



COVID-19 Advice For Schools – Transition and Back to School



With thanks to

Wakefield Educational
Psychology Service

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Introduction

Change is a normal part of everyday life and can provide opportunities for personal growth and enable adults and children to develop their sense of self-efficacy and resilience. The majority of children and young people attending our schools and settings will be able to cope well with change even in the face of adversities brought about as part of the COVID-19 experience. However, psychologists predict that there will be a significant minority of pupils who will feel anxious about returning to school after the prolonged period of social distancing due to the Public Health crisis. This document provides best practice guidance for schools and settings on how to support all children and young people to manage their transitions successfully. Advice is particularly relevant for those children and young people who are starting or moving to a new school or educational setting and are identified as vulnerable, have a disability and / or additional learning needs (ALN).

Why is Transition Important?

It is important that we support our children and young people to experience successful transitions back to school, recognising that transition is a process and not a single event. We know that an individual's experiences during this time can have a powerful and long-lasting effect on academic outcomes, as well as impacting on their self-esteem and emotional wellbeing.

During a period of transition children and young people 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 being de-skilled and less valued
- Uncertainty about the future

In addition, we must acknowledge the ongoing thoughts and worries about safety and health at these times.



Key Principles of a 'Good' Transition

Whilst the current circumstances are unprecedented, schools are skilled in planning and preparing for transitions on a regular basis. The key principles of successful transitions still apply to the present situations (whether children are returning to the same class / setting before the end of the academic year or entering into a new class / setting) although the means of executing transition processes may need to look different. It is worth noting that as well as the children and young people who are transitioning to a new environment that schools 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***
- ***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 pupils and families – what class they are going to, which staff they will be with, which pupils they will be with, what the routines will be etc.
- Plan activities / projects that can support the transition process. Ensure these are accessible to all pupils.
- Work with parents / carers to enable them to support their child(ren) and prepare them for a successful return to school.
- Identify the pupils who will need a more enhanced and individualised transition plan and being aware that teams within the ALN & Inclusion service have a number of transition resources on their website.

Clear Communication

- Ensure regular communication with parents / 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.



- Communicate with the pupils in an age-appropriate manner i.e. use of video messages from staff, emails, newsletters.
- Communicate regularly with all staff to make them aware of plans and any changes from the 'normal' ways of working.
- Communicate between schools and 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 pupils and staff to develop relationships and to get to know each other. This would be a good opportunity to create or renew a *One Page Profile* for pupils and staff.
- Identify pupils 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 pupils i.e. are they with established and known friends.

Examples of good transition practices could be:

- Communication between staff and settings to find out about the pupils. This should not solely be for the purpose of sharing academic attainment but also involve personal information that is needed – such as good at sports, lost a parent, particular interest in dinosaurs etc.
- 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, etc
- Children and young people to be involved as much as possible so they too can share their likes and dislikes. Examples could include completion of 'All about me' activity or the completion of a One Page Profile.
- Communication with parents/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.
- Schools to think how they can use technology to aid transition if it is not possible for children and young people 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 on line (or through the post) such as examples of dinner menus, what the uniform looks like, typical timetable etc.



What Can We Do to Support Children Upon Their Return to School?

It is important to recognise that for many children, going back to school will be a welcome return. However for many children, this will be a time of anxiety. It is important to remember that each child will have had their own experience. 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.

It will take time for children to re-establish and re-learn routines and expectations in schools. 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, especially given the concentrated time spent in the home environment because of 'lock down'. Children will have become used to being with their parents and immediate family for an extended period. This will be a potential source of anxiety for young children.

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.

Teachers and other adults who listen with empathy perform an important therapeutic function, without being therapists. Some children may be carrying a large emotional burden and school might be their only place to talk about this.

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



Psychosocial Care

Research has identified five key principles 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 school
- **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.
- **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. They need to feel they belong to a group that is likely to experience positive outcomes. This is known as collective efficacy.
- **Social connectedness:** It is important that adults, children and young people feel they belong and have a social network who can support them within the educational setting.
- **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.

