



ST AUGUSTINE'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM

DEVELOPING THE WHOLE PERSON

Helping your Child Manage their Feelings around Lockdown

The announcement of the next lockdown and move to online schooling is especially tough on teenagers, we're aware they are deprived of their friends, unsure about their exams and worried about future job prospects.

For many who thrive on predictability and routine the unknown future can feel overwhelming. Reassure your child that they will cope with the changes, and that it is always good to get more practice with managing change as we will face changes throughout our lives.

As always, listening without judgement or interruption to your teenager is really important. Their world was starting to open up again and has suddenly got very small. Upkeep of vital relationships will be of huge importance to a lot of teenagers, whether via the phone, online or through gaming.

Help your teenager to recognise when they are worrying about things which cannot be changed. They (or you) may notice that they are in a repetitive loop of worry which they may find it hard to step away from. Filling their mind with something to truly distract them from those thoughts can make a huge difference. They might find it helpful to talk or draw what is happening for them or find a hobby which can keep them engaged mindfully rather than worrying about the past or future.

Here are some suggestions of ways you can support your child over the next few weeks. You could suggest they try:

- Together, set aside a time each day where they can talk about worries they have or to talk about how they are feeling.
- Focus on things they can control, such as managing their free time.
- Journaling (either written, verbal or using art) as a way of processing their thoughts.
- Share what helps you when you feel stressed or anxious.
- Think about being able to be outside – a walk in nature, a bike ride etc can help them (and us!)
- Think about what you can celebrate – not just birthdays but achievements you have each made such as meeting a target or completing a piece of coursework.
- Include them when supporting neighbours or family members. Although it may not be possible to see friends in person, help them to connect with others regularly.
- If your child is feeling anxious, encourage them to try simple breathing techniques such as breathing in for a count of four, holding their breath for a count of four and breathing out slowly for a count of seven.