



St. Richard's  
Hospice

CARING FOR LIFE

Reg. Charity No. 515668

W e l c o m e





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**Supporting  
Children  
through  
COVID-19,  
Grief & Loss**

# Who we are...

## **St Richard's Hospice & Bereavement Support South Worcestershire**

- Pre and post bereavement support for children and families known to St Richard's
- Bereavement support for children and families who are registered with a south Worcestershire GP
- Pre-death and bereavement therapeutic groups



# Who we are...



## **Primrose Hospice and Bereavement Support North Worcestershire**

- Family Support Centre with specialist Children and Young People's Team
- Bereavement support for any child, young person and their family who is registered with a Bromsgrove or Redditch GP
- Anticipatory grief and bereavement support for children and families known to Primrose Hospice
- Individual and specialist group support available to Children and Families including PYPS a closed therapeutic group for child and parent/carer, Team Trevor, supporting children and young people anticipating grief and Teen Group, an open and informal group 12+

# Objectives

- Impact of Covid-19 on children
- Impact on children with varying needs
- Impact specifically on bereaved children
- Covid-19 and grief
- How to support bereaved children
- Resources and useful links
- Referral process and support provided by SRH and BSSW
- Signposting to local bereavement services

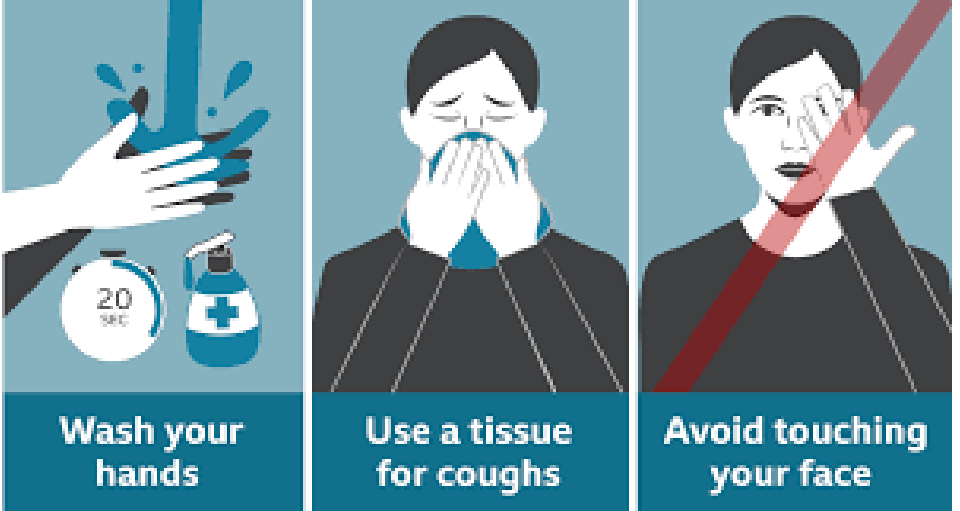
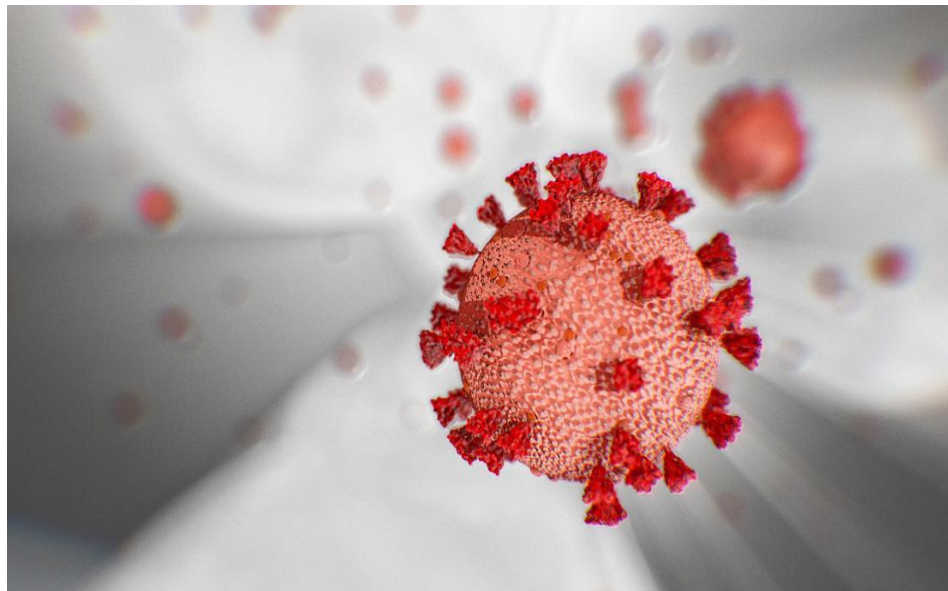


