

6. The importance of transitions

- Explore feelings about the return to school by asking for letters, drawings or videos.
- Make an online virtual tour to show the layout of classrooms, corridors and communal areas.
- Help children anticipate new routines through verbal/visual countdowns, rhythm or music.
- Consider transitional objects which help the child to feel connected and held in mind.

5. All behaviour is communication

- Playfulness to reduce stress - personalised greetings and fun rehearsals of new routines.
- Acceptance of the child's thoughts and feelings - *"You loved spending time with your parents every day and it's sad to leave them"*.
- Curiosity to help elicit the child's views - *"I noticed you've been quiet since coming back..."*.
- Empathy - *"I know this is really tough for you. The classroom looks so different from the last time you were here"*.

4. Language is a vital means of communication

- "Name it to Tame it" - talk through difficult situations like a story.
- Use emojis, short scripts and role-plays to recognise and regulate emotions - *"I am feeling ___ because..."* and *"When I feel ___, I can..."*.
- Use warm and welcoming language - *"I've missed seeing your smile"*; *"When I saw ___ on TV, it reminded me of you"*.
- Agree on simple, concise and factual statements about the passing of relatives, typical responses to grief and coping methods.

1. Learning is understood developmentally

- Rather than "catching up", we may need to revisit previous topics & concepts.
- Opportunities for play and activities which evoke laughter and satisfaction should be initially prioritised over academic expectations.
- Provide meaningful, practical and multi-sensory experiences for new learning, with tasks which are broken down into small steps and actively modelled.
- Consider attachment needs - tasks which can be completed with little support vs time-limited bursts of independent working and regular reassurance from staff.



2. The classroom offers a secure base

- Consider a whole-school Social story, which acknowledges the difficulties of the lockdown, welcomes the children back to school, shows how things will be different and explains why.
- Emphasise structure and predictability - visual scheduling; seating plans; clear labelling of new areas for storing resources and possessions.
- Identify designated places for relaxation and calming sensory input.
- Create a sense of belonging by decorating a wall with photos of the children and key staff.

3. The importance of nurture for wellbeing & self-esteem

- Notice their strengths and creativity during the lockdown - ask parents for photos and videos of rainbow paintings, homemade dens, Joe Wicks workouts, etc.
- Offer choice in new tasks and routines, as a way of providing control and promoting autonomy.
- Celebrate and remind them of success - keep a book or box with evidence of their effort and achievements.
- Give hope during more challenging tasks by praising their effort and persistence and emphasising how we learn through practise, mistakes and small steps.