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



Psychological Theories and Principles Underpinning Guidance

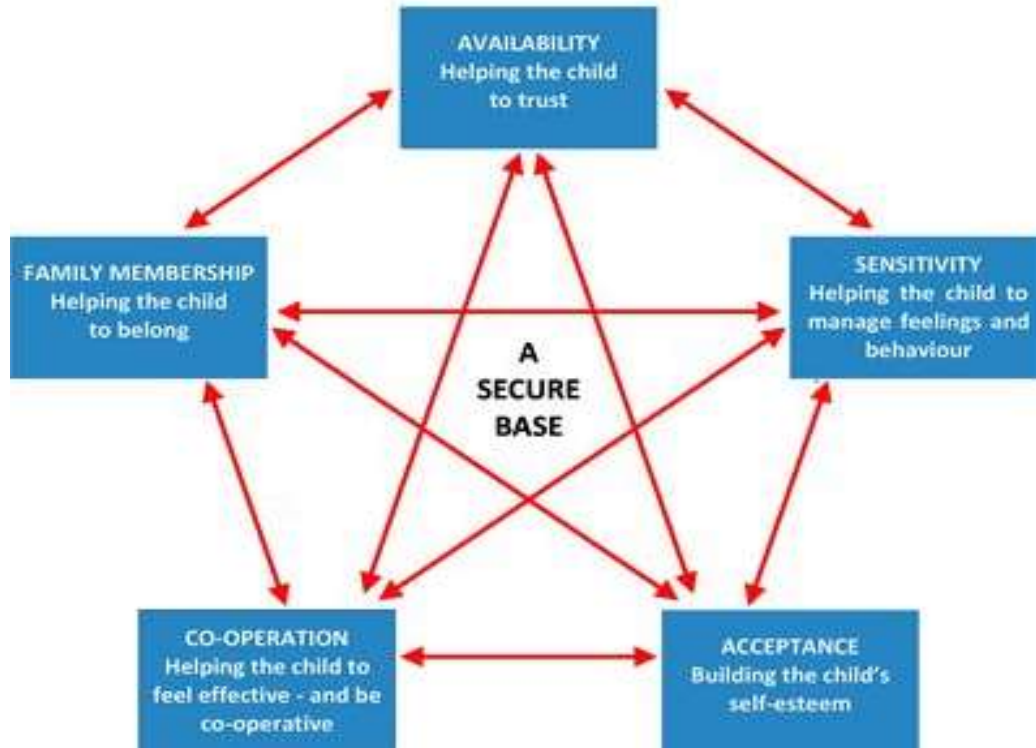
This information is included, in order to explain the psychological theories that form the basis of the advice, provision and resources provided to support you in welcoming children and young people back into schools/settings. It is included to share the theoretical frameworks underpinning recommendations,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

An open, ready, calm, relaxed and engaged attitude

Acceptance

Unconditionally accepting a child makes them feel secure, safe and loved

Curiosity

Without judgement children become aware of their inner life

Empathy

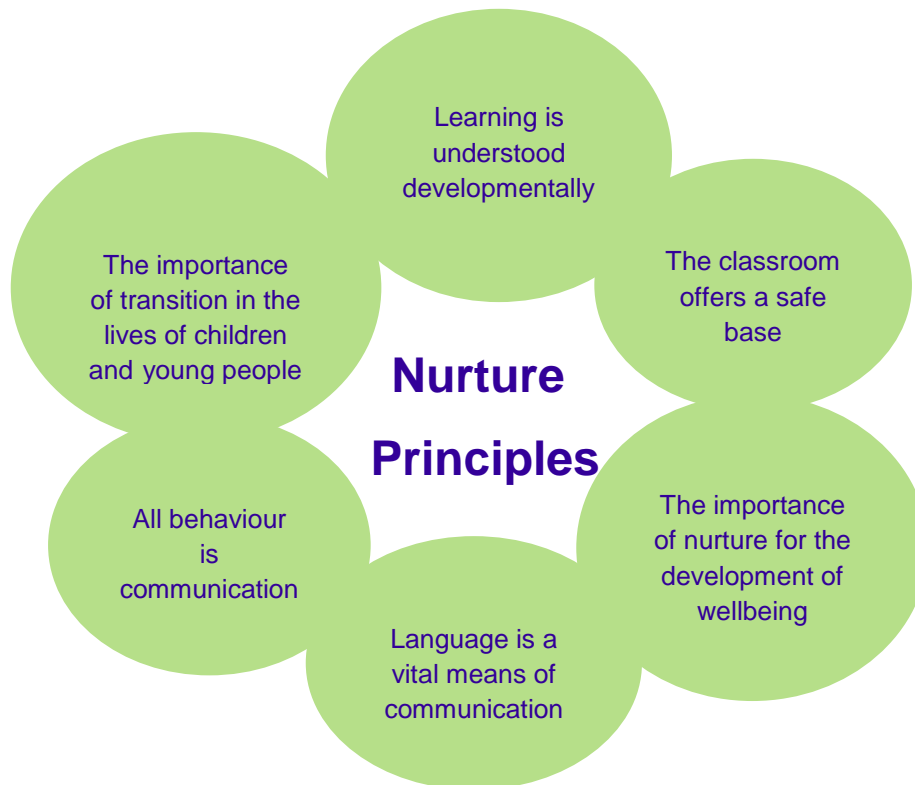
A sense of compassion for the child and their feelings

