Supporting the Return to School

Using a trauma-informed approach to support the return to school: Guidance for staff.

This guidance has been written using trauma-informed principles to support the planning for all pupils, including those who may require an additional level of support, with the return to school.

Using a Trauma-Informed Approach to Support the Return to School

Experiences during COVID-19 could have a significant impact on our pupils, potentially affecting their wellbeing and ability to learn. We need to consider how these changes may affect children and young people and what we can do to support this.

This guidance has been written using trauma-informed principles to support the planning for all pupils, including those who may require an additional level of support with the return to school. It is not intended to be an exhaustive resource but aims to provide the beginnings of a toolkit to support this next phase of our return to school. This guidance sits alongside the Fife Council Educational Psychology Service's "Return to School" leaflets, P7/S1 Education Staff, Schools and Nurseries

The return to school is likely to look quite different for our pupils and provide a new experience for all. It is going to be very important to focus on how we help pupils *feel* on the return to school.

> 'Children may not remember everything you taught them
>
> but they will remember how you made them feel'
>
> Sir John Jones

This guidance includes:
- An introduction to a trauma-informed approach
- A focus on staff wellbeing as the foundation to a trauma-informed approach
- Practical suggestions for support both prior to and at the point of return
- Classroom activities to support emotional wellbeing
- Pupil questionnaire to identify pupils who may need additional support Click to upload Questionnaire

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Introduction to a Trauma-Informed Approach

A trauma-informed approach is one that recognises the impact of stress and adversity, and responds with acceptance, validation and empathy.

COVID-19 has brought huge challenges and changes to all our lives. All pupils have experienced unexpected and enforced transitions through school closure, extended time at home or they may have new experiences including attending an Activity Centre. Access to family and friends has been significantly restricted and pupils will have had different levels of access to and engagement with virtual learning and social interactions. Others will have experienced changes in family circumstances and may have changed care placement.

We know from research and experience that pupils can find transitions unsettling and stressful. It is likely that many pupils will experience similar feelings when they return to school once social isolation ends. This is especially pertinent for those who are vulnerable, have additional support needs, or are moving to a new school.

Pupils and adults will be returning to school having had very different individual experiences during lockdown. Most pupils will be eager to return to school and will have protective factors, which will have helped them to deal with the impact of the lockdown. However, we can also anticipate that those with positive experiences during lockdown feel safe within their current 'bubble' and may be unsettled about moving back into a school environment which will look and feel different. This feeling will undoubtedly be replicated by staff and parents/carers too. A number of pupils and their families will have had difficult experiences or an unsettling time.

One experience that will be common to all our pupils albeit in different ways is loss. Loss is experienced in many ways and reflects individual experiences of what has changed. They may have lost, or feel they have lost:

- Routine and structure
- Friendships
- Opportunities
- Freedom   (Barry Carpenter, 2020)

These feelings of loss can trigger the emergence of anxiety, trauma and grief in any pupil. It is possible that some pupils will also return to school knowing of someone who has died. Indeed, they may have first-hand experience of the death of a loved one.

In order to support all pupils back to school it is important that we are aware of this sense of loss and trauma and think about how we move forward in supporting pupils and fostering a sense of resilience in school communities. This will need to be a priority as we know from literature from trauma-informed approaches that a pupil who is stressed or distressed will not be able to focus on learning.

A trauma-informed approach is one that recognises the impact of stress and adversity, and responds with acceptance, validation and empathy. Dan Hughes advocates the PACE approach to inform positive interactions – Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy (Bomber & Hughes, 2013). But we also want to demystify the concept and reassure you that most of these approaches and strategies are already in your professional skillset.

Educational Psychology Resources

The following FCEPS resources are relevant to support planning. For more information contact your school link EP.

Resource	Contents	Link
Anxiety Is Normal	This resource pack has been developed to support key school staff to work collaboratively with pupils to explore their experiences of school, particularly in relation to aspects that cause anxiety. There are 3 sections: assessment, intervention and appendices containing many practical strategies and resources.	[Anxiety is normal resource pack](#)
Understanding and managing anxiety during Covid-19	This guide has been written to help develop understanding of why we feel anxious, how we can recognise this in ourselves and how we can use this to support pupils. It contains many practical strategies as well as a list of useful websites.	[Managing anxiety during COVID-19](#)
A range of information for Young People held on the Educational Psychology Service Website	A resource specifically designed for young people. Includes information on anxiety and learning at home, bereavement, and how to provide support to a friend.	[Link to website](#)
School Based Resilience Assessment and Intervention Tool	There are 6 domains of resilience: Attachment/Secure Base; Education; Friendships; Talents and Interests; Positive Values and Social Competencies. This tool uses these domains of resilience to support school staff in assessing where a pupil or group of pupils are in their development of resilience factors within school and in identifying next steps through practical suggestions.	[Resilience Assessment Pack](#) [Pupils Resilience Assessment Pack](#)
Coaching Conversations	Regular, planned contact with a trusted member of school staff, using coaching conversations is likely to be successful in supporting many pupils to find their own solutions to overcoming wellbeing difficulties. This pack is designed as an introduction to the practice of coaching conversations between adults and pupils they work with and know well. It provides a brief evidence base for this practice and some practical guidelines.	[Coaching Conversations Pack](#)
PACE leaflet	This leaflet outlines the PACE approach, a way of thinking, feeling, communicating and behaving that aims to make pupils feel safe. It is particularly effective in meeting the needs of children and young people who have experienced trauma, however, the principles are relevant to all pupils. The 4 central components are Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy (PACE).	[Pace Leaflet](#)
Window of Tolerance Poster	'Window of tolerance' is a term coined by Dan Siegel. It is used to understand our optimal zone of feeling open and engaged. The poster provides a way for adults to support pupils identify how they might be feeling (just right, hyper-aroused, hypo-aroused) and what factors can shrink this window such as stress, as well as factors which can enlarge the window such as coaching support.	[View Poster](#)

Staff Support and Wellbeing

The emotional wellbeing and physical health of staff in school is paramount. The Staff Wellbeing Strategy outlines the continuum of support that is available. (Staff Wellbeing Strategy Link)

Every member of the school team will be returning with their own experience. We all want to feel safe at school and staff need to feel equipped to support our pupils. A trauma-informed approach relies on the wellbeing of the school team. For staff to be able to model the principles of recovery, they must in turn be supported by those around them. Staff will benefit from a strong support network that ensures their thoughts and feelings are heard, understood and contained. It is through such support mechanisms that staff feel able to effectively support the emotional wellbeing of pupils.

A focus on resilience is a key part of being trauma-informed. Developing resilience is a process as opposed to an internal trait (BPS, 2020). It can change over time and is affected by the context or situation – it is not a case of having or not having resilience nor is the development a linear process. Therefore, factors known to promote resilience in teachers can be nurtured and created through supportive and consistent relationships.
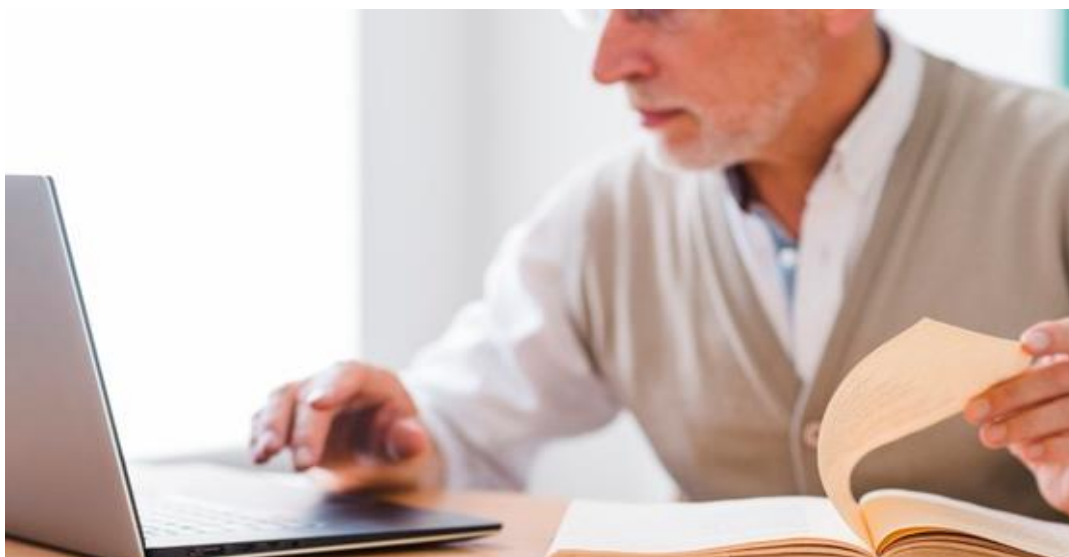
What Practical Support Helps?

You do not need counselling skills to have a significant impact on supporting pupil emotional wellbeing. A study by Cummings and colleagues (2017; cited in Muller & Goldenberg, 2020) showed that adults can make a significant positive impact through staying in touch, providing a listening ear and connecting with pupils and their families. Re-establishing routines and relationships that have been lost has a significant positive effect on wellbeing (Kataoka et al., 2012; cited in Muller & Goldenberg, 2020).

