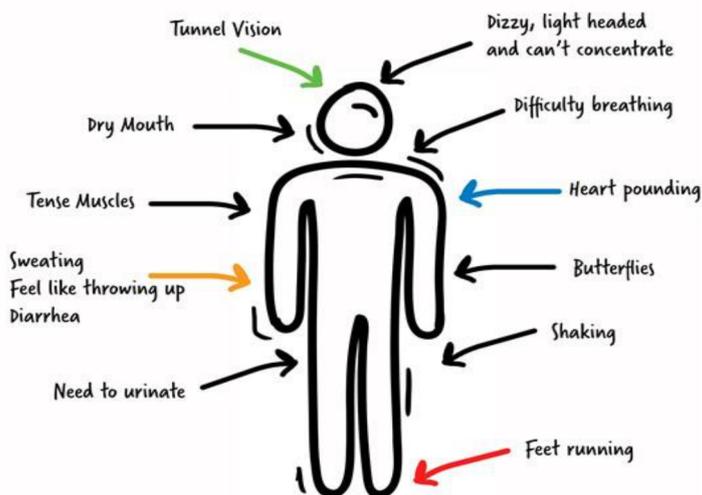
Newsletter - 12th June 2020

The coronavirus pandemic, and the impact it has had and continues to have on all our lives, may make us feel more than usually anxious. For children and young people, disruption to educational and social routines can cause worry and anxiety. Some children and young people may not be able to express their feelings of anxiety other than through changes in behaviour. This week's newsletter focuses on how to recognise problematic anxiety in children, young people and adults, what to do about it, and when and where to seek help.



What is anxiety? The brain has evolved to try to keep us safe by causing us to experience a sense of anxiety in situations it judges to be threatening. When we are very anxious, the 'rational' part of our brain (called the 'pre-frontal cortex') is temporarily overridden by a more primitive, instinctual part of the brain called the 'amygdala', often prompting what can be described as a 'fight, flight or freeze' response: This makes us feel more alert, stops us thinking about other things, and even causes the range of physical effects pictured below, all designed to get us out of the stressful situation as quickly as possible. **A person who is highly anxious will find it very difficult to focus on anything but the source of their anxiety and is likely to find it almost impossible to learn.**

What happens during freeze, fight or flight?



When is it a problem? It is important to remember that a degree of anxiety is both normal and appropriate in the current circumstances – after all, the threat posed by coronavirus is both real and significant. Helpful levels of anxiety about this threat may prompt us to take sensible steps to keep safe, like washing our hands and social distancing. **It is when a person's anxiety stops being useful and 'adaptive' and gets out of proportion with the level of actual threat that extra support may be needed.**



What might problematic anxiety look like? Problematic or unhelpful anxiety may look different depending on the age of the person and what they are anxious about. You might see the following:

Children

- Clingy of care givers
- Difficulties getting off to and staying asleep
- Repeated nightmares (more than once a week)
- Complaints of tummy aches/feeling unwell
- Increased temper tantrums
- Excessive reassurance seeking

Teenagers

- Overeating or undereating
- Excessive sleepiness and fatigue / sleep disturbances
- Overly Irritable and/or tearful
- Social withdrawal
- Restless
- Body aches
- Difficulties concentrating (Sourced from www.mentalhealth.org.uk)

My child seems anxious – what should I do? 'The Worry Tree' is a useful resource to help children and those who care for them to think about what to do when they feel anxious:

THE WORRY TREE



Resource designed by Caitlin Smith 2020 for Bolton CAMHS with input from Bethany Smith, Wellbeing Practitioner. Adapted from Butler and Hope 2007. This resource may be photocopied, stored or reproduced with no alterations. For therapeutic use only. ©

Things to try when you feel anxious

Draw a picture about your worry You could draw a 'worry bag' and inside it draw pictures of all the things you are worried about. Or you could draw yourself doing something that helps you feel less anxious.

Get active Exercise has been shown to make us feel less anxious. You could try going for a walk, doing press ups or star jumps, dancing to music or riding your bike.

