

Dear parents and carers,

Hello again from *The Parents Guide to*. We're starting week six of lockdown and for some, the new routine is getting easier and for others it's getting more difficult. The novelty factor has worn off and the reality that life is not going to revert to normal any time soon is daunting. Don't worry if you feel things are not going as well as you'd hoped, we've got some tips to help you keep harmony at home:

1. **It's OK not to be perfect!** Everybody is finding adjusting to the new normal difficult. We're not used to spending all day, every day with the people we live with – no matter how much we love them. There are bound to be short-temperers, cross words and frustrations. Accept this, acknowledge this and, as far as possible, give everyone in the family some time to themselves every day.
2. **Don't try to be all things to all people** – it's not possible. You are a mum or a dad – and you are a brilliant mum or dad. But you are not your children's friend, you are not their teacher, their grandparent, their sibling or their adventure leader. Don't try and fulfil all these roles for your children; be the best parent you can be, help them where you can and encourage facetime so they can keep in touch with those they are missing. Don't exhaust yourself by pretending you can fill in all the gaps – you can't.
3. **Keep a routine:** it's not the be-all and end-all; but keeping some kind of structure will help family life remain stable and give some meaning as one day rolls into the next. As far as possible, try to keep bedtime, getting up time and meal-times aligned with what children would be doing if they were at school, including studying during weekdays and getting dressed as well as doing different things over the weekend so Saturday and Sunday feels different from the rest of the week.
4. **Taking up a new hobby during lockdown is not for everyone!** Lots of companies have offered free activities/memberships to help stave boredom while we're staying at home – and that's a fantastic thing and wonderful if you have members of the family that want to benefit. Don't feel guilty if you are struggling to cope and don't feel you have the time (or energy) to introduce something new into your lives:- that's OK too.
5. **Make sure you and your family spend some part of the day being active** – it's not just a cliché. Physical activity gives off feel-good hormones as well as burning off excess energy and frustration. It's really important for everyone's mental health (as well as physical health) to spend some time in the day being active – make sure all your family takes the opportunity to go outside each day and exercise.
6. **Keep an eye on what you're all eating** – it's tempting to graze all the time when you're at home, especially if boredom sets in. Make sure your fridge is stocked with plenty of healthy snacks so if you are tempted to eat between meals, you are all eating things that are good for you;
7. **Stay informed of what's happening but don't overload on news** – especially via unreliable sources such as social media. Restrict looking at the news stories to just once or twice each day. Don't spend all day worrying about things you can't change or that you don't know. Focus on one day at a time and practical action you can take to make things better. Setting a good example will be helpful for your children too.
8. **Focus on getting a good night's sleep.** Lots of people are having difficulty sleeping at the moment. This is partly through worry and partly because they are not exercising. Even if you

can't get to sleep, go to bed and with lights out at an appropriate time and encourage your children to do the same. Listen to relaxing music before bedtime or try an app to help with sleep (such as Sleep Pillow Sounds). If you really can't sleep, don't fret – read or do something quiet instead.

Examinations

All academic examinations are cancelled this year. If your child should have been taking exams this summer, they will still get results as usual on 20 August for GCSEs and 13 August for sixth form qualifications. Results will be calculated based on work your child did up until school closures. This may include mock examinations, course work, lesson time, homework and any other relevant information. Grades will be allocated by their teacher, Head of Department and input from Academic/Deputy Heads as well as Head Teachers. Work that your child has done since school closures will help finalise and consolidate their learning, but it won't count towards their final grades. A government consultation is currently underway to decide how grades will be awarded for vocational qualifications and we'll provide more news about this as soon as we can. To read more about Results Day 2020 and the impact this will have on your child, [click here](#).

If there are any items about school closures that you'd like us to review, please do send us a note at info@theparentsguideto.co.uk and we'll be happy to help. Meanwhile,

Stay home, stay safe and stay connected,