Bruce Perry, a leading proponent in trauma-informed practice, asserts:

> **"What makes children get better following a trauma is connection to other human beings: human beings who are present, who are kind and who are sensitive. They don't need to be necessarily psychologically insightful. They need not know anything about trauma. All they need to know is that they're right there with the child, they're trying to be comforting, they're trying to be supportive, they're trying to encourage. Those kinds of interactions end up being much more therapeutic and healing than many of the other things we try to do with kids."**
>
> **(Perry, 2003)**

Perry advocates a neurosequential model of support which emphasises the importance of relationships. The focus is on being regulated and feeling safe and connected before we can engage in higher order thinking like problem solving, planning and evaluation. In other words, being ready to learn. Video explaining the Neurosequential Model
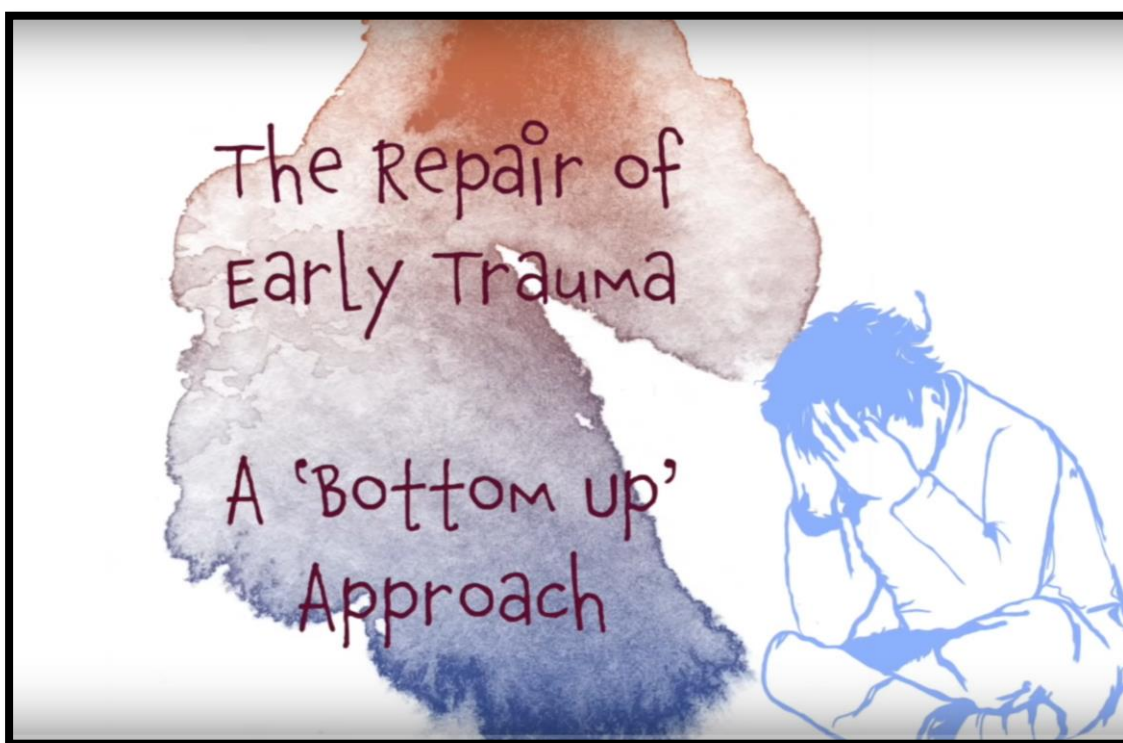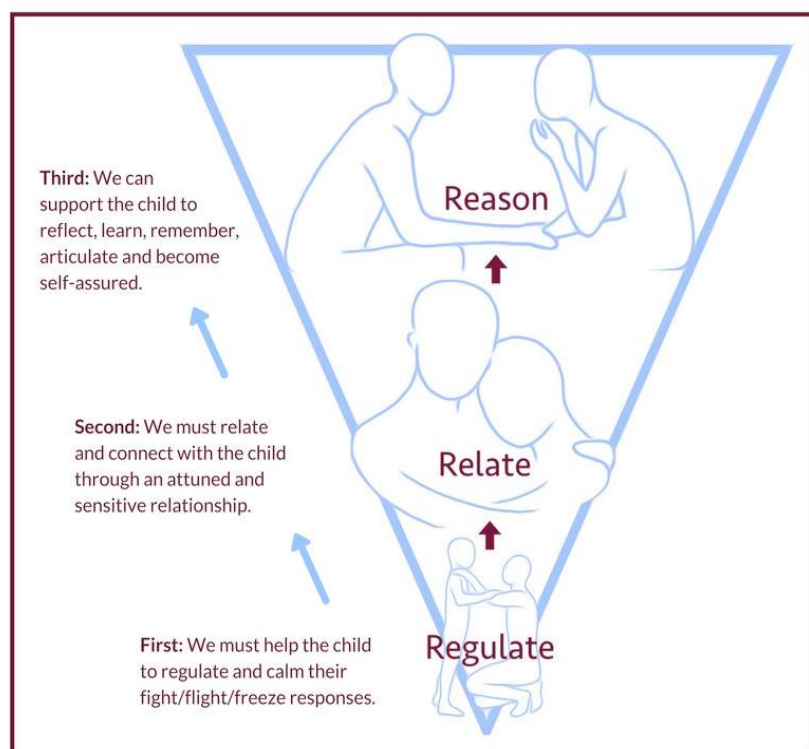
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5 KEY PRINCIPLES:

It is important to focus on what emotional support is needed by those returning to school. Research has identified **5 key principles** that support recovery following a disaster or serious incident (Hobfoll et al., 2007). These principles clearly align with the 5 Ways to Wellbeing outlined in Fife's Our Minds Matter Framework, Our Minds Matter Framework link, the Educational Psychology Service's Resilience Assessment and Intervention tool and the "How Nurturing is Our School?" development toolkit. They also complement approaches which are well established within Fife e.g. the Solihull Approach, Restorative Approaches, Self-Regulation.
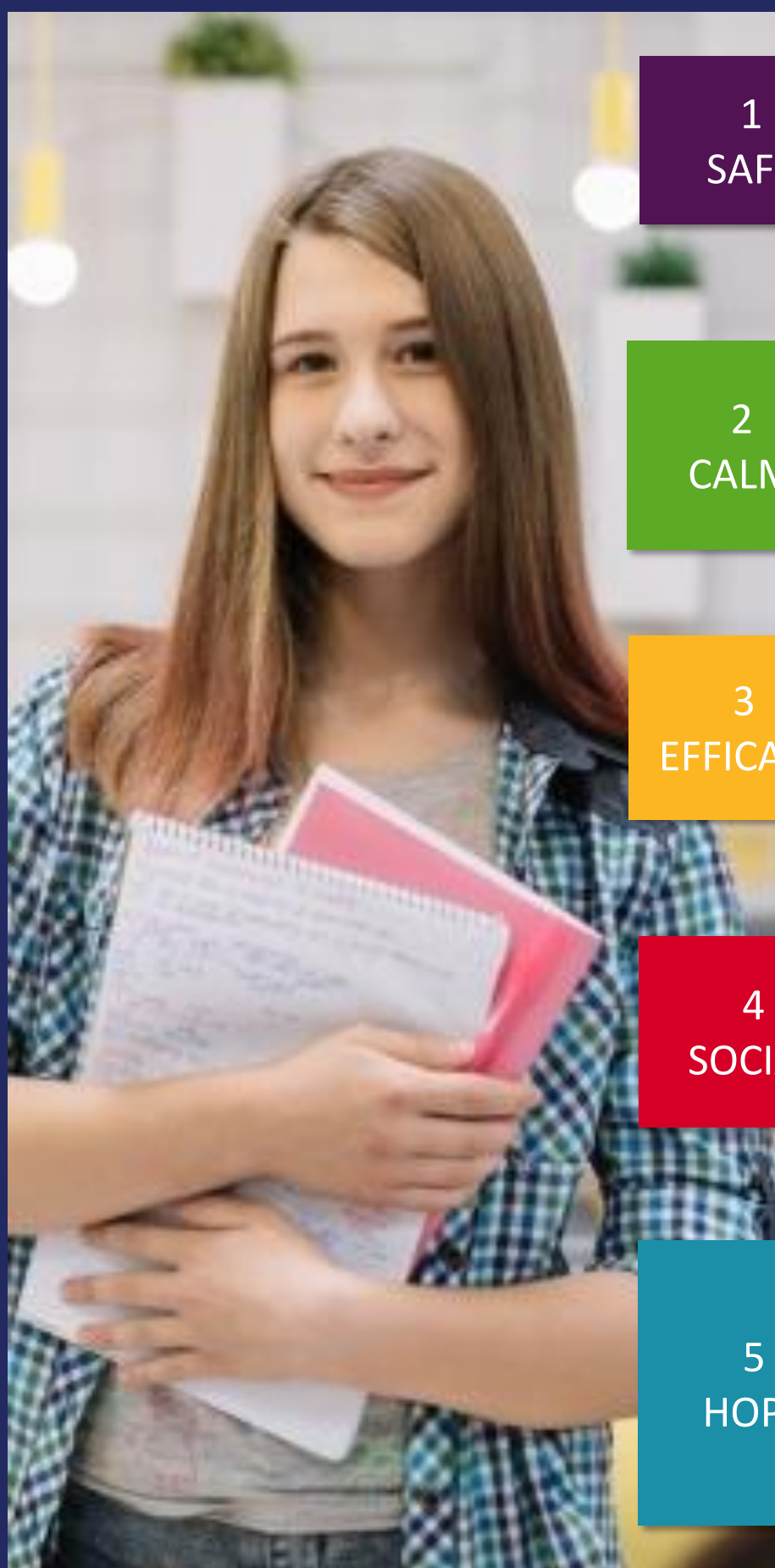
1 SAFE

