COVID-19

Advice for Schools:

Transition and Back to School

NYCC Educational Psychology Service*

Contents

Introduction

Research suggests that many children and young people can find the transition between schools unsettling and stressful. Following the current Public Health Crisis (COVID-19) it is likely that many children/young people will experience similar feelings when they return to school once social isolation ends, especially those who are vulnerable, have special educational needs, or are moving to a new school. The purpose of this guidance is, therefore, to provide advice on how schools can support their children/young people in managing this transition. The psychological approaches and key principles presented in this document can be flexibly applied by schools when the timescales and measures governing the return are made known.

As much as returning to school may feel like a relief, or even feel exciting for some children and young people, it is also likely to be a time when many children/young people feel worried, particularly those who have underlying health conditions or who live with someone who is shielding. Feeling safe may have come to be associated with 'staying at home', 'social distancing' and frequent hand washing and so we all need to learn new ways to continue to feel safe whilst connecting with our friends and peers and learning together back in our school setting. There will also be a transition for those pupils who have remained in school throughout and will now be working in larger groups and possibly following a more formal curriculum again. Staff can help to create classroom environments that provide reassurance, for example, how they are following the latest government and scientific guidelines, and make expectations clear about how we can all look after ourselves and each other. This may take time and it is important for us to hold on to the idea of a *transition period* as we develop new ways of learning together in the aftermath, rather than rushing or putting unnecessary pressure on ourselves or each other to 'feel or get back to normal'.

Why is Transition Important?

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

During a period of transition children and young people can experience:
- A loss of attachment to familiar people, friends, the environment and objects within that environment
- Role and identity uncertainty
- Entry into an environment that is less predictable
- A perceived loss of control
- A feeling of being de-skilled and less valued
- Uncertainty about the future

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

Key Principles of a 'Good' Transition

Whilst the current circumstances are unprecedented, schools are skilled in planning and preparing for transitions on a regular basis. The key principles of successful transitions still apply to the present situations (whether children are returning to the same class/setting before the end of the academic year or entering into a new class/setting) although the means of executing transition processes may need to look different. It is worth noting that as well as the children and young people who are transitioning to a new environment that schools should consider every pupil as a new pupil due to the amount of time that they have been absent. Schools also need to consider staff and pupils who have been in school throughout transitioning to a new way of normal working.

Effective transitions are supported by:

- ***Advance planning and preparation***
- ***Clear processes for communication***
- ***Consideration of relationships***

(The practices to support these principles are further detailed in the later sections on parents and the specific provisions to enable transition).

Planning and Preparation
- Identify information to be shared with pupils and families – what class they are going to, which staff they will be with, which pupils they will be with, what the routines will be etc.
- Plan activities/projects that can support the transition process. Ensure these are accessible to all pupils.
- Work with parents/carers to enable them to support their child/children and prepare them for a successful return to school.
- Identify the pupils who will need a more enhanced and individualised transition plan.

Clear Communication
- Ensure regular communication with parents/carers. This will help to ensure that the right information is being shared at the right time, and will help parents to feel confident in the process.
- Communicate with the pupils in an age-appropriate manner i.e. use of video messages from staff, emails, newsletters.
- Communicate regularly with all staff to make them aware of plans and any changes from the 'normal' ways of working.
- Communicate with feeder/receiving schools and ensure processes are in place for the transfer of all necessary information for those children who may be entering a new setting.
- Plan 'check-in' processes to review the settling in process and two-way feedback process with parents/carers.

Consideration of Relationships

- Plan time for pupils and staff to develop relationships and to get to know each other.
- Identify pupils who need key workers. Review who this will be, plan for how this relationship will be established/re-established.
- Consider the social relationships available to individual pupils i.e. are they with established and known friends.

Examples of good transition practices could be:

- Communication between staff and settings to find out about the pupils. This should not solely be for the purpose of sharing academic attainment but also involve personal information that is needed – such as good at sports, lost a parent, particular interest in dinosaurs etc.
- Communication about specific experiences linked to the COVID-19 outbreak, such as the loss or serious illness of close family members or friends, time in hospital, etc.
- Children and young people to be involved as much as possible so they too can share their likes and dislikes. Examples could include completion of the 'All about me' activity.
- Communication with parents/carers, not only to find out additional information but also to allow parents/carers to raise any specific concerns about recent events or ask questions.
- Schools to think how they can use technology to aid transition if it is not possible for children and young people to directly access settings. This could be in the form of virtual tours, question and answer sessions etc.
- Visual resources to be produced that can be accessed on line such as examples of dinner menus, what the uniform looks like, typical timetable etc.

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

It is important to recognise that for many children and young people, going back to school will be a welcome return. However for many children and young people, this will be a time of worry. It is important to remember that each child/young person will have had their own experience. Whilst there has been discussion in educational and psychological circles about the need for 'trauma informed practices,' it is essential to highlight that trauma is a response not an event. All staff, children, young people and families have experienced the impact of COVID-19 on their lives; not everyone will present with trauma or anxiety. A wide spectrum of emotional needs and responses should be expected.

It will take time for children/young people to re-establish and re-learn routines and expectations in schools. It will be important to respond to what children/young people have learnt, not what we expect them to have learnt, and what they may have forgotten. It could well be over-whelming and frightening to be amongst groups of children/young people and adults, especially given the concentrated time spent in the home environment because of 'lock down'. Children/young people will have become used to being with their parents and immediate family for an extended period. This will be a potential source of anxiety for young children.

We know that transition is a process and not an event. Recent research from The Sutton Trust (April 2020) reports that only 45% of students had communicated with the teachers in the past week. Further research from Oxford University (The Guardian, April 2020) states that a fifth of primary aged school children are afraid to leave the house, where older children are more concerned with their health and that of their families, reporting that two fifths of young people are worried that their friends or family will catch the virus and one fifth worried about catching it themselves.

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

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

Psychosocial Care

Research has identified five key principles that support recovery following a disaster or serious incident. These principles will be important to consider when supporting members of staff, children and young people upon their return to school.

The five principles are:
- A sense of safety: It is important that adults, children and young people feel safe upon their return to school
- A sense of calm: Children/young people are likely to experience a range of emotions including both pleasant and unpleasant emotions. It is important that these are normalised and they are given support to help them manage their emotions and return to a state of calm.
- A sense of self- and collective- efficacy: Children/young people need to feel they have some control over what is happening to them, and a belief that their actions are likely to lead to generally positive outcomes. They need to feel they belong to a group that is likely to experience positive outcomes. This is known as collective efficacy.
- Social connectedness: It is important that adults, children and young people feel they belong and have a social network who can support them within the educational setting.
- Promoting hope: Whilst things may feel difficult at the moment, it is important that adults, children and young people feel things will get better and work out in future. They need to be provided with reassurance, and understand that in the long term they will feel positive again.

