

Transition planning for children returning to Early Years Settings and Primary Schools

It is important that children and young people are supported to experience a successful transition back to their Early Years Setting or school, recognising that transition is a process and not a single event. Research by Hobfoll *et al.* (2007) 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:

1. **A sense of safety:** It is important that adults, children and young people feel safe upon their return to school or setting
2. **A sense of calm:** Children and young people are likely to experience a range of big feelings including both pleasant and unpleasant emotions. It is important that these feelings are normalised and that support is provided to help them manage their emotions and return to a state of calm
3. **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). They need to feel they belong to a group that is likely to experience positive outcomes and this is known as collective efficacy (Antonovsky, 1979; Benight, 2004)
4. **Social connectedness:** It is important that adults, children and young people feel they belong and have a social network which can support them within their school or other educational setting
5. **Promoting hope:** Whilst life may be difficult at the moment, it is important that adults, children and young people feel the situation will improve in the future. Staff and pupils need to be provided with reassurance and understand that in the longer term they will feel positive again

Before the children return

- Consider using the pupil view sheet provided on our website
- Provide as much information as you can about what things will be like when the children return use photos videos to share
- Provide opportunities for parents/carers to ask questions
- Identify children who might need the most support -Have virtual meetings with the parents/carers to plan these transitions
- Send a welcome back message

When the children return

- Plan the Hellos and Goodbyes
- Spend time welcoming the children back and talking about what they have been doing
- Have clear and consistent routines
- Understand that the children's development may have been affected and their emotional resilience may be affected too
- Focus on making the children feel safe and rebuilding relationships
- Allow time for the children to readjust

Promoting Belonging and Connectedness

- Jigsaw activity – it is important to recognise that we are all unique individuals, but we can also come together as a group of students, class, or year group. <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resource/t-t-9884-we-all-fit-together-class-portrait-jigsaw-puzzle>
- Worry box – Post your feelings, thoughts and questions
- Gingerbread man outline activity – Identify and label your current emotions. How does it feel? Where are these feelings? <https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resource/t2-d-008-design-your-own-gingerbread-man>

Transitions to Reception

- Link up and work closely with your new schools to plan together
- Use photos/videos of the new schools and teachers to make a transition book
- Arrange a question and answer session for the children, this can be remotely via zoom or skype.

Transitions to Year 7

- Link up with your secondary schools to plan together, this can be remotely via zoom or skype
- Encourage the children to talk about the transition and voice any questions or concerns
- Lessons based on key skills needed for secondary schools (e.g. reading timetables, using a diary, tying a tie, looking at the secondary website etc)
- Ask the children to write a letter to their new teachers to introduce themselves
- Question box to send to secondary school staff to answer- use prompt cards to record answers – see over the page.

Prompt cards

Prompt cards are useful if designed to address an individual's specific anxieties about a particular change or transition. They can be used in the upper stages of primary school through to adulthood.

Example:

If I can't find my way to class

- ▶ I will get out my map in my Filofax and try to work it out
- ▶ I will try to ask someone in my class
- ▶ I will ask a teacher
- ▶ I will ask the secretary in the school office

If I arrive late

- ▶ I will go to the school office and tell the secretary I have arrived at school
- ▶ She will mark the register
- ▶ I will go to my lesson

If I forget my homework

- ▶ I will tell my form tutor
- ▶ I will tell the subject teacher when I get to the lesson
- ▶ The teacher will tell me where to put my homework when I bring it in tomorrow

People who can help me

- ▶ Mr Davis - form tutor
- ▶ Mrs Singh - SENCO
- ▶ Miss Robbs - LSA
- ▶ Jason - mentor
- ▶ Miss Everson - secretary