A sense of safety

It is important that adults and pupils feel safe upon their return to school, both physically and emotionally.
Click here to read more

2 CALM

A sense of calm

Pupils are likely to experience a range of pleasant and unpleasant emotions. It is important that these feelings are normalised and pupils are given support to help them manage their emotions and return to a state of calm.
Click here to read more

3 EFFICACY

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 (Bandura, 1997).
Click here to read more

4 SOCIAL

Social connectedness

It is important that adults and pupils feel they belong and have a social network who can support them within the educational setting.
Click here to read more

5 HOPE

Promoting hope

Whilst things may feel difficult at the moment, it is important that adults and pupils feel things will get better and work out in the future. While having their anxieties and fears acknowledged, they also need to be provided with reassurance that in the long term they are likely to feel positive again.
Click here to read more

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Putting the 5 Principles of Recovery Into Practice: A Brief Summary

The principles can be put in place both at a universal and additional level of support both prior to and after transition. Please refer to current council policies and guidance relating to Covid 19 criteria. Discretion may be needed to tailor strategies to the current context.

SAFE

- Share any changes that may be in place in the environment.
- Reduce the number of transitions in the day and provide a signal/warning of transitions throughout the day.
- Have consistent, predictable routines. We want to create as much predictability as possible in the time of unpredictability as this helps create a sense of safety for pupils.
- Consider new welcoming 'hello and goodbye' routines.
- Create a safe space with details as to where it is and how a pupil can access it.
- Understanding separation: validate emotions e.g. 'I know this is really hard but I am going to do my best to keep you safe'.
- Use Transitional Objects: physical and virtual transition objects may be used such as a kiss or a smile to keep. Or draw a heart on the pupil's hand and encourage parent/carer to do this too to symbolize a link while away.
- Be curious and provide validity on any feelings of anxiety. Refer to PACE information.

CALM

- Pupils will take their lead from you, use your voice and relaxed body language in order to convey calm.
- Offer affirmation messages, e.g. *'we look forward to meeting you'* and *'our priority is to keep you safe'*.
- Focus on what they have learned rather than what they have not.
- Regularly monitor wellbeing (1-10 scale of how you are feeling today) and check they each have someone they can talk to if they need to.
- Teach relaxation strategies.
- We don't need to make up for lost time. We are all in HIGH ALERT. Create an environment where we can THRIVE – Remember the importance of PLAY.
- Name it to tame it: *'I think you might be finding these changes a bit unsettling and you're feeling frustrated. I understand that and I'm here to help you'*.

5 PRINCIPLES FOR RECOVERY PLANNING: Brief Summary

How to help the pupils and young people feel:

COLLECTIVE & SELF EFFICACY

- Focus on their strengths individually and as a group.
- Encourage a sense of control by asking for their feedback each day on how the day/session went and what might improve it.
- Give pupils responsibilities through planned jobs.
- Focus on how the pupils can support others collectively through projects e.g. fundraising for keyworkers.
- Build pupil problem solving skills around coping with difficult situations e.g. using coaching conversations.
- Reflect on how pupils coped during lockdown, the skills that they have developed as a result and how they manage any unpleasant feelings they may experience.

SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS

- We need to encourage an environment where we can all socially connect and build on the skills we may have lost during lockdown.
- Before – send an introduction and welcome back video/messages, 'looking forward to seeing/meeting you".
- Identify key adults for pupils with ASN and connect prior to and during recovery.
- Promote kindness and understanding through role modelling.
- Focus your curriculum on relationships and community.

HOPE

- Consider as a class 'How have we changed for the better?"
- What are we looking forward to?
- What opportunities do we have now that we didn't have before? E.g. more outdoor learning opportunities?
- Re-visit and re-consider the school aims with emphasis on the future and what can be achieved.

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For pupils to be settled and ready to learn or take on new experiences, they need to feel a sense of attachment and safety. School needs to be a secure base and include **predictability of routines, reduced numbers of transitions, and the provision of safe spaces.** The more predictable we make changes for pupils and the more they are prepared, the more likely we are to reduce stress and increase the window of tolerance for learning.
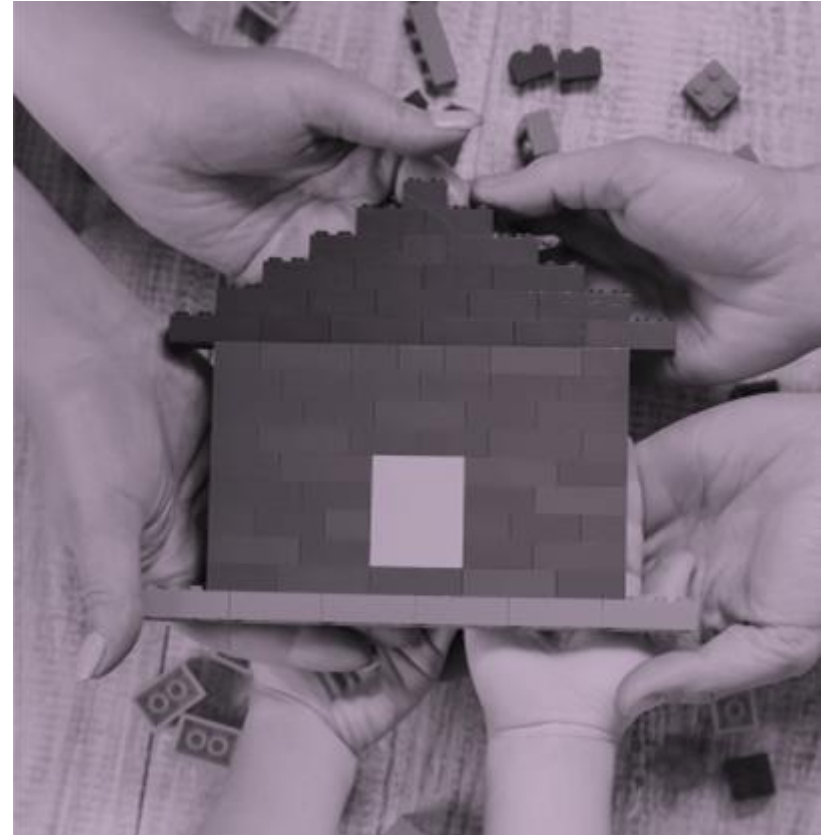
Here are practical measures that can be undertaken for both staff and pupils to feel a sense of physical and emotional safety.

Supporting Staff Wellbeing

You and others in your team may understandably feel apprehensive about your return to work within the school environment. It will take time to re-adjust. It is vital that staff feel physically and emotionally safe to do this. In addition to induction processes taking place within Fife, it will be important for staff to become reacquainted with the school building and new protocols in place, on a gradual process.

Think about:

- Your own network of support and how you are staying connected to school colleagues and community.

- Adults in school need to communicate and share with someone we feel safe with. This helps to clarify and process our current situation and frees up space to think.

- Carefully plan the use of rota systems in school that will promote physical (but safe) contact with others.

- Consider creating 'buddy networks' so teachers have a small network of individuals they can contact when needed. Dr Bruce Perry recommends what he terms the 'Relational Three' whereby one member of staff e.g. Head Teacher, checks in with three colleagues who each in turn check in with three others and so on.

- Staff need to be aware of, label and acknowledge their own feelings. This is important before adults offer support to pupils in co-regulating their emotions. Validate feelings and address the fears and anxieties of pupils by naming and acknowledging them.

SAFE: Information for Supporting Pupils: Prior to Transition

Universal	Additional
Connecting to families for information Gathering information about your pupils' experiences during lockdown is key to understanding and connecting with them and knowing how to support them. Person Centred Planning tools and passports formats such as All About Me will be helpful. The Educational Psychology Service has designed a simple questionnaire for all schools that can be sent out to pupils to seek their views about their confidence in returning to school. This will identify pupils who may need an enhanced level of monitoring. **Being clear about the physical environment** Although it is currently uncertain what school will look like, staying in contact with children and families to let them know you will share information when you have it will support the development of trust and reduces anxiety. As this becomes clearer, introductions to the school and staff will support children to visualise what the building will look like and who they will be meeting. It will be helpful to emphasise things that will stay the same about school while being open about the changes. This could be through Sway or other means. You might include virtual tours of the school buildings and classes as well as opportunities for staff to give a bit of information about themselves and if secondary school, the subject that they teach. **Physical safety** Provide information on how physical safety will be maintained such as social distancing and hand washing facilities. Consider the use of Boardmaker symbols. **Connect to other peer experiences** Either within Sway or another method, it will be helpful for previous pupils, such as former P1s or S1s, to introduce school uniforms and provide information about favourite activities. **Normalising anxiety and supporting self-regulation** Share self-regulation scripts with parents/carers about how they can support pupils to have a positive return to school. For example, parents/carers might be supported to use problem solving scripts to make plans around areas the child may feel worried about.	**Information gathering** Use questionnaire data to follow up on concerns for individuals. Identify any pupils who may require a higher level of monitoring on their return. **Regular check-ins** with worried parents/carers. Making this at predictable times, such as at the same time every week, may help. Use of **School Based Resilience Assessment and Intervention Toolkit.** Follow up with the family about information they have provided to discuss further. Use of **social stories** adapted for individual's needs. Click here for an example. Some pupils may need to be **taught new ways of managing their anxiety** or reminded of strategies that they have used in the past. This may include walking and talking, time to relax or breathing exercises to enable calm. Consider updating **Proactive Management Plans** for specific pupils to take account of physical distancing.

