



Support for families during lockdown

The Covid-19 pandemic and national restrictions are difficult for everyone. At the moment schools are closed to the majority of children and the lockdown means people must stay at home, except in a small number of circumstances.

We understand that this is putting more pressure on families and there are services that can help.

● **Learning at home**

Children are learning from their parents every day at home but with the new lockdown rules you are being asked once again to support the learning your child would normally do at school.

Learning at home this time round should be a different experience. Schools are expected to provide a full curriculum experience and have teachers available to help children as they learn. Last time this was not the expectation- and parents did a lot of the work with children. Depending upon the needs and age of the child this time parents do not need to do so much and aren't expected to be able to teach them curricular subjects.

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- Make sure your child is able to access the learning sessions and resources.
- Does your child know how to get in touch with their teacher and ask the school for help?
- Children should be able to watch the lessons on line or on television and work through the resources that have been sent home.
- Get help from the school if they're stuck! Encourage the child to ask the teacher for help via the platform they are working on, whether it's Google Classroom or Class Dojo etc.
- Try your best to keep your children in their usual school routine as much as possible, so that they are ready to work at the beginning of the school day and taking regular screen breaks to play and exercise.

Schools understand that parents are trying to manage home learning and their own work and that parents are not teachers and they are there to help. Be kind to yourself and ask your school for help if you need it.

If your child is completing all of their school-set work and looking for other activities to keep them busy at home, there's some ideas for different age groups at www.norfolk.gov.uk/children-and-families.

● Technology

Schools have access to laptops and other equipment to help support home learning and can apply for more if these are needed. Please speak to your child's school if you need support with technology. Schools are also able to request free mobile data for those families that need it to support home learning and many are able to help parents with printed out packs if necessary.

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● Emotional well-being and mental health

- These are difficult times and we know that parents and carers and children and young people might be feeling anxious or struggling with their emotional well-being.
- Children and young people aged 0-25 don't need a referral to access urgent mental health support.
- Online counselling platform, called Kooth for 11-25 year olds, which young people can contact directly for support. Visit **www.kooth.com** for online counselling 365 days a year.
- You can also text ChatHealth Norfolk on **07480635060**.
- More support is available, as well as tips to support emotional well-being at **www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/mentalhealth**
- The NSFT YouTube channel also has helpful podcast content for young people produced by the Mental Health in Schools team
 - Young people and low mood during COVID pandemic
 - Recognising the signs of COVID stress in young people**<https://www.youtube.com/c/NsftNhsUk/videos>**
- First Response is a 24/7 helpline for people of all ages in Norfolk and Suffolk who need urgent mental health support. If you are experiencing something that makes you feel unsafe, distressed or worried about your mental health you can now call the helpline on **0808 196 3494**.

There is also advice and support available at **www.norfolk.gov.uk/mentalhealth**

● Support with food and finances

If your child was already receiving free school meals then their school will continue to provide access to food or vouchers during the lockdown. You can find out more about free school meals, and if you might be eligible, by visiting **www.norfolk.gov.uk/schoolmeals** If your child is already in receipt of free school meals, please contact your school in the first instance if you haven't already heard from them to find out how this provision will be made for you at home.

The pandemic has also placed additional financial pressure on many families. If you are struggling to pay the bills or pay for food, you can contact the Covid Winter **Support scheme for advice or support at www.norfolk.gov.uk/covidwintersupport**

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● Health advice

Health support and advice is available to parents and carers via the Just One Norfolk and Just One Number services at www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk or **0300 300 0123**.
In an emergency, always call 999.

● Safety

With many more children at home and isolated from those who might normally support them, there are concerns some children who might be at risk will not be able to get the help they need. Police, schools and children's services have measures in place to keep children safe but are keen that people in communities across the council get in touch if they are worried about a child or family. If you have concerns you should contact Norfolk County Council on **0344 800 8020** or in an emergency contact the police on 999. In a non-emergency the police can be contacted on **101**.

● Cyber Safety

With children and young people relying on their tech at home for learning and entertainment during lockdown, it remains vital to keep conversations about online safety going and raise awareness of reporting routes if something goes wrong.

Check out these simple 15 minute activities that families can do to support their child's online safety at home including topics such as cyber security, social media and gaming. Packs are available for ages 4 to 14+. Parents can also watch our video guides on different online safety topics. **Online safety home activity worksheets (thinkuknow.co.uk)**

For more online guidance on keeping children and young people safe online visit **UK Safer Internet Centre** - Online Safety Tips, Advice and Resources | Safer Internet Centre

● Further help and support

If you need any extra support for your child or family, or you are concerned about the safety of a child, please contact Norfolk County Council on **0344 800 8020**.

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