

Educational Psychology Service

Wellbeing and Recovery Secondary



Parent Activity Booklet

June 2020



Returning to settings/school following Covid-19



West Berkshire
C O U N C I L

WELLBEING and RECOVERY

Returning to School following Covid-19

West Berkshire Educational Psychology Service
June 2020

Dear Parent and Carers,

Covid-19 has been a unique experience in our history which has significantly impacted on how we go about our daily lives. This document and the accompanying PowerPoint presentation are aimed to support you to support the child/children in your family/care.

These activities are drawn from a Guidance Document that was sent out to educational settings by West Berkshire Educational Psychology Service. It aimed to bring together a range of information and resources that would be helpful for staff as children and young people began returning to nurseries, schools, and other settings.

Some of the ideas and resources from the Guidance Document have now been adapted for use by parents and carers and are included here for your consideration and use.

Our hope is that these practical suggestions will make it easier for you to keep a focus on both your own wellbeing, and that of your family's, during this unprecedented time.

Wishing your child a happy and safe transition back to school,

Michelle

Dr Michelle Sancho

Service Manager: Social & Emotional Mental Health & Wellbeing and Principal
Educational Psychologist

Promoting Wellbeing and Recovery Activity Booklet

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*All these activities should be used in accordance with the current government guidance.
Please see <https://www.gov.uk/coronavirus>*

Wellbeing for Parents

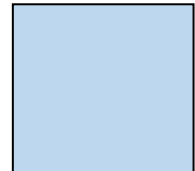
As they say on planes 'Put your own oxygen mask on first' – it's essential that parents/carers make sure they look after their own wellbeing so that they then have the capacity to help and support the wellbeing of their children.

1. Tense and Release

Starting from your head and working down your body, tense and release the muscles in different parts of your body. Try to work on just one part at a time and do each part twice before moving on to the next - first, tense the muscles in your neck and shoulders. Squeeze and tense the muscles so that they feel hot and tired (but not so much that they hurt). After a few seconds release the muscles feel them become loose, limp and relaxed. Tense and release the muscles in your neck and shoulders one more time. Now try to keep your neck and shoulders still and relaxed while you work on other parts of your body. In turn, tense and release the muscles in your back and chest, arms and hands, tummy, bottom, legs and finally your feet.

2. Square breathing

Find a square to look at or imagine one in your mind. You are going to draw an imaginary line around the square. As you draw along the top of the square, breathe in to a count of 3, as you draw down the side of the square, hold that breath for a count of 3. Along the bottom of the square breathe out to a count of 3 and then hold for 3 as you draw up the last side. Repeat ten times.



3. Maintaining wellbeing

Individual Checklist for Parents

Personal Wellbeing:

- I maintain a healthy, balanced diet and ensure I drink plenty of fluids.
- I aim to keep a regular sleep pattern
- I have thought about how to maintain a healthy work-life balance.
- I look after myself (e.g. showering and dressing, cleaning teeth).
- I take normal, healthy precautions following government guidelines.
- I keep active and try and get fresh air when I can.
- I keep in regular contact with friends and family
- I spend time doing positive things/things I enjoy doing.
- I have identified effective coping mechanisms to help manage during times of stress.
- I am aware of simple stress management techniques and can access apps to support with this.
- I have explained the situation to others so they can provide support and I know to reach out for help if needed.
- I take breaks from the news/limit myself to checking news at certain times in the day.

Practical Considerations:

- I use a range of technologies, so I am not always just looking at a screen.
- I try to discuss and share the tasks at home so that I am not doing everything (and probably feeling like I'm not doing anything well)
- I have adopted a transition routine to enter/leave the work environment.

PERMA – Questions You Can Ask Yourself to Promote Wellbeing

Positive Emotion	What's going well at present? What positive/healthy experiences can you plan to do today? (e.g. reading, music, food, games, exercise, meditation, learning, gardening etc.). What can you be grateful for today? What small act of kindness can you do for someone else today? This week? Who or what inspires you? What can you do for amusement today? How can you achieve a moment of calm? Who do you feel love for? How can that inform your behaviour today? What experience/activity/food/drink can you savour today? Do you have a pet you can spend time with?
Engagement	What absorbs you? What are your strengths? How can you use one or more of your strengths today? What can you achieve today through the exercise of one or more of your strengths? What can you explore with curiosity today? What gives you enjoyment?
Relationships	Who can you connect with today (in reality, over the telephone, online)? In what way could you make a small, positive difference to someone else? How can you show interest in another person or their work/hobbies/family etc.? How can you show kindness to, or simply be with, an animal?
Meaning	What do you see as your purpose? (This doesn't always come readily to mind for people, so don't worry if it doesn't!) How can you pursue this purpose today? What small part can you play in contributing towards something bigger (e.g. community)? What is the one thing that you can do today that the world needs? What are your values (e.g. kindness, consideration, honesty, respect, contribution)? What goals can you set for today that are informed by your values?
Accomplishment	What goal or goals, no matter how small, can you achieve today? What challenge can you take on today? How can you invest in your development today? How might you go about it? What possible options can you think of? What will you do?

4. Create a wellbeing plan

Create a support system:

- Who/what is in it?
- Small, medium and large things all count.
- How does work fit in?
- What's healthy? Unhealthy?
- What do you need more of? Who can help you?
- What else needs to be in it?

Next steps...

- Think about setting yourself a short term (a week or two), medium term (a few months) and long term goal (within a year)

5. Five Ways to Wellbeing

The following are evidence-based strategies identified to support wellbeing:

1. Connect:

Find virtual ways to spend time with family, friends and colleagues.

2. Be Active:

Plan daily exercise outside or using online videos or other indoor exercise options.

3. Take Notice:

Practise being mindful of your own body and the environment around you.

4. Learn:

If you have extra time, use this to try something new or focus learning on your role (e.g. new technology, ways of teaching) or wellbeing.

5. Give:

This could include practical support as well as offering encouragement, time and expressions of gratitude to others, could be random acts of kindness.



6. Sensory Strategies

Think about how you can use your senses to ground yourself in the present moment:

Sight: looking at something calming (e.g. bubble tube).

Sound: calming music or noises.

Touch/proprioception: deep pressure can often be calming to people.

Smell: e.g. essential oils.

Taste: e.g. having a cup of tea/hot chocolate.

