The impact of the coronavirus pandemic on child welfare: schools

This briefing uses insight from Childline counselling sessions and message boards to highlight children and young people’s experiences of being away from and returning to school during the coronavirus pandemic

December 2020

Key findings

• During the first lockdown children and young people contacted Childline to talk about how they missed being in school, missed seeing their friends and teachers, struggled with being out of their normal routine and were worried about getting behind with their school work.

• As children returned to school, some young people told us about their challenges with the transition and the new COVID control measures.

• Some young people told us that they see school as a safe and supportive place but were finding it difficult because they didn’t have the same support as they’d had before lockdown.
About this briefing

This briefing contains quotes from children and young people which may cause distress. Further support is available from the NSPCC helpline and Childline (contact details are listed at the end of the briefing).

This briefing focuses on children and young people talking to Childline about their experiences of school during the coronavirus pandemic (COVID-19). This includes:

- children learning at home during lockdown
- vulnerable children or children of key workers attending school in person during lockdown
- children transitioning back to school as restrictions were lifted
- children having to learn at home due to self-isolation or local outbreaks of the virus.

Key Themes

Learning during lockdown

From March until the end of June/July 2020, most children and young people were learning remotely at home because they were unable to attend school in person. Some struggled with the changes associated with lockdown and found adapting to new routines difficult. They shared with Childline counsellors how much they missed school.

“I am feeling overwhelmed and really missing school and my friends. I need a daily routine and I am not having one at the moment.”

Boy aged 11

Some young people were worried about falling behind with school work while they were learning remotely, particularly how this would impact on future exams. Some felt they would never catch up.

“Teachers set so much work online and it’s too much. I haven’t done lots of it and I’m going to be so far behind when we go back to school.”

Post on Childline message boards

Being able to stay focussed and motivated at home proved difficult for some children and young people. They mentioned being distracted by the internet, mobile phones,
social media, watching TV or trying to study in a busy and noisy household. Some said they were unmotivated because they were finding the work difficult, but they felt uncomfortable asking for support.

“Home schooling makes me really stressed and I always have work left from the day before and can’t complete it all. How do you stay motivated?”

Post on Childline message boards

“I am finding it really hard to focus on my work. I often choose to do other things instead of school work. I know I should do my work but there are certain tasks I am just unable to complete because I don’t understand, but I feel like I am being silly when I ask for help because I just don’t get it. I am really behind now and if I say something I will probably get into trouble.”

Girl aged 14

Some children told our counsellors they were reluctant to ask for support due to embarrassment, fear of being viewed negatively by teachers and/or parents, drawing attention to themselves or believing they would not get any help.

In other cases, children with special educational needs, additional needs and/or disabilities were struggling to learn at home without the right assistive technologies.

“I am d/Deaf and am struggling with online lessons. I am being supported by my ToD (teacher of the d/Deaf) who is writing subtitles but a firewall is preventing access. Last week mum contacted school but we have not had a response yet.”

Girl aged 10

Some children were finding it hard to take part in online lessons, because it was bringing back distressing memories of online abuse.

“Since lockdown all my friends want to chat on FaceTime and they don’t realise how hard it is for me. I get scared that it will be like the video chats I had with men when I was younger, that someone will hack in and they’ll show their boy bits on the screen... It’s the same when I have to log in to video lessons at school. Most of my class mates think I’m just shy, but it’s cos I’m terrified. I tried to look up stuff about video chat phobias and how to fix them, only I didn’t find any info about what scares me. Now I feel like I’m the odd one out.”

Girl aged 18
Some children and young people continued to attend school in person during lockdown. This included children of keyworkers, children who are vulnerable and children with special educational needs, additional needs and/or disabilities. Sometimes school was a very different place and this was hard to deal with.

“I can’t cope with all the changes that have happened recently. I have still been going to school as I am vulnerable and mum is a keyworker, but it still doesn’t help with everything. It just feels really hard to cope with, especially as I have autism. Most of the day at school is spent doing independent study and it can get very noisy, stressful and overwhelming for me.”

Girl aged 14

Transition back to school

As coronavirus restrictions were lifted across different parts of the UK, children and young people experienced a range of emotions.

Some young people were pleased to know they were going back to school after summer and expressed how much they were looking forward to returning. They welcomed the structure and routine of being back at school, even if this was different to what they had previously been used to.

“I have been feeling bored and fed up because of the coronavirus. I have had nothing to do and I haven’t been doing my homework, I can’t be bothered. I have really missed school. My parents have been arguing since lockdown started and I don’t like it when they argue. I miss all the fun things I used to do like spending time with friends, going to the cinema and bowling. I am really looking forward to going back to school in September. I want a routine again.”