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



The Principles of Nurture

The Principles of Nurture 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 students 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:



(Colley, 2009)

These principles of adapting a nurturing approach can also be implemented within a classroom, such as providing children and young people a feeling of being safe and secure, as well as thinking that the transition back to school 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 learn when the focus moves to a more formal curriculum. 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 school approach is more likely to have a positive impact on both staff and pupils.



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 Dr Michelle Borba’s principles, which identifies five ways of developing or promoting resilience. The model can be used to build resiliency in individuals, groups or within a whole school approach.

Again, the model shows the importance of establishing positive relationships (affiliation) to feel safe and connected. It can be argued that it is impossible to overcome adversity without the presence of a caring person. This does not have to be family, having a caring person in your life is critical for support and consequently academic success.

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 Coaching

Emotion Coaching is an evidence-based strategy based upon the work of John Gottman. Emotion Coaching uses moments of heightened emotion and resulting behaviour to guide and teach the child and young person about more effective responses. Through empathetic engagement, the child's emotional state is verbally acknowledged and validated, promoting a sense of security and feeling 'felt'. This activates changes in the child's neurological system and allows the child to calm down, physiologically and psychologically. Challenging behavioural responses are not condoned in Emotion Coaching. When the child is calmer, incidents are discussed in a more rational and productive manner. Moves are made to problem-solve and engage in solution-focused strategies. As a result, Emotion Coached children are better able to:

- control their impulses
- delay gratification
- self soothe when upset

The impact of emotion coaching means that children and young people:

- Achieve more academically in school
- Are more popular
- Have fewer behavioural problems
- Have fewer infectious illnesses
- Are more emotionally stable
- Are more resilient

(Gottman, J; 1997)



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 are more willing to take on challenging tasks, focus on learning goals and are 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 school life and their education.

The Educational Psychology Service (EPS) and Specialist Teams from the ALN&I service can provide further training and guidance on these models.



Identification of Specific Cohorts and Groups to be Considered

In addition to considering the processes in place to support all children and young people returning to school, 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 FS, Year 3, Year 7, Year 12), those with an identified ALN (with or without a Authority Individual Development Plan), 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.

The ALN&I teams have prepared a number of transition resources on their website (www.adyach.cymru) and cases who are open to the teams can be discussed in the usual way.

a) Transition to a New School

- Create a virtual tour of the school which can be posted on the school's website. This could even be done by children who are attending school (with parental permission).
- A visual resource with photos of key people/places in school. This can be sent directly to children who have ALN or considered vulnerable. Again can be posted on schools website for **all** to access.
- Provide other visual resources regarding the rules and routines of the day such as pictures of the uniform, how many lessons a day, timing of lunch time etc
- If class teacher/form tutor is identified, for them to give parents a ring and dependent upon age speak to child/young person.
- Consideration of whether class teacher/form tutor send the child/young person a letter to let them know they are thinking about them.
- School to provide a Q&A sheet for parents with key questions and answers that are often asked.
- Schools to try and gain as much information as they can about the child/young person from parents, the child, the previous school or any agencies that are currently involved with the child (e.g Specialist ALN&I teams, EPS, CAMHS, SALT, O.T)



- Consideration of sending home some activities that children can complete about themselves (age dependent) that can give adults opportunity to find out their thoughts. This could be things such as 'All about me' sheets or *One Page Profiles* containing photos of the child.

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. Be flexible with any rule that you have around bringing toys to school at this time
- 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 snack times, assemblies and whole-class discussions.
- 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

c) Vulnerable Children (ALN, LAC, CP etc)

There are specific groups of pupils that settings must be thinking about when planning the return to school. These include pupils who are likely to have 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.

The Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion Service are sharing advice and guidance to schools in relation to those pupils with high level learning needs on their website.

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 school. Settings 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

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.**

In addition to any available background information and information shared with the setting when communicating with parents (this will take into account any incidents, loss, concerns raised about returning to school), settings can also consider completing an **emotional wellbeing questionnaire** with all pupils. The information can be used 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 school setting. It is therefore important that staff continue to monitor pupils, 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 monitoring systems (e.g questionnaires) 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 this time. 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.

For advice or information regarding wellbeing questionnaires, contact the ALN&I service.



Advice for Parents

The return to school 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 to school.

They may have concerns about:

- Their son or daughter settling into a new class, or for some, a new 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
- Their son or daughter's safety, particularly if they have any existing health concerns

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.

For All Parents / Carers

- Ensure that there is effective and enhanced communication in place the lead up to any return to school. This should include contact from the pupil's new class teacher (if this has changed) and key workers (if relevant). 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 key workers etc.).
- 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.
- If social distancing and safety measures remain in place at the point of the return to school, make sure that parents know how these are being implemented in school.
- 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 to school, 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 learning 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 or telephone 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 Schools

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

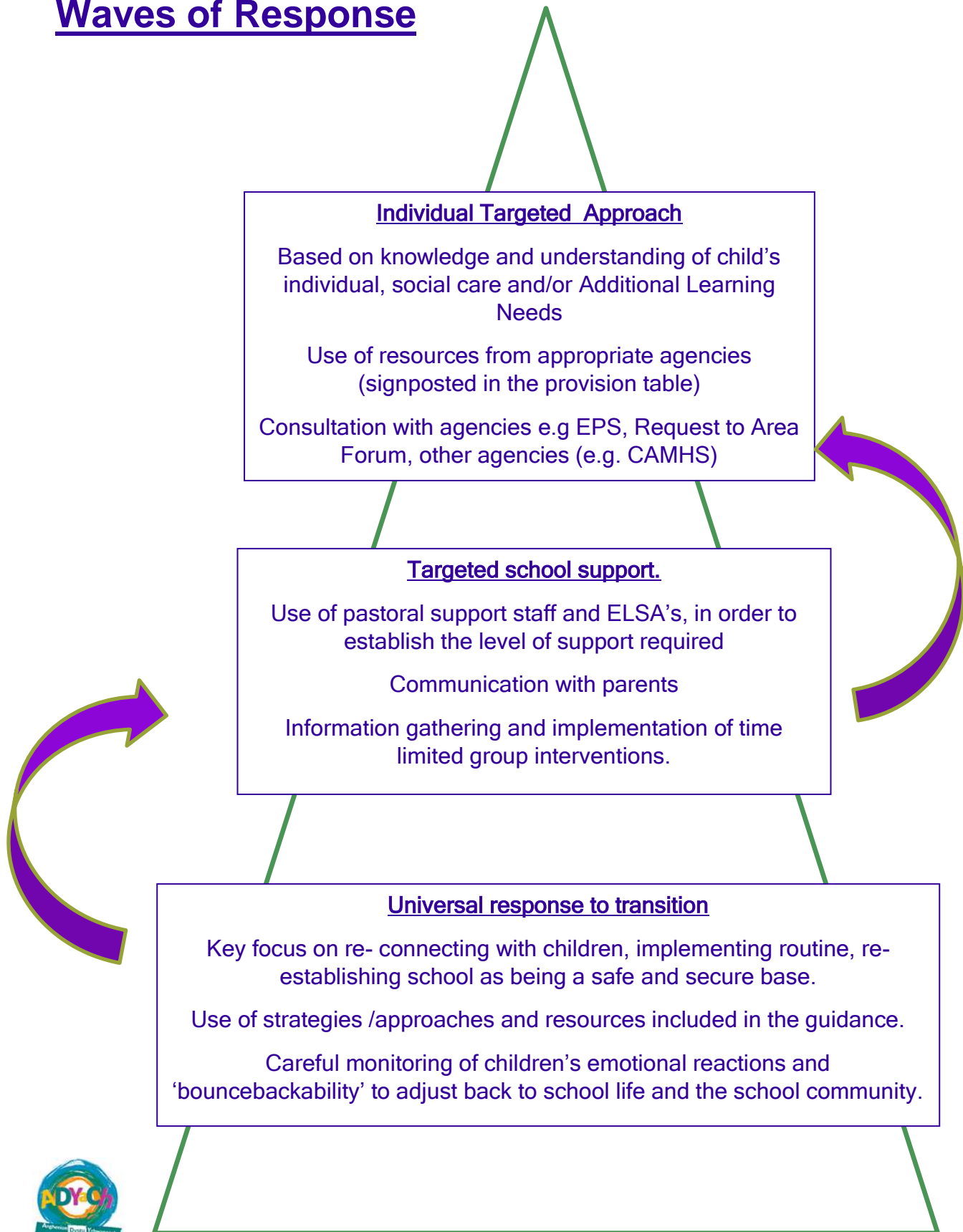


Table of Provision

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 	<p><u>Websites</u></p> <p>www.adyach.cymru</p> <p>www.boingboing.org.uk</p> <p>www.nurtureuk.org</p> <p>www.emotioncoachinguk.com</p> <p>https://www.annafreud.org/</p> <p>https://www.calameo.com/read/000777721945cfe5bb9cc?authid=Xu9pcOzU3TQx</p> <p><u>Books</u></p> <p>Attachment in the Classroom - Louise Bomber</p> <p>Inside I'm Hurting - Louise Bomber</p>