References:

- Support during self-isolation - School planning document to support psychological wellbeing during Covid-19 by Hertfordshire Integrated Learning Services
- <https://www.mindkit.org.uk/5-ways-to-wellbeing/>
- www.actionforhappiness.org

Wellbeing for Children and Young People

1. Write to Heal

An opportunity for children and young people to write about how they feel, including their emotions and thoughts. Write continuously for 20 minutes. Give an opportunity to talk about their thoughts and feelings if they would like to do this.

2. Mind your 5

Help children and young people come up with different activities for each section and encourage daily practise.

Healthy Practice

This reminds you to look after your body in order to look after your brain. For example, it helps to practice a regular sleep routine or to eat a balanced diet.

Activity - Activities are very helpful for brain health. These include most sporty and physical activities, creative activities (e.g. art), calming/soothing activities (e.g. mindfulness/having a massage), and exciting activities (e.g. a new game).



Positive Thinking - How we think will influence our emotions and our actions. Some thoughts are positive and uplifting and others are negative. Negative thoughts can make us feel unhappy or anxious. The way we think is unique to each of us. Learning to manage our thoughts and get a good balance between negative and positive is very helpful.

Positive Emotions - Knowing what you feel and being able to express and manage emotions is very helpful. For example, when you watch a movie, observe what emotions this brings about in you. Talk with someone else who has also watched it and share what you experienced. See what you have in common and how you differ.

Connections - Friends, family and relationships are really important to help us feel happy. Leaving some time every day to spend a little face to face time with some or all of them can be very good for positive mental health. Tip: Connections are not only about being with others. Try and connect to nature every day – go for a walk or do some work in the garden instead of in your room.



3. Carrying a positive sense of calm in the palm of your hand

First have the young person trace their hand on a sheet of paper.

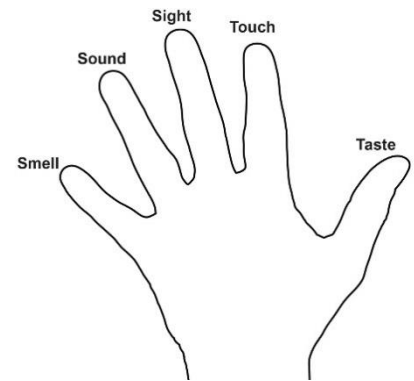
The person then thinks of a positive memory that would help them feel safe and calm to remember even in the midst of stressful and triggering situations.

Write each of the five senses (seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, and smelling) on each of the five fingers.

The young person will draw and / or write about the memory in the palm of the hand.

Encourage the individual to identify how the memory is experienced using each of the five senses on each finger and write or draw a picture for each.

Last but not least talk about how thinking of this memory can help the person feel a sense of safety and inner calmness despite outer life circumstances.



4. Take Notice

Create a 'calm' poster using magazine cut outs, drawings and words that make you feel calm and put it on your wall



5. Give

Send a note or draw a picture for someone who has helped you as a way of saying thank you.

6. Breathing activity

Strawberry cake Breathe in through the nose (smell the strawberries) and out through the mouth (blow out the candles). Saying the phrase in your head, '*smell the strawberries and blow out the candles*', will help you to take slow, controlled breaths. Now, try breathing out slowly and gently so that the candles flicker.



7. Tense and Release

Starting from your head and working down your body, tense and release the muscles in different parts of your body. Try to work on just one part at a time and do each part twice before moving on to the next. First, tense the muscles in your neck and shoulders. Squeeze and tense the muscles so that they feel hot and tired (but not so much that they hurt). After a few seconds release the muscles feel them become loose, limp and relaxed. Tense and release the muscles in your neck and shoulders one more time. Now try to keep your neck and shoulders still and relaxed while you work on other parts of your body. In turn, tense and release the muscles in your back and chest, arms and hands, tummy, bottom, legs and finally your feet.

References:

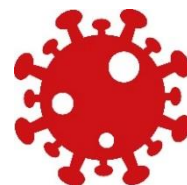
- 'Writing to Heal' by James W Pennebaker
- www.Stem4.org
- kristinamarcelli.wordpress.com

Sharing Experiences

How to Talk to Children and Young People about Covid-19

It is important to talk to children about what is happening, as not knowing can be worse. Children are also likely to ask questions during this time. Here are some tips on how to talk to them about what is happening, along with some resources to help you know what to say:

- If they are reluctant to talk, it may be best to try and **have a chat while doing an activity** (particularly if you can do it when side-by-side), like walking drawing a picture, doing the washing up or making and doing see below for ideas.
- Start by asking them about what they have heard about the virus and the situation. **Ask open** questions (e.g. “What makes you feel that way?”; “What have you heard about the virus?”, “What are your worries about this?”).
- It is important to **listen to their concerns** and **acknowledge them** without minimising them.
- If relevant, you may be able to **correct any misconceptions** that children have about the virus, but don’t say anything if you are unsure about it. Use information from trusted sources.
- **Talk about how they can help themselves** (e.g. washing hands, keeping 2m away from people, cough into tissues/their elbow). Follow government/health guidelines.
- Depending on the age of the child, you may end up having to answer the same questions a number of times. This is also completely normal, **just answer it again**.
- You should try to remember to **keep things positive and give children hope**. For example, tell children that now many people are working to make this better and that even though it is serious, everyone is doing their best to help people. Reassure them that this will pass, you’re there for them, and you will get through this together.
- It can be **helpful to explain to children that anxiety is a normal human emotion**, and a certain level of it can be helpful. You can talk about how it feels in their bodies, as not all children will know this. For example, notice the signs that they feel anxious (e.g. red face, heart beating faster, speaking faster etc.).
- **Sharing your own worries** may be helpful so that you are being open with them – don’t pretend that things are still the same. Make sure you are also clear about how you manage your feelings and try to remain calm in front of them. Don’t expect these same strategies to work for your children though.
- At the end of the discussion, **remind your children that they can have other difficult conversations with you at any time**. Remind them that you care, you’re listening and that you’re available whenever they’re feeling worried.



Key phrases

Covid-19 is a new type of virus that has been affecting people across the world. It is sometimes called Coronavirus and can affect lungs and airways but it seems to have less effect on children and young people. The symptoms are usually high fever and a cough you have not had before. Most people will recover fully without having to see a doctor. Experts in the UK and around the world are working on treatments and ways to keep everyone safe. We are doing everything we can to make sure we stay safe and well like social distancing. If someone gets ill help is available but most cases are mild and people get better at home.