Girl aged 11

“I have been struggling with motivation and my energy levels. I have been feeling this lack of energy since the coronavirus lockdown I think because of the lack of structure and being away from my friends. Now I am back at school I hope it will improve.”

Girl, age unknown

But for other young people the return to school was overwhelming and increased their anxieties.

“I had my first day back at school today and I kind of want to cry and never go back. It was so overwhelming to see so many people which is
why I probably felt better during lockdown. Now I am feeling too scared to go back tomorrow.”

*Girl aged 14*

“I want to go back as I’ve really missed school but it’s scary to think about what rules there will be and what the health risk is. Just seeing people and going out again is scary too.”

*Post on Childline message boards*

Some children and young people talked about it being difficult to adjust. They found that being amongst large groups and in a noisy environment again was overwhelming. Some also found it difficult to wear a mask. One girl, who is on the autism spectrum, explained that she was finding the transition back to school particularly difficult.

“Being back at school is really stressful. During lessons, everyone is so loud and it makes me feel anxious. I had to leave the classroom today because I found it too much and burst out crying.”

*Girl aged 13*

Some children and young people felt uncomfortable about widening their contact with others and catching the virus through going to school. They were scared about making themselves and/or family members ill, particularly if a family member was vulnerable. Some were concerned about using public transport to get to or from school.

“I am worried about putting my parents at risk of getting COVID-19 now I am back at school as there’s thousands of us there and my parents are both high risk and have been shielding. I have to use public transport to get to and from school and worry that I could be near to people who have the virus but aren’t showing any symptoms.”

*Girl aged 15*

**School work**

Other children and young people were worried about catching up with their school work after learning remotely for several months. They told our counsellors they were scared about going back to school as they felt they would be in trouble for not doing all the work they should have done.

“I am really worried about being behind with school work and going back to school. Work has been sent to me online and it started off well, but then I fell behind. Now I can’t face any of it. I don’t feel I can tell a
Some children found it hard to adjust to being back in the classroom. They felt they had fallen behind during lockdown and this made them frustrated and distressed. Some young people used the word “failure” to describe themselves and said they felt “overwhelmed” with workloads and exams.

“Being in lockdown really threw me off my routine, and I’ve struggled to get back into the swing of things since school opened again. I am finding it hard to adapt back to the pace and school pressures. I used to be so driven and ambitious, but right now I’ve got zero motivation and everything seems to be piling up on me, it’s so overwhelming. I am so far behind and I cried in class as I didn’t understand the work. I don’t know where I go from here – I feel like a part of me is lost and that I am a failure”.

Girl aged 17

“So, I went back to school and I’ve forgotten everything. I’m in year 11 so I have GCSE’s ahead and I’m supposed to know everything but I’m back at square one! I can’t do any of the work, it’s just too much for me, I feel like such a failure.”

Girl aged 15

COVID secure measures at school

For some children and young people, adjusting to the new coronavirus safety measures added to the challenges of returning to school.

“I am feeling anxious because of the new and temporary measures put in place at school. The school is much stricter because most of the learning time of students is gone – we now have three lessons a day instead of six. The one-way system is everywhere and students have to stay within their bubble. And at the end of each day, teachers have to
follow us out the building after our final lesson. It’s so stressful as no-one in the school has experienced anything like this before.”

*Boy aged 13*

Some children were frustrated because they didn’t think their peers were following the social distancing measures. They were concerned about how effective the measures were going to be.

“*I want to talk about school and all the new changes. They tell us we need to social distance but nobody does and the teachers don’t say anything. We also have a thing called a year group bubble which I think is stupid. It’s basically trusting that nobody else in your year has COVID when my year is made up of 150 people and many go outside to malls and parks etc. You feel like there isn’t much point in social distancing because I have been in such close contact with everyone, so if someone does have the virus we are all going to get it.”*

*Girl aged 12*

“It feels like no one is following the one way system or wearing masks like they should. Bubbles don’t really work because people have family in different bubbles in the same school and it feels really crowded, so you can’t even get to the hand sanitiser. It feels like it’s not being taken seriously.”

*Post on Childline message boards*

Some young people talked to Childline because they were worried about the implications of not having to wear a mask in the classroom. But others struggled with wearing a mask around school, particularly if they experienced anxiety and panic attacks.