The five key principles will be discussed in more detail:

1. Creating a sense of safety

Many adults, children and young people will be worried about returning to school and be feeling unsafe about being in such close proximity to others again. There has been extensive media coverage around increasing hygiene and social distancing practices and children and young people will be aware of this. It is therefore vital that schools create an environment where all members can feel a sense of safety and able to cope with their emotions. The following can help to promote a sense of safety in school:

- **A clear structure and expectations for everyone**; staff, pupils, parents/carers and visitors

- **Continue with routine activities**

- **Be explicit about physical safety;** the location of rooms, people and activities. Be clear about when and where lessons and meetings will happen and whom pupils can speak to if they are uncertain or need to talk

- **Use transitional objects to support the children to feel safer**. This can help pupils to feel connected to someone who cares about them whilst in school

- **Offer kindness and comfort**, ask pupils what you can do to help them and give information

- **Provide a safe place to talk and distraction activities** if pupils are not able to talk

- **Keep pupils involved and included.** Give children and young people a voice

- **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

- **Watch and listen.** Behaviour is a form of communication and careful observation can help the adults to understand how the pupil might be feeling, particularly when the child or young person has not yet developed the vocabulary or language skills to express themselves clearly. Be curious about what the child's behaviour might mean

2. Promoting a sense of calm

Many children and families will be feeling anxious about the transition back to school once the social distancing regulations around COVID-19 are relaxed. Supporting children, young people and parents/carers with these anxieties will be important for successful transitions. You may wish to consider the following:

Before the children/young people return:

- **Offer pupils a virtual tour** of their classroom and school

- **Introduce staff using video technology** to prepare pupils for the school environment. Offer virtual question and answer sessions

- **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

- **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

- **Offer affirmation messages**, e.g. 'we look forward to meeting you' and 'our priority is to keep you safe'

- **Signpost parents/carers to resources** which they can use at home with their children to reduce potential anxieties

When the children/young people return:

- **Spend time welcoming the children and young people back to school** and build in time for discussions about their thoughts and feelings

- **Make use of emotion regulation strategies** in the classroom such as calm corners, regulation stations and relaxation resources

- **Model emotion regulation** and how to stay calm. Co-regulation is important. Hold whole-class sessions, such as mindfulness exercises and ensure that all staff take part

- **Provide additional pastoral care** 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

- **Promote frequent check-ins** within small groups throughout the week

3. Promoting self and collective efficacy

During the COVID-19 crisis, many children and young people may feel a lack of control over what has happened to them, and may doubt the impact their own actions can have. It is therefore important that a sense of self-efficacy is developed on their return to the educational setting. This can be promoted in the following ways:

- **Provide children and young people with responsibilities** such as specific jobs or tasks

- **Work with children and young people to set targets and goals**

- **Help children and young people to regulate their emotions** (see above) thus feeling they are in control of and can manage any unpleasant feelings they may experience

- **Teach children and young people problem-solving skills** which they can apply when facing difficult situations or when trying to overcome a problem. This could include using 'Steps to my Goal' or 'Exploring Solutions to Difficult Situations'. Help children and young people to recall times when they have coped with change in the past

- **Use cognitive behavioural approaches** to help children and young people recognise the link between their thoughts, emotions and behaviours. Carefully challenge unhelpful thoughts which may be impacting on their feelings and behaviours

- **Create a sense of community within the classroom**. This can be achieved through involving pupils in the planning and implementation of activities, and social activities that create a sense of belonging. Communal language such as 'our school' or 'our project' is also helpful

- **Obtain the voice of children and young people** in the school, and identify what they feel will support them within the school environment

4. Promoting social connectedness

Reinforcing connectedness to the school and peers will be crucial for the pupils during this period of transition, and will enhance their enjoyment and genuine connection to the school community. Facilitating a sense of connectedness in school where pupils feel they are genuinely cared about, wanted, listened to and supported can positively impact on their engagement, achievement and emotional wellbeing (Keay, Lang and Frederickson, 2015).

Many children and young people are likely to have been in contact via social media, however, most will have experienced a range of losses including close contact with friends, school-based and recreational activities and connections with many other people. Schools can promote social connectedness in the following ways:

- **Provide peer to peer programmes:** to help the pupils reach out to each other and facilitate connections, e.g. buddy and befriending schemes which can support children to build friendships and a sense of belonging

- **Use Circle Time or Tutor periods:** to promote a collective understanding of how to support each other and encourage small acts of kindness

- **Build relationships or reconnections with key adults**: for some children and young people, it may be beneficial to assign staff to help support them in school. This aims to establish trust and rapport and promotes a feeling of safety and being supported through this transitional period. Ensure that staff who are supporting the most vulnerable children and young people in school are emotionally stable and resilient

- **Social connectedness programmes:** develop the use of areas in school to increase interaction among pupils and staff. This could involve facilitating discussions on various health and mental health related topics pertinent to the crisis

- **Engage pupils in extracurricular / out of school activities:** activities and games could be implemented with flexibility around school hours in order to re-establish relationships with both peers and school staff

- **Support pupils through peer conflicts:** relational approaches that are supportive rather than punitive would benefit both staff and pupils' understanding of emotions and possible causes for challenging behaviour. This could include the use of Restorative Approaches

- **Model the behaviour you want to see in others:** on return to school, it is important for staff members to model a sense of community to support children to develop and maintain attachments. Using communal language such as 'our school', 'our project' will help to develop a feeling of social connectedness

5. Promoting a sense of hope

'Active hope' is a practice, it is something we *do* not something we *have* as a personality trait. Recovering from the COVID-19 crisis is an opportunity like no other to engage the whole school community in thinking about what really matters. 'Are we the same or have we changed?' and 'What matters most to us now and how do we live with that?' (Meredith, 2020). 'Active hope' is rooted in our ability to create and sustain resiliency, first in ourselves and then for the children and young people in our schools and communities. It is founded on principles of Relational Practice, rooted in hope.

