**How to talk to your children about the Corona Virus**

**1. Deal with the news head-on and talk about it openly and calmly, giving them the facts**

* *Give them age-appropriate information – take a look at:*
	+ [*BBC Newsround hub*](https://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/51204456)*– regularly updated with information and advice*
	+ [*#covibook*](https://www.mindheart.co/descargables)*– for under 7s*
* *Educate them about reliable sources of information and how some stories on social media may be based on rumours or inaccurate information*
* *Encourage them to take breaks from listening to or reading the news – overexposure isn't helpful*

**2. Encourage questions**

* *This will give them the confidence to reach out and ask, if they have anything to ask*
* *Use comforting tones and be honest when answering questions – it's ok if you don't have all the answers*
* *Allow for repetition – children tend to repeat themselves when they're feeling uncertain or worried, so you might have to answer the same questions more than once as they seek extra reassurance*

**3. Be a role model**

* *Recognise and manage your own worries first*
* *Be open about sharing this with pupils – e.g. I'm also finding the news a bit worrying, so I'm doing X which makes me feel calm*

**4. Let them know it's normal to be concerned**

* *If needed, reassure them that the effects of this virus on healthy young people are very mild*

**5. Promote awareness of our body's immune system**

* *It's constantly working against germs without us knowing. We can't and don't need to control this process*
* *Explain that we're taking precautions against this particular germ because it's a new one which our bodies haven't come across before*
* *Remind them of the benefits of healthy eating, sleep and exercise – which help to fight germs*

**6. Be aware of children with higher levels of anxiety**(e.g. those with existing phobias or obsessive-compulsive disorders)

* *Get them to do activities such as counting, ordering and sorting tasks which can help with heightened levels of anxiety*
* *Encourage them to use relaxation techniques such as controlled breathing*
* *Detect any obsessive or compulsive behaviours early and intervene before they become entrenched patterns of thinking. Do this by challenging unhelpful thoughts and assumptions. Frame worries as situation-specific by relating them to the current situation, which is temporary and unusual*

**7. Keep doing your bit to help children reduce the spread of the virus**

* *Encourage them to sing 'happy birthday' twice when they're washing their hands*