

CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19)

PHASE 2 | REACHING OUT TO CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH HIDDEN VULNERABILITIES

Much work has been ongoing by ASCL and others, including the government, on the need to support children, young people and adults in general during the COVID-19 crisis and, specifically, those who are vulnerable.

This was explored in our first paper, [Coronavirus: Advice to schools and colleges to reach out to children and young people with hidden vulnerabilities](#).

All children and young people need our support more than ever and many organisations are responding with suggestions about how to help, from tips to practical help, albeit at a distance, to resources which can be purchased and used online. The disruption and isolation of the population in general, the concerns we all have about our own and other's health and the continuing uncertainty about the future post COVID-19, when we all get back to 'normal', has created a community of support for everyone.

However, as we move into the second phase of social distancing and isolation, with schools and colleges still closed for most children and young people, we need to remind ourselves about the needs of those children and young people with hidden vulnerabilities; those who are even more anxious about the current situation, the future and what it holds for them.

The second phase of isolation brings those children and young people with anxieties, not only about the current situation of no school or college, but about transitions, including actually going back to school or college, starting school, moving up to secondary school, moving to sixth form or FE college or going to university. These transitions are just over the horizon and would be an anxious time for most, but for those with hidden vulnerabilities, facing these transitions without the usual support mechanisms in place is daunting. They may not have been able to visit their new school or college, or they may not be able to get an apprenticeship, for example, if the opportunities are not presenting themselves.

What can we all do to help?

We know that one size does not fit all and what may be good practice in some settings does not work in others. We also know from research following other crisis situations around the world that when back to 'normal', the anxieties which everyone faces are quickly overcome. Children and young people in general quickly catch up. However, those with hidden vulnerabilities may not be sufficiently confident to catch up as quickly as others and so we set out below a few ideas for school and college leaders to consider:

1. When setting work for the whole class, consider what this might mean for children and young people with SEN or who are disadvantaged. Are they in a position to respond or do the work without their usual in-class support?
2. Do all children and young people have access to the tools to complete work that is set at this time?
3. Have you thought about texting a newsletter to all parents of children and to young people to keep them in touch with school or college? Some may not have access to a computer but they are more than likely to have a phone. Short texts can keep everyone equally part of the school or college community and in touch with all that is happening.
4. Can you identify levels of engagement which will build confidence in those with hidden vulnerabilities? What can they do well and achieve?
5. Can you identify key concepts which all children and young people need to learn in any tasks set before they complete set work? They may not be able to complete the whole task on their own but they will be able to complete some of the building blocks.



Examples shared by members

The following examples have kindly been shared by members and can be adapted to suit your own school or college community. They should not be read as specific advice or guidance from ASCL. For specific advice relevant to your particular circumstances, please contact your employer's HR service or legal advisers.

1 | Monitoring and reviewing engagement

- Hard copies of letters are being sent to students about the next five weeks of work with an overview of the work for students who are not on email.
- Microsoft Teams is a fantastic tool for tracking engagement and work completion (it is free to schools who use Microsoft Office 365 and needs to be configured with the management information system).
- Students submit work via assignments so you can see who has viewed and completed the work.
- Teachers are going to track this, and we have carefully worded emails home to parents of students who are not engaging. We will then be able to identify students who are not engaging.
- This is being followed up with Head of Years - with the same process above.
- We are going to review where we are in a week and decide how we can help our students who need it the most. We are considering inviting vulnerable students in school that are not engaging with the work at home.

2 | Strengthening relational teaching online

For those who are for example, not engaging well, lack confidence, or are anxious about working online. These examples give ideas on how to provide choices and increase communication whilst not overwhelming children and young people (CYP):

- A good morning text to young person's mobile (all logged).
- Setting work for a week – breaking this down clearly and simply so it doesn't overwhelm.
- Encouragement about what they can achieve today.
- Option to have hard copy resources delivered.
- Sending a postcard from the teacher to say well done for the previous week's work.
- Option to email and request tutor time for support with their subject teacher.
- Recognition that if a CYP is struggling to access learning, we need to offer help from their teacher not from an LSA.
- Teachers are working together to identify pupils who are disengaging and to specifically target communications with these pupils. For one or two we have decided they may just concentrate on subjects they feel confident with.