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# COVID-19



# Impact of COVID-19 on Children-

## *“Angry, fed up and isolated”*

- School closures and associated change of routine
- Reduced socialisation
- Increased worry/anxiety
- Not seeing grandparent/ other family members
- Questioning impact on school work/exams
- Increased risk of abuse
- Concern for parents health/jobs
- Separated families/Co-parenting
- Impact on children with learning disabilities



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# Covid-19 and Bereavement



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*“When Mummy died I felt as if I had been hit in the tummy by a car. If I hadn’t been told she would die it would have felt that I had been hit in the tummy by a bus.”*

**Winston’s Wish**



# How does grief show itself in children?

- Physical
- Emotional
- Behavioural
- Spiritual
- Social
- Educational



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# What does the research tell us about children's needs in bereavement?

- Information
- Reassurance
- Inclusion
- Expression of feelings
- Opportunity to remember



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# Impact on children with Learning Disabilities

- Being able to control and predict environment.
- Knowing what's going on.
- Knowing what's going to happen.



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## Contd.

- Can we hide details and protect the person from them?
- Consistency of message- It's better to have an average message promoted consistently than some good and some bad.
- Make the implicit explicit with our language.



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# Impact on bereaved children with Learning Disabilities

- Remember clear and objective messages can be delivered with compassion.
- Avoid uncertainty in our vocabulary.
- Importance of retaining structure.
- Responses
- May need an explanation or evidence of what death actually is.



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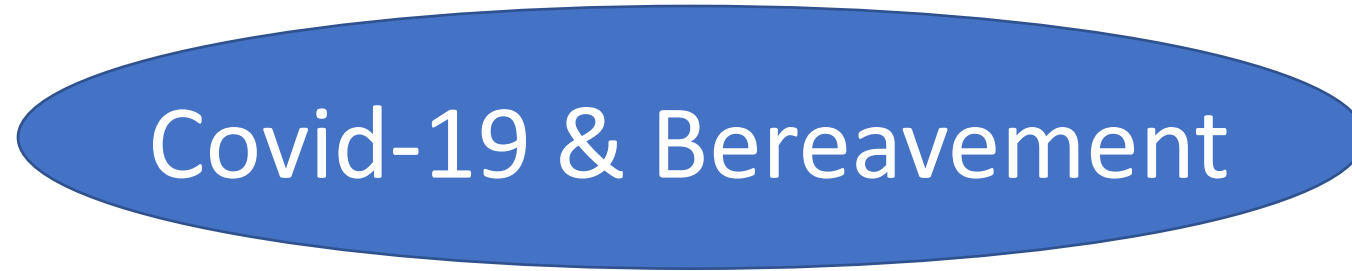


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Bereaved prior to Covid-19



Covid-19 & Bereavement



Bereaved from Covid-19



Bereaved during Covid-19

# Bereaved prior to Covid-19

- Increased media of death and dying
- Reduced visiting
- Questioning mortality
- Removal of routine



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# Bereaved during Covid-19

- Lack of specialness
- Social distancing
- Absence of rituals
- Media coverage of death



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# Bereaved from Covid-19

- Unpredictability
- Suddenness
- Distance
- Fear
- Separation
- Support Structures
- Anger
- Anxiety
- Lack of 'specialness'
- Constantly reminded
- Absence of rituals

*Ref: Winston's  
Wish 2020*



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*“This is a scary time for everyone, especially children and young people. Children need adults to help them understand what’s going on, to help them talk about what frightens them and to help reassure them”*

- The Irish Childhood Bereavement Network, 2020

# Ages and Stages



*“The best thing to do is give children honest, age appropriate information about death. Helping children understand death and grief will vary depending on the child’s age and development stage...”*

The Irish Childhood Bereavement Network, 2020

## 3-5 years

- Do not understand that death is irreversible
- Rituals help to make death concrete – not one event but accumulation of events
- May demonstrate less of a reaction
- Magical thinking
- Seek out replacement parents
- Sleep problems

These children need a language and emotional context they can use to communicate about the person who has died.

