

Information for children & young people about Covid-19

(also called Coronavirus)



We are all being affected by the recent Covid-19 outbreak and this includes members of the [Family Justice Young People's Board](#) who are staying safe and staying at home.

We understand that these are worrying times and we want to share some of our comments, advice and some helpful information with you.

Check out our [glossary](#) which may help explain some of the words and phrases you might be unsure of.

The questions you have may be different depending on the type of court case you have.

The family courts know that court proceedings are important to you and your family. The Covid-19 outbreak does mean the courts have to change how they work and there will be delays in some cases. Everyone is working hard to look at how hearings (*where decisions about your life are made*) can go ahead safely. It is likely that they will take place by Skype, telephone or video link.

Private Law These cases are brought to the **family court** by family members, generally parents, to help sort out arrangements about who a child should live with or spend time with.

What is happening to private law applications currently? Some applications, where a child is safe, may be delayed. If there are concerns about a child these cases will still be heard by the court as soon as they can.

Will I see my Family Court Adviser (FCA)?

Your views are very important and your FCA will be in contact with you to talk to you about your wishes and feelings, but this will be by Skype or telephone. We know this might be strange, but your FCA will try to make it as comfortable for you as possible.

Public Law These cases are brought to the **family court** by **local authorities** when there are worries that a child or young person is not being looked after safely. The **family court** may make a **Care Order**, a **Supervision Order** or no order at all.

What is happening to court applications currently? If there is a worry that a child or young person is not safe the court will still work to protect that child and an order will be made.

How can I contact my Guardian or Social Worker?

You should have details so you can contact your Guardian or social worker by Skype, telephone, email or text. You should always be able to contact someone in your Guardian or social worker's team if they themselves are not available, or your independent reviewing officer or their manager. If you don't have any contact details, please contact your [local council](#).



Please try not to worry. If you want to talk to someone at Cafcass about your court hearing or if you are worried about things that are happening at home or where you are living, then please do contact your Family Court Adviser or your social worker who can help you. You can check out the Cafcass website at www.cafcass.gov.uk or call them on 0300 456 4000.

How can I spend time with family and friends?

The restrictions caused by the Covid-19 (coronavirus) outbreak are difficult for everyone, but it can be especially hard if you are worried about how you can spend time with your family who you don't live with and your friends. You might also be worried if you are living in foster care or residential care, especially if you are concerned that there might be a delay in the court making a final decision about where you will live or if you seeing your family in person has been stopped.



What do I do if I feel unwell, unsafe or I am worried about someone I know?

- Talk to someone you trust about your worries or if you feel unsafe or unwell. If you think someone is going to hurt you, you need to call the police, a social worker or an adult you trust.
- If you are worried about the safety of a parent, brother or sister, carer or friend, you should talk to a trusted adult.
- You could ask a social worker, if you have one, a teacher, a foster carer or a professional, as well as family members.
- If you are a looked after child and can't reach your social worker, remember you can [contact](#) your independent reviewing officer too or ask for their manager.

Don't keep your worry to yourself.

TOP TIPS

For keeping in touch with family and friends during the Covid-19 outbreak.

- Telephone, maybe you could hold a group call and include more than one person.
- Use Skype (you could ask your parents and carers to help you set this up).
- Make fun videos and share them with your family and friends.
- Send small emoji faces and short text messages regularly throughout the day.
- Send photos to keep people in touch with what you are doing.
- Play online games together.
- Set each other fun challenges to complete at home i.e. *have a bake off and see whose looks the best.*

Make sure to ask an adult you trust about how to keep in touch with them and others.

Ask your social worker or Guardian by text message, or ask a trusted adult to contact them, if you don't feel you are staying in touch with your family or friends enough.



How Covid-19 (coronavirus) is affecting us.