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Universal	Additional
Re-use of **pupil questionnaires** to check for any new concerns. Sensitive checking for any losses during lockdown. **Acknowledge loss and sadness in its widest sense** (e.g. connections with friends) prior to moving onto gratitude and positive experiences during lockdown. Consider a discussion in school about **how to pay respects** after the loss of loved ones and to provide collective support. Consider time with the **previous class teacher** and class before moving on to the next class; this will give a sense of closure and debriefing. Initial **curriculum focus on health and wellbeing** with time to talk and the use of worry boxes. **Check-in times** at the beginning and end of the day are helpful for eliciting any issues that may require support but also give a safe, predictable structure to the day. **Clear seating plans and protocols** for movement around spaces. **Protocols**/rules should be **phrased in positive terms** such as "**Do",** not "Don't". **Have consistent, predictable routines**. We want to create as much predictability as possible in a time of unpredictability as this helps create a sense of safety for children. **Re-establish and practise routines, values, rules and expectations** brought about by physical distancing. **Visual supports** such as signs and visual timetables will support children with predictability and new routines, as well as understanding changed environments and protocols. The whole class may benefit from a **social story** to agree and discuss changes. **Provide prior warning** and count down for transitions. Reduce number of transitions throughout the day. **Be curious not furious** – some pupils will show how they are feeling through their behaviour, particularly when they do not yet have the vocabulary or language skills to express themselves. This may include pupils who had not shown any concerning behaviours before schools closed as their "windows of tolerance" of stress may be smaller [View Poster] We need to try, where possible, to understand and empathise with the underlying need rather than responding to the behaviour itself (e.g *'this must feel strange for you being back in school, we can work together to make it feel comfortable'*). **Understanding separation:** flexibility to meet the individual needs of children and families will be essential. Be aware that separation may be more difficult following the COVID-19 social distancing measures, for both pupils and parents/carers. Validate emotions e.g. *'I know this is really hard but I am going to do my best to keep you safe.'* **Use transitional objects**: physical and virtual transition objects may be used such as a kiss or smile to keep. Or draw a heart on the pupil's hand and encourage parent/carer to do this too to symbolise a link while away. Respond sensitively to any transitional objects that a child needs and work with parents/carers to find the best way to make use of these. **Plan hellos and goodbyes:** parents/carers will need to feel connected with and supported by staff at this difficult time. This is most often the case at the beginning and end of sessions. Practitioners will need to recognise and empathise with the anxieties that parents/carers and pupils have, rather than dismiss them. **Create a sense of belonging** by having photos of the whole class on the wall, even if in small bubbles. **Keep pupils involved and included.** Give children a voice and listen to them.	Targeted intervention if **follow up pupil questionnaire** indicates a need. Be clear about who **pupils can talk to** and when. Physical **areas of 'safe space'** for pupils to access as needed. Identify a **key person** and carry out predictable check-ins. Use of **Seesaw and Teams** to share what's happening across home and school. Consider if an additional **staggered start** could be accommodated to support specific pupil needs. **Shared visuals with home** such as structure of the day, now/next. **Support pupil understanding of their own responses to stress and perceived challenge.** **Use of Window of Tolerance poster** [View Here] and resources on brain and behaviour for individuals to explain feelings. Link to "Teenagers' Brains and Behaviour: What do we all need to know?" https://www.fife.gov.uk/educationalpsychology Consideration of **exaggerated warm voice** and open gestures for pupils who might be dysregulated.

Click here to Access Activities to Support SAFE

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Principle 2. A Sense of CALM

Pupils are likely to experience a range of emotions that will be both pleasant and unpleasant. It is important that these are **normalised**, and that they are given support to help them **manage their emotions** and return to a state of calm.

Here are practical measures that can be undertaken for both staff and pupils to build a sense of calm.

Supporting Staff Wellbeing

- Whether your experiences away from school have been challenging or more positive, it is important that you have access to support networks as well as quality time with colleagues and as a school team.

- This will help to support feelings of calm and connection. It is only when we feel calm and connected, that we can support pupils to be calm and ready to learn.

- Be aware of emotional contagion. We are all hard-wired to respond to the emotion of those around us. Pupils are very attuned to your feelings and behaviours. This is particularly the case for pupils who have had previous difficult experiences. When we model calm thoughts through our tone of voice, pace of communication and open body language, our pupils tune into and mirror this.

- A common misconception is that acknowledgement of sadness and loss can exacerbate stress. Instead, it will more likely facilitate a sense of understanding each other better and in turn foster empathy for each other.

- Consideration should be given to staff time for re-grouping and re-connecting with each other.

- Neuroscience shows that when we feel safe internally (i.e., not under threat) we function at our best. Place emphasis on strategies such as grounding activities and mindfulness which may help staff to feel calm and present. Examples can be found in the "Anxiety is Normal" pack.

- Stop, focus on your breathing and this will help slow your thinking (Porges, 2011).

- Think about where you can go and what you can do to help yourself calm if it feels overwhelming.

CALM: Information for Supporting Pupils: Prior to Transition

Universal	Additional
Acknowledge and directly address concerns. Contacting families or having virtual meetings can give an idea about what their concerns might be. Provide clear information about the type of support and strategies you plan to provide for the pupils on their return. **Offer affirmation messages**, e.g. 'we look forward to meeting you' and 'our priority is to keep you safe'. **Normalise the emotions** being felt – refer to "Anxiety is normal" tool for staff and signpost to "Understanding and managing anxiety during COVID-19" information for parents/carers and children.	**Use of co-regulation and self regulation scripts** personalised for individual need. **Identify which pupils may require extra support** at the time of transition, such as children who have previously experienced emotionally-based school avoidance. Consider what their individual needs might be.

Click here to Access Activities that Support CALM

CALM: Information for Pupils: At School Re-Entry	
Universal	**Additional**
Spend time welcoming the children back and build in time for discussions about their thoughts and feelings. Focus on what they have learned rather than what they've not e.g. 3 favourite things they did (could be bike rides, making a rainbow for NHS etc). **Make use of emotional regulation strategies** in the classroom such as calm corners, regulation stations and relaxation resources, worry boxes. **Model emotional regulation** and how to stay calm. Co-regulation will be important in promoting calm in the environment. Hold whole-class sessions, such as mindfulness exercises. **Name it to tame it:** Validation of emotions, reassurance. Try a script such as *'I think you might be finding these changes a bit unsettling and you're feeling frustrated. I understand that and I'm here to help you'.* **Monitoring of pupils' health and wellbeing** Some pupils will be expressive and others less so. We need to monitor so we can intervene when required. Have a class daily check in about how they are feeling e.g. 1-10 scaling at the start and end of each day or emojis on wall. Check they have one person in the school (including a pupil) they would talk to if they need it. This way we are modelling problem solving and connection. **Adults modelling what is calming** for them such as a smell on a tissue. **Teach relaxation strategies** We are not able to reason if we are feeling stressed. Use of physical self-regulation activities such as breathing, physical exercise, music, anything rhythmic. Short, frequent bursts of activity will be more effective. When children are in freeze mode, use physical activity to re-connect and re-engage pupils. When pupils are in fight or flight mode, use calming activities e.g. breathing. **Breathing** is the best way to get out of fight or flight. **Think 7/11**. - Breathe in 7 seconds and out for 11 seconds. - To make it easy for young children to do, ask them to pretend they are smelling the flowers and blowing out candles. **Have social scripts to help pupils** recognise and manage emotions e.g. 5 point scale.	Support pupil development of **personal bank of self-regulation activities** and awareness of when/how to use these, e.g. personalised 5 point scale, social stories. **Regular individual/small group check in times**, either virtual or in person. These will probably just need to be low key and show you are keeping the pupil in mind. Have **planned spaces ideally within the classroom** and clear protocol for children to access safely if they feel they need a break or to leave the classroom. Some children will need more practise and **opportunities for self-regulation activities** such as heavy lifting, sorting/classifying tasks, rocking, weighted blanket, sensory food such as very crunchy, chewy food. **Provide access to a named key adult** for those who require it, either individually or in small groups. This might include opportunities to leave the classroom if pupils become overwhelmed, or having access to an identified key adult who is available if they need to talk. Signpost parents/carers to information on sleep support.

Click here to Access Activities to Support CALM

Principle 3. A Sense of SELF and COLLECTIVE EFFICACY

During the lockdown experience, many staff and pupils may feel that they have little control over what is happening which increases doubt that they have a role in improving the situation. It is therefore important that their sense of self and collective efficacy is developed before and during their return to the school environment.

