Dear LAS family,

We hope that you and your family are safe and well during this unprecedented time.

As parents and carers of children and young people with a diagnosis of autism, the current situation with COVID -19 means that many of us need to adjust and perhaps differently than other families. We are very aware that you are receiving a huge amount of information from schools, media, friends and various services. It can be overwhelming for you as parent/carers, anxious that you are meeting your family’s needs, meeting education needs and keeping those anxiety and sensory needs down to minimal levels.

**We want to remind all our families that you all do a fantastic job at supporting your children and young people. You are enough and you are doing your best. Your first priority as we move through this situation is to keep you and your family safe and healthy.**

Knowing that you have probably received a lot of information already. We have decided to put together a new concise pack that is specifically for this situation. Our focus is mental health, education, sensory support and social stories.

For those of you that are educating at home, do what you can and if your children are struggling to keep up with work stay in contact with your schools and ask for the work to be adjusted to suit the needs of your child.

If your child is in secondary school use their normal timetable as a guide. If they are in primary school then set a little timetable of your own (if your school hasn’t given you a timetable). Give regular movement breaks, time for morning and afternoon breaks and proper lunch breaks. Remember listening to music is still a music lesson, bouncing and jumping around is still a PE lesson. Watering and looking after plants is Science, measuring ingredients or counting bubbles is still Maths.

BBC Bitesize are a great resource for all ages including parents who are perhaps struggling with GCSE work. Documentaries like Blue Planet provide loads of fantastic information as well as being very sensory soothing to watch, this all counts as education. BBC Horrible Histories is a great and fun way for children to learn about history.

For those of you with older children who are reading things online about Covid-19 and becoming anxious about the uncertainty and the general misinformation could fact check on reputable news sites such as the BBC news website. Any article that say “may, might, could” may not be factual.

It is important to explain things to our children and young people but remember sometimes less is more. Think about what your child needs to know, would it be better to turn off news bulletins and watch them whilst they are in bed? Some of our young people really like to know all they can, try your best to keep it factual, could you make your own news bulletin to update them? Some children just like to know what is happening in their own world in which case daily timetables are great in just providing some support. Remember you are just writing down your normal day not thinking of fantastic creative things to do.

We hope that all of you are well and safe. Please follow the governments guidelines on staying home. We are still working, albeit from home and you can still call our office as we are accessing messages remotely - 020 8699 3066

Stay safe

Lewisham Autism Support team.

**Lewisham Autism Support Covid-19 support pack**

**Education Support**

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| **Organisation** | **What do they do** | **How to contact** |
| **The National Autistic Society: Education Rights Service** | Advising on education rights for autistic pupils, tribunals and exclusions.  All resources on The National Autistic Society website are free to use | Call: 0808 800 4102  Email: [Education.Rights@nas.org.uk](mailto:Education.Rights@nas.org.uk) |
| **UK Government Guidance on Covid-19 school closures** | Up to date government guidance on the closure of schools  . | <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-school-closures/guidance-for-schools-about-temporarily-closing> |
| **IPSEA** | Leading charity offering free and independent legal information, advice for all kinds of special educational needs (SEN) and disabilities. IPSEA have a wealth of legal information on their website and have specifically provided information regarding SEN provision during Covid-19 | <https://www.ipsea.org.uk/news/ipsea-update-on-covid-19-school-closures-and-sen-provision> |
| **Lewisham Special Educational Needs Department –**  **Local authority SEN department based at Kaleidoscope** | This team manages all special educational needs for the borough. Including school allocation and EHC assessments and planning | Call: 020 3049 1475  Email: [sen@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:sen@lewisham.gov.uk) |

