COVID-19

Advice for Educational Settings:

Transition and Return

BCP Educational Psychology Service

Contents

Introduction

Research suggests that transitions and change can cause stress and uncertainty for children and young people. Following the current Public Health Crisis (Covid-19) it is likely that many children and young people will experience similar feelings when they start at or return to a setting once social isolation ends, especially those who are vulnerable, have special educational needs, or are moving to a new educational setting.

The purpose of this guidance is to provide advice on how settings can support their children to manage this transition successfully. The psychological approaches and key principles presented in this document can be flexibly applied as and when the timescales and measures governing the reopening of settings are made fully known. The government is expecting schools and other educational settings to start to a phased reopening from 1st June, thus we are aware that there is currently limited time to consider and prepare for this first stage of transition back.

Why is Transition Important?

Transition is a process and not a single event and children will require support and preparation for this. We know that an individual's experiences during this time can have a powerful and long-lasting effect on academic and mental health outcomes.

During a period of transition, anyone including young children, depending on their age, understanding and sensitivity to events, can experience:
- A loss of attachment to familiar people, friends, the environment and objects within that environment
- Role and identity uncertainty
- Entry into an environment that is less predictable
- A perceived loss of control
- A feeling of having forgotten skills
- Uncertainty about the future
- A feeling of being unsafe
- During this pandemic there may also be health-related anxiety for both themselves and others.

Key Principles of a 'Good' Transition

The COVID health pandemic and lockdown has led to unprecedented circumstances.

We are aware that across BCP our educational settings are extremely skilled in planning and preparing for transitions on a regular basis.

It is important to remember that the key principles of successful transitions still apply to the current situation.

Given that within most educational settings, pupils will have missed many weeks of education and thus should consider every pupil as a new pupil due to the amount of time that they have been absent.

Effective transitions are supported by:

- ***Advance planning and preparation***
- ***Clear processes for communication and consistent procedures, messages and routines***
- ***Consideration of relationships***

(The practices to support these principles are further detailed in the later sections on parents and the specific provisions to enable transition)

Planning and Preparation

- Identify information to be shared with children and families –
- This could include: Social stories, visual planners and videos showing them what key people and places in the setting will look like when they start or return. It may be helpful to know which other children will be there and what the routines will be and what changes they need to expect.
- Plan activities / projects that can support the transition process. Ensure these are accessible to all children.
- Work with parents and carers to enable them to support their child(ren) and prepare them for a successful return. Provide a way to make contact so they can raise any specific concerns.
- Consider and identify those who may have been vulnerable during the pandemic and may have experienced emotional trauma or risk during this time. The Pyramid of Need and
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- resilience frameworks, alongside safeguarding information and SEND lists may be supportive for this.
- Identify the pupils who will need a more enhanced and individualised transition planning.

Clear Communication

- Ensure regular communication with parents and carers. This will help to ensure that the right information is being shared at the right time and will help parents to feel confident in the process.
- Remember when adults and children have experienced trauma or stress concise, clear simple language alongside visual prompts are most effective.
- Communicate with the children in an age-appropriate manner eg picture cards, use of video messages from staff, social stories.
- Communicate regularly with all staff to make them aware of plans and any changes from the 'normal' ways of working.
- Communicate with receiving schools or other early years settings to ensure processes in place for the transfer for all necessary information for those children who may be entering a new setting.
- Plan 'check-in' processes to review the settling-in process and two-way feedback process with parents / carers.

Consideration of Relationships

- Plan time for children and staff to develop relationships and to get to know each other.
- Identify children who need key workers. Review who this will be, plan for how this relationship be established / re-established.
- Consider the social relationships available to individual children eg are they with established and known friends.

Examples of good transition practices could be:

- Communication between staff and settings to find out about the children's emotional and social needs alongside their areas of interest and strength.
- Communication about specific experiences linked to the COVID-19 outbreak, such as the loss or serious illness of close family members or friends, time in hospital, parents being Key Workers, living with a vulnerable family member etc.
- Children to be involved and have opportunities to share their experiences, views, feelings and to ask questions in an age appropriate way or express them through play. Examples could include completion of a pictorial 'All about me' type of activity.
- Communication with parents and carers, not only to find out additional information but also to allow parents / carers to raise any specific concerns about recent events or ask questions.
- Settings to think how they can use technology to aid transition if it is not initially possible for children to directly access settings. This could be in the form of virtual tours, question and answer sessions etc.
- Visual resources to be produced that can be accessed online such as examples of changes to the arrangement of rooms, number of children, new rules and procedures, how they will support children to be happy and safe.
- Embedding a recovery curriculum and/or supporting mental health and emotional wellbeing using resiliency frameworks and tools such as the SMART MOVEs materials for school aged children.
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What Can We Do to Support Children Upon Their Return to an Educational Setting?

It is important to recognise that for many children, going back to nursery or pre-school will be a welcome return. BCP survey data shows that the majority of children of all ages, where they were able to express an opinion, are looking forward to going back to school and to seeing their friends and the staff in their setting. However, for many children, particularly in this time of the pandemic this will be a time of anxiety. It is important to remember that each child will have had their own experience of lockdown and learning. Whilst there has been discussion in educational and psychological circles about the need for 'trauma informed practices,' it is essential to highlight that trauma is a response not an event. All staff, children and families have experienced the impact of COVID-19 on our lives; not everyone will present with trauma. A wide spectrum of emotional needs and responses should be expected. BCP EPS have produced free whole school training and support materials on supporting pupils who have experienced trauma, bereavement and loss during the pandemic that are available to all educational settings.

It will take time for children to re-establish and re-learn routines and expectations in their settings. It will be important to respond to what children have learnt, not what we expect them to have learnt, and what they may have forgotten.

It could well be over-whelming and frightening to be amongst groups of children and adults, for both staff and pupils especially given the concentrated time spent in the home environment because of 'lockdown'. Children will have become used to being with their parents and immediate family for an extended period. This change is a potential source of anxiety.

We know that transition is a process and not an event. Recent research from The Sutton Trust (April 2020) reports that only 45% of students had communicated with the teachers in the past week. Further research from Oxford University (The Guardian, April 2020) states that a fifth of primary aged school children are afraid to leave the house, where older children are more concerned with their health and that of their families, reporting that two fifths of young people are worried that their friends or family will catch the virus and one fifth worried about catching it themselves. Younger, pre-school children may have the same concerns but may not be able to express these so easily.

Staff who listen with empathy perform an important therapeutic function, without being therapists. Some children may be carrying a large emotional burden and this may be expressed through play or directly to key workers or other staff.

Therefore, a number of key principles can be applied when thinking about how to support all children upon their return to their settings.

Key Recovery Principles

Research has identified five key principles of psychosocial care that support recovery following a disaster or serious incident. These principles will be important to consider when supporting members of staff, children and young people upon their return to school.

The five principles are:

- A sense of safety: It is important that adults, children and young people feel safe upon their return to a setting and that the applies also to the parents.
- A sense of calm: Children and young people are likely to experience a range of emotions including both pleasant and unpleasant emotions. It is important that these are normalised and they are given support to help them manage their emotions and return to a state of calm eg by naming them and by using visual cues and toys, such as puppets to make the emotions more concrete and relatable.
- Social connectedness: It is important that parents, staff and children feel they belong and have a social network of friends, playmates and trusted others who can support them within the educational setting.
- A sense of self- and collective- efficacy: Children need to feel they have some control over what is happening to them, and a belief that their actions are likely to lead to generally positive outcomes. This is a sense of self-efficacy. They also need to feel they belong to a group that is likely to experience positive outcomes. This is known as collective efficacy.
- Promoting hope: Whilst things may feel difficult at the moment, it is important that adults, children and young people feel things will get better and work out in future. They need to be provided with reassurance and understand that in the long term they will feel positive again.

These principles have been expanded into a separate COVID-19 Transition Planning Tool which you will also find in Appendix 3 of this Advice to settings. They are reflected also in the SWAN framework below.

With thanks to guidance from Wakefield EPS, Northamptonshire EPS and the Microsoft Teams national working party of Educational Psychologists/Education Professionals which this section has been adapted from

SWAN Framework

Factors for school staff and professionals to consider using the SWAN framework to plan for transition

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Remember – the swan looks like they are gracefully gliding across the surface, whilst in fact they are frantically paddling beneath the water. Right now, our children and young people need adults in schools more than ever to be the swan.

S – safe

W – welcoming

A – all together

N – nurturing

Further information can be found via the weblink:
elearning.creativeeducation.co.uk/courses/support-a-safe-successful-return-to-school-using-the-swan-framework/   through which training is also available

Their guided discussion document aims to enable you to use the SWAN framework as a springboard for thinking about the return to school for children and adults.