3 | Consolidation rather than new learning

For those secondary students (Key Stages 3, 4 and 5) who lack confidence, examples of consolidation strategies for review and recall of new and prior learning, rather than a focus on new learning:

Key points recall: Read through the work done over the week / two weeks. Can you recall (say aloud or write) the key points? When you can't, make a note on a Post-it / flashcard to prompt you next time. Go back to it later and try again until you get it right.

Flashcards: During your learning time, create flashcards with key points / definitions / vocabulary – these will be a very useful too throughout and at the end of the course to help you recall learning. You could try the Leitner system for learning, watch the clip here.

Feynman Technique: Make notes on a new topic using the Feynman Technique. Recalling prior knowledge first then researching the new knowledge explaining it in your own words to help you understand it better. Watch the clip here.



Create a one-page document of the key points from your learning on a topic / theme e.g. poster / mind-map / graphic organiser / knowledge clock to produce a representation that links loads of knowledge together.

Read these blogs for more information: [Graphic organiser blog](#) | [Graphic organiser templates](#)

K-W-L Chart: KWL charts assist teachers in activating students' prior knowledge of a subject or topic and encourage inquisition, active reading, and research. **KWL charts** are especially helpful as a pre-reading strategy when reading expository text and may also serve as an assessment of what students have learned during a unit of study. The K represents what students know, (filled in at the start) the W is what students want to learn (filled in before the reading / research), and the L is what the students learn as they read or research (filled in after the research).

ABC Brainstorming / Alphabet key: on one sheet of paper, students make a box for every letter of the alphabet and then brainstorm a word or phrase that starts with each letter. For example, if students are about to study the history of slavery in the USA, they may write: "Africans" for 'a', "boat" for 'b', "chains" for 'c'.

Independent, project and super-curricular type activities: See this [link](#) from Tom Sherrington with some ideas on this area.

4 | Strengthening motivation and engagement

For CYP working at their own pace and making independent choices about what to work on.

Record of Achievement EPortfolio/scrapbook: Keep an evidence folder/book (electronic or otherwise) that documents all the things achieved that can contribute to their school diploma. It should include a record of formal learning and additional accomplishments. So, a list of films watched, books read, meals cooked (with photos and recipes), exercise undertaken, to recording things to do with coronavirus (social, medical, ethical, political, environmental or economic). We are living through a piece of history that will be taught in schools of the future - have your own record of it. You need to use this as the receptacle for your 'evidence' of engagement with, and completion of, chosen electives.

5 | Inclusivity and wellbeing as a key focus

Some schools have focused on inclusivity and wellbeing as a key focus or theme for home learning. For an example of a curriculum focus, see this from the [Human Rights Campaign](#) (HRC)

Wellbeing as key to successful home learning

Create a schedule each day: you could have a separate notebook for this and add to it each day. It will help you to track and review your work.

Write down the six subjects you have each day according to your timetable so you know what you should be working on and to give you a balance of subjects.

Work out when you will be able to do the work: are you able to stick to your school timetable? When are you able to have IT access? Talk to your family about this.

Get your work organised: write the date and title and complete your work in your exercise book (or on IT if instructed to do so by your teacher).

Keep your work together and safe: for example, keep books on a shelf or in a box. If you are using IT, save it in folders in an organised way like in your books.

Tick off each subject from your schedule as you complete it and **record the topic of the lesson covered**, for example French = My House.



When you have finished all the work or during breaks, do something to support your wellbeing (see suggestions from the Wellbeing Top Tips below).

Do one more thing: later in the day, go and sit with a family member with your schedule for the day. Get them to ask you questions about your work for each subject to make you think about and remember what you learnt. You are more likely to get the work into your long-term memory this way and by saying it out loud. If you cannot remember, go back over the work and write it on a revision card to prompt you next time, and when they ask you the questions again.