		<p>back assembly (re-establishing school community) to celebrate any missed birthdays, show appreciation for key workers, reinforce everyone safe and back together.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 time tables, 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. 	<p>Attachment for Teachers - Marie Delaney 26</p> <p>Everybody worries - a picture book for children https://www.calameo.com/read/000777721945cfe5bb9cc?authid=Xu9pcOzU3TQx</p> <p><u>Activities</u> Hope Cloud Activity (from Young Minds website)</p> <p>All About Me</p> <p>Therapeutic Story - The Little Elf</p> <p>Growth Mindset - Big Life Journal</p> <p>Well-being rating scales/Daily emotion 'check ins' (i.e placing name on chart to show how children are feeling).</p>
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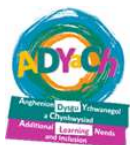
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents to be included in plans of the school with opportunities for parents to share if their child has experienced any difficulties during the lockdown (e.g. emotional, bereavement, illness). • Safe spaces for children to talk about experiences. • Ensure pastoral 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 remember and celebrate members of the school community who have died, this could be in the form of a remembrance assembly where names could be read 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). 	<p><u>Other</u></p> <p style="text-align: right;">27</p> <p>Advice, training and guidance from the EPS and other teams from the ALN&I service</p> <p><i>Critical Incident</i> Document by the EPS</p>
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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". • 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. • Designated Safeguarding Person (DSP) to be in contact with Virtual School if support needed. 	
Targeted School Response	Building Relationships Resilience Nurturing Principles Mindfulness Emotion Coaching ELSA	<p>All of the above and;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number of adults being 'available' to support children if and when needed. • Ensure that key members of staff such as SENCo and DSP have additional time to attend to any matters that have arisen. • Small group work, specifically targeting area of need, such as specific work around 	<p><u>Websites</u> www.elsanetwork.org https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/</p> <p><u>Books</u> The Zones of Regulation: A curriculum designed to foster</p>



		<p>emotions, emotional regulation, bereavement...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Examples of support: ELSA, FRIENDS, Lego Therapy/,Nurture ABC Talking Partners. Seasons for Growth 	<p>self-regulation and emotional control. 29</p> <p><u>Activities</u></p> <p>Advice and guidance from other services, such a EPS and Speicalist ALN&I teams</p>
Individual Targeted Response	<p>Building Relationships Resilience Nurturing Principles Mindfulness Emotion Coaching ELSA CBT approaches Loss and Bereavement work</p>	<p>All of the above and;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 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 	<p><u>Websites</u> www.adyach.cymru https://www.winstonswish.org https://www.cruse.org.uk https://www.samaritans.org https://youngminds.org.uk</p> <p><u>Books</u> The Invisible String - Patrice Karst Think Good, Feel Good - Paul Stellard</p>