Here are practical measures that can be undertaken for both staff and pupils to build a sense of self and collective efficacy.

Supporting Staff Wellbeing

- Consider own circles of control prior to pupil return focussing on e.g. your classroom and the learning and teaching experience you and your team can provide.

- Reinvigorating school sense of purpose by reflecting and reviewing school vision and aims given the changed education context.

- Arrange for time together as a team to plan how the return to school will look – all sharing ideas to support each other and pupils.

- To support collective responsibility and agency: consider how best to support each other as a team and plan frequent check in times throughout the day.

- Consider use of buddies available to support during or outwith class time when windows of tolerance are smaller.

- Staff involvement in creation of calm and supportive staff areas.

SELF & COLLECTIVE EFFICACY: Information for Supporting Pupils: Prior to Transition

Universal	Additional
Building school belongingness and collective efficacy through **shared activities** e.g. online school newspaper, school challenges, transition project.	Work with pupils to set personal **SMART targets** to support their sense of self-efficacy.
Gather on-going **pupil feedback** to inform supports and activities e.g. frequent check-ins, use of questionnaire about transition (Click to View).	Consider use of visuals, scripts, social stories to support pupil self-regulation.
Help pupils to **understand and regulate their emotions to help them feel they** can manage any unpleasant feelings they may experience.	Virtual keyworker support for **regular check-ins and time to talk** to support pupil self-regulation through video chats, voice notes, postcards and phone calls.
Staff can use their understanding of **'Cognitive Behavioural Approaches' (CBA)** to help pupils challenge unhelpful thoughts which can impact on their feelings and behaviours (see Anxiety is Normal pack.)	**Scaffold pupil problem solving skills** by supporting parents/carers to provide them with opportunities to practise applying the skills e.g. through setting challenges and reviewing with the pupil individually.
Support pupils to **develop their understanding** of the things that they find challenging and what helps them.	**Support parents/carers to understand the Cognitive Behavioural Approach** by signposting to the Understanding and managing anxiety during Covid-19 with ongoing coaching from keyworker.
	Signpost pupils and parents/carers to resources on **coping with problems outwith their control (Information for young people on Educational Psychology website)**.

Universal	Additional
Reflect on how pupils coped during lockdown, the skills that they have developed as a result and how they manage any unpleasant feelings they may experience.	Some children may need a **particular role or purpose** identified for them.
Continue to build pupil problem solving skills around coping with difficult situations using coaching conversations.	Continue to support pupils to set **personal SMART target**s to support their sense of self-efficacy.
Set realistic and achievable goals throughout the day with an enhanced focus on HWB to support pupil self-efficacy while transitioning slowly back to formal learning.	Consider use of visuals, scripts, social stories to support pupil development of self-regulation.
Focus on how the pupils can **support others** collectively through projects e.g. fundraising, thanking keyworkers.	A **mixture of virtual and physical** check-ins and time to talk to support pupil wellbeing.
Continue to **gather pupil feedback regularly** on what is working well and ideas for change e.g. pupil survey, circle time, worry boxes/monsters.	Scaffold pupil problem solving skills by providing them opportunities to **practise applying the skills** e.g. through setting challenges and reviewing with the pupil, individually or in small groups.
Ongoing support to pupils to **recognise and challenge unhelpful thoughts** (ideas in Anxiety is Normal pack.)	Small group opportunities to **reinforce use of Cognitive Behavioural Approach** to support sense of efficacy over emotional wellbeing.
Provide pupils with responsibilities such as specific jobs or tasks e.g. peer buddy, hand gel monitor, hand washing champion.	Individual or small group learning opportunities about **"Circles of Control"** see **Information for young people on Educational Psychology website)**.
Create a sense of community within the classroom e.g. **pupil involvement** in the planning and implementation of activities, and social activities.	
Communal language such as 'our school' or 'our project' is also helpful to develop a sense of collective efficacy.	

Click here to Access Activities to Support COLLECTIVE EFFICACY
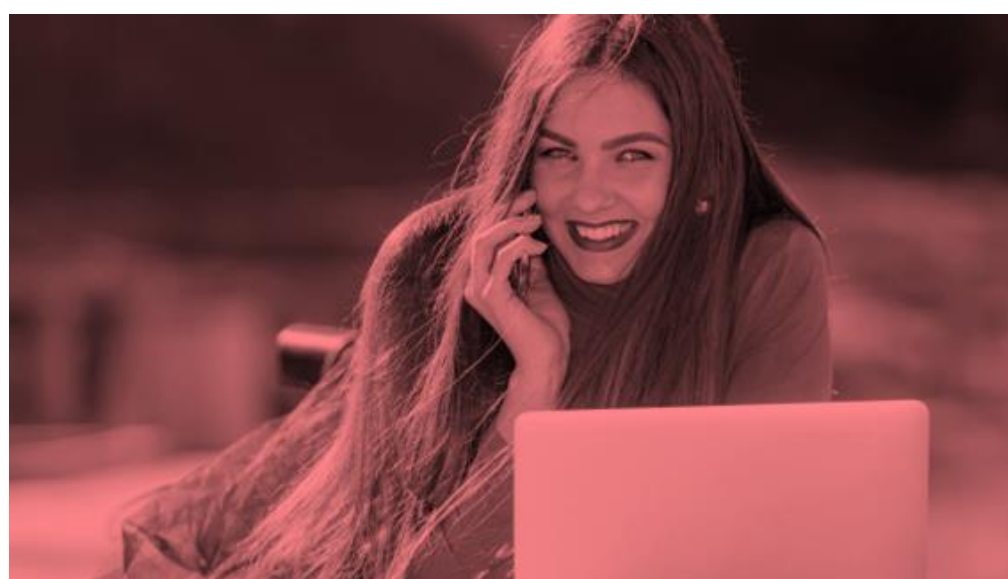
Principle 4. SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS

During this difficult and uncertain period transition back to school will be difficult for many staff and pupils. Many of the relationships that were thriving may need to be invested in and restored. Reinforcing connectedness to school and each other will be crucial during this period, enhancing enjoyment and genuine connection to the school community. A sense of connectedness in school will help staff and pupils feel that they are genuinely cared about, wanted, listened to and supported. This can positively impact on pupil engagement, achievement and emotional wellbeing (Keay, Lang & Frederickson, 2015).

Here are practical measures that can be undertaken for both staff and pupils to build a sense of social connectedness.

Supporting Staff Wellbeing

Staff feelings of social connectedness can be supported by:

- Time for staff to be together focussed on their own reconnection prior to pupils returning to school.

- Increased opportunities for staff to connect throughout the day that is focussed on peer support and social time.

- Planned opportunities for staff to support each other around sharing good practice and planning for learning e.g. sharing ideas and working together where possible.

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SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS: Information for Supporting Pupils: Prior to Transition

Universal	Additional
Introduce class teachers, registration teachers, guidance staff and school management using video technology to **prepare pupils for the educational environment**. Offer virtual question and answer sessions. Send **welcome messages** to all in-coming pupils. Consider use of **staff passport** to share information about themselves with pupils e.g. likes and dislikes, pictures. Support pupils to **keep in touch** with peers, friends and school staff through connections online or in a socially distant manner. e.g. video calls, letters, pictures, postcards. If pupils are transitioning to high school, **support the building of friendships** based on common interest areas using online shared spaces e.g. Teams channel with focus on sharing social interests etc before video chat. If pupils are transitioning to nursery, consider **sharing pictures** of pupils/self-portraits/likes/dislikes etc. Provide opportunities for pupils to **build new relationships or reconnect with known adults** e.g. online and through cards/passports/post-its/phone calls. Building school belongingness through **shared activities** e.g. online school newspaper, school challenges, transition projects. Engage pupils in activities that **connect the school community** when out of school e.g. window bear hunts.	For pupils who may require enhanced transition supports, organise **online meetings** with new class teacher – individual prior to group. For some pupils, it may be beneficial to assign 'key adults' to help support them. This aims to **establish trust and rapport** and promotes a feeling of safety and being supported through this transitional period. Consider use of Solihull principles of containment and reciprocity to support. Identify children who may need additional **support to maintain or develop peer relationships** e.g. questionnaires, contact with pupil and parents/carers. **Facilitate buddy schemes,** which can support children to build friendships and a sense of belonging e.g. P6/7s to younger pupils. Communicate aspects of school environment that will be the same and those that will be different e.g. **scripts and coaching around social expectations** and social stories using visuals if required. More **frequent social opportunities** to connect with peers with similar interests. Consider use of coaching conversations and restorative approaches to **support pupils who are finding it challenging to connect with others** during lockdown or resolve peer difficulties.