- **Adults need to create protective factors** in the school environment as their pupils return and they need to build them intentionally

- **Resilience is influenced by the relationships and connections between staff** at all levels within the organisation. The school environment is one of hope when it moves from being reactive to being responsive (McKnight, 2020)

# Psychological Theories and Principles Underpinning Guidance

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

Attachment

The principles of attachment (relationships with others) are key in thinking about and supporting transition. For some children and young people, they have healthy and secure attachments with their parents/caregivers, meaning that they might have no/little issue separating from parents to return to school, despite being in their care for an extended period of time. We know that transition can prove to be difficult, even when children have secure and stable 'backgrounds', reinforcing the need to use attachment informed principles, universally, for all students. Additionally, the uncertainty of the coronavirus and the impact that this has had, such as routines being disrupted and/or family members being ill, may cause anxiety for children upon their return to school. An attachment (emotional/relational) informed approach will also ensure that provision is appropriate for those children whose attachments may have been 'disrupted', so are not secure.

It is important that relationships with staff are re-established for all children. The school setting, as well as the adults that care for children and young people, need to be safe and secure bases, in order for them to be emotionally able and ready to learn. The following diagram demonstrates the importance of schools being a safe base and how this can be achieved:

The Secure Base model
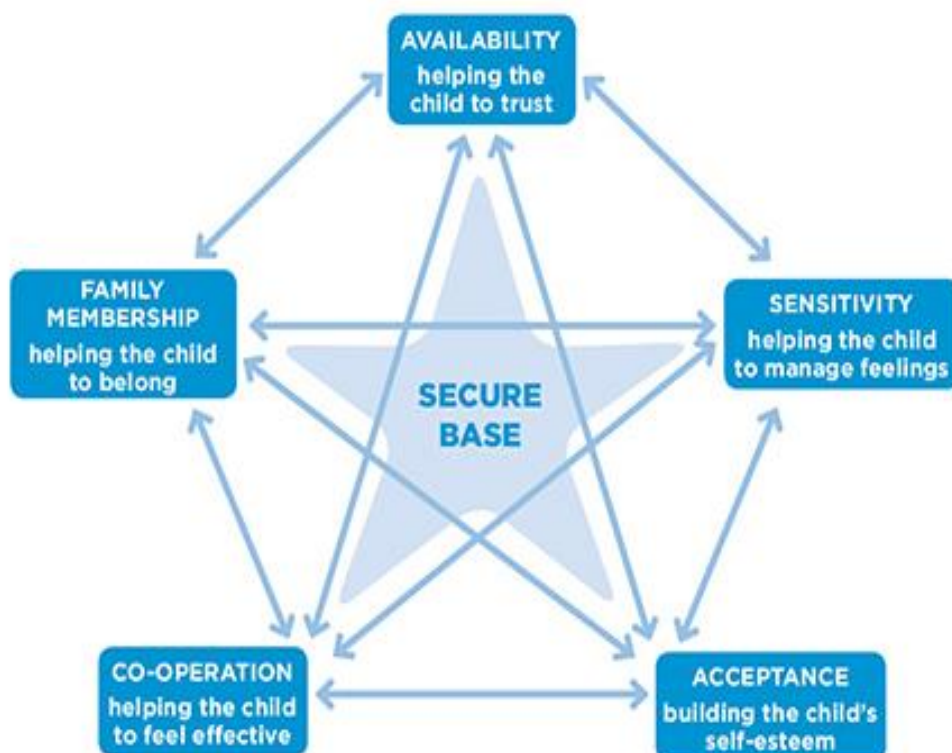
Children and young people need experiences of being and feeling calm; believe that they are lovable and are loved; that others want to connect and interact with them; that others are interested in them and their thoughts/ideas; that they can be curious and make mistakes; that they are safe and that they can trust others to meet their needs.

Key principles from attachment literature, which promotes positive attachments (relationships) include (but are not limited to);

- Staff to welcome and reassure children/young people to ensure and sustain connections with them.
- Tuning in to them and their feelings; acknowledging behaviours, as a form of communication and 'wondering aloud' to translate behaviours to understand their emotional need.
- Communicate empathy with them and acknowledge that for some children/young people, the impact of the coronavirus has been difficult (as it likely has been for staff).
- Differentiating the way we interact with them – be explicit about what they need to do, in order to carefully re-assert and remind them of boundaries and expectations.
- Ensure that they know what is happening and how the environments that they knew and were familiar with have changed (depending on social distancing measures being stipulated)

(Bomber, L.M., 2007)

For children/young people, where there are known social care needs or for whom staff have particular concerns about relationships with family members or staff, specific planning may appropriate with regards to provision, such as identification of a key adult to provide wrap around care to aid the transition or ELSA involvement.

Refer to Appendix 2 for further information on this approach.

PACE Model

PACE can be used by adults to validate, explore and understand children's feelings. It is an approach which limits shame, promotes compassion and brings a sense of mutual support, strength and resilience. When an adult spends time with a child and demonstrates an interest in their inner life, they contain and regulate the child/young person's emotions so that they can learn to do this themselves.

PACE stands for Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity and Empathy.

| Playfulness	Acceptance	Curiosity	Empathy
An open, ready, calm, relaxed and engaged attitude	Unconditionally accepting a child makes them feel secure, safe and loved	Without judgement children become aware of their inner life	A sense of compassion for the child and their feelings

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

Nurture Approach Principles

Nurture Approach principles derive from Marjorie Boxall's (1969) work on Nurture Groups which are defined as an, "in-school, teacher-led psychosocial intervention of groups of less than 12 students that effectively replace missing or distorted early nurturing experiences for both children and young adults; they achieve this by immersing students in an accepting and warm environment which helps develop positive relationships with both teachers and peers" (Nurture Group Network, 2017). The underlying features of Nurture Groups are derived from 6 core principles:

(Colley, 2009)
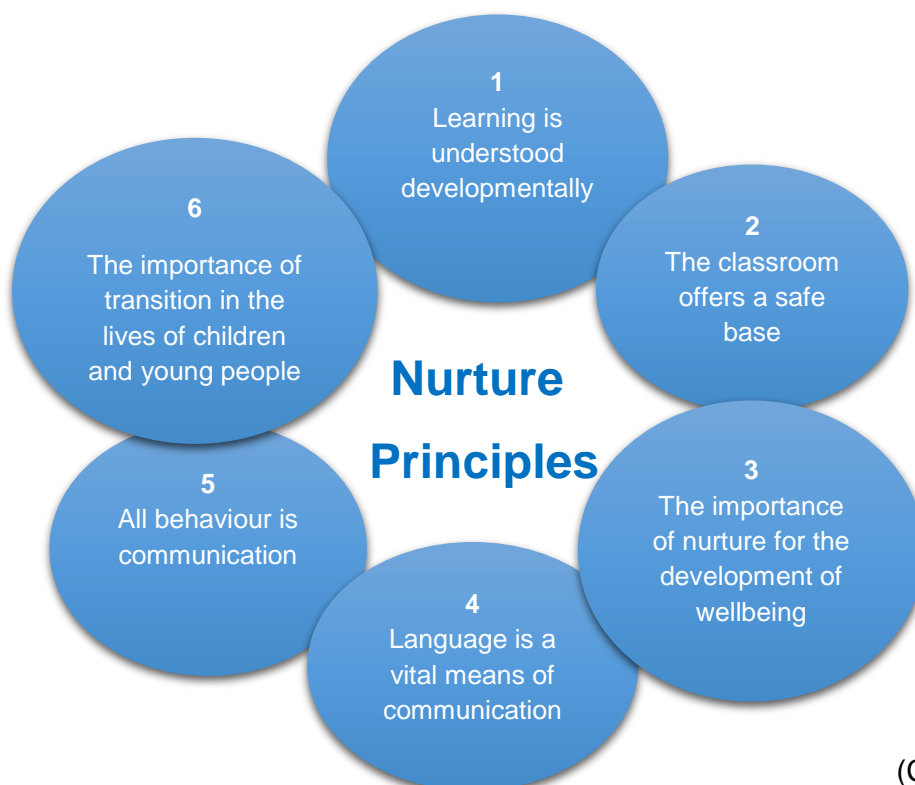
These principles of adapting a nurturing approach can also be implemented within a classroom, such as providing children/young people a feeling of being safe and secure, as well as thinking that the transition back to school may be a difficult move for some children/young people and a range of activities to meet their emotional and social interaction needs should be foremost to ensure that they are ready to learn when the focus moves to a more formal curriculum. However, first and foremost, nurturing principles focus on having the child or young person form attachments to loving and caring adults at school who can provide support giving clear structures and boundaries, responding to their need. A whole school approach is more likely to have a positive impact on both staff and pupils.

Resilience

Resiliency can be described as "a person's capacity to handle environmental difficulties, demands and high pressure without experiencing negative effects" (Kinman and Grant, 2011). Resilience is not a trait. Resilience is a capacity that involves behaviours, thoughts, and actions that can be learned by and developed in anyone. Being resilient involves tapping into your resources, such as personal strengths and the support of others. Luthar & Cicchetti (2000) argue that resilience should be seen as a dynamic process that involves interactions between individuals and their environment and not as something that represents a personal characteristic. Therefore, resilience is learnable and teachable. As we learn we increase the range of strategies available to us during hard times.

Adapted from the book *Resiliency in Schools: Making It Happen for Students and Educators* by Nan Henderson and Mike Milstein, published by Corvin Press, Thoussand Oaks, CA (1996)

One way of promoting resilience in school is to use the Resiliency Wheel which identifies six major approaches to promoting resilience along with specific strategies. Research shows that these six factors are critical factors in fostering resiliency. The Resiliency wheel can be used in building resiliency in individuals, groups or within a whole school approach.

Again, the wheel shows the importance of establishing positive relationships to feel safe and connected. The reason why 'provide caring and support' part of the wheel is highlighted is that is because it is the most critical element to develop resilience. It can be argued that it is impossible to overcome adversity without the presence of a caring person. This does not have to be family, having a caring person in your life is critical for support and consequently academic success.

Mindfulness

Mindfulness is not an abstract or remote body of knowledge, like physics or history. It's more of a practical skill, like being able to ride a bike or play the piano. Mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we're doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what's going on around us. This can be difficult when other thoughts come into our mind, especially if we are worried about something. It helps children and young people to regulate their emotions and focus their attention as well as developing their resilience. Furthermore, it can open a channel of discussion with adults for discussing any thoughts worries and concerns.

Emotion Coaching

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

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

The impact of emotion coaching means that children and young people:
- Achieve more academically in school
- Are more popular
- Have fewer behavioural problems
- Have fewer infectious illnesses
- Are more emotionally stable
- Are more resilient   (Gottman, J, 1997)

Growth Mindset

A Growth Mindset refers to the belief that abilities and knowledge are not fixed and that with effort, experience and support, we can achieve growth. In contrast, those who have a fixed mindset are of the view that their qualities are "carved in stone" and are unchangeable.

Research has shown that when children/young people have a growth mindset they more willing to take on challenging tasks, focus on learning goals and able to rebound more easily from failures.
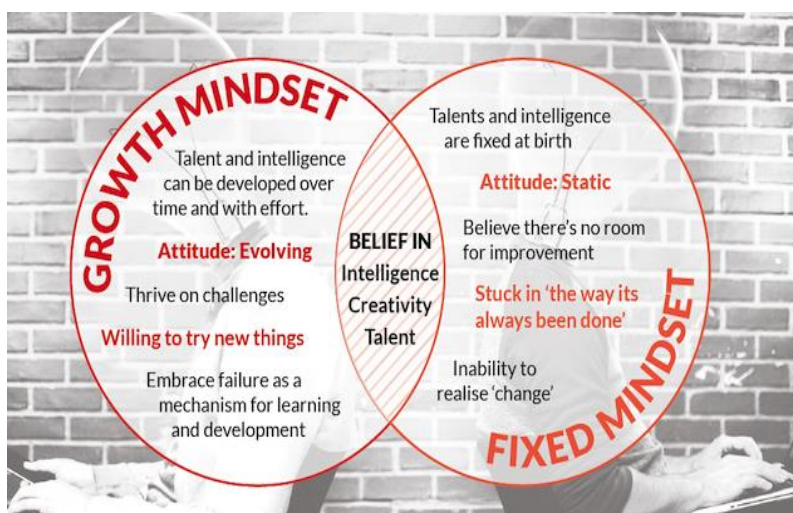
The Growth Mindset will be important and useful for staff to foster when children/young people return to school. It is highly likely that they will feel overwhelmed with academic work, following the unexpected break from school, despite home learning. As such, the key messages and strategies that we can take from the Growth Mindset will reassure and support them that the difficulties that they experience now can be mastered. The power of the word 'yet' is a quick and easy way to promote a Growth Mindset. For example, "you cannot do that maths question *yet* but you will get there".

The Growth Mindset complements and promotes resilience, as well as enables trusting relationships with staff to form a holistic approach to supporting children and young people to adapt back into school life and their education.