Giving bad news – words and phrases to adapt

“I have something important to tell you. B is feeling X. The doctors and nurses are working really hard to help her get better and we are hoping she will get well soon.”

“I have something very sad and difficult to tell you. B died. She had X. Nurses and doctors worked hard but the illness became too strong and her body could not get better and she died.”

“Occasionally someone dies before they are old because of an accident or a serious illness and that is what has been happening for some people with Covid-19. Mostly older people have died but it is not just older people which makes it more frightening. Try to remember mostly people will die once they are very old and also that lots of people who got the Coronavirus got better.”

“Sadly X has died, everyone wishes they had not died and had lived for many more years. However, their body was not able to keep working and they have died.”

“We are healthy and we are going to try and stay that way. That is why we are washing our hands, keeping our distance from people and hardly going out to try and stop ourselves and others from getting the Coronavirus.”

Comments that help children feel held in mind

- I was thinking about what you said last night...
- I remember when you...
- Do you remember when we...
- I was wondering how you'd be feeling today after...
- I'm thinking that might be quite hard, let me know if I can help/shall have a go together?
- It's not that long before bed/I'm going to work...shall we make time to talk about this tomorrow as I really want to chat about it with you but I don't want to feel rushed
- I'm just going to....I'll come and see how you're getting on when I get back
- I'm going to leave you to finish that and I'll come back in 5 minutes



These links have advice on how to talk to children about Covid-19:

<https://www.bps.org.uk/news-and-policy/talking-children-about-coronavirus>

<https://krisepsykologi.no/what-can-we-say-to-children-about-coronavirus/>

<https://childmind.org/article/talking-to-kids-about-the-coronavirus/>

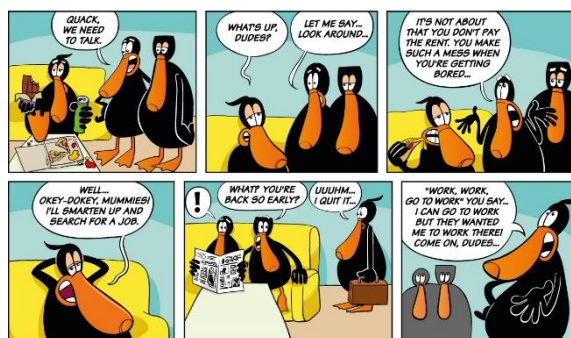
Activities to support children and young people to share experiences:

1. Poetry

Encourage children to write about their experiences of staying at home and express their feelings in relation to this.

2. Coronavirus comic strip

Creative outlets for children to put their experiences of corona virus into pictures/words.



3. Time capsules

Booklets including a range of activities for children to document their own experiences of coronavirus in a fun and creative way

4. Achievements

Work with your children to think about the achievements they have made throughout lockdown and what things they have learnt. Some questions to think about include:

- A new skill I learned was...
- Something I did which I don't always have time for was...
- Something I enjoyed was...
- Something I have learned from this is...
- Something I will continue to do is...
- Something I will remember is...

5. Ripples

Draw a series of circles like ripples when you drop something into water. The inner circle is you, the middle circle is your friends and family, the outside circle is your school or community. Draw ways in which the current situation has affected your life. It is important to reflect how problems affect you personally and how they affect others.

- How have you shown resilience to these changes? Who and what has helped you?

- Think about another person's perspective – do the ripple effect again for a family member or friend.



6. WORDLES

Wordles can be helpful in allowing young people to explore the feelings and thoughts they are experiencing - using online tools, children can generate word clouds from the text that they input. The Wordle gives more prominence to words that appear more frequently in the inputted text.

7. Photograph Montage

Create a photograph montage of lockdown experiences.

8. Thank you

Get creative and encourage children to make some artwork to show who they are grateful to through the C19 pandemic. (Could be NHS, police, food industry workers, bin men, neighbour or relative).



For more information/resources:

Poetry Competition - <https://www.potentialplusuk.org/index.php/2020/04/07/covid-19-creative-challenge-penned-in-poetry-competition/>

Comic Strip - <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/02/28/809580453/just-for-kids-a-comic-exploring-the-new-coronavirus>

Time Capsules - https://www.coventry.gov.uk/downloads/file/32470/covid-19_time_capsule

Mindfulness

‘You can’t stop the waves but you can learn to surf ‘Jon Kabat Zin

Mindfulness can help children and young people to not only manage difficulties but also to flourish. Mindfulness is about being alive and knowing it.

Parents/carers and teachers will be experiencing a similar range of emotions and responses to the coronavirus pandemic as the children and young people in the school community. Coping with a range of stressors and changes to everyday life will be shared experiences for many.

Mindfulness activities may be helpful at this time. In order to promote mindfulness, it will be important for teachers and parents to understand and be able to manage their own stress and to know what to try to avoid.

For more information:

See Psychological First Aid and 5 Ways to Wellbeing

<https://www.nctsn.org/treatments-and-practices/psychological-first-aid-and-skills-forpsychological-recovery>

<https://www.mindkit.org.uk/5-ways-to-wellbeing>

How will mindfulness activities help?

1. Using the breath to train the Mind

We use the breath to help us be mindful because it is with us wherever we go, like a good friend. The breath is a place to train the mind. Using and training our attention by using the breath, can be likened to training a puppy. When the mind wanders we can bring it back restoring a sense of control and self-efficacy.

Breathing exercises <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Uxbdx-SeOO0>

Teachstarter Activities: A range of 5/10 minute breathing exercises for all ages: <https://www.teachstarter.com/gb/blog/classroom-mindfulness-activitiesforchildren-gb/> .

2. Learning to be in the Present Moment

This is an opportunity to Pause and Be and pay attention to your body breathing and choose where to put your focus. This can be done anywhere and can be useful in many situations e.g. waiting in a line (hairdressers, doctors, dinner hall, assembly, to get into school, before an exam) .

- Stop Breathe and Think Kids: <https://www.stopbreathethink.com/kids/>
- Writing a daily Gratitude Journal

3. Grounding Ourselves when we Wobble

We all feel wobbly from time to time and more wobbly now perhaps, during this difficult and unusual time. Mindfulness can help us ground ourselves when we wobble. Wobbles can feel very different if we can be friendly to ourselves when we wobble, rather than telling ourselves off or giving ourselves a hard time. There are some mindfulness activities we can do to help ourselves when times are challenging or difficult.