Click here to Access Activities to Support SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS

SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS: Information for Supporting Pupils: At School Re-Entry

Universal	Additional
Provide increased opportunities for children to socialise and spend time together – consider **creative approaches through play** e.g. shadow tig. Plan for frequent check-ins/ opportunities to talk/ **listen to pupil experiences** throughout the day. Provide opportunities for pupils to **reflect on how best to support each other** and small acts of kindness e.g. circle time, anonymous post-it notes on gratitude board. Consider how to promote pupil **connectedness to wider school community** while being physically distant e.g. letters from one class to another. Staff can **model a sense of community** to support pupils to develop and maintain attachments. Using **communal language** such as 'our school', 'our project' will help to develop a feeling of social connectedness and belonging. When pupils and adults feel under stress, neutral communication can be interpreted as a threat. **Incorporate PACE in all communication** e.g. by exaggerating positive non-verbal communication and incorporating visuals such as emojis into written communication.	Ongoing links to **peer buddies** – regular check-ins supported by adult. Use of **mindfulness activities** in small groups to promote connection. Continue to use coaching conversations to support pupils who are finding it challenging to **connect with others**. Support pupils to feel connected to adults when not physically close to **reassure pupils that they are being held in mind** through use of e.g. analogy of the magic string.

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Principle 5. PROMOTING HOPE

When a school emphasises proactive as opposed to reactive responses it promotes a collective sense of hope. This means that we feel prepared to create a positive environment where pupils and staff are supported to reflect on their experiences and look forward to the future with optimism.

Many pupils will feel like they have lost time in learning as demonstrated in the Lockdown Lowdown report (Scottish Youth Parliament, Youthlink Scot & Young Scot, 2020). We can work alongside pupils to focus on all forms of learning that they have achieved during their time at home and consider how best to move forward.

Here are practical measures that can be undertaken for both staff and pupils to build a sense of hope.

Supporting Staff Wellbeing

- Plan for time together as a team to consider the previous four staff wellbeing principles in this guidance and consider how these can be implemented in your context.

- This will support you to further develop a positive working environment for yourselves and your pupils, and allow you to feel settled and secure enough to look to the future in a hopeful way.

PROMOTING HOPE: Information for Supporting Pupils: Prior to Transition

Universal	Additional
Celebrate all learning and new skills developed during time at home during interactions with pupils. Consider the **positive experiences** that pupils are having and plan to celebrate these on return to school. Plan how to **focus on emotional wellbeing and learning achieved** as opposed to looking primarily at academic learning.	Some pupils may require **a higher level of monitoring** to identify positive future goals. See the Anxiety is Normal pack for ideas to **recognise and challenge negative thinking traps.**

PROMOTING HOPE: Information for Supporting Pupils: At School Re-Entry

Universal	Additional
As above and... **Reflect with the pupils on what has worked i**n terms of supporting their emotional wellbeing and consider how this could be brought into school. **Gather pupil views** about what they want to focus on in their learning. Reflect on **what changes have improved the community** e.g. have they noticed people being kinder to each other or helping more, local art projects. Reflect on **new ways of learning** that we want to continue e.g. outdoor learning, online video calls. **Model kindness and gratitude** in interactions with colleagues and pupils. Support pupils to consider their **positive goals for the future** e.g. writing a letter to my 2030 self or Person Centred Planning activities (PATH).	Some pupils may require **closer adult support** to consider a positive future and positives. See the "Anxiety is Normal" pack for ideas to **recognise and challenge negative thinking traps.**

Click here to Access Activities to Support HOPE

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Guidance for using the Back to School Questionnaire

Please find on the following page an exemplar pupil questionnaire. This is designed to assist school staff identification of pupils who may require additional levels of support both in advance of and upon return to school. It is hoped that this will support planning for pupil return on an individual and whole school basis.

Please feel free to print and share with pupils and families. You can adapt the content to your context if you feel this is necessary. This may be done best at a whole school level to ensure consistency.

There is an identical online version of this questionnaire which pupils may find easier to engage with. This can be accessed via the following link Online Back to School Questionnaire. If you would like to access a simplified version of this questionnaire for younger children please click on the following link Early Years Online Questionnaire.

Responses from completed online questionnaires will be sent back to the person who sent the link to the pupil. As such, consider carefully and agree at a whole school level who will be best placed to do this.

Name _____

Back to School Questionnaire

We would like to ask you some questions about how you feel about coming back to school.

We want to know what you are looking forward to and also any worries. There are no right answers, so please tell us what you think. Your name will only be seen by adults in your school.

1 Really Worried	2 A little Worried	3 OK	4 Pretty Confident	5 Really Confident

How do you feel about different parts of coming back to school? Use the numbers in the scale above to tell us (so if you are really confident or excited about it, you would write 5).

Seeing my friends		Being in a classroom that will look different from normal	
Seeing the rest of my class(es)		Being in the playground/school grounds at breaktimes	
Seeing my teacher(s)		What I will do at lunchtime	
Being able to do my learning		Keeping safe in school e.g. physical distancing and hygiene	
Knowing what to do or who to speak to if I am worried or anxious		Other children following the new rules	
Knowing how I will be allowed to play with my friends		Knowing how to react if my friends talk to me about being worried or sad	
Being away from home		Anything else?	

continued next page

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Some facts about you

Your class teacher(s) and other school staff will have missed you while you have been learning at home. Your answers will help them get ready for welcoming you back to school.

The friends that I am most excited to see again are...	The thing I missed most about being in school was....
The subject/topic I am looking forward to learning about is...	The school staff I am most excited to see again are...
The thing I liked most about learning at home was....	Before I come back, I need _____ e.g. m class teacher to know.... (e.g. if something important happened while you have been at home. If you don't want to write it down, write XXX)
Would you like to share a worry? The thing I am worried about is...	The thing I am most looking forward to is...

Print Copy

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What is Your Window of Tolerance?

HYPERAROUSAL

Feeling:
- ☐ Extremely Anxious
- ☐ Out of Control
- ☐ Anger and Rage
- ☐ Fight or Run Away

HYPER-DYSREGULATION

Feeling:
- ☐ Anxious
- ☐ Revved Up
- ☐ Angry
- ☐ Agitated

Stress & Trauma

- ☐ Can Shrink Your Window
- ☐ Harder to Stay Calm
- ☐ Lose Focus
- ☐ Thrown Off Balance

Window of Tolerance

Feeling:
- ☑ Just Right
- ☑ Can Cope with Anything
- ☑ Calm (Not Tired)
- ☑ Alert (Not Anxious)

Work with Coach & Self

- ☐ Enlarge Your Window
- ☐ Keep Calm
- ☐ Stay Alert
- ☐ Maintain Balance

HYPO-DYSREGULATION

Feeling:
- ☐ A Shutdown
- ☐ Spacey
- ☐ Lose Track of Time
- ☐ Sluggish
- ☐ Not Yet Stuck, Not

HYPOAROUSAL

Feeling:
- • Extremely Zoned Out
- • Numb (Emotionally & Physically)
- • Missing Time
- • Frozen & Sunk
- • Body Takes Over
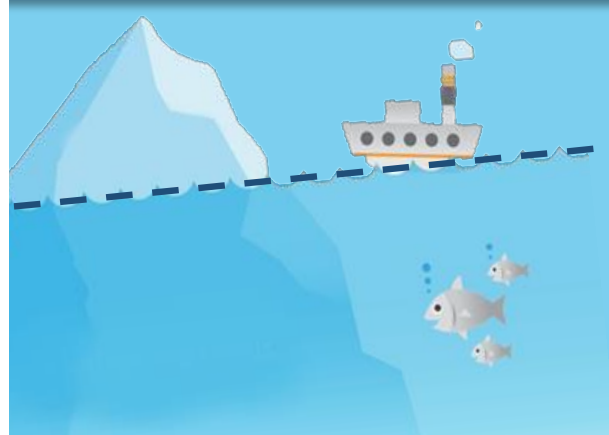
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		Principle 1 – Activities for promoting a sense of safety	
Stage	Type of activity	Universal	Additional
P1-P4	Class conversation starter	**Book – Coming Back to School in a Bubble by Kezia Matthews (Shere Infant School and Nursery).** A free picture book to reassure pupils about the social "bubbles" that they will be in on return to school, how to look after each other's health and how to remain connected to the wider school. https://files.schudio.com/activelearningtrust/files/Coming_back_to_school_in_a_bubble._A_book_for_children_(1).pdf	This could be shared with groups of pupils and parents/carers prior to return to school.
P5-S6	Class conversation starter	**Poem - What Ifs by Shel Silverstein** A good opener to reassure pupils that some of them will have worries and that this is natural – but there are people in school to talk to if they need.	
P1-P4	Class conversation starter	**Book – A Huge Bag of Worries by Virginia Ironside** A reassuring picture book encouraging pupils to open up about their fears and anxieties to help manage their feelings. A good book to soothe worries during stressful times.	
S1 and up	A range of emotional wellbeing activities for classes	**Coping with changes** Lesson plan in which pupils will learn to recognise different changes that may happen in their lives and consider how to cope with change https://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/schools/deal/deal-resources/coping-strategies/coping-changes/ The Samaritans have a range of lesson plans and resources for secondary age pupils that explore emotional wellbeing and coping strategies.	
P1 -P7	Conversation starter about loss and bereavement	**The Heart and the Bottle by Oliver Jeffers** A picture book to start a discussion about grief. Teachers can explain that there may be pupils in the class who have experienced the death of a loved one. Pupils can be invited to add their memories to a loss and remembrance book that can be put in a safe place in the class.	
S1-S6	1:1 or small group activities to support regulation		**Book - You think I'm evil by David Taransaud** Activities ideas for making connections with teenage boys. The third person activities give the opportunity for pupils to explore their inner thoughts in a less intrusive way.
All	Tool for individual pupils	**I need to talk** A slip for pupils to use if they want to ask for help but find it difficult to say the words. https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Pupil-self-referral-2.pdf	
P1-S1	Class activity to support wellbeing	**Worry Monster** Pupils can design a worry monster and then tell their worries to it. They can list/ draw any of their worries first. https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Design-a-worry-monster.pdf	Some pupils may benefit from closer adult support and containment during this activity.
P1-S1	For pupils to feel kept in mind	**Lunchbox notes** Parents/carers/carers can send in with their pupils' lunch/in book bags. This can be particularly helpful if a pupil is finding separation from home and family difficult. https://assets.ctfassets.net/p0qf7j048i0q/5p7HhRQvrvh1xMVNR5Jrfz/f530f4cb02858cfa98ae6aede9957010/Lunchbox_Notes_to_Help_Your_Pupil_Build_Confidence_Understood.pdf	
P1-adult	Conversation starter about difficult emotions	**Acknowledging pupil sadness** Watch Disney Pixar's Inside Out – Reinforce that all of your emotions are important – even sadness and anger. Pupils are invited to add leaves to a sadness tree display – acknowledging the loss and grief some pupils are feeling – leaves can be added to at any point. Pupils are reassured that they do not need to talk to anyone about their sadness but are told that it can help and the teachers who are there if they need. Older pupils could make sad playlists. This can be followed by an activity about things that the pupils are grateful for/ looking forward to.	
P1-P7	Conversation starter	**Transitional Objects/support for separation** Book - The Invisible String by Patrice Karst This is a story about how twins realise there is an invisible string connecting all people who love one another… you can feel it in your heart and always be connected, even from afar. Perfect for: dealing with loss, moving, friendship issues, family problems, night time fears.	Support pupils to create own transitional objects to share with people at home e.g. bracelets
P1-S4	Whole class activity to create a sense of safety as a group	**Creating a sense of belonging** A wall for "belongingness" such as quotes from pupils about what they enjoy about being back at school, photos of class, or achievements at home. As pupils will not return as a whole class, displaying photos of the whole class will facilitate a sense of connectedness. This can be done for registration groups in secondary.	