<div align="right">(Dweck, C. S, 2006)</div>

The Educational Psychology Service can offer further training on the above approaches, if requested, as part of their traded offer. Contact andi.henderson@northyorks.gov.uk for further details.

Identification of Specific Cohorts and Groups to be Considered

In addition to considering the processes in place to support all children and young people returning to school, there are some specific groups that may require additional planning. These children and young people include (but are not limited to) those who will be transitioning to a new school (those moving into UFS, Year 3, Year 7, Year 12), those with an identified SEND (with or without an EHCP), children in care and those who are on child protection plans.

The information below is intended to be a guide to some of strategies that may support groups where specific plans for transition are required.

a) Transition to a New School

- Create a virtual tour of the school which can be posted on the school's website. This could even be done by children/young people who are attending school (with parental permission).

- A visual resource with photos of key people/places in school. This can be sent directly to children/young people who have SEND or considered vulnerable. Again this can be posted on the school's website for all to access.

- Provide other visual resources regarding the rules and routines of the day such as pictures of the uniform, how many lessons a day, timing of lunch time etc.

- If class teacher/form tutor is identified, for them to give parents a ring and dependent upon age speak to child/young person.

- Consideration of whether class teacher/form tutor send the child/young person a letter to let them know they are thinking about them.

- School to provide a Q&A sheet for parents with key questions and answers that often are asked.

- Schools to try and gain as much information as they can about the child/young person from parents, the child, the previous school or any agencies that are currently involved with the child (Inclusive Education, EPS, CSC, CAMHS etc.)

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

b) Transition of Children from Nursery into School

The transition from nursery to full time school can be a particularly anxious time for parents/carers and children as they begin their formal education. Due to the current pandemic, typical events may not have happened to support transition. It is important to think about transition as a process rather than an event, as it will take time for both children and parents/carers to settle into the new structure. Below are some possible ideas that could be helpful.

- Place an evener stronger emphasis on consulting with parents/carers this will help to reduce their stress which can otherwise transmit to their child.

- Share information: additional questions to consider when completing/discussing your transition documentation might be: sleep, what comforts them, how they show distress etc.

- Having friends in the same class helps children adjust to the demands of the new setting. Ask parents/carers as well as staff from previous settings if any.

- Help the child to become familiar with your setting which under current circumstances could be by providing virtual photo books and/or video tours of key features of the school/classroom e.g. entrance, toilets, pegs, break out area, playground, a selection of toys/equipment available by providing these on your website.

- Relaxed/staggered starts under the current situation will be evermore important to allow the child and their parent/carer to take their time separating and to choose what the child is ready to engage in. However, parental agreement must be previously sought and accommodating of parents and their needs, such as returning to work or other commitments.

- Adopt an individualised approach to separation; be watchful and flexible to respond to the variable needs of individual children and families. These are likely to be accentuated after the pandemic. Observe attachment behaviours. Young children who are securely attached need to continue to experience an optimum level of support and nurturing care with their key adults. Children who are showing insecure or avoidant attachment behaviours need help building relationships.

- Transitional objects: understanding and appreciating the role that comforters play helps us to respond sensitively to their presence.

- Hellos and goodbyes: the time when parents/carers will need to feel most connected with and supported by practitioners, especially at this challenging time will be at the beginning and end of sessions. What parents/carers and children will need at handover transition times is the soothing presence of a sensitive practitioner who understands and empathises with them.

- Predictability and routines will be important, especially during the settling in phase without too many interruptions to sustained play or too many breaks for adult-driven tasks, such as snack times, assemblies and whole-class discussions.

- Listening to children - ask gentle questions, provide opportunity for children to voice concerns. Incorporate ideas and feelings about change and transition into their play, through story and drama, role play and in their 'small world' play.

c) Vulnerable Children (SEND, LAC, CP etc.)

There are specific groups of pupils that settings must be thinking about when planning the return to school. These include pupils who are likely to have the found the changes in routines or disruption to relationships extremely challenging, such as those with social communication needs and / social emotional and mental health needs.

These groups of students may need to have specific plans in place that take into account the support and teaching approaches that have proved effective in the past.

Advice and guidance to schools in relation to those pupils with high level learning needs can be sought from the Inclusive Education Service.

For children/young people who have (or continue to experience) disruptions in their home life and events which have impacted well-being, such as those in the care system or who have Child in Need and Child Protection plans, they will likely require an enhanced level of planned emotional support and nurture through caring relationships to enable a successful return to school. Settings should consider developing plans jointly in liaison with services known to the child/young person and their family, ensuring regular and effective planning with families to enable a holistic and family centred approach to working.

d) Identification of Vulnerable Individuals

Identifying and supporting vulnerable children/young people will be important, and settings must recognise that these cannot be assumed to just be the children with previously identified needs, but also some children who are considered to typically manage well.

A simple emotional well-being rating could be completed by all pupils. Based on previously identified needs, and through information shared with the setting in their communication with parents/carers (this will take into account any recent events, experiences of loss, identified worries about returning to school), settings may consider 'RAG (Red, Amber, Green) rating' pupils to identify the level of support that may be needed to facilitate a successful return to school.

The emotional needs of some children/young people may become more apparent once they are back in the school setting. It is therefore important that staff continue to monitor pupils, showing sensitivity to the signs that they need to be supported in a different or enhanced way. It may be helpful to continue to use a RAG rating system over the period of a term following the return to school, making adjustments to the level of emotional and social support in place as required.

It is also important that settings take into consideration children/young people who may not be returning into school at this time. It is possible that on-going shielding and social distancing measures, may prevent some pupils returning at this time. There are also children/young people who are currently placed at alternative provisions. Settings must plan as to how to remain connected to those pupils and consider their emotional and relationships needs.

Advice for Parents/Carers

The return to school will also be a time of significant change for many parents and carers. For most, they have been at home with their children for an extended period, and the parents/carers themselves may have worries about the return to school.

They may have concerns about:
- Their child settling into a new class, or for some, a new school
- Any enduring emotional impact of recent events, including experiences of loss and bereavement
- Any lasting impact of the disruption to their child's learning and progress
- Their child being able to re-establish friendships and relationships in the class / school
- Their child's safety, particularly if they have any existing health concerns

It is important that schools and professionals appreciate the thoughts and worries of parents and carers and pro-actively seek to reduce anxieties which may transfer to the individual child/young person. We should reassure parents/carers that any feelings of worry are understandable and normal in the current circumstances.