		<p>can be supported to offer reassurance, such as the use of CBT approaches.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some children may have experienced loss and bereavement and will need some additional adult support, such as an ELSA or other suitably trained adult. 	<p>Therapeutic Stories - Margot Sunderland 30</p> <p>Starving the Anxiety Gremlin - Kate Collins-Donnelly (primary and secondary editions).</p> <p>Huge Bag of Worries - Virginia Ironside</p> <p>Conversations that Matter - Margot Sunderland</p> <p>What to Do When You Worry Too Much? A Kid's Guide to Anxiety - Dawn Huebner</p> <p>The Mindfulness Journal for Teens - Jennie Marie Battistin.</p> <p><u>Activities</u></p> <p>The use of Therapeutic Stories - The little Elf (http://www.em-edsupport.org.uk/coronavirus-eps)</p> <p>Creation of a five point scale, for any emotion, including anxiety (Dunn Baron and Curtis).</p>
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			<p>Hierarchy of Support</p> <p style="text-align: right;">31</p> <p><u>Other</u> Loss and Bereavement Guidance, and Critical Incident Guidance produced by Gwynedd and Anglesey EPS</p>
Support from the ALN&I service and external agencies	EPS Specialist Teams from the ALN&I Service	<p>To have tried all of the above strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This should be done following the graduated response with the Plan, Do and Review Cycle. • For support from the EPS, issues should be brought to planning meetings using the prioritising form. • For support from the specialist ALN&I Service and IDP should be sent with the appropriate documents to the aresa forum in the usual way. • Referrals to agencies in the usual way 	



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Appendixes

Appendix 1: Websites

Below are a list of websites that may offer further advice and guidance

<https://www.bps.org.uk/coronavirus-resources/public/psychology-play>

<https://www.bps.org.uk/coronavirus-resources/public/back-to-school>

<https://www.bps.org.uk/coronavirus-resources/professional>

<https://www.bps.org.uk/coronavirus-resources/public/teacher-resilience-during-school-closures>

<https://youngminds.org.uk/>

www.meddwl.org



www.adyach.cymru

Appendix 2: Additional Considerations

Issues to be Aware of ...	Possible Impact	Practical Activities
Everything is NOT normal	Expectations of normality amongst pupils, staff and parents will be high	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schools to manage expectations and uncertainty in their communication to all stakeholders. Time must be available to do this. • The ways in which school is likely to be different is considered and communicated to all prior to the return to school. • There may need to be activities and displays in school which reflect upon this time. Things that we are sad about / things that we are glad about. • Time provided within the curriculum to consider this.
Ongoing Social Distancing / Hygiene Considerations	Impact on attendance and distribution of classes within the school, as well as routines and practices. Understanding how social distancing measures might affect emotional wellbeing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part time attendance, spacing in the classroom, 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 school?



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do not begin with formal assessment, assess knowledge more informally. Start curriculum with what children know ... not what you think has been taught. • Topics may be revision for some...this will not harm them. 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 school.
Trauma and Bereavement	Many children / staff will have experienced trauma and bereavement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide opportunities and encourage communication from parents / carers around child experiences. Plan information sharing.



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff to be vigilant (update awareness training prior to schools opening) and be made aware of the EPS's <i>Critical Incident and Bereavement and Loss documents</i> • Provide safe spaces for children to talk about experiences. • Clear communication regarding the whereabouts of members of the school community. • Opportunities to celebrate members of the school community who have died.
Safeguarding	There is likely increase in safeguarding issues including those related to poverty, Domestic Violence, parental mental health, substance abuse etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 DSP 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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Balance between acknowledging the issue and managing anxiety. • Use of Social Stories. • Opportunity to teach coping skills. • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarify communication lines so that children and young people are confident that contact could be made with them at school, in case of emergency (phones as transitional objects). • Again, acknowledge feelings (emotion coaching / PACE) and teach coping skills.



	unsafe. This may particularly impact where there are key workers or vulnerable people in the family.	
Additional needs, especially children with ASD	Any time of change can be challenging ...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Refer to resources by the Specialist Team for Interaction and Communication available on the ALN&I website
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.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • Refer to resources by the Specialist Sensory Team available on the ALN&I website
Placement Transitions	Loss of 'ending' activities Loss of transition activities during the previous term.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.



		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acquisition of uniform when this is possible.
Uniform Issues	Outgrown, not replaceable at current time, financial issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 in to school 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 students	Some students may feel frustrated that they want school to just get back to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acknowledgement that 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.



	<p>normal and feeling they have coped well with the crisis and schools being shut. Some students will have developed resilience through various coping strategies and approaches.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
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**With thanks to the Microsoft Teams national working party of Educational Psychologists/Education Professionals.
This document has been adapted from that shared within the team.**