“I hate having to wear a face mask in school. I am so worried about having a panic attack because it has happened before. My dad is vulnerable and I am worried about catching the virus and passing it to him. I used to get support from a school counsellor for my anxiety but she has left now.”

*Girl aged 17*

Some found the experience of returning to school very frightening.

“I’m having a lot of anxiety and stress about school. Today was my first day back since lockdown and everything stressed me out so much. I had a panic attack and felt like I was going to be sick on the bus to school. I
didn’t know where any of my classes were and nobody was social distancing which scared me. I didn’t eat anything all day. I don’t feel comfortable talking to the teachers at school. I feel like I am being melodramatic and should get a grip of myself but the thought of school makes me want to throw up.”

*Girl aged 12*

Others used the Childline message boards to reassure their peers that going back to school would be okay.

“I’m back already and it was different at first but after the first day, you’ll get used to it so don’t worry!”

*Post on Childline message boards*

“I’ve been back for a few weeks now and I want everyone to know it won’t be as bad as think having to wear masks and remembering all the rules. Teachers are there to help and you can ask them and just take deep breaths. Everyone is nervous too but it will be okay.”

*Post on Childline message boards*

Some children shared on Childline’s message boards that their parents were anxious about them returning to school, despite COVID secure measures being in place. Some said their parents were keeping their children at home, and they were worried about the impact of continuing to learn from home.

“I’m not allowed to go back to school because my parents are worried about it not being safe but I would love to be at school. I miss it just being normal and online schooling makes me feel like I’m really far behind.”

*Post on Childline message boards*

**Being sent home to self-isolate**

Childline also heard from young people who had been sent home from school due to outbreaks of coronavirus. Some had been enjoying the normality of seeing friends and teachers, and they found it upsetting to go back to home learning.

“I am feeling really upset and stressed at the moment. I recently went back to school and they’ve already said some teachers have COVID symptoms so they are shutting the school on Monday. I was enjoying having a tiny bit of normality and I am not sure what’s going to happen
from this point. I just want to be back with teachers and friends and it’s been rough over the past four months so it was nice to see other faces.”

*Girl aged 17*

“I’m really struggling with anxiety at the moment, especially since I have been sent home from school to isolate. I have anxiety and being in school gives me structure and routine. I also have my GCSEs this year and trying to work from home is so hard.”

*Girl aged 15*

Some young people were worried about the impact another period of remote learning would have on their studies.

“I can’t go to school for two weeks. My whole year has been sent home to self-isolate. I don’t feel I am going to be able to cope. I couldn’t keep up with the school work whilst in lockdown due to coronavirus and this has made things worse. Nobody knows how I feel and I know I will end up self-harming.”

*Girl aged 15*

**Bullying**

Last year, bullying was the fourth most common concern that children and young people spoke to Childline counsellors about. Between April and September 2020, we saw a notable decrease in the number of counselling sessions about bullying. We will be exploring this in more detail in a future briefing.

Some children found that lockdown had provided respite from being bullied, and were worried about what might happen when they returned to school. The thought of it happening again created feelings of fear and anxiety.

“I have been getting bullied by a boy at my school for the past few years. I get called names, have had my things stolen, received threats about my family and he has hit me so hard it left a bruise. At times, I have thought about ending my own life. School are aware of this and put some measures in place but the bullying never stopped until we went into lockdown. Now I have to go back to school and I am really scared and worried about it starting up again.”

*Girl aged 15*

For some, the bullying had begun again as soon as they went back to school.
“I went to school yesterday for the first time since March and hated it because I don’t fit in and am different. I have been at the school for some time and have always hated it. I am bullied by a group of girls who call me racist names and make fun of my weight by calling me anorexic. They have even made up a racist rhyme about me which they sang at me yesterday. I have been put on a two-year waiting list with CAMHS [Child and adolescent mental health services] regarding the panic attacks which I experience because of the ongoing bullying. I have told my social worker that I am not going back and want to be home schooled.”

*Girl aged 14*

Other children felt their self-confidence and resilience had improved during lockdown, as they didn’t have to deal with bullying. They worried this progress would stop once they returned to school.

“This sounds a bit cringe, but during quarantine I would look in the mirror and tell myself that the bullies don’t matter and their words can’t hurt me anymore. I gradually felt so much better about myself and I was so proud. The main reason why I’m here is cos I’m just really scared my confidence is going to go down again now we’re back at school, and all the hard work I’ve done will come crashing down. I don’t want to be timid and crying again.”