Education: Home Learning Support

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| **Organisation** | **What do they do** | **How do I contact them?** |
| **University College London (UCL)** | UCL have put together some great practical ideas to help you get started with home learning | <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/departments-and-centres/centres/centre-inclusive-education/homeschooling-children-send/managing-transition-home-schooling> |
| **Special Needs Jungle** | Special Needs Jungle provides parent-centred information, news, special needs resources. Highly respected in the SEN world. Their team have put together some information to help parents during the Coronavirus Lockdown. | <https://www.specialneedsjungle.com/>  (scroll down on homepage for Covid-19 support) |
| **The National Autistic Society**  **\*\*Visual support\*\*** | It is important to many autistic people to have a daily routine. The National Autistic Society have created a template you can use to schedule your daily activities: | <https://www.autism.org.uk/services/helplines/coronavirus/resources/helpful-resources.aspx> |
| **Drumbeat ASD School**  **Please take time to look at what Drumbeat have produced, there are some really fantastic support aids that are all free and all designed for autistic young people**  **\*\*Highly recommended Visual support\*\*** | Information on their website designed to support families at home and especially during isolation. Great ideas and visual resources that are autism specific  **Please make sure you are receiving Drumbeat emails by contacting:** [**outreach.admin@drumbeat.lewisham.sch.uk**](mailto:outreach.admin@drumbeat.lewisham.sch.uk) | <https://www.drumbeatasd.org/page/?title=Outreach+Resources&pid=202>  (please look at the Covid-19 pack that the Drumbeat Outreach team have put together) |
| **Flipboard**  **Virtual Tours** | Flipboard is an online news and information site. Their website allows you to visit museums from the comfort of your home. | <https://flipboard.com/@theculturedesk/virtual-tours-live-streams-and-online-cultural-programs-bsvtv2fvukelq787?from=share> |

**Mental Health**

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| **Organisation** | **What they do?** | **How to contact them** |
| **CAMHS (children and adolescents mental health services)** | South London and Maudsley NHS – Crisis Support Line Telephone support | **0800 731 2864**  available 24 hours a day if you need urgent help or advice. |
| **Lewisham Health and social care for children and families** | **If you are worried that a child or young person is in immediate danger, call 999 immediately.**  Otherwise you can contact this team to report your concerns. | Call: 020 8314 6660  Out of hours call: 020 8314 6000. |
| **Drumbeat ASD School**  **Please take time to look at what Drumbeat have produced, there are some really fantastic support aids that are all free and all designed for autistic young people**  **\*\*Highly recommended Visual support\*\*** | Practical guides to help reduce anxiety.  The Drumbeat Outreach team have put together a Covid-19 pack for families | <https://www.drumbeatasd.org/page/?title=COVID+19+Resources&pid=362> |
| **Kooth** | Kooth.com is an online counselling and emotional wellbeing service which is a free, confidential, safe and anonymous way to ask for help. They are not autism specific but are very autism aware. | <https://kooth.com/>  Monday – Friday 12pm – 10pm  Saturday/Sunday 6pm – 10pm |
| **NSPCC** | NSPCC have produced specific advice on Covid-19 anxiety and depression. You can also report safeguarding concerns to them. | <https://safeguardingtool.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/childrens-mental-health/depression-anxiety-mental-health/>  Email: [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk)  Call:[**0808 800 5000**](tel:08088005000) |
| **Elsa Support** | Supporting emotional learning. They lots of great activities for younger children to help with anxiety with positive focused activities that are free to download. | <https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/category/free-resources/coronavirus-support/> |
| **Young Minds** | Supporting young people to get the best possible mental health support and have the resilience to overcome life's challenges. They also have Covid-19 specific support. | <https://youngminds.org.uk/>  Parent helpline: 0808 802 5544 |
| **Shout** | 24 hour, 7 days a week text messaging service support in a crisis. The team of trained Crisis Volunteers will help take you from a crisis to calm 24/7, whenever you need them. Text Shout to 85258. They have breathing exercise videos onsite while you are waiting for a response. | <https://www.giveusashout.org/>  Text: 85258 |
| **Place2be** | Support for parents in helping children with mental health such as anxiety and depression. | <https://www.place2be.org.uk/about-us/news-and-blogs/2020/march/coronavirus-information-for-children/> |
| **Samaritans**  **(please note that Samaritans are listed for parents and carers)** | Samaritans are a registered charity focussing on suicide prevention, there to listen without judgement, no pressure, and help you work through what's on your mind. They are currently offering Covid-19 specific support. | Call for free on 116 123,  or alternatively on 0330 094 5717  <https://www.samaritans.org/> |
| **Good Thinking**  **(please note this is listed for parents and carers)**  **NHS approved** | Website breaking down various needs such as sleep, anxiety, low mood etc. You will be asked some question (anonymously) and the site will provide suggestions for help based on your answers. They have a lot of calming app suggestions that may also be useful for young people | <https://www.good-thinking.uk/coronavirus/> |

