



Life in lockdown or when you are isolating can be hard and also lonely. It can also be difficult to keep coming to school when lots of your friends are working at home. As a pastoral team we wanted to put together a few strategies and resources which you can use at this time to support your mental well-being either if you are attending school or working at home.

Remember, your teachers are always here to support you, all you need to do is get in touch! admin@hexhammiddle.org.uk

Support for You

On Friday 5th February we will be suspending live lessons for the day and instead focussing on mental health and wellbeing with an aim of getting some time connecting with friends, coming off screen and doing other things. More details to follow!



In the meantime, there are lots of fun ideas on the internet for you to try to break up the day between your lessons and also at the weekends:

<https://www.5minutefun.com/wellbeing-activities-for-kids-stuck-indoors/>

Support for Parents

With the recent announcement that lockdown is likely to continue for at least another few weeks, we appreciate that many parents will be finding the task of home-schooling overwhelming.

We have done our best to provide a structured programme of live lessons to support pupils however, there are also lots of other useful materials available online.

Engage Education have pulled together a selection of activities for parents to utilise during lockdown:

<https://engage-education.com/blog/engages-big-list-of-free-kids-lockdown-activities/>

The dadlab have also got loads of fab ideas to keep children busy and learning:

<https://thedadlab.com/>

Mr Gaines and Mr Barry will continue to circulate their weekly PE challenges and tasks throughout lockdown. For those of you with children usually inclined to do lots more sport, remember Joe Wicks has resumed his daily workouts for people of all ages to get involved in. All available on his YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/thebodycoachtv>



Lockdown 3.0—A Staff Snapshot

Well, we are well over half way through this half term and what an interesting term it's been! This lockdown may feel more tough than the last two but we are tougher. During my first lockdown I didn't have my wonderful form class to keep me company every morning at 8:45am or my fabulous students throughout the day.

It was tough, my family live a long way away, in Leicester, so I had to find alternative activities to keep me occupied. Luckily, my mum's a chef and so I've learnt a trick or two when it comes to baking and so, I began to bake!

Eating plenty of home baked goodies meant I had to increase my activity too. This is when I found a love for walking. I'm not one for exercising too much, especially in the winter time but getting outside and enjoying a walk always helps. It's amazing what new things you notice when you walk the same route a couple of times a week! Can you notice anything new on your regular walk each day? I'm grateful I get to experience all the natural beauty of the North East.

Anyway, apart from all the goodies I've cooked up throughout the lockdowns, I've also created a recipe to build a positive mental wellbeing. Here's my recipe for getting through lockdown:

Miss Downes' lockdown recipe

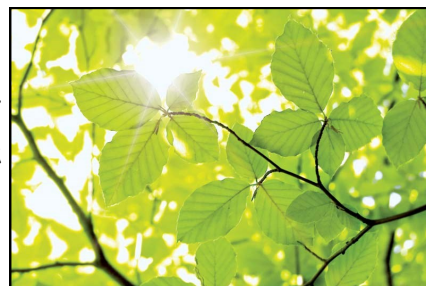
- A sprinkle of good weather* – always helps when you get to make snowmen, take a walk on a frosty morning or the feeling of sunlight on your face when you wake up!
- A bucketful of tea* – Everyone who knows me knows I love a fresh cuppa. Nothing beats a cup of tea with some rich teas to dunk in (be careful not to leave it in too long else you'll end up with a mug full of biscuit, I learnt that the hard way!).
- A dash of fresh air* – even going for a walk around the block is always a good idea. A bit of fresh air to clear the mind. Make sure you wear your ear muffs, I forgot mine and my ears turned red.
- A handful of good books* – Always wonderful to lose my mind in a good book for a few hours. I'm currently re-reading Harry Potter and the Philosopher's stone.
- A pinch of Disney plus/Netflix/iPlayer* – Sitting in front of a screen is not always the best way to spend your evening after a long day of online lessons but it always feels different when it's your favourite TV program or film.
- A cup and a half of family time* – Whether that be sitting on Facetime with my sister or writing my grandparents letters (they're old and much prefer a letter than a text) it's always nice to see my family. I have to admit, writing letters is a mindful activity and I enjoy putting all my thoughts and feelings down on paper to tell my Nana. I also look forward to receiving her letters in return!
- A couple more bucketfuls of tea* – just to be safe.
- 500g of chocolate* – because, apart from tea, there is nothing better than a bar of chocolate (I'm currently enjoying a bar of mini eggs chocolate, YUMMY!).
- 5 spoonfuls of your favourite hobby* – Do what you love, love what you do! I have a wonderful routine to manage a work/life balance. Yoga, baking and drawing help me to wind down and find calmness in this crazy world.
- Lastly, 2 heaps of normality* – being able to continue to work, keep a structured day, teach my usual lessons, check in with my form class and have my usual, regular meetings means life throughout lockdown 3.0 is as close to normal as can be. Keeping to my routine as much as possible has helped me to get through another lockdown!

Can you think of what you might add together to cook up your own perfect lockdown?

I hope you have enjoyed reading, Miss Downes.

Weekly Challenge: Get Outdoors

Many of us are spending lots more time inside than we usually do and much of that is spent looking at a screen. Whilst this is almost unavoidable it is important to try and balance this with some fresh air!



For your challenge this week, why not aim to get outside for at least ten minutes each day. While you're out, see if you can spot something unusual in nature and take a photo. It could be an interesting shaped leaf, an animal in its natural habitat or just something pretty!

You can post pictures of your findings to our HMS Facebook page and use the hashtag *#HMSWeeklyChallenge!*

Safeguarding

This remains a key priority for us at HMS throughout this lockdown period. Please remember that although school is not open we are all still here to support.

Any safeguarding concerns can be reported to admin@hexhammiddle.org.uk or Mrs Curry can be contacted on 01434 602533.

Children's Services also remain open throughout this time 01670 536 400.

E-Safety

As we have all moved online it is important to remember our basic e-safety principles:

- 1) Never communicate with anyone you don't know
- 2) Never share personal information
- 3) Never share passwords
- 4) Be kind online—just because it's typed doesn't mean it doesn't hurt
- 5) Report anything suspicious to a trusted adult

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>