Tune in to the 'now' Anxiety can make us dwell on 'what ifs' and future possibilities. Deliberately 'tuning in' to the present moment can help to break this habit. There are lots of ways to do this. You could try mindfulness activities, such as those in the book 'Sitting Still Like a Frog' by Eline Snel, or at

<https://positivepsychology.com/mindfulness-for-children-kids-activities/>

or grounding: paying attention to the place you are in right now, think of 5 things you can see ... 4 things you can hear ... 3 things you can feel against your skin (the breeze/ the ground/ your clothes against your skin) ... 2 things you can smell ... 1 thing you can taste....



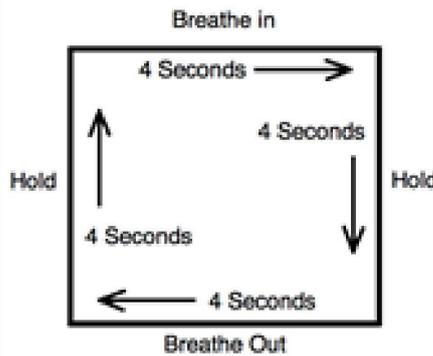
Focus on your breath

When we are anxious, our breathing can become shallow and fast. This is to get the body ready to run or fight, but the effects (dizziness) can make us feel more anxious. Taking slow, deep breaths can have a calming effect. You could try:

-Hot Chocolate Breathing: Pretend you have a mug of hot chocolate in your hands. Smell the warm chocolatey smell for three seconds, hold it for one, blow it cool for three, hold it for one. Repeat three or four times.

-Teddy Breathing: Place a teddy/beanbag on your stomach and watch it move up as you breathe in and down as you breathe out

-Square Breathing: breathe in for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds, then breathe out for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds (see diagram)



Back to Back Breathing (good for ages 5-12)

- sit with an adult so you are back to back
- try keeping your back long and notice you partner's breath moving their back
- Try matching their pace of breathing or breath slowly together

Visualisation (for younger children, keep this shorter)

Adult would ideally guide child to keep them focused:

- lie down with legs straight or knees bent
- cover yourself with a light blanket
- take a deep breath in
- let your eyes close
- in your mind's eye, imagine your favourite place
- look around your favourite place. What can you see? Trees? The sea? Sky full of stars?
- listen carefully to any sounds. What can you hear? Music? Gentle waves arriving to the shore?
- take a deep breath. Can you smell anything familiar? Flowers?
- can you taste anything? Chocolate fudge cake?
- what can you feel? The sun warming your face? Water tickling your feet?
- when you are ready, take one more look at your favourite place? Notice how you feel being there. You can go to your favourite place anytime.
- wiggle your fingers and toes and when you are ready, slowly open your eyes.

Special thanks to Beth Smith, Ruqayyah Karajda and Adi Frankovitch (CAMHS) for contributing to this newsletter.

Who to contact for help

If you or your child is experiencing unhelpful anxiety which is persistently interfering with daily life, you may wish to seek further support – for example, from your GP, or from the following organisations:

-1Point counselling service: website: www.1pointbolton.org.uk , telephone: 02104 917745

-Anna Freud -advice and resources on supporting children and young people experiencing anxiety: www.annafreud.org/coronavirus-support/coronavirus

-Anxiety UK: www.anxietyuk.org.uk

-NHS-approved mental health apps, many of which are tailored to supporting individuals with anxiety, can be found at www.nhs.uk/apps-library/category/mental-health

-Kooth - for young people aged 11-18, offers online counselling and chat forums: www.kooth.com

**Educational Psychology Service
Schools ICT
Smithills Dean Road
Bolton
BL1 6JT**

Telephone: 012044 338612



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www.bolton.gov.uk



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**Bolton
Council**

Our values are who we are...

Accountable, determined, making a difference, honest and respectful. We work together.



**Bolton
2030**

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BOLTON
BECAUSE...**