- **Apps:** Smiling Mind <https://www.smilingmind.com./au/>

4. Dealing with Difficulties

Sometimes the way we think can make us **wobble** or **react**. We start to over think, get caught up in the story telling mind and start to worry. Mindfulness allows us to pause and be and see our thoughts clearly. Thoughts are NOT facts – this can be very helpful. When we observe our thoughts, we can choose not to get caught up in them or pulled away by them. If we feel ourselves pulled off balance we can use our mindfulness practice and focus on something that is here right now, such as our breath, to steady ourselves, notice what is happening and make a choice. Thereby *responding* rather than *reacting*.

Apps /audio

Free audio version of Dawn Heubner's book 'Something Bad Happened

A Kid's Guide to Coping with Events in the News (6-12 year olds)

Links

Puppy mind is a story to help young children manage their thoughts:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xd7Cr265zgc>

Headspace <https://www.headspace.com>. Offers a free trial period.

Mindfulness... ideas to try

1. Square Breath

A square breath is a breath that is even on all sides, and it can be useful as a mindfulness exercise children.

Here's what to do:

- Breathe in, to the count of four.
- Hold the breath for four seconds.
- Breathe out to the count of four.
- Wait for four seconds before taking in your next breath.
- To help children keep track, show them how to draw a square in the air with their finger, taking four seconds on each side.

2. Mindful Walking

Encourage children and young people to go on a mindful walk offering them a few simple instructions.

- Everyone should walk slowly and in silence.
- Tell them to pay attention to what they see, hear, smell and feel.



3. Mindful Colouring

You don't have to get a special mindful colouring book to practice this. Just find some colouring sheets and be quiet and present while colouring. Just pay attention to what you are doing and observe the thoughts and feelings you experience while colouring.

4. Guided Meditations

"Sit in a comfortable posture, with your spine upright and your shoulders rolled down and back. Close your eyes, if that feels comfortable for you, and just allow your breath to be natural....

As best you can, bring your attention to your breath, noticing when you are breathing in...and when you are breathing out....

See if you can notice what your breath feels like in your nose, as the air goes in your nose, and then comes out over the lips.... (pause)....

See if you can notice what your breath feels like in your chest, perhaps sensing the gentle expansion of the chest on the inhale, and the fall of the chest on the exhale.... (pause)....

You may find yourself thinking about breathing but see if you can focus on the actual physical sensations of breathing.... What does it feel like, right now, in your body as you breathe?

If you'd like, see if you can notice what your breath feels like in your belly, noticing how the belly expands as you inhale, and softens as you exhale.... (pause)....

You may also be able to notice the sensations of the breath elsewhere in your body....

For a few more moments, just try to let your attention rest on your breath, wherever YOU notice it most....

When you're ready, you can open your eyes."



5. Mindful Word

Think of a word that seems calm or soothing. This could be a word like "peace" or "love" or "peaceful" or "snowflake" or "sunlight" or "hum" or "calm." Think the word to yourself. Say it silently and slowly in your mind. Say your word to yourself with each breath you take, in and out. Keep your attention gently focused on your word. When your mind wanders, guide your attention back to your word, and keep saying it gently and slowly while you relax and breathe. Can you do this for a whole minute? Can you do it for 5 minutes?

6. Mindful Breathing

You want to pay attention to your breath in an easy way — on purpose, but not forced.

- Sit up in a comfortable way. Close your eyes.
- Notice your breathing as you inhale and exhale normally. Just pay attention to your breath as it goes in and out. Can you feel the place where the air tickles your nostrils?
- Pay attention to how the breath gently moves your body. Can you notice your belly or your chest moving as you breathe?
- Sit for a few minutes, just paying attention to your gentle breathing. See how relaxed you can feel just sitting, breathing in and out.
- When your mind starts to wander and think about something else, gently guide your attention back to your breathing.



Calming Activities

Apps:

- Calm: <https://wwwcalm.com>
- Stop Breathe and Think Kids: <https://www.stopbreathethink.com/kids/>

Links:

- Childline: <https://www.childline.org.uk/toolbox/calm.zone/>
- Movement meditation for children who find it difficult to stay still : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=buPuB4SaOzU>
- A short meditation for young children 'Be a Pond' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wf5K3pP21UQ>
- Peace Out has short stories that help younger children calm down and relax <https://bedtime.fm/peaceout>

References:

Teens Health - <https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/mindful-exercises.html>

For more information/resources go to:

Mindfulness for Teens - <http://mindfulnessforteens.com/resources/>

The Free Mindfulness Project <https://www.free.mindfulness.org/apps> is offering access to a range of apps for free.

The Free Mindfulness Resources as a Response to Covid-19

<https://www.freemindfulness.org/covid19> provides access to recurring live sessions of practice and free mindfulness –related resources

For information on introducing mindfulness to schools go to:

www.mindfulnessinschools.org - Courses include Begin – an 8 week online introduction to mindfulness course for school staff.

For the next few weeks *Mindful Schools* will be offering free live mindfulness classes for children. These might be helpful anchors to give some shape, routine and structure to the day at home or at school - <https://www.mindfulschools.org/free-online-mindfulness-class-for-kids>.

Guided Imagery

Guided Imagery could be described as a visualisation and relaxation tool. Children and young people can be inside or outside, on the floor in the living room or sitting in their room. Most children and young people respond to it immediately and others do so over time, of course, there are some who find it embarrassing/hilarious and are unable to give it a go.

These activities can simply be for relaxation but can also prompt discussion, art, drama or creative writing.

1. Waterfall of Light

Get in a comfortable position and close or lower your eyes. Focus on your breath, breathing in and out. With every breath out you become more and more relaxed. You breathe out any fears and worries, you breathe in feelings of safety and calm. Now imagine that a beautiful waterfall of white light is pouring into the top of your head. You feel it's gentle, healing energy throughout your head, pouring over your face, your chin and your neck. The waterfall of white light continues to move through your body, it moves into your chest and shoulders. It moves down your arms and hands and out through your fingertips, taking with it any stress that you had in your body. The white light pours into your stomach and your back and continues to the top of your legs. It moves down your legs, knees and calves. Now it flows through your ankles and feet and out through your toes taking any stresses or worries with it. Now you are a continuous waterfall of white light (pause). Every part of you is being filled with white light (pause), this gentle energy washes over you filling you with feelings of warmth and safety and washing away any stresses or worries (pause). Enjoy the gentle calm you feel (pause). Now I will count to ten, join with me at the count of six, open your eyes at ten, feeling relaxed, alert and calm. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten.