Avoid 'sleep', 'lost' or 'gone on a long journey'



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## 6-8 years

- Beginning to understand that death is permanent
- Outspoken, direct questions
- Separation anxiety
- Death is an inevitability, people including themselves will eventually die
- Talk to dead person
- Possessions important

These children need care explanation of cause of death, the funeral and burial process and what happens to the deceased person's body. Help to clarify thoughts and feelings and reframe events.



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# 9 – 11 years

- Reactions often intense
- Need to participate in rituals
- Fears of other losses
- School very important – learning – routine
- Need details about the death
- May need permission to show emotions
- Anger and aggression
- Trouble concentrating in school
- Limit setting important

These children need information and structured opportunities for emotional expression



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# 12 – 14 years

- Participation in funeral rituals – important
- May grieve in private (Seem to get on with life)
- Reaction is likely to be intense
- May bottle feeling up
- Displacement, anger, injustice
- Identification with the deceased
- School and peers are very important

Gentle encouragement is needed for the young person to open up and communicate their feelings.



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# 15 – 17 years

- Mourning process more adult – intensity often overwhelming
- Some displacement of anger - regression
- Concerned about living up to expectations
- Need to idealise dead person
- More likely to seek support outside the family
- May use alcohol/drugs/self-harm or as a way of coping



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# Memories & Practical Work

*“Research shows that bereaved children need to be given opportunities to remain connected with the person who has died”*

*(Silverman and Worden)*

Memory boxes  
Memory Books  
Memory cards  
Photo frame  
Candles  
Letters  
Salt jars  
Dream catchers  
Stones  
Puppets  
Worry Dolls  
Feelings Masks  
Worksheets and work books



# Things to consider due to Covid-19...

- Marking the day if children cannot attend funeral
- Creating a sense of connection via technology
- Reassuring children that no one is to blame
- Maintaining routine as much as possible
- Prioritising open and honest communication



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# Red flags to identify bereaved children at risk:

- Persistent difficulties in talking about the dead or ill parent.
- Persistent, un-containable aggression.
- Persistent symptoms of anxiety, i.e. refusal to go to school and extreme clinging to parent/carer.
- Persistent somatic complaints.
- Persistent sleep difficulties and/or nightmares after a year.
- Persistent changes in eating patterns.
- Marked long social withdrawal.
- School difficulties or a serious decline in academic performance, continuing after nine months.
- Persistent blame or guilt (indicative of clinical depression)
- Self-destructive behaviour or a desire to die. Child should be offered individual work immediately regardless of how long ago the diagnosis/death occurred.