For All Parents/Carers

- Ensure that there is effective and enhanced communication in place the lead up to any return to school. This should include contact from the pupil's new class teacher (if this has changed) and key workers (if relevant). This will enable the sharing of information on both sides, and offer parents/carers an opportunity to share information that may impact on the pupil's return to school (for example, have they experienced bereavement and loss as a result of COVID-19, have there been any changes within the family, are parents key workers etc.).
- Make parents/carers aware of all plans that are being implemented for transitions and the enhanced arrangements on offer. Explain what is different about the process of transition this year.
- If social distancing and safety measures remain in place at the point of the return to school, make sure that parents/carers know how these are being implemented in school.
- Parents/carers may appreciate information being shared with them about changes that they can prepare their child for: new staff, classroom, routines, and any changes that have occurred in school.
- Offer a key point of contact for questions and concerns. Parents/carers may have more queries than would typically be expected at a transition point.
- Once children return to school, parents/carers may continue to need an enhanced level of contact, and the space and opportunity to talk to staff about the settling in process more frequently than might typically be planned.
- Share information with parents/carers about the emotional support and provisions that will be in place for all children/young people in the weeks (and months if necessary).
- Make parents/carers aware of how any impact on learning will be addressed over the coming months.

Parents/Carers of Children Entering Reception / Year 1

For the parents/carers of children formally entering school for the first time, the current situation may result in increased worries and the possibility of separation anxiety occurring.

- Schools may consider replacing the typical 'home visits' that support transition, with virtual meetings and video calls where this is possible.
- Parents/carers are likely to find the use of virtual video tours of the setting, including points of entrance, cloakrooms etc. useful.
- Consider how you can enhance home-school communication in the initial weeks.
- Parents/carers may need greater sensitivity and flexibility in how they separate from their child at the start of the day. Work with parents/carers to make this an emotionally supportive process for them, as well as their child.
- Staff should ensure they are available to talk to parents/carers at the start and end of day. Parents/carers may need more contact, and over a longer period of time than is typically expected. This may mean that an extra member of staff is required to support classroom routines at that time in order to make key staff available.
- Resources such as 'The Invisible String' can also help parents/carers to feel connected to their child when they are separated.

Parents/Carers of Pupils Leaving the Setting (Year 6, or moving to a different setting)

- Consider how they can say 'goodbye' to parents/carers, as well as the pupils, even if this is done retrospectively.
- Let parents/carers know what information has been shared with the new school, so that they feel assured that information has been effectively shared.

Parents/Carers of Children Moving from Primary to Secondary Education (or changing settings)

- Ensure that parents/carers are given adequate and enhanced opportunity to share their views and information about their child in advance of transition.
- Personal contact (by telephone call or email) from the form tutor / head of year will likely be appreciated by most parents/carers.
- Make sure parents/carers are aware of the contact that there has been with the primary school (or previous school) so that they feel assured that information has been effectively shared.
- Share information about routines and what the first few weeks will look like.
- Make sure that parents/carers know who the key points of contact are and assure them of their readiness and availability to answer questions and talk to them.
- All of the above points may need to offer at a further enhanced level of those children/young people with identified needs and known vulnerabilities. Make sure parents/carers understand and know about the support and provisions that are being put in place (as appropriate).

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Appendixes

Appendix 1: Websites

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

NYCC Ladder of Intervention:
https://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/Resources/ladder-of-intervention/

NYCC SEMH Intervention Guidance:
https://cyps.northyorks.gov.uk/sites/default/files/SEND/Social,%20Emotional%20and%20Mental%20Health/76099_Intervention%20guidance_interactive%20final.pdf

North Yorkshire specific website that provides information to help signpost young people, families and professionals regarding mental health and wellbeing www.thegoto.org.uk

NYCC Bereavement guidance for schools to support during COVID-19 and NYCC General Bereavement guidance for schools

www.compass-uk.org

www.kooth.com

www.bps.org.uk then 'coronavirus resources' tab

www.annafreud.org

www.educationsupport.org.uk

https://youngminds.org.uk/resources/school-resources/transition-tips-for-pupils-with-send/

https://www.seainclusion.co.uk/post/the-many-problems-of-returning-to-school

https://www.education.ie/en/Schools-Colleges/Services/National-Educational-Psychological-Service-NEPS-/NEPS-Guides/Transfer-from-Primary-to-Post-primary/

https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/learning-disabilities/our-work/employment-education/moving-on-to-secondary-school/

https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/transitioning-to-secondary-school/zkc9pg8

https://childrensmentalhealthcampaign.org/resources/covid-19-resources

https://www.early-education.org.uk/attachment-and-trauma-aware

# Appendix 2: More Information Regarding Attachment and Secure Base

The Secure Base Model is a relational model which can provide a framework when thinking about how to teachers, parents and caregivers can help children and young people feel more secure, build trust and increase resilience, based on the work of Schofield and Beek (2014). It draws from 'Attachment and Resilience theory' (Schofield et.al., 2014). It is a useful frame to explore within homes and schools during this time of change and uncertainty.

This model promotes five care-giving dimensions relevant for home and school:

1. Promoting **trust** through the **availability** of a key adult.
2. Promoting **managing feelings and emotional co-regulation** through key adult **sensitivity** and attunement.
3. Promoting **self-esteem** through **acceptance**; helping build self-worth, a positive internal working model and a hopeful view of the future.
4. Promoting **autonomy** through **co-operation**; helping the child to feel effective and develop mastery.
5. Promoting **belonging** through **family and school membership**- helping the child to feel part of their school/class/community.

For further information and resources, see:

https://www.uea.ac.uk/providingasecurebase/the-secure-base model
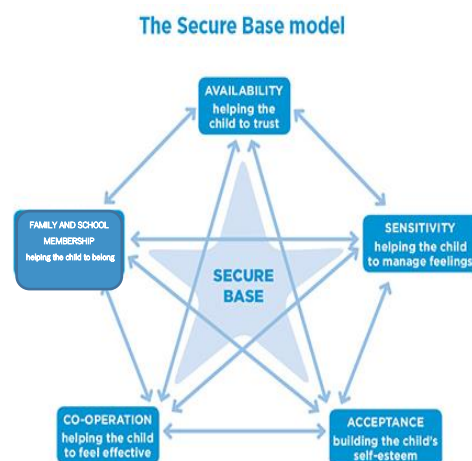
The boxes represent key **dimensions** of therapeutic caregiving and also the **benefit** that this type of interaction has for the child or young person. The model focuses on the connections and relationships that occur between children or young people and significant adults in the home and at school. It considers how those relationships can enable the child to develop competence within school, peer group and community. Through **connection** and **co-regulation** via **relationship,** children and young people have the chance to positively change their thinking and feelings about themselves.