With thanks and credit to Dr Pooky Knightsmith from Creative Education for this framework

Psychological Theories and Principles Underpinning Guidance

This information is included, in order to explain the psychological theories that form the basis of the advice, provision and resources provided to support you in welcoming children and young people back into schools/settings. It is included to share the theoretical frameworks underpinning recommendations, for your reference.

Attachment

The principles of attachment (relationships with others) are key in thinking about and supporting transition. For some children and young people, they have healthy and secure attachments with their parents/caregivers, meaning that they might have no/little issue separating from parents to return to school, despite being in their care for an extended period of time. We know that transition can prove to be difficult, even when children have secure and stable 'backgrounds', reinforcing the need to use attachment informed principles, universally, for all students. Additionally, the uncertainly of the coronavirus and the impact that this has had, such as routines being disrupted and/or family members being ill, may cause anxiety for children upon their return to school. An attachment (emotional/relational) informed approach will also ensure that provision is appropriate for those children whose attachments may have been 'disrupted', so are not secure.

It is important that relationships with staff are re-established for all children. The school setting, as well as the adults that care for children and young people, need to be safe and secure bases, in order for them to be emotionally able and ready to learn. The following diagram demonstrates the importance of schools being a safe base and how this can be achieved:
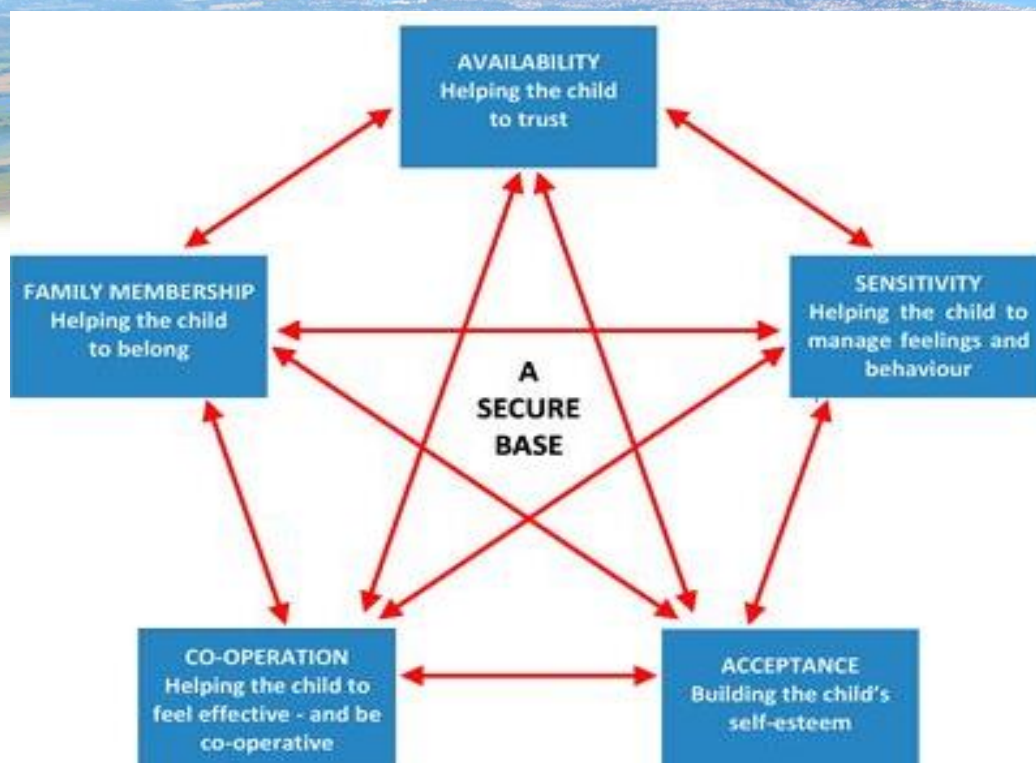
Children need experiences of being and feeling calm; believe that they are lovable and are loved; that others want to connect and interact with them; that others are interested in them and their thoughts/ideas; that they can be curious and make mistakes; that they are safe and that they can trust others to meet their needs.

Key principles from attachment literature, which promotes positive attachments (relationships) include (but are not limited to);

- Staff to welcome and reassure children to ensure and sustain connections with them.
- Tuning in to them and their feelings; acknowledging behaviours, as a form of communication and 'wondering aloud' to translate behaviours to understand their emotional need.
- Communicate empathy with them and acknowledge that for some children, the impact of the coronavirus has been difficult (as it likely has been for staff).
- Differentiating the way we interact with them – be explicit about what they need to do, in order to carefully re-assert and remind them of boundaries and expectations.
- Ensure that they know what is happening and how the environments that they knew and were familiar with have changed (depending on social distancing measures being stipulated). (Bomber, M.L; 2007)

For children, where there are known social care needs or for whom staff have particular concerns about relationships with family members or staff, specific planning may appropriate with regards

to provision, such as identification of a key adult to provide wrap around care to aid the transition or ELSA involvement.

The PACE Model is also an effective approach in promoting attachments (see below).

PACE Model

PACE can be used by adult to validate explore and understand children's feelings. It is an approach, which limits shame, promotes compassion and brings a sense of mutual support, strength and resilience. When an adult spends time with a child and demonstrates an interest I their inner life, they contain and regulate the child's emotions so that they can learn to do this themselves.

PACE stands for Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, Empathy.

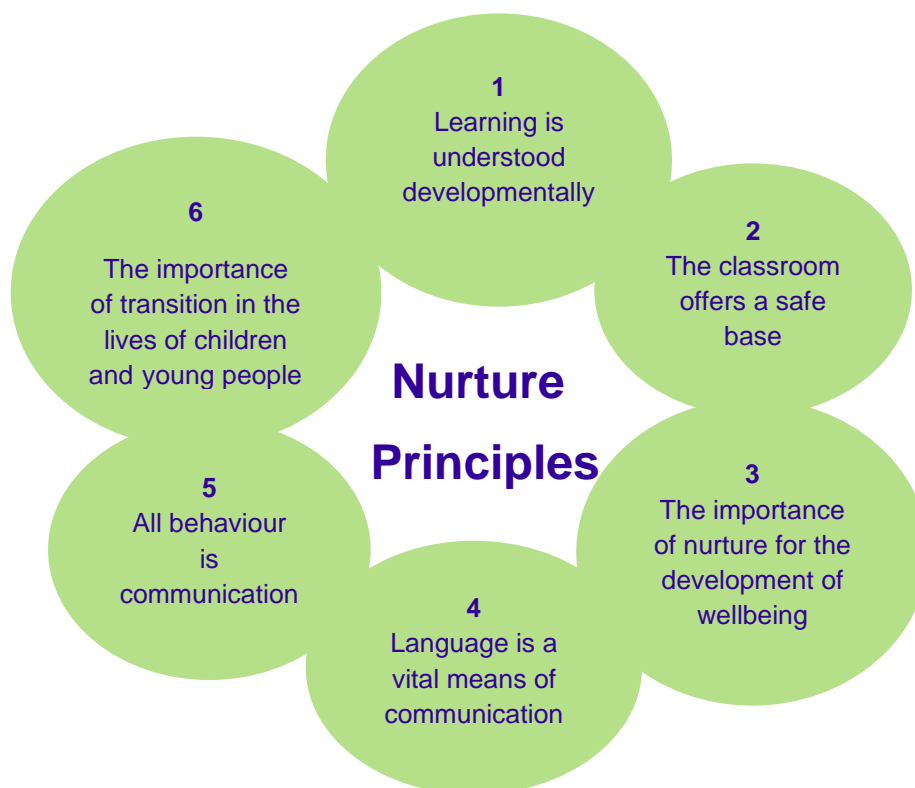| Playfulness	Acceptance	Curiosity	Empathy
An open, ready, calm, relaxed and engaged attitude	Unconditionally accepting a child makes them feel secure, safe and loved	Without judgement children become aware of their inner life	A sense of compassion for the child and their feelings

More information can be found at https://ddpnetwork.org/about-ddp/meant-pace/

Nurture Approach Principles

Nurture Approach principles derive from Marjorie Boxall's (1969) work on Nurture Groups which are defined as an, "in-school, teacher-led psychosocial intervention of groups of less than 12 pupils that effectively replace missing or distorted early nurturing experiences for both children and young adults; they achieve this by immersing students in an accepting and warm environment which helps develop positive relationships with both teachers and peers" (Nurture Group Network, 2017). The underlying features of Nurture Groups are derived from 6 core principles:

Nurture Principles

1 Learning is understood developmentally

2 The classroom offers a safe base

3 The importance of nurture for the development of wellbeing

4 Language is a vital means of communication

5 All behaviour is communication

6 The importance of transition in the lives of children and young people

(Colley, 2009)

These principles of adapting a nurturing approach can also be implemented within a classroom of playroom, such as providing children and young people a feeling of being safe and secure, as well as thinking that the transition back to an educational setting may be a difficult move for some children and a range of activities to meet their emotional and social interaction needs should be foremost to ensure that they are ready to play and learn. However, first and foremost, nurturing principles focus on having the child or young person form attachments to loving and caring adults at school who can provide support giving clear structures and boundaries, responding to their need. A whole-setting approach is more likely to have a positive impact on both staff and pupils.