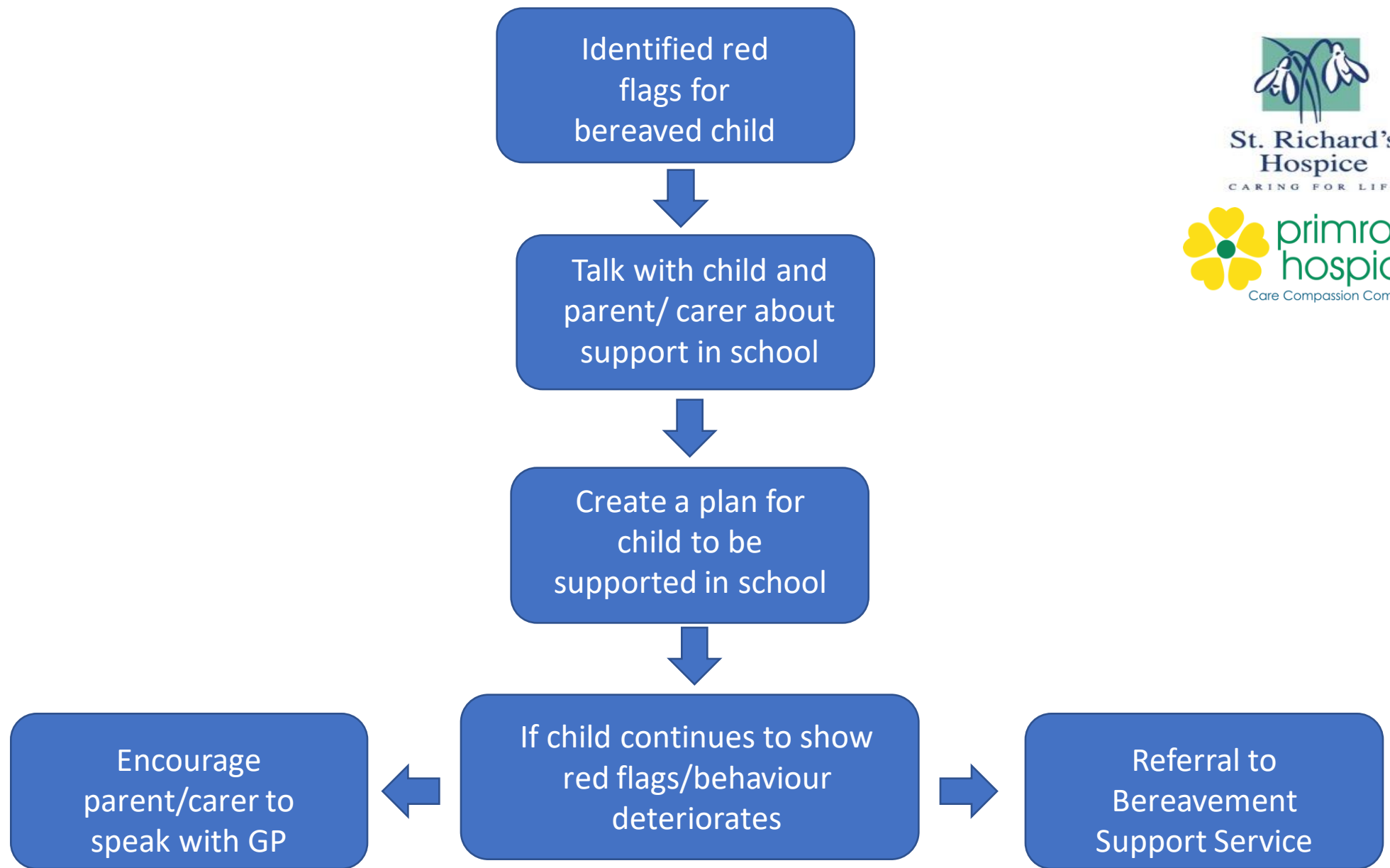
Worden 1996 Pg. 147-150



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# Flowchart



# How to make a referral...

## **South Worcestershire-**

Direct referral to our Bereavement Support South Worcester on 01905 760934 with permission of parent/carer.

Must have a South Worcestershire GP.



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# How to make a referral...



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**North Worcestershire** (including anyone registered with a Bromsgrove or Redditch GP) -

- Children and Young people can be referred to our services by a Teacher, GP, Parent/Carer and other Agencies involved in care of the young person
- Children and Young People can contact us directly

Please call:

01527 889799 and ask for a member of our Children and Young people's team

Or email [info@primrosehospice.org](mailto:info@primrosehospice.org)

# Local Bereavement Services

## **St Richard's Hospice & BSSW**

South Worcestershire

01905 763963

<https://www.strichards.org.uk/>

## **Primrose Hospice**

North East Worcestershire

01527 871051

<https://primrosehospice.org/>

## **Kemp for Kids**

North West Worcestershire

01562 756000

<https://www.kemphospice.org.uk/kempforkids>

## **Footsteps**

Worcestershire-wide

0845 467 6065

<http://talktofootsteps.co.uk/>

## **Touchstones**

North East Worcestershire

07547 367267 or email

[info@touchstones-support.org.uk](mailto:info@touchstones-support.org.uk)

<https://touchstones-support.org.uk/>



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# National Bereavement Services

- Winston's Wish – national helpline, resources and training
- Child Bereavement UK – national helpline and resources
- Childhood Bereavement Network – resources for schools



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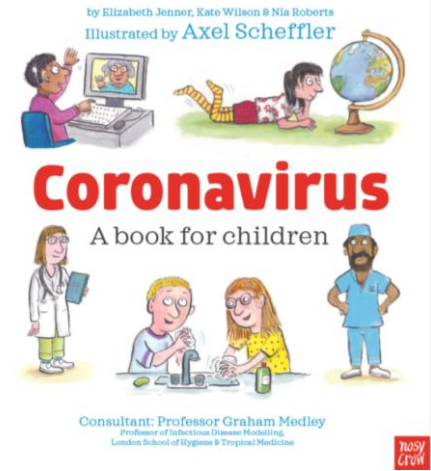