**Social Story Support**

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| **Organisation** | **What they do** | **How to contact** |
| **YouTube – Playmobil**  **RObert explains the Coronavirus**  **(may appeal to those who love the Lego movies)** | Animated explanation of Coronavirus using Playmobil. It covers - school closure, staying at home, symptoms, spreading the virus, home activities and hygiene.  Aimed at 5yrs + | <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5DlOGKpMNs4&safe=active> |
| **Manuela Molina**  **Covi-book** | Large pictures (cartoon style), simple language. It covers -  Symptoms, hygiene and emotions. Available in a variety of languages.  Aimed at 5-7 yrs. | <https://www.mindheart.co/descargables> |
| **Elsa Support**  **Coronavirus Story** | Cartoon pictures with writing. It covers -Symptoms, antibodies, emotions, hygiene and isolation. Available in other languages.  Aimed at 5-11 yrs. | <https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/coronavirus-story-for-children/> |
| **Children’s Commissioner**  **Children’s Guide to Coronavirus** | A written explanation of Covid-19 with some pictures and videos. It covers -  Emotions, symptoms, explanations about why people should stay at home, activities to do at home.  Aimed at 9-18 yrs. | <https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/publication/childrens-guide-to-coronavirus/> |
| **Happy Learners**  **Feeling Anxious** | Written explanation of anxiety with strategies. No pictures.  Aimed at 9-18 yrs. | <https://happylearners.info/social-stories/feeling-anxious.html> |
| **Elsa Support**  **Our School is Closing for a While** | School - cartoon illustrations and clear writing, covering school closure, change/transition and emotions.  Aimed at 5-11 yrs | <https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/our-school-is-closing-for-a-while/> |
| **Autism Little Learners**  **Expectations for Online Learning** | School and online learning using pictures and text.  Aimed at 5 yrs.+ | <https://www.autismlittlelearners.com/search/label/My%20Freebies> |
| **Living Well with Autism**  **When I feel sick** | Cartoon with text encouraging children to communicate about symptoms.  Aimed at 5 yrs. + | <http://www.livingwellwithautism.com/how_to_use_social_stories/social_stories_-_health_and_wellness> |

**Sensory Support**

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| **Organisation** | **What they do** | **How to contact** |
| **Phoenix Primary and Secondary school** | School in the borough of Tower Hamlets. They offer a number of home resources. They have an excellent section on sensory support. | <https://www.phoenix.towerhamlets.sch.uk/thamlets/primary/phoenix/site/pages/homeresources> |
| **Sensory Smarts** | This website has some great advice and articles on supporting sensory needs and creating things like sensory diets for your young person | <https://www.sensorysmarts.com/> |
| **We are Teachers – website** | Videos and instructions on how to make your own fidget toys | <https://www.weareteachers.com/diy-fidgets/> |
| **Drumbeat ASD School**  **Please take time to look at what Drumbeat have produced, there are some really fantastic support aids that are all free**  **\*\*Highly recommended Visual support\*\*** | Some fantastic and simple ideas on sensory led activities that you can do even if you don’t have much space | <https://www.drumbeatasd.org/page/?title=My+Health+and+Wellbeing&pid=352> |