Academic and Emotional Resilience

Resiliency can be described as "a person's capacity to handle environmental difficulties, demands and high pressure without experiencing negative effects" (Kinman and Grant, 2011). Resilience is not a trait. Resilience is a capacity that involves behaviours, thoughts, and actions that can be learned by and developed in anyone. Being resilient involves tapping into your resources, such as personal strengths and the support of others. Luthar & Cicchetti (2000) argue that resilience should be seen as a dynamic process that involves interactions between individuals and their environment and not as something that represents a personal characteristic. Therefore, resilience is learnable and teachable. As we learn we increase the range of strategies available to us during hard times.

One way of promoting resilience in school is to use the Resilience Framework by Angie Hart et Al which identifies five major approaches to promoting resilience along with strategies and training to support these to be embedded. Research shows that these five proactive and protective areas are critical factors in fostering resiliency. Further training and support on promoting resilience and mental wellbeing in school by implementing the academic resilience approach can be accessed through the BCP EPS.

Resilience Framework (Children & Young People) Oct 2012 – adapted from Hart & Blincow with Thomas 2007					
	BASICS	BELONGING	LEARNING	COPING	CORE SELF
SPECIFIC APPROACHES	Good enough housing	Find somewhere for the child/YP to belong	Make school/college life work as well as possible	Understanding boundaries and keeping within them	Instil a sense of hope
		Help child/YP understand their place in the world		Being brave	
	Enough money to live	Tap into good influences	Engage mentors for children/YP	Solving problems	Support the child/YP to understand other people's feelings
	Being safe	Keep relationships going			
	Access & transport	The more healthy relationships the better	Map out career or life plan	Putting on rose-tinted glasses	Help the child/YP to know her/himself
		Take what you can from relationships where there is some hope		Fostering their interests	
	Healthy diet	Get together people the child/YP can count on	Help the child/YP to organise her/himself	Calming down & self-soothing	Help the child/YP take responsibility for her/himself
		Responsibilities & obligations			
	Exercise and fresh air	Focus on good times and places	Highlight achievements	Remember tomorrow is another day	Foster their talents
	Enough sleep	Make sense of where child/YP has come from		Lean on others when necessary	
	Play & leisure	Predict a good experience of someone or something new	Develop life skills		There are tried and tested treatments for specific problems, use them
	Being free from prejudice & discrimination	Make friends and mix with other children/YPs		Have a laugh	
NOBLE TRUTHS					

The framework shows the importance of establishing positive relationships to feel safe and connected. Belonging is highlighted as a critical element to develop resilience. It can be argued that it is impossible to overcome adversity without the presence of a caring person and a secure attachment relationship. This does not have to be family, having a caring person in your life is often a key factor in achieving positive long-term outcomes.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is not an abstract or remote body of knowledge, like physics or history. It's more of a practical skill, like being able to ride a bike or play the piano. Mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we're doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what's going on around us. This can be difficult when other thoughts come into our mind, especially if we are worried about something. It helps children and young people to regulate their emotions and focus their attention as well as developing their resilience. Furthermore, it can open a channel of discussion with adults on discussing any thoughts worries and concerns.

Emotion Literacy Support

Emotional literacy support assistants are well established across BCP and are regularly supervised by EPS. This is an evidence-based psychological intervention strategy.

The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) can provide full 6 day training for staff. This training covers the psychology and psychobiology underpinning the Emotional literacy Support Assistant approach, outline the principles and providing opportunity to practice putting these into practice.

Growth Mindset

A Growth Mindset refers to the belief that abilities and knowledge are not fixed and that with effort, experience and support, we can achieve growth. In contrast, those who have a fixed mindset are of the view that their qualities are "carved in stone" and are unchangeable.

Research has shown that when children have a growth mindset, they more willing to take on challenging tasks, focus on learning goals and able to rebound more easily from failures.

The Growth Mindset will be important and useful for staff to foster when children return to school. It is highly likely that they will feel overwhelmed with academic work, following the unexpected break from school, despite home learning. As such, the key messages and strategies that we can take from the Growth Mindset will reassure and support them that the difficulties that they experience now can be mastered. The power of the word 'yet' is a quick and easy way to promote a Growth Mindset. For example, "you cannot do that maths question *yet* but you will get there*".*

The Growth Mindset complements and promotes resilience, as well as enables trusting relationships with staff to form a holistic approach to supporting children and young people to adapt back into life in their educational setting.

(Dweck, C. S; 2006)

In addition to considering the processes in place to support all children returning to education, there are some specific groups that may require additional planning. These children and young people include (but not limited to) those who will be transitioning to a new school (those moving into Reception, Year 3, Year 7, Year 12), those with an identified SEND (with or without an EHCP), children in care and those who are on child protection plans.

The information below is intended to be a guide to some of strategies that may support groups where specific plans for transition are required.

a) Transition back into an Early Years Setting or to a New Setting

- Create a virtual tour of the nursery/pre-school which can be posted on the setting's website. Some of this could done by children who have been attending the setting eg children of Key Workers (with parental permission). This will be particularly important if there have been changes to layout etc.

- A visual resource with photos of key people/places in school. This can be sent directly to children who are have SEND or considered vulnerable. Again, can be posted on the website for all to access.

- Provide other visual resources regarding the rules and routines of the day such as pictures of the garden, a visual timetable of the day, children enjoying key events like snack and lunchtime etc

- If a key workers are identified, for them to give parents a ring and dependent upon age and ability, speak or video conference with the child.

- Consideration of whether the keyworker/s send the child a card to let them know they are thinking about them.

- The setting to provide an FAQ sheet for parents with key questions and answers that often are asked.

- The setting to try and gain as much information as they can about the child from parents, the child, a previous pre-school or any agencies that are currently involved with the child (EPS, Early Help, SALT etc)

- Consideration of sending home some creative or practical activities that children can complete about themselves (age and ability dependent) that can give adults opportunity to find out their interests and abilities. This could be things such as 'All about me' sheets containing photos of the child, artwork they have done or pictures of things they are interested in.

b) Transition of Children from Nursery into School

The transition from nursery to full-time school can be a particularly anxious time for parents/carers and children as they begin their formal education. Due to the current pandemic, typical events may not have happened to support transition. It is important to think about transition as a process rather than an event, as it will take time for both children and parents/carers to settle into the new structure. Below are some possible ideas that could be helpful.

- Place an even stronger emphasis on consulting with parents/carers this will help to reduce their stress which can otherwise transmit to their child.

- Share information: additional questions to consider when completing/discussing your transition documentation might be: sleep, what comforts them, how they show distress etc.

- Having friends in the same class helps children adjust to the demands of the new setting. Ask parents/carers as well as staff from previous settings if any.

- Help the child to become familiar with your setting which under current circumstances could be by providing virtual photo books and/or video tours of key features of the school/classroom e.g. entrance, toilets, pegs, break out area, playground, a selection of toys/equipment available by providing these on your website.

- Relaxed/staggered starts under the current situation will be evermore important to allow the child and their parent/carer to take their time separating and to choose what the child is ready to engage in. However, parental agreement must be previously sought and accommodating of parents and their needs, such as returning to work or other commitments...

- Adopt an individualised approach to separation; be watchful and flexible to respond to the variable needs of individual children and families. These are likely to be accentuated after the pandemic. Observe attachment behaviours. Young children who are securely attached need to continue to experience an optimum level of support and nurturing care with their key adults. Children who are showing insecure or avoidant attachment behaviours need help building relationships.

- Transitional objects: understanding and appreciating the role that comforters play helps us to respond sensitively to their presence.

- Hellos and goodbyes: the time when parents/carers will need to feel most connected with and supported by practitioners, especially at this challenging time will be at the beginning and end

of sessions. What parents and children will need at handover transition times is the soothing presence of a sensitive practitioner who understands and empathises with them.

- Predictability and routines will be important, especially during the settling in phase without too many interruptions to sustained play or too many breaks for adult-driven tasks, such as greeting time, snack times, and whole-group activities.

- Listening to children - ask gentle questions, provide opportunity for children to voice concerns. Incorporate ideas and feelings about change and transition into their play, through story and drama, role play and in their 'small world' play.