2. An Undersea Adventure

Get into a comfortable position where you are. Close or lower your eyes and focus your attention on your breath. (Pause). Breathe in and breathe out. (Pause) Now imagine that you are walking down the beach. It is a beautiful, sunny day, and you enjoy the sound of the sea. You feel the warmth of the sand under your feet and notice your body starts to relax. As you walk along the beach you spot a small door partly hidden in the sand, you brush the sand away with your foot and open the door. You notice a winding staircase leading down under the sand. You walk down the stairway, feeling perfectly safe, and

find yourself in a tunnel with a bright, sparkly light shining in from the tunnel's end. You walk along the tunnel until you reach a glass room with a huge bubble window. You realise that you are in a glass room under the sea. Brightly coloured fish are swimming by, you see a turtle in the distance. You notice a comfy chair if you want to sit and watch and in the corner there's a diving suit and a submarine if you want to venture out. You now have a minute of clock time equal to all the time you need to enjoy and explore the sea. (After a minute) Now it is time to return. (Pause). You walk back along the tunnel to the stairs and up through the door in the sand. You close the door and know that you can return whenever you want. You leave the beach and become aware of sitting here, fully alert and relax. I am going to count to ten. Join me at the count of six, opening your eyes at ten, feeling fully awake and alert and able to remember your experiences. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten.



3. The Circles of Power

Find a comfortable position where you are and close or lower your eyes. Focus on your breathing and notice yourself slowing breathing in and breathing out (pause). Breathing in and breathing out. Start to notice how your feet feel and imagine a circle expanding from your feet, and another one, and another one. The circles get larger and larger and you notice that you are in the circles and they are radiating from your feet and keeping your body safe. They are the circles of strength and power. You notice some of your worries and fears are on the outside of the circles and the circles of power are bouncing those worries and fears away. You notice how they disintegrate as they bounce away from you. Inside the circles you feel safe and calm. Now you have a minute of clock time equal to all the time you need to feel safe in your circle – you might watch your fears and worries be repelled; you might watch your hopes and dreams enter the circles. Now, in a moment, I will count to ten, join me at the count of six. Open your eyes at the count of ten feeling alert, calm and safe. Remember you can access your circles of power at any time. One, two, three, four, five, six, seven, eight, nine, ten.

References:

Guided Imagery inspired by Maureen Murdock's book *Spinning Inward*.

Physical Activities

1. Yoga

The Teen Yoga Foundation can be accessed here:

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCW56cm0SXozQzVH3GNn6t8A?view_as=subscriber

Or, you could try Yoga with Adriene: www.yogawithadriene.com



2. Movement Break

Roll a dice or spell your name for a brain break:

http://www.yourtherapysource.com/files/Roll_Some_Fun_Freebie2.pdf

3. Deep pressure activities

- Self-squeeze - Fold arms and hug yourself tightly. This can be used almost anywhere and combined with a Monster Face Squish and a Deep Breath, to help the child regroup after or during an alerting sensory situation. A similar effect can be gained by firmly hugging a soft toy.
- Massage - Massage is very relaxing. In school child can massage their own hands or arms, when needing to refocus. At home they may enjoy head massage, back massage etc. when needing to calm down. Ask the child what they prefer - light or heavy massage and for how long.
- Monster Faces - Raise shoulders and make a monster face. The child can use their hands to squash their cheeks or scalp. This reduces sensory overload and promotes relaxation. Use it in stressful, tight or busy spaces to gain self-regulation.
- Mini Pushes – Table push up, chair push up, and wall push off, all help to energize, focus and calm. Do them fast to alert and increase focus or do them slow to calm and steady.
- Theraputty - Provide the child with something that can be squeezed hard e.g. play dough or stress balls, which offer finger and hand resistance. This provides deep pressure and something for the child to fiddle with when required to sit for long periods.

Acknowledgements:

Deep pressure activities - thank you to Dr Plum Hutton, Educational Psychologist

Creative Activities

1. Make a coat of arms

Print out a template coat of arms (lots available on the internet) and divide the shield into different spaces. You could children to draw the following into the spaces:

- A person who is special to them
- Their favourite hobby
- Something they are really good at
- An activity they enjoy
- A treasured memory



2. Rock Painting

Collect pebbles, clean them, and paint them. They could be decorated with a theme in mind (e.g. protecting the environment, animals, and inspirational messages).



3. Origami

Go to <https://origami.me/> for lots of ideas.



4. Grateful for activity

Think about what you are grateful for today and what went well. This could be something you achieved, something you enjoyed (e.g. the sunshine) or something another person did. It can be nice to look back at these individually or as a group. You can record this in different formats for example, a gratitude diary/journal, a gratitude wall or fridge or a gratitude jar. Information on how to start one is here: <https://coffeepancakesanddreams.com/2019/04/29/how-to-start-a-gratitude-journal-for-kids-families/>

5. Watch performances online

For example, National Theatre are streaming performances:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCUDq1XzCY0NIOYVJvEMQiqw>

6. Safety activities

Ask children and young people to draw around their hand and on each finger write a different area in school where they feel safe. On their palm, ask them to write the names of adults and friends that they feel safe with.

7. Gardening

Make a recycled self-watering device:

- Remove the lid from an empty plastic bottle.
- Make a hole in the lid using sharp scissors or a palm drill (an adult may need to do this).
- Cut strips of dishwashing, absorbent cloth.
- Push one end of the cloth strip into the hole in the lid, pull half the material through.
- Cut the bottle in half (an adult may need to do this).
- Put the lid back on, coil the excess material into the 'top' half.
- Fill the 'top' half with multipurpose compost, covering the dishcloth material.
- Stand the up-turned, cut-off 'top' into the 'bottom' half of the bottle.
- Water the compost well.
- Make a hole in the centre of the compost and place your chosen plant in, press in extra compost to make it feel firm.
- Pour water into the lower part of the bottle and make sure that the absorbent cloth can reach it.

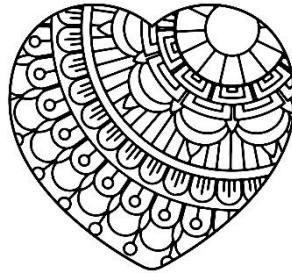
For more Resources:

<https://schoolgardening.rhs.org.uk>

Play

1. Mindfulness colouring

Colouring is an easy way to give children some time out from the busy reality of returning to school. Mindfulness colouring allows children to take some time for themselves to relax, express themselves and tune into their emotions.



