

**Facts about
Coronavirus
(COVID-19) for
Children with
Autism**

User guide

Children with Autism like to know what is happening. In these unpredictable times with COVID-19 we hope to prepare some social stories to support understanding and thinking for our children.

These can be used to give clear facts and to reassure children about what is happening if school has to close.

It is important to give information as they need it and not overload them. Anxiety and uncertainty can cause us all to behave differently.

Please see attached:

- More detailed fact sheet for children's questions to explain terminology and words that they might be hearing
- Coronavirus and handwashing
- School closure
- Self-Isolation

Facts – ‘things we know’

1. What is Coronavirus?

It is a type of virus like the flu. It is also called COVID-19

Symptoms include:

- High temperature (fever over 37.8)
- Coughing a lot
- Difficulty breathing

2. Who is at risk?

Everyone can catch it but most people **will get better**.

Young healthy people will only be a little ill if they caught the virus. A bit like a cold.

Old people and people who have other serious medical conditions can be more ill. This means they might be poorly for longer and the virus might be worse for them. These people are being told to **social distance**.

3. What does social distancing mean?

It means **limit** the interaction between people e.g. stay 1-2 metres apart from people.

Limit means not as much. Family in your home is OK but seeing lots of people is not.

People are being told to keep in touch using phones and emails and video calls.

Try not to meet in places where there are big groups e.g. cinema, restaurant etc.

4. What happens if we know someone who has symptoms or I have symptoms?

You will not be able to come to school.

You will have to stay at home for 14 days.

This is called **self-isolating**.

5. What does self-isolating mean?

It means to **stay at home**.

Not go to work

Not go to school

Not go to public areas e.g.

- Restaurants
- Cafes
- Cinemas
- Pubs
- Some shops

Not to use public transport e.g. buses, trains, taxis

No or **few** visitors to the home.

Ask for help – this means friends, family members or local shops to deliver items/ food to the home.

You will need to find things to do at home. You could:

- Watch TV
- Draw
- Do school work
- Play games
- Read
- Go in your garden
- Bake
- iPad
- Computer
- Listen to music
- Write

6. Things I **MUST** do.

WASH MY HANDS.

This helps to keep people safe. It helps to stop the spread of COVID-19.

I **MUST** use **soap** and wash my hands all over (see the sheet to show you how to wash your hands)

ALWAYS WASH HANDS when you:

- Get home
- Get to school/ into class
- Before you eat
- Before you cook
- If you sneeze
- If you cough
- If you wipe or blow your nose

TRY NOT to touch your nose, eyes or mouth.

KEEP AWAY from people who have **symptoms**.

ALWAYS cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue and throw the tissue in a bin then wash your hands.

7. How do I know what will happen?

The Government are telling everybody what we need to do to keep safe. This can **change every day**.

We **MUST** listen to the **advice**.

Advice means 'follow the rules' and 'things that can help us'.

The government are using medical research to give advice. This means 'facts' about COVID-19 to help us.

The government may say that school has to close. If school closes this will mean you have to stay at home.

8. What will happen to me if school closes?

I will have to stay at home.

I will have to use **social distancing**.

School teachers will work from home. This means they can:

- Send work for children to do.
- Ask children to do the work at home so you are still learning.
- Keep in contact with parents.
- Phone children or parents at home.
- Video call

I should do my school work at home.

I should follow the rules about **social distancing** or **self-isolation**.

I can ask questions if I need to know something – the teachers will try and help. This can be an email or a phone call when the teachers get in touch.

I will keep washing my hands.

I will go back to school when it re-opens.

9. Things to remember.

When things change it is difficult for everyone.

We all need to help each other.

We are all trying to do our best to help COVID-19 go away and to keep everyone safe.

When things are different it is harder to ‘think what to do’. I need to remember to:

- Make a plan each day
- Keep busy with things we enjoy (things we can do at home)
- Keep doing work from the teachers to help our minds keep busy
- Keep healthy by eating and drinking
- Have fresh air when we can
- Talk to people who help us on the phone
- Keep in touch with friends and family
- Keep in touch with school
- Tell someone if you don’t feel good
- Keep washing hands

IMPORTANT

Social media can have **fake news**. People get scared by fake news.

Fake News means things that might not be facts or true.

Try to remember that we all need to listen to FACTS and think about the things that ‘**we know.**’

10. What happens next?

The government will tell the school if it has to close.

School will tell everyone if it is closed.

We all need to know the facts. The government keep giving us new information and we will listen to that and not fake news.

We need to remember to keep safe and keep washing our hands.

It will all be OK in the end and we will all come back to school.

Social story examples for children with autism to support:

- Coronavirus and handwashing
- School closure
- Self-Isolation

1. Coronavirus is an illness.
2. It makes you cough, have a high temperature and find breathing hard.
3. It is like a bad cold or flu.
4. Coronavirus makes you feel poorly.
5. You might have to stay at home.
6. It is important to wash your hands.

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- If you sneeze
- If you cough
- If you wipe or blow your nose

If School is closed

1. I will stay at home while school is closed
2. My teacher will send me things to do
3. I can do school work at home
4. Other things I can do:
 - Watch TV
 - Draw
 - Do school work
 - Play games
 - Read
 - Go in your garden
 - Bake
 - iPad
 - Computer
 - Listen to music
 - Write

5. Things we know:

- Change is sometimes hard
- We need to remember to think

We can think to remember to:

- Make a plan each day
- Keep busy with things we like to do
- Go outside in the garden
- Talk to friends and family
- Talk to teachers if they call
- Tell someone if you don't feel good
- Keep washing hands

6. People will get better from Coronavirus

7. School will open again

8. You will come back to school and see your friends

9. Keep washing hands

10. It will be OK

Self-isolation and Coronavirus

1. I might hear these words - 'self-isolation'
2. This means people have to stay at home.
3. It means I might be at home for a long time
4. It means some places will close:
 - Cinema
 - Bowling
 - Eating out
 - Some shops
 - Some parks
5. I will have to do fun things at home:
 - Watch TV
 - Draw
 - Do school work
 - Play games
 - Read
 - Go in your garden
 - Bake
 - iPad
 - Computer
 - Listen to music
 - Write
6. When it is better places will open again
7. I can go out again