[With thanks to guidance from Alison Gardner at Northamptonshire EPS and the Microsoft Teams national working party of Educational Psychologists/Education Professionals which this section has been adapted from resources by Wakefield EPS]

c) Vulnerable Children (SEND, CLA, CIN etc)

There are specific groups of pupils that settings must be thinking about when planning the return from lockdown. These include pupils who are likely to have the found the changes in routines or disruption to relationships extremely challenging, such as those with social communication needs and / social emotional and mental health needs.
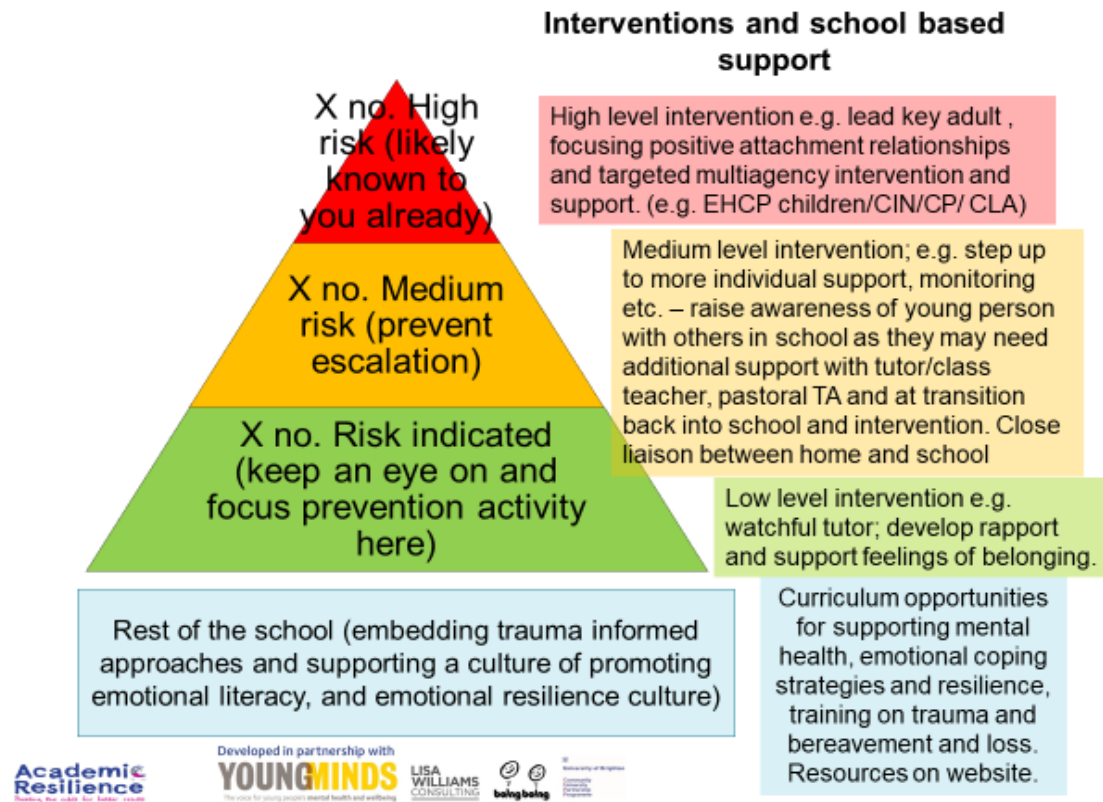
These groups of students may need to have specific plans in place that take into account the support and teaching approaches that have proved effective in the past.

Where necessary guidance and advice from support services in health, education and social care sectors might be sought for those to pupils with additional needs and vulnerabilities. Pupils with particular challenges such as those with language or social communication needs and those with social, emotional and mental health needs will need particularly careful consideration.

For children who have (or continue to experience) disruptions in their home life and events which have impacted well-being, such as those in the care system or who have Child in Need and Child Protection plans, they will likely require an enhanced level of planned emotional support and nurture through caring relationships to enable a successful return to the setting. Staff should consider developing plans jointly in liaison with services known to the young person / family and ensuring regular and effective planning with families to enable a holistic and family-centred approach to working.

d) Identification of Vulnerable Individuals – Pyramid of Need
Children and young people will present with different levels of needs. This could be conceptualised in a Pyramid of Need as follows:

Interventions and school based support

X no. High risk (likely known to you already)

High level intervention e.g. lead key adult, focusing positive attachment relationships and targeted multiagency intervention and support. (e.g. EHCP children/CIN/CP/ CLA)

X no. Medium risk (prevent escalation)

Medium level intervention; e.g. step up to more individual support, monitoring etc. – raise awareness of young person with others in school as they may need additional support with tutor/class teacher, pastoral TA and at transition back into school and intervention. Close liaison between home and school

X no. Risk indicated (keep an eye on and focus prevention activity here)

Low level intervention e.g. watchful tutor; develop rapport and support feelings of belonging.

Rest of the school (embedding trauma informed approaches and supporting a culture of promoting emotional literacy, and emotional resilience culture)

Curriculum opportunities for supporting mental health, emotional coping strategies and resilience, training on trauma and bereavement and loss. Resources on website.

Developed in partnership with

Academic Resilience

YOUNGMINDS

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being being

Identifying and supporting vulnerable children will be important, and settings must recognise that these cannot be assumed to just be the children with previously identified needs, but also some children who are considered to typically manage well.

A simple emotional well-being rating could be completed by all pupils. Based on previously identified needs, and through information shared with the setting in their communication with parents. This will take into account any recent events, experiences of loss, identified worries about returning to school), settings may consider 'RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rating' pupils to identify the level of support that may be needed to facilitate a successful return to school.

The emotional needs of some children may become more apparent once they are back in the setting. It is therefore important that staff continue to monitor children, showing sensitivity to the signs that they need to be supported in a different or enhanced way. It may be helpful to continue to use a RAG rating system over the period of a term following the return to school, making adjustments to the level of emotional and social support in place as required.

It is also important that settings take into consideration young people who may not be returning into school at this time. It is possible that on-going shielding and social distancing measures, may prevent some pupils returning at the same time as their peers. There are also young people who are currently placed at alternative provisions. Settings must plan as to how to remain connected to those pupils and consider their emotional and relationships needs.

Advice for Parents

The return to an educational setting will also be a time of significant change for many parents and carers. For most, they have been at home with their children for an extended period, and the parents themselves may have worries about the return.

They may have concerns about:
- Their son or daughter's safety, particularly if they have any existing health concerns.
- Their son or daughter settling into a new group, or for some, a new pre-school or school.
- Any enduring emotional impact of recent events, including experiences of loss and bereavement.
- Any lasting impact of the disruption to their son or daughter's learning and progress.
- Their son or daughter being able to re-establish friendships and relationships in the class / school.

It is important that schools and professionals appreciate the thoughts and worries of parents and carers and pro-actively seek to reduce anxieties which may transfer to the individual child. We should reassure parents that any feelings of worry are understandable and normal in the current circumstances. It will be important that parents are encouraged to seek support for themselves through their own families and / or social networks or from professional sources where necessary.

For All Parents / Carers
- Ensure that there is effective and enhanced communication in place the lead up to any return to pre-school or school. This should include contact from staff in the setting, including key adults especially if there will be a change of staff. This will enable the sharing of information on both sides, and offer parents an opportunity to share information that may impact on the pupil's return to school (for example, have they experienced bereavement and loss as a result of Covid-19, have there been any changes within the family, are parents designated as key workers for the purposes of current working arrangements?
- Make parents aware of all plans that are being implemented for transitions and the enhanced arrangements on offer. Explain what is different about the process of transition this year.
- Make sure that parents know how social distancing and other safety measures are being implemented.
- Parents may appreciate information being shared with them about changes that they can prepare their son or daughter for: new staff, classroom, routines, any changes that have occurred in school.

- Offer a key point of contact for questions and concerns. Parents may have more queries than would typically be expected at a transition point.
- Once children return, parents may continue to need an enhanced level of contact, and the space and opportunity to talk to staff about the settling in process more frequently than might typically be planned.
- Share information with parents about the emotional support and provisions that will be in place for all children in the weeks (and months if necessary).
- Make parents aware of how any impact on progress will be addressed over the coming months.

Parents of Children Entering Reception / Year 1

For the parents of children formally entering school for the first time, the current situation may result in increased worries and the possibility of separation anxiety occurring.