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Principle 2 – Activities for promoting a sense of calm

Stage	Type of activity	Universal	Additional
All	Mindfulness class/ small group activities	**Basic Mindful practices** A good starter to introduce mindful practices into your classroom including breathing and meditation. https://mindfulintheclassroom.files.wordpress.com/2015/04/mindful-activities-basics-v-1-20151.pdf https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/sites/default/files/1-Mindfulness%20activity%20book.pdf	Plan for more frequent use of this kind of activity to support pupil regulation throughout the day. Some pupils may find mindfulness activities that focus on stillness and quiet overwhelming, particularly they have ongoing difficult experiences. Consider use of more hands-on strategies to support calm and regulation e.g. glitter jars, movement breaks, guided muscle relaxation
All	Mindfulness class/ small group activities	**Mindfulness Colouring Sheets Downloads** https://www.betweensessions.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/mindfulness-coloring-book-4_25-16.pdf	
P1-P7	Mindfulness class/ small group activities	**Cosmic Kids Yoga** **Videos demonstrating mindfulness techniques in child friendly language** https://www.cosmickids.com/	
All	A range of emotional wellbeing activities for class and small groups.	**Helping Pupils to Flourish by HandsOn Scotland** These packs offer a range of activities to support pupils' wellbeing and resilience. There is a pack for each of the following: • Emotional Balance • Developing Character Strengths • Confidence https://girfec.fife.scot/resources-and-publications/	Plan for more frequent use of these kinds of activities to support pupil regulation throughout the day.
N-P4	Class mindfulness	**Mindfulness App** Works on smartboard with lots of quick mindful activities. https://www.stopbreathethink.com/kids/	
All	Class mindfulness	**Happy Visualisation** Ask the pupil if they can visualise their place. What colours can they see? What can they hear? What can they smell? What can they feel? What can they taste? Help them to use all of their senses to visualise that happy place Ask them to draw/build what their happy place looks like. This can be extended to discuss creating a safe place in class.	Be mindful that some children find these kind of activities challenging, particularly if they have ongoing difficult experiences. Consider use of more hands on strategies to support calm and regulation e.g. building a fort, using Lego etc.
P1-7	Physical self-regulation Activity	**"Relax like a cat"** Storybook approach to guided progressive muscle relaxation. Website includes printable story and audio using male or female voices https://www.moodcafe.co.uk/for-pupils-and-young-people/relaxation-for-pupils.aspx	
All	Physical self-regulation Activity	**Active Movement Breaks** Physical movement can support the regulation of pupils' nervous systems and promote calm. The Alphabet Game includes pupils spelling out their names (or anything else) using exercises associated with letters. For example see https://www.theottoolbox.com/alphabet-exercises-for-kids/	

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Stage	Type of activity	Universal	Additional
		Principle 3 – Activities for promoting a sense of self and collective efficacy	
P2-S1	Class activity to support wellbeing	**Kind to yourself challenge** This is a 5 day challenge to support mental health including recognising achievements and forgiving mistakes https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Kindness-to-yourself-challenge.pdf	
All	Class activity to support wellbeing	**'How to feel better' wall** Each pupil draws and/or writes what makes them feel better under each of Our Mind Matters - 5 ways to wellbeing. The class discusses their ideas and thinks about ways to help others. They then add their ideas to a class display for how to feel better. https://girfec.fife.scot/wp-content/uploads/sites/61/2019/01/Fife-5-Ways_leaflet_.pdf https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yF7Ou43Vj6c	
P1-P4	Class activity to support wellbeing	**Warm and Fuzzies** Helping pupils reflect on ways that they can make themselves feel warm and fuzzy https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Warm-and-fuzzy.pdf https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Warm-and-fuzzy-jar.pdf	
P1-P4	1:1/small group emotional wellbeing activity		**Book - A Volcano in My Tummy: Helping Pupils to Handle Anger** Presents a clear and effective approach to helping pupils and adults alike understand and deal constructively with pupils' anger. Using easy to understand skills including how to teach communication of emotions.
All	1:1/small group emotional wellbeing activity	**Wheel of Awareness** - From the book "The Whole-Brain Pupil" by Daniel Siegel. Adults help pupils shift focus from negative to positive thoughts. Pupils can make the wheel themselves or adults can help them.	
P1-P4	1:1/small group emotional wellbeing activity		**Book - My Hidden Chimp** by Professor Steve Peters By explaining the developing 'chimp' brain in pupils, the author suggests how 10 habits can help pupils to understand and manage their emotions and behaviour.
P1-P4	1:1/small group emotional wellbeing activity		**Unhelpful thoughts** For pupils who tend to think negatively about situations which cause them to direct these feelings inwardly or outwardly – affecting their self-esteem. The adult's role is to use coaching skills to help the pupil think differently and move from unhelpful to helpful thoughts. https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Negative-to-positive.pdf
P5-S6	1:1/small group emotional wellbeing activity		**Book - Banish your Self-Esteem Thief** by Kate Collins-Donnelly Using **cognitive behavioural approaches** and mindfulness principles and techniques, this workbook will helps change how young people think and act in order to build positive self-esteem - to work through alone or with the help of a parent or teacher.
P1-S1	1:1/small group emotional wellbeing activity	**Snakes and Ladders:** Small group activity where pupils play together. Play snakes and ladders as normal – when they come across a snake they name something that they find difficult, and when they come across a ladder they name something that helps. Place emphasis on what the pupils can do themselves to build self and collective efficacy.	Same as universal but 1:1 with adult or peer buddy. The adult or peer buddy can draw on their knowledge of the pupil to make suggestions and scaffold this activity.
P4 – S1-6	1:1/small group activity focussed on problem-solving skills	**The Problem-Solving Tree** Have pupils draw out a tree including the roots, the trunk and leaving space for leaves. Leaves: Work with pupil to identify all of the effects of their main concern/problem - write each of these in a leaf in the tree canopy e.g impacts on friendships, emotional wellbeing, learning etc. Trunk: Write the main concern/problem on the tree trunk Roots: Support the pupil(s) to consider the underlying causes of the main concern/problem. Be prepared to support the pupil or take a break if this becomes overwhelming. Support pupils to link underlying causes to the effects e.g. colour coding. The ones that link to the most leaves is your starting point to start identifying solutions.	Consider doing this on a more 1:1 or private basis with children who have previous or ongoing difficult experiences.
All	Group activity to build efficacy	**Planning to give** Look into (or create!) local community volunteering opportunities when Government guidelines allow e.g. doing someone's garden, helping elderly local residents, making care packages for elderly/self-isolating locals	