The child or young person is able to move away from patterns of survival and disconnection, the result of trauma experience, and move towards patterns of **safety** and **connection** (Dana, 2018). This will be particularly pertinent for school staff in the days and weeks after schools reopen for more students.

The context of COVID-19 for vulnerable young person: When sense of security is threatened
When a child or young person has had felt profoundly unsure or unsafe or encountered adverse childhood experiences they can lack the sense of a 'secure base'. Therefore a further a transition, such as partially closing and reopening schools, can re-trigger the anxiety and fear they have felt before (Fursland, 2013). This can have a direct impact on their emotional wellbeing, coping skills, mental health and behavioural expression. These behavioural changes may indicate confusion and uncertainty, or underlying, ongoing distress.

Vulnerable students can include, but are not limited to:
▪ Students who are **Looked After**, **Children in Need** or subject to a **Child Protection Plan**.
▪ Students who may have encountered **Adverse Childhood Experiences** (ACEs) these can include
- Experiencing physical, emotional or sexual abuse or neglect.
- Experiencing the loss of a trusted adult from death, divorce, separation or imprisonment.
- Experiencing poverty, homelessness, or scarcity of food.
- Having a member of the household with mental health issues.
- Being in the vicinity of domestic violence
- Being in a household where a member is experiencing substance or drug misuse.
- Experiencing childhood sexual exploitation.

▪ Students who have been **shielding** during the pandemic as a result of underlying health conditions, and siblings of those who have been shielding, whose experience of lockdown will have been even more restricted.
▪ Students with existing **Social, Emotional and Mental Health** needs (some might have EHCPs that identify this as an area of special educational need that requires intensive support).
▪ Students with other known **Special Educational Needs or Disabilities**.
▪ Students who came under **Refugee and/or Asylum Seeker** status who may have previous experiences of trauma.
▪ **Young carers.**
▪ Students with **gender identity issues.**
▪ Students in the **LGBTQ community**.
▪ Children living in **poverty**.

Vulnerable students may display signs of insecurity or perception of threat through their behaviour. School staff and care-givers may need to be alert, looking for behavioural changes. Patterns may emerge within behaviours which may help school staff and care-givers to plan support. For a child or young person who has encountered an adverse childhood experience a relational approach will be the most effective since we learn emotional regulation through positive and warm nurturing relationships (Cozolino, 2013). A differentiated behavioural approach based on connection, attunement and relationship can empower the child or young person to develop their coping skills (Gus et.al., 2017).

During this period children or young people <u>may</u> have experienced:
- Loss of attachments to familiar people and friends or bereavement;
- Placement breakdown, or multiple moves of placement;
- Feelings of anxiety, frustration, depression, sleep disturbances, or eating difficulties, powerlessness or low self-worth/self-confidence.
- Scarcity of basic living requirements including food.
- Feeling unsafe or insecure about their current situation.
- Loss of hope in the future and low readiness for learning.

Developing a Secure Base

Psychologists who follow Attachment theory consider that it is the Internalising a Secure Base over time provides children and young with the security needed for to explore the world (Sunderland, 2010). Research by Hobfoll et al. (2007) identifies five key principles that support recovery following a disaster or serious incident. These are promoting: **1) a sense of safety, 2) calming, 3) a sense of self– and community efficacy, 4) connectedness, and 5) hope.**

Below is a helpful table showing how care-givers and school staff can give practical help and support in each of these five areas based on the Secure Base Model.

5 Key Principles of Recovery following a disaster or serious incident (Hobfoll et al., 2007)	Secure Base Model & ideas for practice. This can include ideas for inside and outside of school
1. **Promoting a sense of safety:** It is important that adults, children and young people feel safe upon their return to school. The perception of the child/young person is more important than the reality (Porges, 2014) i.e. they need to feel safe. So checks may need to be made about individual perception.	**Key adult and school staff AVAILABILITY promotes trust and feelings of safety:** • Virtual pre meetings to plan / virtual tours / affirmation messages / welcome the child / be delighted that they are coming • Structure and routines aid predictability. Create a predictable consistent environment. Be aware of the Physical environment sensory overload? Emotional environment • Be explicit about safety: physical spaces / key adults / points of connection • Availability – supporting trust. Have safe place to talk. • Who can they go to talk to? • Transitional objects • What you can expect of us / expect of them / do it together • Provide frequent 'check ins' for those who need it in the week / day, adjust as needed
2. **Promote calming:** 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 <u>normalised</u> (It is ok not to feel ok) and that support is provided to help them manage their emotions and return to a state of calm	**Key adult and school Staff SENSITIVITY promotes calm through the management of feelings** • Be aware of your own emotions and self-regulate before co-regulating • Use an authoritative (high warmth - high guidance) and be flexible. Relationships and connection are the most powerful in behaviour change • Support young people to manage difficult feelings. Normalise difficult emotion • Regular re-set activities / calming activities / Practise useful coping mechanisms to develop skills / have resources / activities ready / you are likely to need regulation stations / spaces / mindfulness / sensory regulation / exercises • Name the worry to tame it. Emotion Coaching. Wondering out loud, I wonder if you might be feeling… • Discrete pockets of worry time – make an appointment to worry and only in that time • List it / write it / draw it / share it

