



ABINGDON

## **Supporting Student wellbeing through the Coronavirus period**

Dear Abingdon student

The outbreak of Covid-19 is, understandably, causing a great deal of worry and increasing our levels of stress and anxiety. Alongside taking precautions around hygiene etc. it is also really important to look after our mental health and wellbeing at this time. It's easy for things to feel confusing and overwhelming, however, there are some steps that we can all take that can help reduce the stress and anxiety and help normal routines as much as possible. A great starting point is this booklet entitled ["My Whole Self" from MHFA England](#)

### **Some top tips:**

**Exercise** – this is really good for our overall mental fitness and cardiovascular system. It also stimulates natural feel good chemicals in our brain. Refer to the [PE Firefly pages for ideas](#).

**Talking** – It's important to **stay in touch** with friends and family to maintain a strong support network at this time. If you have concerns or worries do talk to someone. Remember your Tutor, Housemaster, Head of Section, School Counsellors and Health Centre will still be contactable when you are working from home.

**Worry time** – It is quite understandable to be worried and anxious at this time. It can help to try to limit the times when you think about your anxieties and worries so they are not all consuming all of the time. You might like to check out the guidance here: [Address your Stress](#).

**News and social media** – Avoid fake news websites, ration your intake of news so that you are not inundated by a constant media flow. Rather, check in with reliable news sites only once or twice a day.

**Stick to Routines** – stick to your normal routines as much as possible. It is important to keep doing all the usual things: get up at a decent time, have breakfast, walk your dog, eat lunch, check in with lessons on Zoom as per your normal timetable. Don't forget your Other Half and Core Sport exercise times! Consider using the regular school timetable to help organise your day and make sure to take a break at the normal morning break time. Be patient, it will take time to adjust to this new way of being.

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**Helping others** – This period provides a renewed opportunity to look outwards for ways to help - for example around the house, why not learn to cook to help your family, box up food for an elderly relative or neighbour, facetime your gran or grandpa? Ask your parents or carers what you can do to help - I'm sure your offer will be greatly appreciated!

**Protect your Sleep** – Resist the temptation to stay up late into the night gaming or on YouTube. Be self disciplined about going to bed at the usual time. You should be getting 9 hours sleep a night so don't forget your sleep hygiene. Make sure you get up at the usual time so you are ready to register for tutor periods at 835am each school day. Click [here](#) for help with sleep hygiene.

**Stay connected** - We have the luxury of social media and whatsapp so do stay connected with friends and family. Why not invite your friend for a virtual cuppa online! You can even do board-games or baking together online!

**Be mindful of screen time** - If the temptation is to binge on Netflix or a PS4 game then why not take this time as an opportunity to read more widely, perhaps in a genre that you have hitherto not explored.

**Be Productive** – use this as an opportunity to paint, make music, compose, write a letter, plant some seeds, mow the lawn, help your parents with gardening at home - or help a neighbour with their garden. Growing vegetables is a good way of self-sufficiency. Producing good quality school work will also provide a real sense of achievement.

**Be Calm** - Use this as an opportunity for greater calm in your life. Why not try a mindfulness exercise, seek out more fresh air, walk the dog more often, get the *stellarium* app and gaze at the night sky or go for a bike ride. Yoga outside in the garden is good for the mind and body. For a list of helpful apps click [here](#).

**Other useful weblinks:**

<https://abingdon.fireflycloud.net/wellbeing>

<https://abingdon.fireflycloud.net/wellbeing/coronavirus>

Our school wellbeing twitter feed: [https://twitter.com/ab\\_wellbeing](https://twitter.com/ab_wellbeing)

<https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/what-to-do-if-you-re-anxious-about-coronavirus/#talk-to-someone-about-how-you%E2%80%99re-feeling>

<https://twitter.com/OxfordshireMind>

Finally, [James Shone](#) visited the school recently to give a talk on wellbeing. He spoke to parents about his model of **UFO**. This mnemonic was a great support to him and brought him hope and strength through a very challenging chapter in his life.

To look **Up** - to draw strength from our inspirations, principles, values, morality or faith.

To look **Forward** - with hope and optimism.

To look **Outwards** - particularly to help and support others in our community, especially the vulnerable, lonely and isolated.

This has been a very helpful mnemonic in my own life recently and I hope it offers strength for you too.

PDBG

19 March 2020