- Schools may consider replacing the typical 'home visits' that support transition, with virtual meetings and video calls where this is possible.
- Parents are likely to find the use of virtual video tours of the setting, including points of entrance, cloakrooms etc. useful.
- Consider how you can enhance home-school communication in the initial weeks.
- Parents may need greater sensitivity and flexibility in how they separate from their child at the start of the day. Work with parents to make this an emotionally supportive process for them, as well as their child.
- Staff should ensure they are available to talk to parents at the start and end of day. Parents may need more contact, and over a longer period of time than is typically expected. This may mean that an extra member of staff is required to support classroom routines at that time in order to make key staff available.
- Resources such as 'The Invisible String' can also help parents to feel connected to their son or daughter when they are separated.

Parents of Pupils Leaving the Setting (Year 6, or moving to a different setting)

- Consider how they can say 'goodbye' to parents, as well as the pupils, even if this is done retrospectively.
- Let parents know what information has been shared with the new school, so that they feel assured that information has been effectively shared.

Parents of Children Moving from Primary to Secondary Education (or changing settings)

- Ensure that parents are given adequate and enhanced opportunity to share their views and information about their son / daughter in advance of transition.
- Personal contact (by telephone call or email) from the form tutor / head of year will likely be appreciated by most parents.
- Make sure parents are aware of the contact that there has been with the primary school (or previous school) so that they feel assured that information has been effectively shared.
- Share information about routines and what the first few weeks will look like.
- Make sure that parents know who the key points of contact are and assure them of their readiness and availability to answer questions and talk to them.
- All of the above points may need to offer at a further enhanced level of those children with identified needs and known vulnerabilities. Make sure parents understand and know about the support and provisions that are being put in place (as appropriate).

Guidance for Educational Settings

The following guidance is provided as a means of supporting settings to aid the transition of all children and young people back to school. As discussed, this advice is underpinned by the psychological approaches previously presented, all of which have a common theme of 'relationships'.

The guidance takes the form of a hierarchical diagram, which outlines what can be done universally, for all pupils and gradually works towards targeted and bespoke planning, where necessary. This diagram is accompanied by a table highlighting relevant provision that we feel is important, at each stage. Additionally, further considerations and practical advice can be found in the table included within the appendices (Appendix 2).
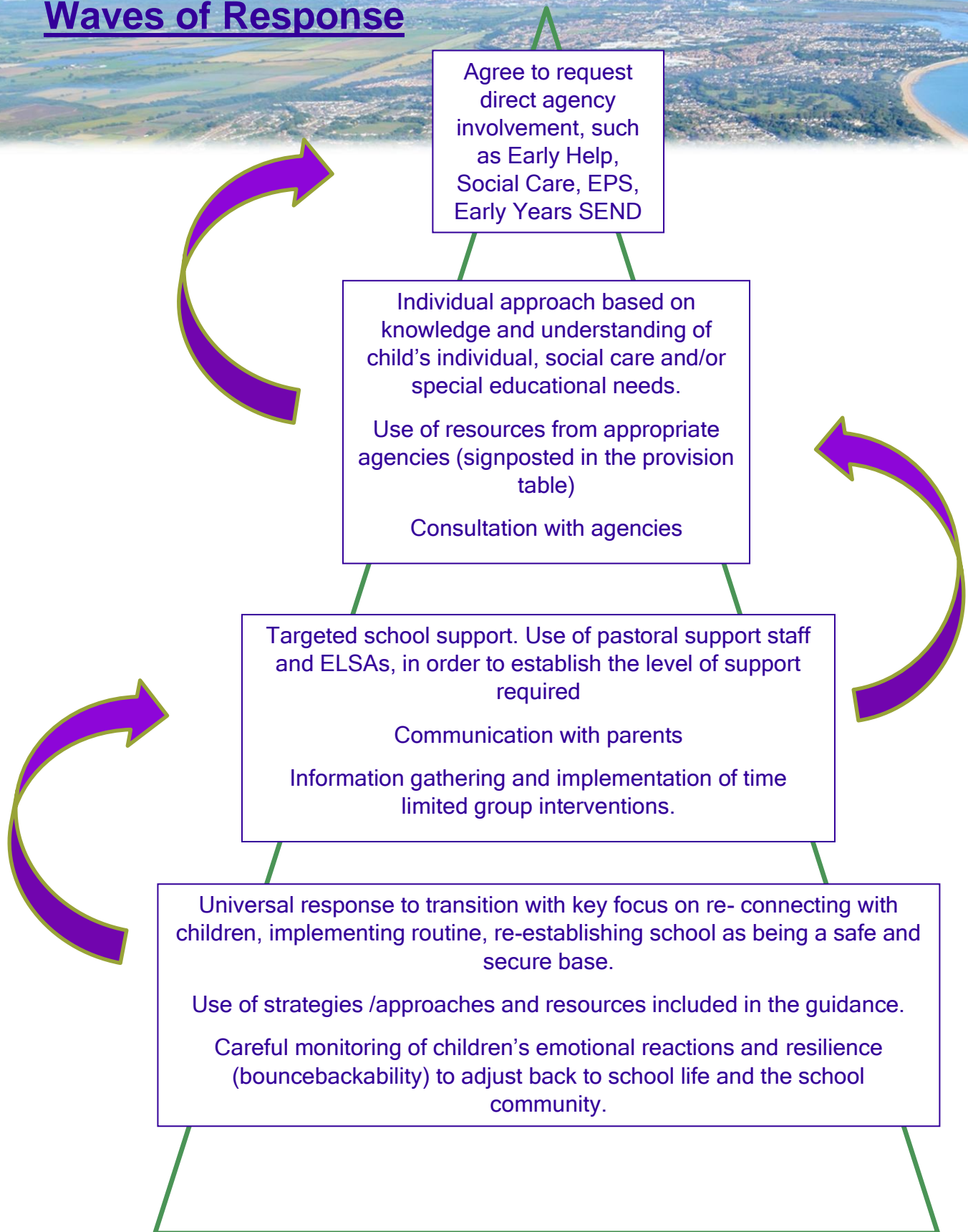
Waves of Response

Agree to request direct agency involvement, such as Early Help, Social Care, EPS, Early Years SEND

Individual approach based on knowledge and understanding of child's individual, social care and/or special educational needs.

Use of resources from appropriate agencies (signposted in the provision table)

Consultation with agencies

Targeted school support. Use of pastoral support staff and ELSAs, in order to establish the level of support required

Communication with parents

Information gathering and implementation of time limited group interventions.

Universal response to transition with key focus on re- connecting with children, implementing routine, re-establishing school as being a safe and secure base.

Use of strategies /approaches and resources included in the guidance.

Careful monitoring of children's emotional reactions and resilience (bouncebackability) to adjust back to school life and the school community.

Table of Provision

Level of Response	Teaching and Learning Strategies	Provision	Support
Universal Response	Building Relationships Resilience Nurturing Principles Mindfulness Emotion Coaching Trauma Informed approach PACE model Growth Mindset – Carol Dweck	• Acknowledge that for some children and young people, they will be frustrated by the situation and want to be back in school. • Acknowledgement that some children and young people will have experienced safeguarding issues being at home. • Priority to be given to the re-affirming of relationships between both staff and children/young people. Although there will be some learning lost, not to get straight into formal assessment. • Flexibility - a way of demonstrating that wellbeing is the first priority. • Awareness of any Key Worker children, if they have remained in school and their feelings towards others who have not been attending school. • Consideration of the day especially in the first instance to think about activities that build on relationships, feeling safe, repetition of routines and structures. This can involve Circle Time, games, welcome back assembly	Websites Local offer: fid.bcpcouncil.gov.uk/kb5/poole/fis/site.page?id=E-GOWcpQTdA Resilience: www.boingboing.org.uk Nurture groups: www.nurtureuk.org Emotion coaching: www.emotioncoachinguk.com Mental health: https://www.annafreud.org/ Children's mental health: childrensmentalhealthcampaign.org/resources/covid-19-resources

