



This week's big news



Music on the balcony
in Milan, Italy.

QUESTION TIME

The prime ministers of Denmark and Norway held special press conferences for children, to answer their questions about the outbreak.

"Everything will be ok"



Sebastiano

Sebastiano Piccioli, 14, who lives in Tuscany, Italy, spoke to *The Week Junior* about what life is like there.

Piccioli said that the first few days at home were "ok" but now he is missing his friends. He says it's difficult because "I can't see the people I love and care about". His school lessons are continuing online, and Piccioli says that his teachers have been "very creative". His advice to others would be, "While it's scary at the moment, remember, as we say in Italy, that *'Andrà tutto bene'* – everything will be ok."

Acts of kindness as world tries to stop the spread of Covid-19

People around the world are showing extraordinary kindness and compassion to one another, as they deal with the outbreak of Covid-19.

What is Covid-19?

Covid-19 is a disease caused by a new type of coronavirus called SARS-CoV-2. A coronavirus is a type of virus that causes respiratory infections (infections in the nose, throat and lungs, including colds and flu). It was first discovered in humans in Wuhan, China, at the end of last year. It has since spread around the world, with more than 180,000 cases across 140 countries. Symptoms can include a sore throat, breathing difficulties and a high temperature.

How has the UK Government responded to the outbreak?

There have been more than 1,900 confirmed cases of Covid-19 in the UK, and 71 people have died. The UK Government has held emergency meetings and come up with plans to deal with the outbreak. From 16 March, the Government began holding daily news conferences to keep people updated about the situation. At the time *The Week Junior* went to press, Welsh and Scottish schools were set to close, with English schools expected to close in the near future.

What are people doing to help?

People across the UK are helping others deal with the outbreak. A woman called Becky Wass, from Falmouth in Cornwall, has designed a postcard that people can give to neighbours who are staying at home because of Covid-19. The UK Government has asked people who show symptoms, and anybody living with them, to stay at home for up to 14 days, to limit the spread of the virus. On the postcard, people can write their contact information and offer to pick up shopping or run errands for people stuck indoors. Wass says, "It's really important to try to spread kindness." On the weekend of 14–15 March, football clubs across the UK donated the food that they had prepared for match days to charity. This was after the Premier League and the English Football League (EFL) announced on 13 March all games were stopped until at least 4 April.



The Italian air force display.

allowed to go out to pharmacies, to supermarkets or to work. To keep themselves entertained, people have been singing together from their balconies and windows. The country's air force also decided to lift people's spirits; a group of planes used coloured smoke to paint the Italian flag in the sky while another plane, which represented the virus, flew out of the way. You can watch a video of the aerial display at tinyurl.com/TWJItalyplanes

What's happening in other countries?

On 16 March, Spain went into lockdown. People across the country gathered on their balconies to applaud medical staff for the work they have done since the outbreak began. In South Africa, the Ndlovu Youth Choir came up with a song about how to prevent people from catching the disease, which went viral on social media. In the US, people have been buying supplies for those in need, and governments in South America have started working together to stop the virus from spreading there. Commenting on a video of a fitness instructor leading an exercise class on the balconies of a Spanish apartment block, head of the World Health Organisation, Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus tweeted, "I am so impressed and inspired by all the examples of kindness and compassion people are showing around the world!"

All figures and information were correct at the time *The Week Junior* went to press on 18 March.

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Investigate

Read the article and then try the following activities...

Throughout history, people have said interesting things about kindness. Find your five favourite kindness quotes and don't forget to mention who said them. Challenge: pick your absolute favourite and write a paragraph about why you think it is a particularly powerful message.

Writing challenge!

Choose one of the following writing warm-ups.

1 Write a letter to a grandparent or any other person you know who is over 70 and has had to isolate themselves in order to stay safe. Make sure you give your letter a kind, reassuring tone that will make them feel hopeful, remembered and entertained.

or

2 Write an acrostic poem where the first letter of every line spells out the word K I N D N E S S when you read it down the page.

Hold a debate

While it is admirable that people have tried to help each other, there is always a danger of them doing something that might accidentally put others at risk, even if they never meant to. Therefore, should we leave all acts of care and support to state-run organisations such as the Police, NHS and Social Services? That way, everyone would get a fair share of what is available. Or is it better for people to help out where they can, as long as they follow government guidelines? Even if we are staying away from each other, there is still plenty we can do. What do you think?