



EXPLAINING CORONAVIRUS

General tips for adults when explaining the situation to children and young people.

✓ **Remember that it is good to talk about the situation with children.**

Children will have heard about the Coronavirus and it is important that they feel comfortable talking to you about it. Start by asking them what they already know about it.

✓ **Be truthful but mindful of the child's age**

It is important to give them factual information but adjust the amount and detail to fit their age.

Younger children will need simple information that should balance the facts about Coronavirus with appropriate reassurances that:

- ✓ Their schools and homes are safe;
- ✓ Adults are there to help them if they feel ill or afraid (e.g. "the grown-ups are working very hard to keep you safe.")

Older children may have more questions and may need help separating reality from rumour or fantasy. It would be helpful to:

- ✓ Discuss the government efforts to prevent germs from spreading;
- ✓ Provide reliable and accurate factual information about the virus and the current situation. Having this knowledge can help them feel a sense of control.

✓ **Allow children to ask questions**

Giving children the space to ask questions and have answers is a good way to alleviate anxiety. Again, try to be honest in your responses – it is ok to say you don't know. You can explain that we don't yet have all the answers about the virus right now and add in information about what people are doing to try to answer these questions.

✓ **Try to manage your own worries**

Identify other adults you can talk to about your own worries and questions. What things usually help to make you feel a bit calmer? If you are at home, music, breathing and relaxation techniques, distraction (such as watching something funny) and time with family members or pets can all help. Talk to your children when you feel calm – it will reassure them.

✓ **Give practical guidance**

Remind your child of the most important things they can do to stay healthy – washing their hands and the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' advice for coughs and sneezes. Help your child practise and increase their motivation for keeping going (maybe thinking of a song they want to sing while washing their hands).