



Educational Psychology Services

COVID-19 Support

Staying in touch and connecting – why students need their teachers during school closures

Northamptonshire Educational Psychology Service...Bringing positive change and growth
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Though teachers cannot always deliver online classes or send work home to every student, they can still play a valuable role in their lives by staying connected in this time of uncertainty and heightened anxiety. Hearing from their teachers can provide young people comfort and consistency amid the disruptions caused by school closures and social distancing.

Resilience is central within all key relationships between humans, who show an inherent need to belong, connect to each other and to develop strong attachments.

“We know that strong, secure bonds with our teachers are really important in social-emotional development. To suddenly lose out on that under such strange and unprecedented circumstances can be really hard on kids,”

Jamie Howard, senior clinical psychologist at the Child Mind Institute and the director of the Center’s Trauma and Resilience Service.

❖ Relationships and connecting

The foundation of a classroom is always relationships. Having the ear of a trusted, known adult can be reassuring. It is also important to note that research has explored the benefits of teacher-student relationships from the child’s perspective. However, these relationships are also reflected positively by teachers, who have identified them as a key motivating factor for staying in the profession

❖ Providing continuity and modelling resiliency

Teacher communications with their students during COVID-19 school closures, can validate difficult feelings, demonstrate healthy responses to stress and model resilience.

Small measures of routine and predictability can be comforting for students stuck at home. Example of this could include what the classroom pet has been up to or sharing artwork completed at home.

At present we may be physically distancing from one another but we have the opportunity to emotionally connect in a number of creative ways.

❖ **Practical ways to stay connected**

- Phone or video calls to students following school guidelines and seeking parental consent etc (remember that some children and young people won't have access to remote technology, it may be helpful to consider other ways such as calling a parent to speak to a child)
- Email students to check-in with them, offering increased check-ins for those children and young people who are most vulnerable
- Post videos of you reading chapters from the classroom's shared reading book or have a bank of stories staff have recorded that they can access
- Post daily challenges or quizzes to keep your children engaged
- Model the idea of journaling – if you feel comfortable, you could model the use of an online journal to share examples of what you have been doing and how you have been feeling. Perhaps you can model that some days can feel trickier than others? Maybe you could share some ideas of things you have been doing to cope during these times?
- Encourage children to think about an object that helps them to feel connected to school, the classroom, a peer or their teacher or adult support. Encourage them to draw a picture of something they are looking forward to when they return to school Maybe as the child's teacher or their adult support you could do this too to help you to feel connected to your students and share with your class
- Take pictures with a poster which may include a message or record a short video clip. These photos could be collated into a short video or slideshow to share with children and young people with a message e.g. '*We wanted to let you know that we miss you and can't wait to see you again very soon*'. Examples from schools of how they connect : <https://vimeo.com/406861060?ref=fb-share> https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i8_7ck2BhQ0&feature=youtu.be (from about 15 minutes in)

References

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help

observe

consult

assess

focus

advise

encourage

develop

appreciate
