

## KS2 Explaining Coronavirus

This resource pack is designed to help you answer questions about the Coronavirus and what children may have seen on the news. As the teacher, parent or carer, it is your responsibility to judge what is appropriate to share.

It is likely that the children you teach will be aware of this news story. As such, you may need to be prepared to answer questions on it. However, take time to decide whether exploring the news story as a whole class is suitable or wise to do in your context.

### Talking About Upsetting News

Children have 24-hour access to news and the media. As a result, they may be aware of upsetting news from across the world. It can be difficult for children to discuss fears they may have. However, these fears will be very real to children. They may have questions like:

- Will this happen to me?
- Could this affect someone I know?
- Am I in danger?

### What Can We Do?

As teachers, parents or carers, we may be asked about upsetting events in the news. We usually won't need to explore the more upsetting details. However, guidance from the Mental Health Foundation suggests that it's important to be truthful and clear with the facts of what has happened. We can share the facts while keeping our children away from disturbing details.

Other advice from the Mental Health Foundation includes:

- letting children know the facts from the news story;
- letting children know that it is normal to be worried;
- tailoring your conversation to the age and needs of the child;
- finding an appropriate time to talk about it;
- leaving space for questions.

As teachers, parents and carers, we can also explore the ways people are helping. Some behavioural psychologists have shown that constructive news, focused on solutions, helpers and proactive reactions to events can reduce fear around news events.

This is just a short guide about some of the considerations when exploring upsetting news with your class. As a teacher, parent or carer, you must judge what is appropriate to discuss with your class and what is not.

### Further Reading

- [Mental Health Foundation - Talking to your children about scary world news](#)
- [American Psychological Association - How to talk to children about difficult news](#)
- [KidsHealth from Nemours - How to Talk to Your Child About the News](#)
- [Mariska Kleemans et al, - Children's cognitive responses to constructive television news](#)

## KS2 Explaining Coronavirus

### Background Information

- Coronavirus is a virus which can affect our lungs. According to the World Health Organisation, it is from the same family of viruses which includes the common cold.
- Symptoms for some people can include coughing, difficulty breathing and a fever. It can also cause more severe symptoms for people who are already ill or elderly. However, most cases are mild. The WHO say that most cases (around 80%) are mild and require no special treatment.
- On 16<sup>th</sup> March, the UK government advised people with the symptoms and those living with them to stay at home for 14 days if they had a cough or a high temperature. They also advised against large gatherings and have asked people to avoid social contact and non-essential travel.
- On 18<sup>th</sup> March, the government said that all UK schools will close until further notice, Children of key workers and vulnerable children will attend school but most children will be at home.
- The current advice says that the most important thing individuals can do is wash their hands more often, for at least 20 seconds, with soap and water. This is about the time it takes to sing 'Happy Birthday' twice.
- The risk to children appears to be quite low. The BBC's Health Correspondent, Sophie Hutchinson, says that the virus seems to be affecting elderly people the most and that young, healthy people would likely only be a little ill if they caught the virus.
- [Guidance for schools and other educational settings can be found on the government's website.](#)
- [The most up to date advice for what to do if you are worried that you or someone you know might be at risk can be found on the NHS's website.](#)
- These facts could change. It might be helpful to familiarise yourself with the most up-to-date facts from trusted news sources.

### Preparation:

If you are discussing this issue with children, make sure you choose an appropriate time and allow space for questions. Reassure them that they are safe and looked after. Use the facts to show that people are taking action to help and stop the spread. [BBC Newsround's video on this might be a useful way to answer some of the questions children might have.](#)

Be aware that the children you are talking to will have different personalities, backgrounds and cultures and respond accordingly.

It may help to do something positive afterwards. This could be looking for ways to help those affected. It could also be some time for drawing and colouring. As the conversation could be quite tricky, it may be a good idea to do something physical outside. Physical activity is a great stress buster and can remind children that there are a lot of positive things in the world.

Finally, make sure you share good news with your child or class as well! Twinkl NewsRoom have a range of child-friendly, positive news stories which show the positive things happening across the world.