2. Games

Games are a great way for reconnecting with students and create a fun and engaged mood.

Some examples for the family include:

- Pictionary
- Charades
- Taboo
- Twenty objects
- Categories
- Hang man



3. Get Creative

Encourage children to express themselves and have some fun by getting creative.

- Painting and drawing
- Collages and mosaics
- Natural art work
- Make some music
- Photography
- Poetry

4. **Get Active**

Get children active and expressing themselves through sports, drama and dance:

- Rounders
- Bench Ball
- Make up a dance
- Play musical games e.g. musical statues



Nature

1. Wandering and Exploring

Get out and exploring. All you need is an accessible landscape and a bit of curiosity. Ask children and young people to imagine they have been given a mission to learn this landscape and find all the best hiding spots, camping locations, biggest trees, waterways, etc. Some questions to think about:

- How are you going to learn this landscape?
- Where are you curious to explore?
- What parts of the land have you visited?
- What parts are still a mystery to you?
- What happens if you follow the creek upstream?
- Where might you be able to find a new berry patch to harvest?



2. Have a picnic outside

Encourage children to eat outside or even organise a walk out to a local park or woods for lunch.



3. Photographic scavenger hunt

Get out and about on a scavenger hunt and encourage creativity where the most innovative photo for each theme wins. Make this a competition within the family or between friends. For examples:

<https://www.ltl.org.uk/resources/photographic-scavenger-hunt/>



4. Nature bingo

An easy and fun outdoor game which will engage young people while also teaching them about the species of plants and animals in their local area. All you need is a list of plants and animal species that can be found in your area. Get children exploring and either taking pictures or collecting samples of the items on the bingo sheet.

5. Bio Blitz

A bio blitz is similar to a scavenger hunt except rather than starting from a specific list, your goal is simply to find as many local plant and animal species as possible. Set children the goal of exploring and collecting/photographing as many different plant and animal species as possible.

6. Sense Meditation

Get children outside and consciously focussing their attention on each of the five senses. First, spend a few minutes really listening deeply to all the sounds like bird calls, squirrels, wind in the trees, even insect noises and highway sounds. Then move on to the senses of touch, sight, smell, and even taste... relaxing all the way through and allowing the mind to become calm and quiet. Start by focussing on each sense individually, then gradually putting them altogether until the entire awareness is completely open and receptive.



7. Gardening and Planting

Gardening is a great way for children and young people to immerse themselves in nature. Get them planting herbs, flowers and vegetables or help to maintain the garden while learning about the bio diversity of the local area.



8. Natural Art Work

For more artistic children, sometimes being creative is a great way to immerse themselves in nature. Get them using natural materials to build things like medicine wheels, fairy houses and natural sculptures. Art is a great way to bypass the analytical and judgmental parts of the brain to simply allow people the freedom to connect.



References:

Learning through Landscapes - <https://www.ltl.org.uk/secondary-schools-outdoors/>

Nature Mentoring - <https://nature-mentor.com/nature-connection-activities/>

Mass Audubon - <https://www.massaudubon.org/get-outdoors/young-explorers/explore-a-sanctuary/nature-bingo>

Separation Anxiety

Young people will have spent **a lot of time at home with their parents/carers** due to schools being closed as a result of the COVID-19 outbreak. Feeling safe may have come to be associated with 'staying at home', 'social distancing' and frequent hand washing and so young people will need to **learn new ways to continue to feel safe when they return to school**.

Young people may respond to the return to school in **different** ways. The return to school may feel like a relief, or even exciting for some. However:

- It is likely that a number of young people will have worries about coming to school after such a long period of absence therefore it is important to **validate and normalise** these worries.
- Some young people may be feeling anxious at the thought of **leaving home** again; especially if they have an **underlying health condition** or are **living with someone who is shielding**.
- Some young people who **previously** had difficulty coming into school and leaving their parent or carer may find the return to school particularly challenging.
- Some young people may have experienced difficulties attending school (school non-attenders/emotional based school avoiders) prior to the COVID-19 outbreak, therefore the extended school closure and possible emotional consequences of the COVID-19 outbreak may **exacerbate their difficulties attending school**.

The following strategies and activities may help support children that are experiencing these difficulties:



1. **Create a plan** of what is going to be put in place. Set short- and long-term **targets/weekly goals**. Very important to **celebrate the achievements** and progress – regardless of how small these may be!



2. Arrange for your child to **meet a friend** at the start of the day (eg. On the walk to school).



3. **A comforting object** for the child to keep with them at school: small photo of parent/carers, bracelet for the child/adult to swap.



4. **In agreement with schools**, arrange a specific '**check-in**' time during the school day where your child is able to check in with you.



5. Very important for children and young people to be **positively encouraged** when finding things difficult. Tell your child how **proud** you are that **they were able to cope** during the school day.



6. Start the day with a **low pressure or soothing activity**, e.g. (breathing, mindfulness, colouring in, time to talk).



7. Support the young person to **manage their worry/anxiety** (please refer to the anxiety activities resource for idea/activities). It can be helpful to support them to project the anxiety onto something else (metaphorically). Is the young person able to draw the anxiety out?



8. Books can be used as part of a toolkit to support children experiencing separation anxiety (or loss and grief) and to manage worries/anxiety. For example:
What to Do When You Worry Too Much
Starving the Anxiety Gremlin: CBT Workbook

Anxiety

1. Toothbrush thought

If you give yourself a chance to think positively about yourself, you will start to behave positively. Then just sit back and notice the positive results that come from this. Take one positive thought about yourself and think about this when you brush your teeth in the morning.

For example, **“I am likeable”**

“Tessa told me I am a good listener”

“Robbie said I was his friend”

“The old lady on the bus smiled at me”

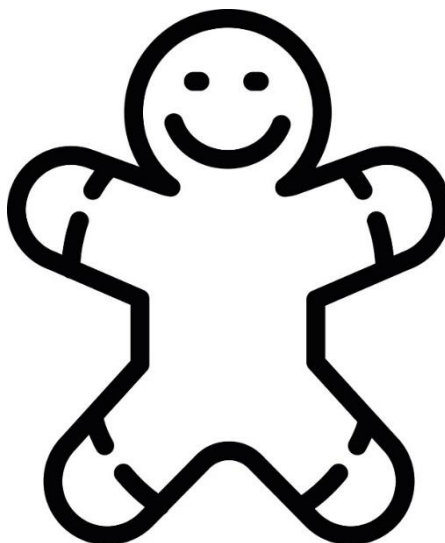
Test this thought throughout the day. When you brush your teeth at the end of the day, think of the results you’ve had from testing it.

