

Beecholme Safeguarding and Wellbeing



In an emergency, or if you believe a child is at immediate risk of harm, call the police on 999

If you are concerned about a Merton child:

- Urgent child protection matters needing immediate attention, call Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) 020 8545 4226/7 - Out of hours 0208 770 5000

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If you are concerned about a child living in Wandsworth?

- Urgent child protection matters needing immediate attention, call Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) 020 88716622-
Out of hours (after 5 pm weekdays or weekends) 0208 871 6000

You could also call the NSPCC Freephone Child Protection Helpline on 0808 800 5000.

Dear Parents and Carers

Within this letter, we include a summary of our arrangements to try to continue to offer support to our families through the school closures.

We realise that at different points in the weeks to come, many families will encounter difficulties and that stressful situations may make families vulnerable. You will not be alone and there are many sources of support out there- some well established and others new. As time goes on, we will endeavour to continue to update the list of these agencies. At these times, it is useful to know where to turn for additional support.

Visit the Beecholme Primary website regularly for suitable websites to support distance learning and also Health and Wellbeing guidance and support. Don't forget, teachers will be available during normal school hours whenever possible, to respond to work and queries via Seesaw or by emailing them via the school office address:

office@beecholme.merton.sch.uk

Reducing Anxiety during Self-isolation

The thought of staying at home for an indefinite period of time might seem daunting. You might feel there is nothing to do or you might be inclined to create a minute by minute schedule for your children. You may have high hopes of hours of learning, including online activities, science experiments, and book reports. You might have every intention of limiting screen time and technology until everything is done! But here's the thing...

Our children are just as scared as we are right now. They can not only hear everything that is going on around them, but they feel our constant tension and anxiety. They have never experienced anything like this before. Although the idea of being off school for weeks sounds awesome, they are probably picturing a fun time like summer break, not the reality of being trapped at home and not seeing their friends.

Over the coming weeks, you could see an increase in behaviour issues with your children. Whether it's anxiety, or anger, lethargy or protest that they can't do things normally - it will happen. You may well see more meltdowns, tantrums, and oppositional behaviour in the coming weeks. This is normal and expected under these circumstances.

What children need more than anything is to feel comforted and loved; to feel like it's all going to be ok. At the present time, whilst still being socially responsible and following the social distancing guidelines, it is possible to play outside and go on walks. Bake cookies and paint pictures. Play board games and watch movies. Do a science experiment together or find virtual field trips to the zoo. Start a book and read together as a family. Snuggle under warm blankets and do nothing Together

What if my child's learning suffers?

Don't worry about children regressing in school. Every single child is in this boat and they all will be ok. When we are back in the classroom, we will meet them where they are. Teachers are experts at this! Don't pick fights with your children because they don't want to do maths. Don't be angry for not following the schedule. Don't mandate 2 hours of learning time if they are resisting it. Instead, work with your child to find out what works best for both them and you.

Your child's mental health will be more important than their academic skills. How they feel during this time, and how you continue to bind as a family, will stay with them long after the memory of what they did once these weeks are long gone. So keep that in mind, every single day. Be creative, have fun, whilst also having some peace and quiet. Looking ahead positively- in our busy lives, how often do we have this chance to come together to face a challenge as a family and win?

Keeping Safe Online

Social media will be important to your children as a means of keeping in touch with their friends. Many of these are not age appropriate for primary school pupils but nevertheless children will use them. Please make sure you are able to monitor the content of the apps and have good privacy and parental controls set up.

For details about how to do this, most phone companies have help pages for their devices. Sites such as National Online Safety have many free parent guides relating to the most popular apps (including Fortnite, YouTube, TikTok, WhatsApp etc.) and which are also stored under the Safeguarding tab on the school website. ThinkuKnow (part of CEOP) has keeping safe programmes for children as well as clear reporting tools for inappropriate use should you need them. You can find links to these resources on our website.

There are advice and helplines specifically related to talking to children about Coronavirus and anxiety from the Anna Freud Centre.

https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/media/1960/coronavirus-mental-health-and-wellbeing-resources.pdf?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=coronavirus&utm_content=toolkit

Support for Children:

All our children are aware of how to call the emergency services- however, due to the effect of television, many may still quote 911 instead of 999 when asked! Please talk this through with your child.

All pupils are aware of the number for **Childline 0800 1111**, should they feel the need for someone to talk to. Remember, many children will not want to talk over their anxieties with a parent or carer because they won't want to worry you.

Children could also express any worries with their class teacher via the Seesaw app.

For Parents:

Family Lives (previously ParentLine) offers a useful website of advice and a confidential helpline number for those wanting support with any parenting issues including managing behaviour.

0808 800 2222

ELSA <https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/>

This website has very useful resources (mostly free) for dealing with children whose emotions are running high.

National Domestic Abuse Helpline offering support for victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence and their children remains open 0808 2000 247

Department for Education (DfE) COVID-19 (Coronavirus) helpline

DfE has launched a helpline to answer questions about COVID-19 related to education. Staff, parents and young people can contact the helpline as follows:

Phone: 0800 046 8687

Email:

DfE.coronavirushelpline@education.gov.uk

Opening hours: Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm and weekends from 10am to 4pm



Please remember, although we won't be having face-to-face contact with the majority of our families, we are still working to support you. Please use the distance learning materials and Seesaw service we offer. Teachers are available to help to try to motivate pupils who may find learning this way difficult. We may try to contact you by telephone periodically to check on how things are going and to see if there are things we can help with. We look forward to keeping in touch and seeing you all again soon.

Keep safe and healthy

The team at Becholme Primary

Merton Council Services Update

There is a COVID-19 web page which will be updated daily with any changes to services and special e-bulletins to keep you informed -

<https://news.merton.gov.uk/2020/03/26/coronavirus-information-for-residents-and-businesses/>

If you are experiencing hardship or difficulties

Council tenants in arrears as a result of COVID-19 will not face eviction, and the Council is urging private landlords to follow suit.

Merton Council website lists all the council support available for residents including:

For help with LWSS – Local Welfare Support Scheme, call 020 8274 4908 to speak to an advisor or email

lwss@merton.gov.uk

Discretionary Housing Payments may be available for a limited time to top up housing-related benefits to cover housing costs such as rent

You may be able to claim a discretionary reduction in council tax- visit your council website to find out if you qualify.

For those parents in need of support with food there are various good banks available:

<http://mlbc.org.uk/food-bank/> - based at Mitcham Lane Baptist Church.

<https://wandsworth.foodbank.org.uk/> - based in Tooting.

<https://www.trusselltrust.org/get-help/find-a-foodbank/croydon/> - based in Croydon.