*Girl aged 14*

Some young people told Childline they had fallen out with friends or had become distanced from their friends during lockdown. Upon returning to school their friends were acting differently, saying nasty things, ignoring them or leaving them out. This made them feel lonely and isolated.

“Since going back to school, I have been feeling low and lonely. My friends are being horrible and ignoring me. I wasn’t invited to a recent party which all my friends went to. I am feeling isolated and am having difficulty trusting others with how I feel. I am struggling to motivate myself for school each day and I don’t really want to go.”

*Girl aged 17*

In other cases, children and young people had experienced online bullying during lockdown. Some had been bullied online by people they had considered friends. They were worried about facing them when everyone returned to school.

“My best friends at school have been calling me names over Xbox during lockdown. They have been calling me fat and it upsets and hurts me
because they were my friends before lockdown. I wish they could feel what I am feeling because then they would stop it. I am worried about going back to school and seeing them in case they carry it on.”

Boy aged 10

Some children and young people told Childline they were being bullied about coronavirus. Sometimes their peers were taunting them or chanting about them having the virus. Some Asian children and young people said they had received racist comments where they were blamed for causing the pandemic.

“People from my school keep walking past my house and yell mean things at me and I am really upset about it. They keep shouting that I have coronavirus.”

Girl aged 11

“I am being racially bullied due to the coronavirus. I am half Chinese and they say the pandemic is my fault! My teachers have not been helpful or supportive.”

Girl aged 17

Other young people with respiratory conditions, such as asthma, also experienced bullying.

“I have bad asthma and everyone at school assumed I had coronavirus because I was coughing a lot, which made me really upset. They don’t understand my asthma problems. I told my teacher and was crying. She was really lovely and arranged it so I could sit with people who are not nasty to me in class.”

Girl aged 14

Mental health

Some children and young people who spoke to Childline during the pandemic had mental health issues. They reflected on how lockdown had impacted on their mental health.

Some had struggled with pre-existing issues during lockdown. When they went back to school, they were worried about people noticing and having to answer questions:

“Lockdown has been hard. My depression and eating disorder got really bad and I lost a lot of weight. Today was my first day back at school and this boy shouted out how skinny I looked. Everyone kept asking me how
I lost weight and it just made me feel awkward and self-conscious and I am so stressed at the thought of going back tomorrow to face more comments.”

Girl aged 15

Some children and young people had been looking forward to returning to school, as they believed this would improve things. Unfortunately, some found that school life was not the same or what they expected.

“I have been diagnosed with generalised anxiety and have been feeling more depressed recently. I usually feel better at school than I do when I am at home as I feel I can be more myself at school. Lockdown made me realise how much I like school. However, since going back after lockdown I have been withdrawn, keeping myself to myself rather than mixing with people, it’s just not the same.”

Girl aged 13

Stress around going back to school was a trigger for some young people to start self-harming again, or have suicidal thoughts and feelings. Some young people who had relapsed into self-harm talked about feeling disappointed in themselves, and this added to their low self-esteem.

“I self-harmed for two years but have been clean since lockdown. Over the past few days I have been having suicidal thoughts and urges to hurt myself. I believe my feelings have been triggered by returning to school.”

Girl aged 14

“I relapsed after going back to school and am now cutting twice a day. I feel disappointed with myself for turning back to self-harm and feel like I have disappointed others too. I tried all the distraction techniques but the urge to cut took over.”

Girl, age unknown

Safety and support

Missing support

While they were learning at home, some children and young people told Childline they were missing the social and emotional support they normally received at school.
“I miss school – it’s a good supportive place for me.”

Boy aged 12

Some children mentioned missing the support they get from school friends. They felt this was having a negative impact on their mood and emotional wellbeing.

“I am missing my friends and school and am feeling angry all the time.”

Girl aged 6

“I am feeling low and am experiencing difficulties in concentrating on my school work and exams. I am really missing the social interaction and support I get from friends at school.”

Girl aged 16

Even after returning to school, some children and young people found it hard to build or reconnect with friendship groups.

“It’s hard to make new friends at school and being in social bubbles is going to make this even harder.”

Post on Childline message boards

“It’s also really lonely too when you can’t see your friends at lunch or because they are in different classes and you’re not allowed to mix.”

Post on Childline message boards

Others talked about feeling isolated and lonely because they were unable to see and talk to the trusted adults who usually support them at school.

“I hate my life. I have no one to open up to and don’t know how to cope. The whole situation with what’s happening in the world also doesn’t help. I have no school and I’d usually speak to a counsellor weekly but I haven’t seen her in about a month.”