		(re-establishing school community) to celebrate any missed birthdays, show appreciation for key workers, reinforce everyone safe and back together. • Time within the curriculum to acknowledge that everything has not just 'returned to normal' • Thought around displays in school to reflect the situation, for example things that we are sad about and things we should be happy about. • Adults to model appropriate behaviours and talk about experiences when needed • The use of visual resources to explain and reinforce routines and structures of the day. This could be via visual timetables, checklists etc… • Clear and consistent rules and routines expressed – re-teach these. • Use of social stories. • Repetition and reminders that are supportive rather than assertive. • The use of positive praise at all levels. • Staff to not directly question children on what work they may or may not have completed at home. • Children who have completed home working to be praised privately. • Parents to be included in plans of the school with opportunities for parents to share if their child has experienced any difficulties during	Books Attachment in the Classroom – Louise Bomber Inside I'm Hurting – Louise Bomber 'Everybody Worries' – an online picture book for children: calameo.com/read/000777721945cfe5bb9cc?authid=Xu9pcOzU3TQx Activities Hope Cloud Activity: youngminds.org.uk/resources/school-resources/hope-clouds-activity/ 'All About Me' – many online examples Therapeutic Story – The Little Elf: moss-lane.surrey.sch.uk/web/coronavirus Growth Mindset – Big Life Journal Well-being rating scales/Daily emotion 'check ins' (i.e placing

| | | the lockdown (e.g. emotional, bereavement, illness).
• Safe spaces for children to talk about experiences.
• Ensure pastoral support is available throughout the day and is not by timetable/appointment only.
• Clear communication regarding the whereabouts of members of the school community.
• Opportunities to celebrate members of the school community who have died, this could be in the form of a remembrance assembly where names could be read it of family members of children, as well as celebrating the work of the NHS and key workers (in line with parental / family wishes and only when consent from bereaved families has been sought to do this).
• Opportunities to talk about feelings/emotions embedded throughout the curriculum.
• Careful balance of prioritising wellbeing and also ensuring boundaries are in place, as these are safe, i.e. (it's OK to feel scared about being at school but it's not OK to hit staff).
• Expect 'behaviours' - plans in place for these.
• Gradual approach to reintroducing academic demands. Children and young people have to be emotionally ready before they can learn.
• Staff wellbeing also a priority - "need to feel nurtured to nurture". | name on chart to show how children are feeling).   30

Mindfulness – short mediations:

youtube.com/watch?v=gIkiy-eMSik

youtube.com/watch?v=71EfjSvS3r4

youtube.com/watch?v=KETOeYm9Ap0

youtube.com/watch?v=R8UOqaJCVYI

Webinars: (w.b 18/5/20)

'Back to school after lockdown': zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_I9_DkS6QRX2qvpPBZC41Wg

'From crisis to kindness' annafreud.org/training/training-and-conferences-overview/conferences-and-seminars/from-crisis-to-kindness-the-pandemic-mental-health-and-education/ |

		- New rules and restrictions articulated as 'do' statements rather than 'don't' – such as 'do wash your hands'. - Use of therapeutic stories for the whole class. - Peer mentoring schemes. - The use of transitional objects to be used with younger children. - DSL to be in contact with Virtual School if support needed.	31
Targeted School Response	Building Relationships Resilience Nurturing Principles Mindfulness Emotion Coaching ELSA	All of the above and; - A number of adults being 'available' to support children if and when needed. - Ensure that key members of staff such as SENCo and DSL have additional time to attend to any matters that have arisen. - Small group work, specifically targeting area of need, such as specific work around emotions, emotional regulation, bereavement… - Examples of support: ELSA, Zones of Regulation, FRIENDS, Lego Therapy, Talking Partners.	Websites: elsanetwork.org elsa-support.co.uk/ early-education.org.uk/attachment-and-trauma-aware Books The Zones of Regulation: A curriculum designed to foster self-regulation and emotional control. Smart moves - building resilience booklets for Yr 6 to secondary age: eikon.org.uk/for-professionals/eikon-in-schools/smart-moves-building-resilience/

			Advice and guidance from other services, such as, through consultation.
Individual Targeted Response	Building Relationships Resilience Nurturing Principles Mindfulness Emotion Coaching ELSA Anxiety CBT approaches Loss and Bereavement work Social stories Talking mats	All of the above and; • Provide a consistent adult that a child can develop a positive and trusting relationship with. • Specific targeted work with a familiar adult trained in delivering the programme. • Information gathering and action plan set out to meet needs. • Personalised visual timetable in the short term • Allocated a member of staff/key worker, in the short term to help re-adjust. • The use of both social and therapeutic stories with individuals if needed. • Some specific children may experience separation anxiety from parents/carers – individual support may be needed to offer reassurance. • Some children may experience specific anxiety. Looking at individual ways that they can be supported to offer reassurance, such as the use of CBT approaches. • Some children may have experienced loss and bereavement and will need some	Websites Planning with individuals – eg social stories, talking mats (good for SEND and EY: starsteam.org.uk/coronavirus-resources#collapse4a Bereavement and mental health: em-edsupport.org.uk/coronavirus-eps winstonswish.org cruse.org.uk samaritans.org youngminds.org.uk Books The Invisible String – Patrice Karst Think Good, Feel Good – Paul Stallard

			additional adult support, such as an ELSA or other suitably trained adult.	Therapeutic Stories – Margot Sunderland 33
				Starving the Anxiety Gremlin – Kate Collins-Donnelly (primary and secondary editions).
				Huge Bag of Worries – Virginia Ironside
				Conversations that Matter – Margot Sunderland
				What to Do When You Worry Too Much? A Kid's Guide to Anxiety - Dawn Huebner
				The Mindfullness Journal for Teens - Jennie Marie Battistin.
				<u>Activities</u> The use of Therapeutic Stories – The little Elf (<u>em-edsupport.org.uk/coronavirus-eps</u>)
				Creation of a five point scale, for any emotion, including anxiety (Dunn Baron and Curtis).
				Graduated response: eg <u>poolefamilyinformationdirectory.com/kb5/poole/fis/advice.page?id=ngkGYLmosos</u>

			poolefamilyinformationdirectory.com/kb5/poole/fis/advice.page?id=oKYeuh972QE RAG rating tables Other Loss and Bereavement and Trauma whole school training produced by BCP EPS
Outside Agency Support	Eg. EPS Outreach Early Years SEND Team Mental Health Support Teams Early Help	To have tried all of the above strategies: • This should be done following the graduated response with the Plan, Do and Review Cycle. • In the majority of circumstances children and young people should be raised at the planning meeting with the supporting documentation. • Use of un-named consultations • Supporting Me to Learn Plan (or equivalent) -My Support Plan (MSP) -Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP)	

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Dweck, C. S. (2006*). Mindset; How Can You Fulfil Your Potential*. New York: The Random House Publishing Group.

Gottman, J. (1997) *Raising an Emotionally Intelligent Child.* Prentice Hall & IBD

Kinman, G. & Grant, L. (2011) Exploring stress resiliency in trainee social workers: The role of emotional and social competencies. *British Journal of Social Work,* 41, 261-275.

Luthar, S. & Cicchetti, D. (2000) The construct of resilience: Implications for interventions and social policies. *Development and Psychopathology* 12, (4), 857-885.

Appendixes

Appendix 1: Websites

Below are a list of websites that may offer further advice and guidance. If you would like to discuss any of the content in this information pack, then please speak to your link Educational Psychologist (EP) who will be able to help.

SWAN framework for a safe and successful return to school
elearning.creativeeducation.co.uk/courses/support-a-safe-successful-return-to-school-using-the-swan-framework/

Recovery curriculum: Loss and life for our children and schools post pandemic:
evidenceforlearning.net/recoverycurriculum/

Transition tips for pupils with SEND:
youngminds.org.uk/resources/school-resources/transition-tips-for-pupils-with-send/

Factors to consider when returning to an educational setting:
seainclusion.co.uk/post/the-many-problems-of-returning-to-school

Transfer from primary to post-primary/secondary:
1) education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/NEPS-Guides/Transfer-from-Primary-to-Post-primary/

2) mentalhealth.org.uk/learning-disabilities/our-work/employment-education/moving-on-to-secondary-school/

3) bbc.co.uk/teach/transitioning-to-secondary-school/zkc9pg8

Issues to be Aware of …	Possible Impact	Practical Activities
Everything is NOT normal	Expectations of normality amongst pupils, staff and parents will be high	• Settings to manage expectations and uncertainty in their communication to all stakeholders. Time must be available to do this. • The ways in which setting is likely to be different is considered and communicated to all prior to the return to the setting. • There may need to be activities and displays in the setting which reflect upon this time. Things that we are sad about / things that we are glad about. • Time provided within the schedule to consider this.
Ongoing Social Distancing / Hygiene Considerations	Impact on attendance and distribution of classes within the setting, as well as routines and practices. Understanding how social distancing measures might affect emotional wellbeing.	• Part time attendance, spacing in the classroom/playrooms, time for hygiene • Plan, communicate in advance, reinforce expectations consistently • Communicate with families what measures are in place before children return so they know what to expect. • Film the classrooms and make available online so children and young people can see the environmental changes before they return. • Reinforce and explain that the measures are in place to keep everyone safe.
Routines have Changed	Not just for children but for whole families. There may need to be some sympathy and understanding around this.	• Plan clear routines, share these in advance, including any phased returns. • Consider the impact of these new routines on attendance. How can families be supported/encouraged to prepare themselves for going back to the setting or on to school? • Communicate with them to proactively plan for those who might need additional support.