Examples of questions which could be asked (for each subject):

- What are the three most important things you learnt?
- Can you finish the sentence "Today I have learnt ... " (and talk for 30 seconds about what you learnt specifically not what you did)?
- Give me an example of ... (related to the topic)

Be patient and flexible as much as you can.

Don't worry if you cannot stick to your timetable.

This is just a recommendation to help you get organised.

You may only have IT access at a certain time of day, and you may be sharing devices. If this is the case, do your work when you can.

It is likely you may finish the work set quickly – that is fine! Working from home is a different routine. Just try to complete the work to the best of your ability.

If you have finished your work early or want more work, complete an activity where you review or practise prior or new learning, for example go back over your work and make flashcards of key words and definitions, make a graphic organiser or do some self-quizzing.

Alternatively, do wider learning around your subject (e.g. reading or watch a film or documentary). For Years 7 and 8, do a super-curricular activity.

Communication with school

Your tutors and teachers will be emailing you, so **check your emails every day**. Schools and colleges may also use other forms of communication for feedback and to help with organisation of work.



Wellbeing top tips

The [government has released guidance](#) on how we can all protect our mental health and wellbeing during the coronavirus outbreak. Here are ten ideas to help keep your mind healthy:

1	Stay connected with others	Maintaining relationships is important: stay in touch with your friends and family through phone calls, messages and social media. There are lots of apps where you can video call multiple people at the same time, like Zoom, House Party, Skype and WhatsApp. Try a group video chat with several of your friends or family – on House Party you can play games and do quizzes at the same time.
2	Stay physically active	Current government advice says that you can leave the house for one form of exercise a day, e.g. a run, walk, or cycle, so make the most of it and get out of the house once a day. Don't want to leave the house? Join Joe Wicks every morning at 9am on YouTube for 'PE with Joe', an easy 30-minute workout you can do in front of your TV - you could video call your friends at the same time!
3	Talk about your worries	It's totally normal to feel a bit worried, scared or helpless about the current situation. It's important to talk to people you trust; doing so may help them just as much as you. If you don't feel you can speak to your friends or family, there are lots of helplines you can access. Your school may have more information on their own website with wellbeing suggestions.
4	Look after your sleep	Try and go to bed at the same time you would normally – it's important to maintain regular sleeping patterns. Avoid screens an hour before bed, don't drink anything with caffeine and create a restful environment. For more ideas on how to get a good night's sleep, visit the NHS Every Mind Matters .
5	Manage your media	24-hour news and constant social media updates can make you more worried. Try and limit the information (e.g. only once a day) and make sure you are getting the facts from a reliable source. For example www.gov.uk or the NHS website .
6	Take time to relax	Taking time to relax and to clear your mind can help you manage your emotions and improve your wellbeing. Try downloading a mindfulness app like ThinkNinja, start a new book or have a bath.
7	Make a new daily routine	Life is different for all of us at the moment and will be this way for a while. It's important to establish a new daily routine. Try to set a time to get up and a time to go to bed. During the day, engage in useful and meaningful activities like schoolwork, cooking, exercise, helping around the house, or phoning a friend. It might help you to write it down.
8	Do things you enjoy	You are being set schoolwork to do by your teachers, but it's just as important to spend time doing things you enjoy. Adapt your hobbies so you can still do them inside. You may like to post your ideas on social media or video sharing websites so other people can try them too. For example: like football? Try toilet roll keepie-uppies!
9	Set yourself goals	Setting goals and achieving them gives a sense of control and purpose. Think about things you want to do that you can still do at home: watching a film, reading a book or learning something online. You could keep a lockdown diary or write a blog, or learn a new language using an app like Memrise or Duolingo.
10	Keep your mind active	Try not to just stare at a screen all day. Keep your brain active by reading, writing, playing board games, doing crossword puzzles, number puzzles, jigsaws, drawing, painting, gardening – find something that works for you!

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