

Dysart's TOP TIPS for being at home

We recognise this is a highly stressful time for our pupils and parents during self-isolation and school closures. We have put together a top tips guide to attempt to support you through.

1

Be kind!

Our first tip is to **BE KIND TO YOURSELF!** This is a really difficult time for everyone, try to make it as easy as possible on yourself – there is no requirement to do the home learning activities put together by your child's class if it is proving difficult. Your child may require a similar type of structure to what they have at school – if this makes the day go easier there are tips on that below. On the other hand your child may be finding any type of structure at home difficult, just go with whatever makes life easier. Basically interacting and enjoying ANY type of activity together with your child will have a positive impact on them and their development.

2

To structure or to not structure!

Whether your child benefits from structure or not, creating a simple, predictable rhythm for your family could be of great benefit by helping to keep adults and children on track and reducing anxiety.

Examples of a more structured day:

Example 1:

- Breakfast
- Play/Free choice time
- Movement time – balcony/garden
- Lunch
- Movement time – Walk
- Play/Free choice time
- Dinner
- Play/Free choice time
- Relaxation time
- Bed

Example 2:

- Play/Free choice time
- Breakfast
- Movement time – yoga
- Activity: Number –counting objects then iPad time on number blocks
- Lunch
- Play/Free choice time

- Movement time – outside in garden
- Activity: Making marks with paint
- Play/Free choice time
- Dinner
- Play/Free choice time
- Relaxation time
- Bed

By writing down a plan of your day and drawing simple symbols next to each activity it could help support your child's understanding of the day.

ALTERNATIVELY...

Example 3:

- Go with whatever your child needs – iPad/TV/messy play etc
- **Breakfast**
- Go with whatever your child needs – iPad /TV/messy play etc
- **Lunch time**
- Go with whatever your child needs – iPad /TV/messy play etc
- **Dinner time**
- Go with whatever your child needs – iPad /TV/messy play etc
- **Bedtime**



Fresh air

Get outside if you possibly can! A garden, a balcony or going for a walk – fresh air and exercise is definitely needed for your child and you. The government have said through their current guidelines that going out for exercise once a day is ok so try to build it into your day.



Technology is your friend!

You may have reservations about allowing your child to use that iPad/phone/TV/games console – but to be honest our motto for you to get you through self-isolation is that if it makes your life easier, allow your child to use technology! If however, your child gets upset or over stimulated by technology we do have now/next strips we are happy to send you to help your child finish with that lovable piece of technology and move them onto something else.

All pupils at Dysart are used to only having a turn on a piece of technology for a specific amount of time, if you are struggling to manage your child's behaviour around this, please speak to your child's class teacher about how they manage this at school so you can copy the same strategy.

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Singing hands!

We all love them at school, but whilst you are in self-isolation there is no need to miss out on them! They will be doing sessions every Mon-Fri at 10.30am. You can join them on their page on Facebook, Youtube or via the Zoom app:

- **Mon**- signed story on Singing Hands page on facebook or youtube.
- **Tues** – Live session: Nursery rhymes and action songs – Zoom app - £2 charge
- **Weds** – Topic session on facebook or youtube
- **Thurs** – Live session: Pop songs and action songs – Zoom app - £2 charge
- **Fri** – Makaton Pot luck! Activities on facebook and youtube
- **Kitchen Disco!!!** Wine and Sign sessions! For adults only! Friday evenings (awaiting more info)

To find out more details please go to the singing hands website

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Relaxation time

When supporting our pupil's mental health and wellbeing at Dysart, one of our biggest priorities is to work with each pupil to explore different strategies to self soothe and regulate their emotions so that we can support them to understand what 'calm' feels like. Strategies we use include the following:

- Yoga
- Sound Meditation
- Meditation strategies
- Breathing exercises
- Progressive muscle relaxation strategies
- Story massage
- TACPAC
- Deep pressure exercises
- Weighted blanket/rucksack
- Hug vest
- Calm box
- Sensory room/calm room for personal space or space away from a group
- Exercise – often this would be outside



Some of our pupils respond to several of these strategies, some just 1, others are still learning what they can use to support them in feeling calm.

Our top tip is to use whatever works for your child and where possible try this at the end of a day for a calm down time, if you are unsure what works please ask your child's class teacher – they will have strategies that we use at school and can support you to know how to help.

Here are a few of website links which you could use to support your child to access some of the strategies at home:

- **Yoga:** <https://www.youtube.com/user/CosmicKidsYoga> Includes 'seated yoga' – youtube search [Seated Movement & Mindfulness for Kids!](#)
- **Sound meditation hand on heart song (sung by our very own Joanna!):** <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCI4F66grKRrXxFn01ZGEGyw/>
- **TACPAC:** https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Dsgl-vxE_BI
- <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCciNad6f7-e-XtKtAVPwBQQ>



Look after yourself!

Like we said in point 4 – make your life as easy as possible, your child does not need to be doing home learning activities if it is proving hard to get them to do them! If you have other adults in the household, negotiate a 'swap in' so that you all can take time for self-care strategies that make you feel calmer. This could be a quick cup of tea in a different room, a walk, meditation, reading, Face-timing a friend, having a bath or whatever else self-care looks like for you. Remember to make time to connect with others, eat well and get outside.



Contact us

We are here for you and we understand this is a really difficult time for everyone. We urge you to give us a call if you are struggling or just in need of a chat. Mon-Fri during school hours, there will be someone available at school to take your call or, if we are busy we will do our best to get back to you ASAP. The teachers, OT and SaLT of your pupil's class are all available via email, please contact them for any advice you may need – one quick email may just make your day be a little bit easier.