Relationships	These need to be re-established and this may be an opportunity for renewal	• **PRIORTISE** Staff to focus on creating relationships with children and young people, such as, greetings, individual conversations, 'checking in', modelling and expressing calmness and warmth, emotion coaching approaches and PACE approaches. Treat all children as having attachment needs.
Gaps in Learning	Huge variation in the experiences and opportunities available to young people.	• Assess knowledge informally. Start curriculum with what children know … not what you think has been taught while lockdown has been in progress. • Topics may be revision for some…this will not harm them, but help them feel confident. Plan additional tasks / topics for those who have covered more to enable those who haven't to catch up. Give children the opportunity to share what they have learned (even if it is having watched films or played Minecraft). • Catch up intervention for those who need it.
Some Children have Remained on Site.	Possible stigmatization, potential feelings that safe space is being intruded upon when all children return.	• Preparation of those children who have remained on site for the arrival of others. Perhaps plan a welcome back event or ask them to help with the planning and decision making about how they can welcome other children back to nursery/school.
Trauma and Bereavement	Many children / staff will have experienced trauma and bereavement	• Provide opportunities and encourage communication from parents / carers around child experiences. Plan information sharing. • Staff to be vigilant (update awareness training prior to settings opening). • Provide safe spaces for children to talk about experiences and communicate through play. • Clear communication regarding the whereabouts of members of staff. • Opportunities to celebrate members of the setting community who have died, whether through Coronavirus or other reasons.

Safeguarding	There is likely increase in safeguarding issues including those related to poverty, Domestic Violence, parental mental health, substance abuse etc.	• Ensure that training is refreshed and up to date so that staff are aware. • Provide opportunity for young people to share experiences if needed. • Extra time and support for DSL upon re-opening to work with relevant agencies to safeguard children.
Ongoing Illness Anxiety	Concerns about illness are heightened and are likely to be continually reinforced.	• Balance between acknowledging the issue and managing anxiety. • Use of Social Stories. • Opportunity to teach coping skills eg relaxation, mindfulness. • Implementation of nurture and attachment principles to reassure and re-establish trusting and safe relationships.
Separation Anxiety	Children (and staff) are used to being home with their families. This is particularly comforting when the world feels so unsafe. This may particularly impact where there are key workers or vulnerable people in the family.	• Clarify communication lines so that children and young people are confident that contact could be made with the setting, in case of emergency (phones as transitional objects). • Again, acknowledge feelings (emotion coaching / PACE) and teach coping skills.
Additional needs, especially children with ASD	Any time of change can be challenging …	• Additional preparation will be required, such as videos of any changes to the school; new routines and expectations shared in advance; additional adult support available to check in, explain, answer questions and reassure, as well as use of social stories/comic strip conversations to prepare for going back to school.

Sensory Needs	Potentially overwhelming environment for staff and Children and young people. A development of fear of being around people – unused to people in their personal space.	• Consider a phased return, staggered starts and/or part time timetables. • Availability of calm spaces, ear defenders, ability to protect personal space and choose who accesses it. • Use of markers on the floor may be necessary.
Placement Transitions	Loss of 'ending' activities Loss of transition activities during the previous term.	• Online transition activities, such as virtual school tours, sharing of videos the school has (sports / concerts) photos of classrooms and teachers. Virtual meeting with class teacher if possible. • Phased starts. • Real opportunities to meet the class teacher in home environment in September. • Walks past the school. • Acquisition of uniform when this is possible.
Uniform/clothing Issues	Outgrown, not replaceable at current time, financial issues	• Not the time for strict adherence. Show flexibility and aim to return to uniform at a later date. Consider how to organise uniform swops (may need to consider washing and handling of clothes at this time).
Staff Issues	Burnout, lack of downtime, bereavement, illness, stress and anxiety, childcare issues, financial issues	• Consider how staff wellbeing has been monitored. What have their experiences been and have they been bereaved of family members/friends? • What are their current circumstances and family pressures? Are their children back at school? How can they be supported to balance work and home life? • What information do you know to help create flexibility and support for them upon their return? • Have staff had sufficient time and information to prepare for their return to work? Are expectations and plans to transition children back clear?

		• Initially, limit demands made of them, such as reducing pressures outside of the classroom (paperwork, unnecessary meetings and observations). The focus should be on relationships and supporting one another to re-adjust, rather than performance. • Ensure that they have space and time to talk not only to each other but the children and young people.
Frustration for some children and young people.	Some children and young people may feel frustrated that they want everything to just get back to normal and feeling they have coped well with the crisis and settings being shut. Some children will have developed resilience through various coping strategies and approaches.	• Acknowledgement that young children, school pupils and students will respond to the situation in lots of different ways, some better than others and that this is fine. There is no shame in not coping. • Celebration of the ways in which students coped and managed to keep going and feeling positive or hopeful. • Recognise and celebrate the resilience and coping seen amongst our schools, settings and families and in so doing, consider ways to connect people to share how they have coped with these times, what sources of strength and even joy they have discovered, what reserves within themselves and their communities have taken them by surprise.

The above document has been adapted from resources produced by the Microsoft Teams national working party of Educational Psychologists/Education Professionals and with very grateful thanks to Wakefield EPS.

BCP COVID-19 Transition Planning Tool:

A model for safe and successful return to an educational setting

Introduction

This transition planning tool is to supplement the advice to setting's transition document.

Following the easing of lockdown restrictions in England there are many questions on how best to support the transition of children and young people back to school. This resource aims to provide a structure for planning for children and young people's return and for ensuring their safety and wellbeing within the challenging context that the COVID-19 presents.

Included within this resource are

- Prompts for thinking and decision making.
- An outline of key components of ensuring children's wellbeing through transition.
- A framework with prompts for how best to support these areas before the return to a setting and during transition.
- An example framework with some suggestions for support in each area.
- A blank framework to be completed by schools and other settings during planning for return.

A quick guide to help with initial decision making and wellbeing:

F = Focus on what you can control

A = Acknowledge and be compassionate towards uncomfortable emotions

C = Come back and connect with your physical body

E = Engage with and pay attention to what you are doing now

C = Commit to helpful action that is guided by your values

O = Open up, ask for help and be compassionate

V = Values should guide your decision making and action

I = Identify resources that could help you now and later

D = Disinfect and plan for safe socialising and connection

With thanks to Dr Russ Harris (Author of The Happiness Trap)

Create a sense of safety and calm:

- Figure out the logistics and how things will work.
- What is the best way to communicate what to expect, what will happen, where, who will be there and when?

Find ways for people to feel connected:

- Plan in plenty of opportunity and time for staff and children to reconnect, play and socialise safely.
- What will be the best way to promote and model the importance and value in being particularly kind, caring and compassionate towards one another?

Background

The planning tool is based on key recovery principles to support psychosocial care following a disaster or serious incident.

Safety and Calm

- Our sense of safety and security in life comes from experiencing consistent, close and caring relationships with others, including our teachers. Those with secure attachments may not have difficulties returning to an educational setting, however, others will find it more challenging.
- Schools, other settings and the adults caring for children need to offer a secure base so children can be emotionally ready to learn. We need to feel safe in order to relax, concentrate and learn.
- The pandemic has disrupted the routines, structures and predictability in children's lives giving rise to feelings of fear, confusion, anxiety and at times trauma. Children will have a range of concerns when returning to school/pre-school as things will be less predictable and they will have dealt with a number of challenging situations.
- Children will have experienced a range of losses, including time with friends and family, opportunities to learn, as well as possible bereavements.
- Setting staff are in a unique position to provide an environment to help children regain feelings of safety, security and calmness at this challenging time.
- When teachers and key adults are attuned to the needs and feelings of children, they can ameliorate the impact of these distressing and traumatic experiences. They can offer support to soothe and calm, teaching children these self-regulatory skills for the future.
- Creating a responsive school/pre-school environment to rebuild secure relationships will build children's resilience and promote hope for brighter times ahead.

Social connectedness

- We are social beings. We know that connection and relationships are essential to our wellbeing and help to regulate our physiology and emotions. It is psychologically damaging for a person to live in a world devoid of emotional warmth, connection, touch and affection.
- During this difficult time, we have all been separated from friends, colleagues and loved ones. Some will have lost loved ones. This situation has made it harder for us to meet our basic need to connect with others. It has been harder for us to soothe and be soothed by others.
- Various factors about the situation will have raised, and continue to raise, many people's anxieties, which unfortunately encourages an "I need to look after me" mindset. What we need to do is encourage the compassionate mindset of "we need to look after each other".
- We all need to find ways to promote and foster relationships, connection and compassion.