“It’s true – people do like me”



2. Understanding Physiological symptoms of Anxiety

Draw a gingerbread person and give it a name. Get children and young people to draw/write on the person all the physical things they notice about what happens when they are worried/anxious.



3. Introduce 'clear fear' app

Within this you can create your own Safety Net which you can do without the app. How to create a Safety Net – Write down things you can do and think using the strengths that you have to keep yourself safe (for e.g. – listen to music as I know it relaxes me). Write down the people who you can contact who you know will support you (this can include GP/medical contact and some emergency contacts).

4. Grit box - from the 'clear fear' app

People who have 'grit' tend to stick to their goals despite facing problems and failures. They have courage and determination. Create a Grit box which will have in it 'Inspirational people', 'Inspirational Statements and Quotes' and 'My Positive Thoughts'.



5. Grounding exercise

Look around and identify and name 5 things you see, 4 things you feel, 3 things you hear, 2 things you smell, 1 thing you taste.

6. Practise identifying whether worry is 'real problem' worry, or 'hypothetical worry'

If you're experiencing lots of hypothetical worry, then it's important to remind yourself that your mind is not focusing on a problem that you can solve right now, and then to find ways to let the worry go and focus on something else. You might also use this tool with children if they are struggling to cope. (See the Worry Tree: <https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/the-worry-tree/>).

References:

The Growlery - <http://www.tothegrowlery.com/>

Bereavement and Loss

'Grief is not an illness. It is a normal and inevitable part of human existence.'
(Monroe in Rowling, 2003)

1 in 29 pupils aged 5 – 16 years has been bereaved of a parent or sibling
(Child Bereavement UK)

We should help to prevent children and young people from feeling lonely and being alone with their thoughts.



At any age children and young people may grieve in short bursts, moving in and out of the grief spiral or puddle jumping.

Shelley Gilbert (2004): www.griefencounter.org.uk

Immediate Bereavement Reactions

Children and young people will react differently, although common reactions are:

- **shock and disbelief**
- **dismay and protest**
- **apathy and being stunned**
- **continuation of usual activities**

The Developing Concept of Death

A child's understanding of death develops in line with cognitive skills but regardless of age always talk in straightforward age appropriate language without euphemisms. Their loved one has died and is not coming back. We would recommend the words death, died, dead rather than passed, lost, sleeping etc. We want to avoid misconceptions and hence would advise against phrases such as the dead person is a star in the sky watching over them etc. Some children may take this literally and it can be confusing and disconcerting e.g. always being watched.

Although we cannot rescue them from their feelings and experiences of grief we want them to feel as safe and secure as possible hence we would usually want to emphasise that most people die when they are very old and most people who get ill recover, we do not want children frightened anytime someone is off school or described as ill.

Children and young people of all ages may blame themselves for the death of the person so try to be explicit that it's not their fault.

The typical developmental sequence:

Below 2 years old

- The concept of death is not fully developed and yet infants can react strongly
- Death is like a temporary loss or separation
- Children can respond with protest, pining, despair and detachment.
- Children might repeatedly mention what has happened 'Nana die'
- At this age and older children may say the words but not really understand what they mean

Between 2 – 5 years

- Children are concrete thinkers so abstract explanations can add to their confusion.
- There's little concept of the permanence of death – 'When's Mummy coming back?'
- Children may cry and seek the dead person; show anger, sadness or despair
- They may be more concerned with the bodily functions after death
- A tendency to repeatedly ask functional questions as they try to make sense of it 'Will Daddy get hungry in the ground?'
- May believe they caused the death by bad behaviour and if they are good they will return

Between 5 – 10 years

- Children gradually understand death is final
- Children come to understand that death is universal and irreversible but not necessarily comprehending it is for them too
- Magical thinking and a mixture of fact and fantasy may occur e.g. ghosts, skeletons and monsters
- Denial is common and they often need concrete expressions of grief
- They may believe they caused the death by wishing it or arguing.
- Little awareness of the impact on others
- Genders may show their emotions differently in line with cultural expectations

Between 10 – 12 years

- Understanding of death becomes more abstract
- They recognise their immortality which can be frightening
- Some magical thinking may remain
- Children cope better with factual, detailed information about the death
- Often fearful they will forget the dead person (pictures/keepsakes can help)
- May understand the impact of the loss on others and postpone own grief to support them
- With parental death may assume adult roles/responsibilities
- Role of peers may be more important for support

Adolescence

- Teenagers grieve more like adults (crying, sadness, anger, depression) and have a mature concept of death
- They are influenced by the attitudes of their peer group but can feel isolated from them
- Factual information remains vital
- They may like to be more private and need more encouragement and time to express themselves
- Increased vulnerability to high risk taking

Many children and young people will find a new way of being with their normal support networks. If needed grief counselling would not be recommended when they're in they are feeling the initial shock, disbelief and numbness – generally not before 3 – 6 months.

Normal Grief Reactions

Normal bereavement can involve a wide range of responses:

distress, numbness, anxiety, guilt, sadness and longing, vivid memories, anger and acting out, confusion, withdrawal, fear, apathy, panic, preoccupation with loss, difficulties sleeping, intrusive thoughts, loss of concentration, loss of appetite

Changes in behaviour patterns are common. Children may react with regression, clinging, attention needing, bedwetting, tantrums, aggression and poor peer relationships.

A range of these reactions are commonly seen up to 2 years after a bereavement but also beyond, however, the expectation is that these reactions would gradually lessen.

What children and young people might want from you...

- Answer my questions honestly
- Help me understand what's happened
- Let me take part in saying goodbye
- Reassure me
- Let me alone
- Let me talk
- Help me remember
- Help me get back to a routine
- Be there for me
- Help me find other sources of help

Dealing with a bereavement through lock-down will have its own challenges including:

- less opportunity to say goodbye
- social isolation
- media saturation with other Covid-19 deaths
- increased fear/anger – who else is going to get the virus; why isn't there enough PPE
- lack of routine

Coping with grief in isolation

- Stay connected with friends and family
- Feel connected to nature
- Capture memories (memory box, email family and friends – silliest, kindest memory, favourite TV show)
- Express gratitude – say thanks to someone or perhaps write to the person who has died
- Prioritise self-care – exercise, eat, sleep

The Funeral

The funeral is an opportunity for a formal farewell and a concrete ritual which can help make the death a reality. Funerals are unlikely to be taking their usual format during lock-down and children are much less likely to attend. Generally speaking we would encourage children and young people to be part of the funeral as long as it has been explained to them (what it is for, what might happen, who might attend, how people might behave). Build in support for them if the main carer/s feel unable to give them the support they might need. Take photos/videos if there is a reason the children and young people cannot attend; there is only one chance to be part of the funeral.