Girl aged 16

“I’m feeling down and overwhelmed and really need to talk. Nothing is fun anymore. I am having panic attacks and anxiety. I could talk to mum about how I am feeling but just feel like I would be letting her down. I usually see a school counsellor for an hour every week but this has stopped due to COVID-19 and I am struggling without her support.”

Boy aged 15
Some children and young people contacted Childline because they were looking for strategies to use while their normal support networks were unavailable:

“Not being at school, a change of routine and home learning has made me feel anxious so I am looking for tips on how to deal with anxiety please.”

*Girl aged 15*

Children and young people can access a range of support via the Childline website. This includes the Toolbox, which includes games, videos and exercises to help them handle their emotions, and specific information about coronavirus and going back to school.

- Take a look at Childline’s Toolbox
- Information and advice for children about coronavirus
- Information and advice for children about going back to school

**Feeling unsafe at home**

Not being able to go to school meant that some children and young people felt unsafe.

“My home life has got worse during the coronavirus lockdown. At school, I can escape from all the anger and the arguments at home. Mum is emotionally abusive and sometimes physically abusive too. She shouts when she is angry and calls me names when I can’t do something. It’s getting worse and I am scared that mum will hurt me if this carries on much longer.”

*Girl aged 10*

For some, being at home all day with family was challenging. As pre-existing tensions grew there could be conflict and, in some cases, abuse. These children talked about missing the safety of school.

“My parents are in the process of getting divorced but are still living together in separate rooms. Last night they had a massive argument. Mum was abusive as she had been drinking and physically hurt dad. I had been getting support from the school counsellor but it’s stopped because of the coronavirus. I am missing school as it is my safe place.”

*Girl aged 12*

**Getting support from school**
Some children and young people told our counsellors about support being put in place for them by their school. For some, remote support measures didn’t quite feel the same.

“I am really missing school and we can’t go back until September. The teachers have helped me with a few problems I have had and I feel that I can’t really talk about them with anyone else. My teachers have always been very helpful and they have said I can email if I need to but it’s not the same. I am feeling so alone.”

Boy aged 14

But others found it reassuring to be able to contact teachers for support.

“I feel really down as we are in lockdown again. It’s not the lockdown that is the matter, it’s the fact that our school is closed. I need to be there for my mental health. I need those chats with my link teacher because without them I struggle. As soon as I heard we were closing again, I went to see my link teacher and asked if I could email her and she said I could. I was really struggling to come in to school after 5 months off. She has been great and has helped me so much.”

Girl aged 15

Some felt that the school hadn’t recognised that they were struggling, or been able to offer help. For them, Childline was a vital source of support.

“Ever since we returned to school my mental health has got so bad. I have never felt like this before. I thought the feeling would go away but it has been nearly 2 months now and I feel the same. I am usually confident and talkative but now I barely speak and never smile. I feel insecure and can’t stand going anywhere. I feel anxious all the time and disconnected from everyone and everything. All I want to do is stay in bed. I told two teachers I needed a counsellor to talk to and they both ignored me. I really do need support because I am starting to lose hope. I can’t focus on my lessons because I feel trapped in my own head and am always worrying.”

Girl aged 14

Other children who had been struggling during lockdown, told us that their teachers had noticed that they were struggling once they returned to school. This meant the child had been provided with support:

“I am feeling extremely low and depressed. I have been feeling this way during lockdown and was looking forward to going back to school and
seeing my friends. After a couple of day of being back I stopped mixing with my friends, chose to sit alone and just feel numb. I feel worthless, pointless and hate myself. I feel so alone. I am not motivated and just sit staring ahead. I have also started to scratch myself and bang my head on things. I feel so embarrassed and I didn’t want to tell anyone how bad I am feeling but thankfully my teacher noticed and spoke to my parents. I am now seeing a school counsellor and am being referred to CAMHS [Child and adolescent mental health services].”

Boy aged 13

Some children and young people told Childline about changes in the support they could access at school due to social distancing measures. For example, places where they had been able to go to get support and/or regain a sense of calm weren’t always accessible.

“I am really struggling with anxiety, depression, panic attacks, my eating and self-harming. All the changes at school seem to have made it all worse. I can’t go and stay in the safeguarding room like I used to because it is in a different area to where I can go because of year group bubbles...I really need a place to go when things get too much but now I have to stay in class. I just can’t focus as everything is so difficult and I feel I have no support.”

Girl aged 14

Other children explained that a trusted teacher had left their school during lockdown, and they weren’t sure who else they could confide in. This was particularly hard if they hadn’t been prepared for the teacher leaving, or seen them to say goodbye.