A sense of self- and collective- efficacy

- People consistently encounter challenges and barriers in life. Our sense of efficacy refers to how successful we believe we will be in meeting these. People with a high level of efficacy believe that they will be successful, individually or collectively, in meeting the challenges that they encounter.
- Our sense of efficacy is vital because it effects how we will respond when faced with challenges. Those of us with a strong belief in our self- and collective- efficacy will adapt quickly to challenges and work to overcome them.
- On the other hand, those of us with low self- and collective- efficacy are more likely to believe ourselves incapable of overcoming difficulties that we encounter and are, therefore, more likely to give up and withdraw from or avoid the challenges that we face.
- The key factors in developing a positive sense of efficacy is to experience mastery, either by succeeding ourselves or witnessing others experiencing success.
- The current situation represents an ongoing global challenge that we as a society have had limited success in overcoming. Moreover, the experience of lockdown may lead to children and young people feeling helpless and lacking in control of their own actions and successes.
- The COVID-19 pandemic is therefore likely to have undermined our sense of sense of self- and collective-efficacy particularly for children and may make them more likely to give up and withdraw when they return to school and encounter new challenges both related to COVID-19 and more generally.

Promoting hope

- Hope is an optimistic attitude and anticipation of positive outcomes
- Hope contributes to our well-being (it can help us manage stress, anxiety and cope with difficulties)
- Children's sense of hope may have been reduced during the lockdown through:
  - negative messages being focused upon (e.g. repeated stories in the media)
  - having fewer things to look forward to each week (including outdoor activities and time with friends)
  - experiencing bereavement

Before children arrive	Welcome Back
A sense of Safety and Calm • What safety plans do you have in place to reassure children and families it is as safe as possible to return to school? • What are the welcoming arrangements so children will know where to go and who their teachers will be on the first day? • How will you re-establish trust between staff and children to promote feelings of security and belonging? • How will you plan time for children to talk about their feelings and learn to use calming activities/resources to restore emotional balance and well-being? • What guidance can you give parents regarding talking to their children about their worries? (https://youngminds.org.uk/media/3702/how-to-support-your-child_corona.pdf)	A sense of Safety and Calm • How will you support those that have found it hard to return to school? • How will you ensure there is an atmosphere of calm across the school and calming approaches are taught and practiced across the school day? • How will you identify those who are very anxious and need more support? How will staff be helped to understand and deal with very anxious or acting out children? Who will provide this more personalised support? • How will you help children express their feelings across the curriculum in a contained way?
A sense of self- and collective- efficacy • How will you address and validate the sense of helplessness that we are all likely to be feeling? • How are you helping children see that through engaging in lockdown they have had an active part in helping their community? • How are you providing children space to express their feelings about lockdown? • How will you meaningfully involve staff, students and parents in transition planning?	A sense of self- and collective- efficacy • In the context of new rules about social distancing how will you help children feel in control of what is happening to them? • How will you frame the challenges that children are facing as something that they can overcome and succeed in? • How will you give children space to share their experiences, particularly their successes during lockdown? • How will you support children to feel they have a role in the response to the pandemic?
Social connectedness • How are you going to re-establish a sense of belonging before seeing each other? • How will you communicate to children and staff that being caring and compassionate towards one other will be a driving value for the setting? • How will you plan in time and opportunity for children and staff to socialise, play and re-connect safely? • How are you going to take account of friendships when planning class groupings?	Social connectedness • How will children and staff be given the chance to reconnect, share stories and look after one another? • How will you help maintain and promote friendships in smaller classes? • How will you provide educational experiences and offer live feedback to those children who are yet to return? • How will you provide staff and children an opportunity to debrief, reflect on and share their experiences together?
Promoting hope • How will you help children look forward to coming back to school? • Are there particular events that could be included within transition that would help? • How will you communicate transition plans to children and parents (to help prepare them and share what they might look forward to)?	Promoting hope • What messages of hope can be given to children in initial welcome times and circle time / form tutor meetings? • How will you share good news stories and reflect upon the ways people are helping each other? • How will you promote opportunities for fun and laughter? • How will you help children to find some of the benefits of the situation that they are currently in or think about things they are grateful for each day? • How will you help children to make plans for the future and look back over good times?

Before children arrive	Welcome back
A sense of Safety and Calm • Class teachers/ Head of House/Setting Manager/Key Adult send a welcome card to their children/ students, before the first day of school. • Provide virtual tours of the school/setting, photos of all staff, a map of the site, key contacts and information sheets with FAQ on the school website. • Send home a transition book and/or social stories outlining what school will be like when they come back. • Find out about children's fears and worries through on-line surveys, and preparatory phone calls. • Plan time in the timetable for students to discuss experiences whilst under "lockdown", including fears and worries as well as celebrations and successes. • Plan to use visual prompts/ posters etc to remind children about new routines and procedures. • Secondary classes may benefit from staying with one or a few key adults during the initial return to school.	**A sense of Safety and Calm** • Offer extended break and lunch times so children and young people have more time to re-establish friendships. Set up group activities to forge relationships. • Normalise feelings of confusion, anxiety and worry. • Set up a Worry Box /Worry Monster. Use Feelings Journals / Circle Time. • Use Mindfulness activities, positive self-talk, own-hand massage, box breathing and other relaxation approaches (see www.elearning.creativeeducation.co.uk and www.relaxkids.com). • Offer opportunities for empathic listening. • Provide group interventions using ELSAs and Key Adults. • Identify a "Calm Space" for children to exit to if necessary. • Provide regular briefings to students so they know what is going to happen and when. Give warnings about changes to staff and routines. • Use sensory resources (sensory circuits, movement breaks etc) to promote self-regulation and self-calming. • Use the curriculum (writing, art, drama and music) to explore children's feelings, self-calm and practice emotional regulation.
A sense of self and collective efficacy • Send out a letter to families acknowledging that we have all faced difficulties since we last saw each other share something you found difficult during lockdown and what you did to overcome it. • Thank children for staying home and tell them how it helped staff at school/the setting and other people such as doctors. • Ask children to write or draw pictures/postcards or letters to their teachers/setting staff with one thing they found tricky about lockdown and one thing they liked. • Create an online survey where parents and staff can express their worries about coming back to school. Respond in a letter outlining how you intend to address these worries and what staff and parents can do to support the transition. • Write a simple letter to children or make a video for the website outlining what they can do to help when they come back. Making sure that you frame it as asking for their help rather than just giving them instructions.	**A sense of self and collective efficacy** • First thing upon returning to class what a video on social distancing and create a class contract outlining how you are going to keep each other safe. • Have a worry box where children can share what they are finding difficult, each day pick out one worry and talk as a group to plan how you could overcome it. • Create a display board of "How We Helped" and ask children to draw a picture or write a story of things they did during lockdown that helped other people, for example, put up rainbow pictures, baked with Mum and Dad or played with siblings so a parent could cook dinner. • Choose a class project that children can engage in to contribute to the national effort, for example, write thank you letters to the NHS, made a video of them singing a song to cheer up elderly people in care homes or write letters to classmates
Social connectedness • Video conference or webinar with class teacher. • Gain children's views about who they are looking forward to seeing and why. • Set up a peer support system in which pairs or trios of staff have identified people with whom they can talk, problem solve and offer or seek emotional support. Consider scheduling in times at the start and end of the day.	**Social connectedness** • Allocate time for children (e.g. circle time) and staff to share their thoughts and feelings in small groups, what they have been up to, how they feel about coming back to school/pre-school, and what others could do to help them. • Communicate the message that the actions we are taking are in place to help others. • Provide lots of time and opportunity for enjoyable/helpful shared experiences, such as games, play, singing, dancing and exercise. • Be mindful of facial expression, tone of voice and posture. Warm, friendly and relaxed expressions help all of us feel soothed. • Validate, normalise and be compassionate towards people's feelings. Label the emotions, offer wisdom around why people might feel strange in this strange situation, be sensitive to people's distress and make a commitment to alleviate it. • Provide opportunity for staff to meet at the start and end of the day to engage in a positive exercise, such as breathing exercise or mindfulness, together. • Encourage staff and children to share a 'gratitude diary' at the end of each day, stating up to three things they have appreciated about the day. • See https://www.compassionatemind.co.uk/resources for lots of helpful resources and information on building compassion.

Promoting hope	Promoting hope
• Webinars or individual meetings via video conferencing platform with parents, pupils and key staff. Letters / emails directly to pupils about plans, social stories • Gain pupil views, or ask parents, about what they would like to happen in their first week back (e.g. through surveys, webinars, individual meetings)	• Extra-curricular activities and events that pupils can look forward to and join in together (e.g. garden games, fun runs, bake-offs) • Daily circle time activities to share good news, things children are grateful for and how people are helping each other • Utilising 'changes and transitions' topics from PHSE curriculum • Including stories of hope (e.g. books and films) through class topics

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A sense of self and collective efficacy	A sense of self and collective efficacy
Social connectedness	Social connectedness
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