How can children and young people still feel involved in saying goodbye if they cannot attend the funeral during Covid-19?

- Follow the Order of Service at home
- Ask for photos and or video of the service
- Is a live stream possible?
- Zoom together with other family/friends unable to attend
- Ask for keepsakes from the service, a flower or leaf to be pressed, a pebble from outside etc.
- Write or draw something to be placed by the coffin
- Be involved with choices within the ceremony – music, poem, flowers
- Write some words that an attendee can read out

Alternative goodbyes

It is never too late to hold a memorial (perhaps linked to an important date) and this might become an important ritual as the child matures. This could include:

- Visiting the grave
- Visiting a place with special memories or where you often went
- Creating your own special place
- Having your own small ceremony with music, poems, tributes
- Having a picnic with the dead person's favourite food
- Preparing something to leave in a special place, flowers, poem, a toy
- Lighting a candle

What can I do?

Encourage the young person to:

- Take a break from the news
- Have clear routines – eating and sleeping routines help us feel safe
- Plan activities so they know what they are doing that day
- Be creative, try to have fun (it's OK)
- Be healthy

When it is feasible...

- Acknowledge the loss
- Listen and re-assure, whatever's on their mind you're there to listen
- Be open, honest and realistic
- Give a clear understanding of the virus

Covid-19 is a new type of virus that has been affecting people across the world. It is sometimes called Coronavirus and can affect lungs and airways but it seems to have less effect on children and young people. The symptoms are usually high fever and a cough you have not had before. Most people will recover fully without having to see a doctor. Experts in the UK and around the world are working on treatments and ways to keep everyone safe. We are doing everything we can to make sure we stay safe and well like social distancing. If someone gets ill help is available but most cases are mild and get better at home.

Useful resources and contacts

www.winstonswish.org.uk

www.daisysdream.org.uk

www.childbereavementuk.org

For young people: www.help2makesense.org

www.hopeagain.org.uk (young people's website by Cruse)

www.actionforhappiness.org

www.themix.org.uk for young people's mental health and wellbeing

Transitions

The following activities are suggested to support with the range of transitions that may be experienced by young people as restrictions ease. These transitions may include from one school to another (i.e. year 6 to year 7), across phase stages or planned school changes (due to other factors), for example. However, all young people will experience a transition, having moved from 'normal' schooling to home education and back into school again, albeit with their new school life likely to look and feel different for some time.

It is important to remember that accessing a school environment will bring about social, sensory, academic and a range of other experiences for young people which they will need to re-accustom themselves to. Simply being around a large number of other young people and adults outside of their family home will initially take time to get used to again after the restrictions that have been in place. The activities below may be modified accordingly.

1. Saying goodbye

The speed with which restrictions were put in place meant that many young people left school abruptly, missing out on opportunities to carry out end of school activities that might be considered rites of passage, and without a proper opportunity to say goodbye. In transitioning to a new setting, it is therefore important to build in time for goodbyes and for opportunities for young people to gain closure on their previous experiences. Activities to support this may include:

Activities to support this may include:

- **Offer an opportunity for goodbyes.** If circumstances allow, children may be invited back into school to celebrate their achievements and say goodbye to their teachers and classmates. This could take a variety of formats (e.g. a leavers' disco or celebratory picnic). Plans may also be made for this to happen virtually if needed.
- It will be important to **provide opportunities for specific goodbyes** between children and key adults supporting them. For example, support children to write cards or letters to their teachers/key adults sharing positive memories about the time spent together at school. This could also be done between friendship groups/peers.
- **Wordles** are a popular way of capturing feelings and emotions: simply type in thoughts and feelings (e.g. about school life, moving on, or missing out on goodbyes) and the software creates an image containing all the inputted words that can prompt reflection as well as capturing thoughts.
www.wordle.net/create



- **Plan a creative activity** whereby children may express their feelings of moving schools and remember the positive memories created through their time at school.

2. Preparing for a new setting

As young people begin to move on, they will no doubt have questions and concerns about what their new setting or class might be like. Our support for these students to prepare for a new setting after restrictions ease should have many parallels with the support we might provide in 'ordinary' circumstances.

Activities might include:

- **Providing practical information and encouraging preparations.** Whilst restrictions are in place, children can still be encouraged to take preparatory steps, with parental support such as planning and practicing their new walk or cycle to school. Encourage children to research their new school by thinking about what new subjects they might learn and what they are most excited about.
- **Respond to worries and concerns.** Acknowledge children's worry's and concerns and reassure them that these feelings are 'normal'. Support children to manage these concerns. See Anxiety section of this booklet.
- Prepare to **establish consistent boundaries and routines.** Whilst children will need flexibility as they adjust to their new setting, it is important to be clear about boundaries and routines from the beginning. This will help children to feel safe and settled. Focus on the behaviours you would like to see, framing reminders positively (e.g. "do...." rather than "don't...").

3. Children who are vulnerable

For some children, such as those who experience autism or special educational needs, or who are growing up in care, transitions may be more challenging. Additional support may be needed to support a true understanding and anticipation of the new setting. Activities may include:

- **Social stories or photobooks** can be a useful resource for children who are more vulnerable. Photos and information should be provided alongside a narrative regarding what is going to happen. This resource should be available to children to access and come back to at their leisure, in order that they may familiarise themselves.
- **Some children may benefit from having a transitional object from home** with them in school to help manage any anxiety they have about

leaving home. This could include a photo of a parent or pet, or a small special item given to them by a family member.

- **Provide visual support and reminders** about new routines, locations, and structures. Ensure these are appropriately differentiated according to the needs of the child (e.g. using the symbol system the child is familiar with).



It is recommended that these activities are considered alongside other suggestions, for example, in terms of how to support young people with managing anxiety and wellbeing.

Further reading:

The National Autistic Society – Supporting Young People with Transitions:
<https://www.autism.org.uk/about/transition/starting-or-switching.aspx>