“My favourite teacher isn’t at my school anymore so I feel like there isn’t anyone to talk to me when I am not feeling good. I am just realising that it is only going to get more stressful. School is just so different now and I don’t think I really like it.”

Girl aged 15

Some children and young people found that accessing counselling at school was more difficult after lockdown. Some talked about being put on long waiting lists, being unable to attend sessions if they were self-isolating, and not being able to have appointments as regularly as they wanted.

“I have a counsellor in school, but I can only see her at school and COVID has made that really inconvenient. She is the only person I can talk to about how I am feeling. We have only managed to have three
sessions as she is only available by appointment. She is absolutely great, but it sucks that I can’t speak to her that often.”

*Girl aged 15*

Some young people who had been receiving counselling at school before the pandemic, talked about this being disrupted due to lockdown. This was made more challenging if the counsellor had changed and the child hadn’t been prepared for this.

“I have so many problems and I feel like I’m all on my own. I used to have a counsellor at school which really helped, but because of corona we stopped. Now the counsellor has changed so it’s not really the same.”

*Child aged 12 (gender unknown)*

**Conclusion**

This briefing highlights that children and young people have experienced a range of challenges related to school during the coronavirus pandemic. Children had a range of experiences during the pandemic, and their thoughts and feelings changed as the situation they were living in changed.

During the UK-wide lockdown in the Spring of 2020, Childline heard from children who missed the social interaction, support and security that school offered. This was particularly the case for those who didn’t feel safe at home.

As restrictions were lifted, some children were looking forward to going back to school, catching up with work and getting back in a routine. For some, going back to school was a chance to get support from trusted adults.

But others found that school was a very different place with COVID secure measures in place, and they struggled to get the help they needed. Coping with the changes was particularly difficult for those who were experiencing extra challenges such as bullying or mental health issues.

There was a reduction in children talking to Childline about bullying whilst they were not in school. We will be exploring this in more detail in a future briefing.

Helping children process and overcome their experiences must be a national priority. As the pandemic continues, Governments across the UK must not lose sight of the negative impact heightened restrictions might have on children, and must set out coordinated actions to mitigate this.
Schools are a safe and protective place for children. Any future closures of schools and nurseries should only be considered as a matter of last resort, for the shortest possible period of time. Where children are unable to attend school, due to closure or self-isolation, there must be local plans in place to ensure a clear and consistent approach to supporting and safeguarding them.

At school, emphasis must be placed on supporting children’s wellbeing. Teachers must be supported to identify and respond to pupils who’ve suffered adversity during the pandemic. Yet schools alone can’t meet children’s emotional needs. They must be backed-up with community-based early intervention services to ensure no child’s future is put at risk by the pandemic.

Methodology

When children, young people and adults contact Childline, our counsellors record what they tell us. Childline only shares a child’s information with other services in exceptional circumstances, for example if a child is in a life-threatening situation, or if they are requesting direct help. Our counsellors always attempt to seek consent from a young person before anything is shared.

The insight in this briefing is taken from those Childline counselling sessions where the counsellors recorded information about children and young people’s experiences of being away from and returning to school during the coronavirus pandemic. It also includes insight from Childline’s message boards, where young people have spoken about issues to do with school.

All names and potentially identifying details have been changed to protect the identity of the children contacting Childline. Quotes are created from real Childline counselling sessions or message board posts but are not necessarily direct quotes.

The time periods

The first time a child mentioned coronavirus when contacting Childline was 10 January 2020.

For the purpose of this briefing, we have compared the period before the government introduced its stay-at-home rules (6 January – 22 March) with the period since (1 April – 31 October). We have used monthly averages to compare between the 2 time periods.
Data tables

Childline offers support to children, young people and adults across the UK. Children and young people can choose to remain anonymous, so we do not always know which part of the UK they live in. Whilst we are able to provide some top-level geographical breakdowns in some contexts, the numbers in this briefing are too small to provide further breakdowns.

Childline counselling sessions

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Counselling sessions by main concern</th>
<th>Before lockdown monthly average</th>
<th>Since lockdown monthly average</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Problems at school or with education</td>
<td>696</td>
<td>462</td>
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Further support and information

Children and young people can contact Childline for information and advice about anything that’s worrying them.

Contact our helpline if you’re worried about a child, or if you need support for something you experienced as a child [nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/](nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/reporting-abuse/)

Visit NSPCC Learning for more information about safeguarding and child protection during coronavirus