"I am cautious because my mum is a nurse and she is going out in the community to help people, but we are all fit and healthy, so I am not too worried. I would suggest to everyone to get a hobby. It really helps me to have something else to focus on. I am also doing my schoolwork online for 2 hours a day and then I am relaxing either by playing on my PlayStation or watching Netflix."

Oscar aged 12

"Please try not to worry, this time we are all in is just a temporary blip. Cafcass staff are all working and from home and are accessible for you to get in contact with them if you have any worries about your case".

Imogen aged 16

"The government announced that all schools should close and exams would be cancelled. On the face of it, to many this would seem like good news, however, it was actually quite the opposite for myself. Firstly, my time at school has been cut short – my friends and I were forced to say our goodbyes to teachers who had taught us for years on years, not forgetting one another, in a short space of time which none of us were prepared for. Secondly, by cancelling A Levels two years of hard work cannot be put to the test. Many of us felt low, however, my spirits have greatly changed. I realised that I should continue to study as if my A Levels were to be going ahead. Along with this study I will be ensuring I maintain physical exercise (including walks and fitness routines) as well as eating healthily. To many this period of isolation may seem endless and unmotivating, but if you are to turn things on its head and make the most of this valuable time by educating yourself online, spending time with people in your home and enjoying some well-deserved relaxation, it will not be too bad! Routine is the answer."

Ollie aged 18

Some thoughts from FJYPB members:

"Just because I now don't have my exams doesn't mean that I still can't revise. Me and my dad Skype and we chat for a bit and then he tests me on my revision."

"Combat boredom at home. Start a new hobby or try to learn a new skill."

"Time at home with family is a great time to help build on your relationships. Try and find something that you both like to do."

"I have arranged to Skype my dad every day at the same time and I have set myself a routine for school home and relaxing time."

"I have joined WhatsApp groups. One with my friends and one with my mum, grandma and cousins. It's not the same as seeing them, but at least we can all stay in touch."

"I have still been able to contact my social worker, she has texted me and we have planned to skype in a few days."

Making the best of being at home

1. **Stay active** – we know it can be challenging. Take a walk or try out a home workout!
2. Find and maintain a **daily routine**.
3. **Eat healthily** but do enjoy a few treats.
4. **Stay in touch with friends and family** over the phone or on social media.
5. If you can't talk to family and friends as much as you'd like, **ask a trusted adult** about what can be done to help you do this more. If you are a looked after child, contact your social worker or independent reviewing officer if you are worried about staying in touch with friends and family over this time.
6. **Keep yourself busy with activities** such as cooking, online learning, games – the list goes on. You might also have time to check out a new hobby...chess anyone?
7. **Remember to take time for yourself** and take regular breaks from social media and the news. Music, reading, writing and making things can be great ways to relax and take your mind off things.
8. Practice good hygiene.
9. **Remind yourself why what you are doing is so important and that it won't last forever**. Hopefully none of your loved ones will be badly affected by coronavirus, but by staying at home, you are protecting the lives of others, as well as helping the NHS.

What to do if you don't feel safe.

If you feel unsafe then there are people and services who can help you.

- Speak to an adult you trust and tell them why you don't feel safe.
- You can contact ChildLine on 0800 1111.
- Speak to your Family Court Adviser or Guardian. If you are unsure of their details, call 0300 456 4000.
- You can contact your social worker or independent reviewing officer (if you have one). If you don't have a social worker and you feel unsafe, you can call your local authority (<https://www.gov.uk/find-local-council>) and to speak to someone.
- In an emergency, call 999.



Helpful websites

If you think that you would like some extra support during this time, check out these websites for some great advice and ideas.

- [Young Minds](#)
- [Become](#)
- [The Children's Commissioner](#)
- [NHS Every Mind Matters](#)
- [Family Rights Group](#) – check out their top tips on maintaining relationships during the Coronavirus outbreak

Information about Coronavirus:

Check out this [video](#) that explains coronavirus using images and Makaton. You can also check out this [cartoon](#).