# Resources

## COVID- 19 Book

<https://nosycrowcoronavirus.s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/Coronavirus-ABookForChildren.pdf>



## PSHE Lesson Plans

PSHE  
Association

'Relationships: Our Special People' home  
learning lessons for KS1 & 2

Child Bereavement UK webinars for Early Years/Nursery, Primary, and Secondary schools [childbereavementuk.org/bereavement-awareness-training-for-education-providers](http://childbereavementuk.org/bereavement-awareness-training-for-education-providers)

## Child Bereavement UK- Growing in Grief Awareness Framework- Audit Tool

<http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk/campaigns/growing-in-grief-awareness/framework.aspx>

# Resources Contd.

## Look for the Rainbow

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1KkT4PnzqZwp-sp1iY3rdzSv0NUP-WAPz/view?usp=drivesdk>



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## Child Bereavement UK Video

<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/coronavirus-supporting-children>

## Partnership for Children- Wellbeing Resources

<https://www.partnershipforchildren.org.uk/what-we-do/childrens-wellbeing-activities-for-teaching-staff-and-families.html>

## Winston's Wish Resources-

<https://www.winstonswish.org/coronavirus/>



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# Has someone important to you died?

## Ideas to help your teacher support you while school is closed

People cope in all sorts of ways when someone dies. Often teachers want to help you in your grief, but aren't sure how, especially while school is closed. Here are some suggestions from other bereaved young people about ways your teacher could support you. Tick the ones you think would help, and send it to your teacher to start the conversation.

Please talk to me about how to let the rest of my class know what has happened

Ask me how I am feeling. It may not be obvious

Understand that I will not 'get over it' or 'put it behind me' but with time I will learn to cope with all the changes

Help me to find new dreams of the future and make plans

Check in with me once a week by email or message so that I know you are still supporting me from a distance

Please talk to me about how to explain what has happened

Help me to make a plan for how I will come back to school when it re-opens

Realise that I have a lot on my plate. I will keep up as best I can

Let me know about groups for children and young people who are also coping with loss and change

Arrange for me to get extra help with my work

Talk to me about what has happened. I may need more information, advice and education about loss

Give me extra encouragement for all the things I am managing to do and keep me in mind

Please try  
.....  
.....  
.....

With thanks to young people and Seasons for Growth trainers at the Notre Dame Centre in Glasgow.  
Published by the Childhood Bereavement Network at the National Children's Bureau reg. charity 258825  
For more ideas and local and national support organisations, visit [www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk](http://www.childhoodbereavementnetwork.org.uk)



NATIONAL  
CHILDREN'S  
BUREAU  
Part of the Family

# Video



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SnIYObmeAZE&app=desktop>

Accompanying booklet:

<https://indd.adobe.com/view/eafec4d8-5699-4f34-8342-9c3de45c26af>

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, 2020

# Final Thoughts...



- Use clear, honest and age appropriate information
- Allow children time to talk and to be listened to
- Use resources and books during support
- Having fun whilst remembering
- Just be there...

# Looking after yourself...

- Be kind to yourself, get rest, fresh air
- A bit of exercise
- Eat and keep hydrated
- Keeping a regular routine can help
- Try and stay in contact with family and friends, either by using telephone or other social media
- Its okay to ask for help
- Don't feel guilty if you are struggling
- Coronavirus Anxiety Workbook

<https://thewellnesssociety.org/free-coronavirus-anxiety-workbook/>



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**Thank you,  
any questions?**

Any questions not answered  
please email...

[Imacleod@strichards.org.uk](mailto:Imacleod@strichards.org.uk)

**Evaluations and Feedback**

## References:

<https://www.cruse.org.uk>  
<https://www.mind.org.uk>  
<https://www.winstonswish.org/coronavirus/>  
<https://www.childhoodbereavement.ie/>  
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

## Useful Links:

- Winstons Wish <https://www.winstonswish.org/coronavirus/>
- Papyrus- Prevention of Young Suicide  
Hopeline number 0800 068 4141 [www.papyrus-uk.org](http://www.papyrus-uk.org)
- NAPAC- Supporting Recovery From Childhood Abuse  
0808 801 0331 [www.napac.org.uk](http://www.napac.org.uk)
- CAMHS <https://www.hacw.nhs.uk/camhs>



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