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Principle 4 – Activities for promoting a sense of social connectedness			
Stage	Type of activity	Universal	Additional
N4-P7	Class ice-breaker tasks and physical exercise	**Physically distanced playground games.** Below is a link to some playground play ideas where the pupils can remain at least 2 meters apart. Physically distanced playground games	
All	Class ice-breaker	**A class song** The class discuss and mindmap what kind of class they wanted to be...enthusiastic, responsible, imaginative etc. The class then write a song/rap, to the tune of 'We will rock you' using these words and phrases and practice during the day. Wordles using the lyrics can be created (www.wordle.net) to put in the classroom windows for visitors to see. The song can be used throughout the year to remember the expectations and to celebrate successes as a class.	
All	Class ice-breaker	**Paper chain of talents** After a brief discussion about some of the pupils' talents, pass out paper and ask pupils to write down five things they do well. Then provide each student with five different-coloured paper strips for them to write a talent on each and glue their chain together. Use extra strips of paper to link the mini chains together to create one long class chain. Once the entire chain is constructed and linked, lead a discussion about what the chain demonstrates - all the pupils have talents; all the pupils have things they do well; together, the pupils have many talents; if they work together, classmates can accomplish anything; the class is stronger when pupils work together than when individual pupils work on their own. Hang the chain in the room as a constant reminder to pupils of the talents they possess and the benefits of teamwork.	Some pupils may find these kinds of activities more challenging. Consider how to engage them in a less intrusive way e.g. writing about a friend's talent rather than their own.
All	Class ice-breaker	**Postcards** Give the pupils a blank postcard with a stamp on it during the holidays. Pupils have to draw a picture on the front of themselves or something they did during the holiday. They then have to write on the back telling the teacher about themselves or their holiday. They send it back to school and pupils are back to school they are shared with the class and put on display.	Some pupils may not have had positive experiences while away from the safety of school. If they find it difficult to think about something positive provide the opportunity for them to discuss this with a trusted adult on a 1:1 basis. Some pupils may benefit from support to challenge negative thinking traps (see "Anxiety is Normal" pack) while some may need more significant containment and support around their experiences.
All	Class ice-breaker	**Silent ordering** A non-verbal communication game where pupils have to line up in order of their birthdays without speaking. They can show the months on the digits of their fingers etc (e.g. hold up five fingers for May) but talking or miming is forbidden. The winning team is the first to have all pupils lining up in order.	
All	Class ice-breaker	**'Facts'** Pupils write 3 'facts' about themselves but one has to be made up. When they are read out the other pupils have to guess which one is a lie.	
All	Class ice-breaker	**Shoe-box portrait** Prepare shoe box with personal items that tell the pupils something about yourself and say why they are important. Pupils then draw/write what they would put in a shoebox that would demonstrate their personality.	
All	Class ice-breaker	**Animal portraits** The teacher introduces themselves e.g. Hello! My name is ...... If I was an animal I would be a bee, because I'm always buzzing around! However I would like to be more of a tortoise because I need to slow down! The pupils then draw a picture of themselves as their animal and write the completed sentences underneath.	
All	Class ice-breaker	**Time capsule** Pupils write (or draw) a letter to themselves, including information on who we were at that point, things that we're going on in our lives right then and there, likes/dislikes. We wrote hopes and wishes and included predictions (personal and worldly). In the tin also went a class photo and a newspaper front cover.	
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Principle 4 – Activities for promoting a sense of social connectedness			
Stage	Type of activity	Universal	Additional
All	Class ice-breaker	**I am happy when…** On the board put up numbers 1-6 and the following titles-1.I am happy when…/2.I am sad when…/3.I'm a good friend because…/4.I get worried when…/5.I get excited when…/6.I'm glad I'm me because… Pupils sit in a circle and take it in turns to roll a big dice and then share with the class the answer to the corresponding 'feeling' on the board. Pupils then turned our ideas into 'feelings flowers'- the pupils wrote down their responses to when they felt happy/sad… on 6 different petals and I took a photo of each pupil to go in the centre of their flowers. These can make a nice display.	
P2-S1	Class activity to build belonging	**Roll the dice** The pupil rolls two dice and then adds them up (bit of maths there) and they can then answer the question on their favourite/ proudest moment etc. https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/Roll-2-dice.pdf	
P1-P3	Class activity to build belonging	**Making a difference** The starfish story is such a powerful story to help pupils understand that the smallest act of kindness can make a huge difference. https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/03/Starfish-story.pdf	
P1-P7	Class activity to build sense of belonging	**Class of 2020 poster** All pupils to have a part in colouring. https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Class-of-2020.pdf	
P1-P7	Class ice-breaker to build sense of belonging	**Who Am I** Each pupil must secretly draw their picture on the front cover and then answer 4 clues about themselves. They write their name on the back cover. Everyone must 'Guess who?' from the picture and clues. https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/09/who-am-I.pdf	
P2-S2	Building a sense of belonging	**About me wheel** A getting to know me activity in a different format for teachers wanting to find out more about their pupils https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/All-about-me-Wheels.pdf	
All	Class activities to develop a sense of belonging	**Making connections with the missing part of the class/ school community/wider community** Pupils can connect with the missing part of their class and make connections with other classes by making treasure hunts/ quizzes/ writing letters and leaving it for others to find. Pupils can also feel a part of their community through having a part in the content of school newsletters.	
All	Building a sense of belonging	**Giftedness Posters** Provide the pupils with a list of their classmates' names and ask them to write something that they like about each of them (a prompt list of positive adjectives may be helpful). Aim to have the same number of comments per pupil. Gather these in and share the positive comments with the pupil they are about. Encourage them to create a poster about themselves using these.	Some pupils may prefer to create their giftedness poster privately/ have an adult compile it for them if they are overwhelmed by the comments or find it difficult to accept praise. Encourage the pupils to provide "evidence" to back up their choice of positive comments. This can support pupils who find it challenging to see the good in themselves.
All	Building a sense of belonging and efficacy	**Soundtrack for Life** Encourage the pupils to make a playlist of all of the music that is important to them – maybe it reminds them of a family member or a memory. Encourage them to include sad/angry music as well as happy as this soundtrack will cover everything that has made them who they are.	

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Stage	Type of activity	Universal	Additional
		Principle 5 – Activities for promoting a sense of hope	
P1-P4	Conversation starter	**Book: Reach for the Stars: and Other Advice for Life's Journey by Serge Bloch** Having mastered the first day of school, the two characters are embarking further on the perilous journey of life. like all of us, they encounter many forks in the road and uphill battles—but they also find that there's no better time than right now to reach for the stars and shoot for the moon. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CRRTnVQLrFE	
P1-P7	Conversation starter	**Book - Oh, the Places you will go by Dr Suess** Teaches pupils to follow their hearts, reach for the stars and not let anything stand in their way, but also how you pick yourself up when things don't go as planned, which is just as important https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GwzbPpbuIf0	
All	Class activities to promote appreciation and a sense of safety	**Practising appreciation** Pupils are given the opportunity to reflect on the positive changes to their community e.g. by asking what does community mean to you now? – how has you community changed? e.g. people who you know now who you didn't before. Develop a 'thank you' wall in class for the pupils to show their appreciation to people who have helped them. Pupils could also make thank you cards for people who help us.	
All		**The good around us** Teachers could also arrange virtual guest talks/ pre-recorded videos from adults who are doing good in the community. School newsletters can be used to link pupils into positive news stories in their wider community. They can have a part in drawing up awards and nominations to show their appreciation to people who are supporting us.	
P1-S1	Class activity to get to know class	**Reflections on lockdown** A4 worksheet for pupils to reflect on lockdown - including positive experiences and things they have found difficult. Pupils can draw or write. https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/2020-review.pdf	
All	Class ice-breaker	**Dream Tree** A display board is prepared with the branches of a tree and every pupil is given a leaf made from green paper and they write an aspiration for the year. It is discussed first, circle time style, and then leaves are stuck on the tree. Over the year they can add other leaves and transfer their dreams to an 'our achievements' roll of honour that can be created later on.	
All	Class activity to focus on positive goals for the future	**Dear 2030 Me...** Encourage pupils to think about their lives in ten years time – what would they like to have achieved/be doing? How will they feel? What advice do they think their 2030 self may give them just now? Template can be accessed on Page 16 of "The Great Isolation Activity Book" htthttps://holyspiritsps.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/The-Great-Isolation-Activity-Book-SEND_Converted.pdf	
All	Class activity to focus on positive goals for the future		**PATH – Planning Alternative Tomorrows together with Hope** For pupils who are struggling to think about a positive future. This activity helps pupils think about their aspirations and goals and how they will achieve them. How to create a PATH http://www.bctra.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/BCTRA-Handout-2-PATH-Packet.pdf Example PATH www.imaginebetter.co.nz/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/PATH.jpg
P1-S1	Class activity to build emotional wellbeing	**Wellbeing Diary** For pupils to reflect on positives in their school day. To draw or write. https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/Wellbeing-diary.pdf	
All	Activity to practice kindness	**Random Acts of Kindness** Encourage pupils to engage in random acts of kindness for others and keep a record of these just for themselves. For some ideas see https://www.theschoolrun.com/random-acts-of-kindness-for-kids	
All	Group activity to focus on positive goals for the future	**Vision Board** Encourage pupils to find images and quotes online/from magazines/that they have drawn to visualise their ideal future. Encourage them to create a poster which captures all their hopes and goals.	
P5-S6	Group activity to focus on positive goals for the future	**Bucket List** Encourage pupils to create a bucket list of all the things they want to do – support them to focus on some that will be achievable soon and some that will be longer term.	
All	Group activity to focus on positive goals for the future	**Trip of a lifetime** Encourage the pupils to plan their dream holiday. Exemplar template can be found here https://drive.google.com/file/d/1gasHX74OYHHH4hrrP5Y823FarA_TgnuI/view	

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