		• Mood journaling / what would make a difference?
3.	**Promoting a sense of mastery and collective- efficacy:** Children/young people 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)	**Effective COOPERATION between care-givers, school staff and young people promotes feelings of autonomy and efficacy** Learning environment • Some young people may feel threatened by the learning environment / loss of confidence have opportunities to make shared goals, ensure some success • Share it – notice any 'worry signs' talk about / other activities • Box it – Put the worry in a box for an appointment later • Shout it (Regulation – squeezing, stamping, jumping jacks, music what works for that young person) • Teach problem solving skills / growth mind set • Build in regular timetabled 're-sets' as well as in response to dysregulation. It can be part of a routine Mastery and Acceptance • Encourage activities responsibilities which promote a sense of competence / confidence. Allow some degree of control / limited choice for self-efficacy Promote opportunities for the child or young person to experience success and help them to work out ways they can put these skills to use in other areas of their learning and life. Sometimes they will need help to make the connections and generalise the skills. • Some young people during Covid-19 will have stepped into an adult / caring role. Recognise their capability, while protecting their need to be Psychologically contained by you • Some young people may respond to 'adult to adult' talk and logic
4.	**Promoting connectedness:** It is important that adults, children and young people feel they belong and have a social network which can support them within their educational setting. Research indicates that good peer connections across transitions are connected with better: attainment, regulation and MH outcomes (Knight et.al., 2018). Belonging and academic behavioural engagement are predictive of transition success (Evangelou et al., 2008). Enjoyment and connectedness to school are insulating factors which protect against MH difficulties & improve learning performance (Roffey).	**Class/group/family MEMBERSHIP promotes a sense of belonging and connectedness.** When someone doesn't feel safe, it can interrupt the circuitry of safe connection and take the person into patterns of defence e.g. refusing to engage. However, we are wired for connection but need to feel safe in our bodies, environments and relationship to others in order to do this (Dana, 2018). • Explicit recognition of individual strengths and valuing of the individual linked to values of the family/organisation. Caring, kindness and generosity need to be recognised. • Peer support schemes e.g. Circle of Friends/peer mentoring • Buddy/Peer listening schemes • Tutor Circle time activities to promote understanding of 'how to, 'support each other • Use social connectedness programmes e.g. debates on MH between students / staff • Engagement in out of school activities to re-establish relationships

Perceiving older children to be friendly and social problem solving skills are both correlated with good transitions. (Rice, et al., 2015)	• Group support to develop problem solving relationship skills • Use communal language 'our school', 'our class,' 'we', 'together'
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	**ACCEPTANCE of the child or young person, and the situation that they are in, can help promote SELF-ESTEEM and a more hopeful view of the future.** Character strengths: Everyone has strengths capacity homes and dreams, but they may have been lost during this period. Helping to remind the child or young person of their character strengths. These might include some of those in the diagram below: Deliberately focus on positive future plans, hopes and dreams: 'Active hope,' is rooted in an ability to sustain and create resiliency. The school environment is one of hope when it moves from being reactive to responsive (Michael McKnight, 2020), for example when it actively chooses to focuses on the strengths, capacities and future hopes of staff and pupils. Steve de Shazer (2007) also refers to 'future pull,' as being useful, to draw you towards a preferred future.

Reflective Practice
When considering the Secure Base Model, teachers and caregivers may frequently need to pause and reflect on what the young person is thinking and feeling about themselves and others, and adjust their approach in line with this. This may lead them to use more attuned, reflective, practices such as Emotion Coaching or Restorative Practice or other empathetic, non-judgmental approaches. These approaches are more likely to be effective because they are specifically targeted to changing the child or young person's thinking and feeling in a positive direction (Schofield, 2014). Thought should also be given to supporting and fostering reflection and self-awareness in the child or young person.

The Secure Based Model reflects a dynamic process, requiring frequent reflection and review. Interventions may need to be changed, adjusted or modified as situations, individuals and relationships change.
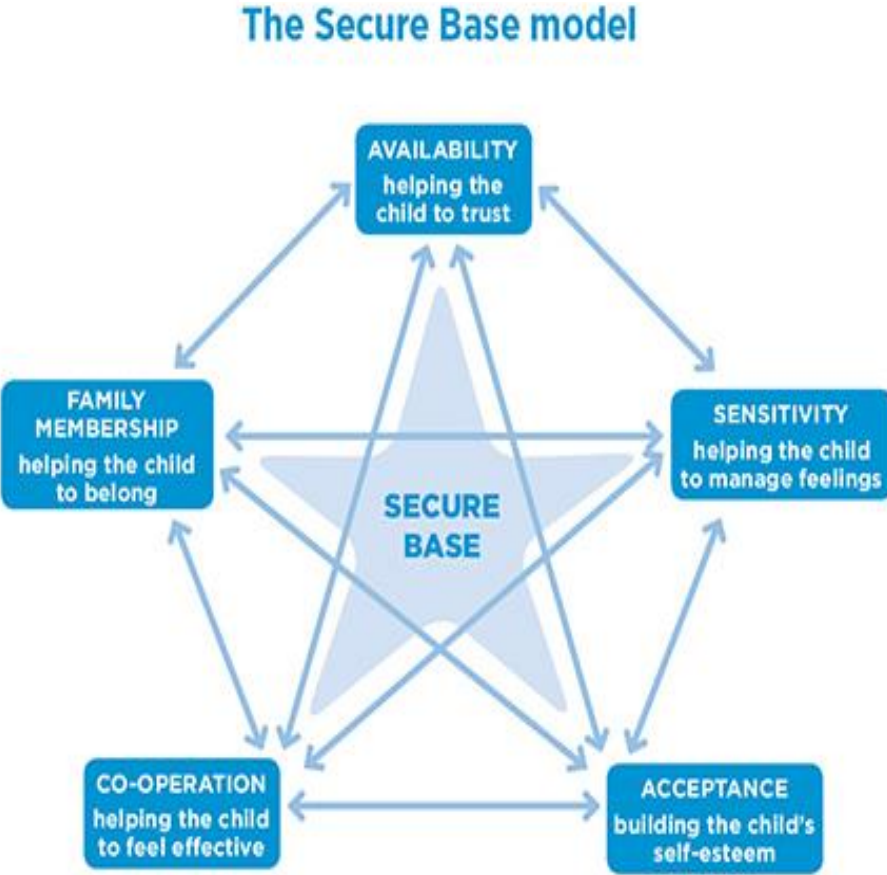
The Secure Base Model
Assessment and Planning Tool

What is working well/ evidence/people involved

Actions/ by whom/ when

Areas to develop

Planning next steps / people involved / activities

The Secure Base model

AVAILABILITY
helping the child to trust

SENSITIVITY
helping the child to manage feelings

SECURE BASE

FAMILY MEMBERSHIP
helping the child to belong

ACCEPTANCE
building the child's self-esteem

CO-OPERATION
helping the child to feel effective

Appendix 3: Table of Provision

Level of Response	Teaching and Learning Strategies	Provision	Support
Universal Response	• Building Relationships • Resilience • Nurturing Principles • Mindfulness • Emotion Coaching • Trauma Informed approach • PACE model • Growth Mindset	• Acknowledge that for some children and young people, they will be frustrated by the situation and want to be back in school. • Acknowledgement that some children and young people will have experienced safeguarding issues being at home. • Priority to be given to the re-affirming of relationships between both staff and children/young people. Although there will be some learning lost, not to get straight into formal assessment. • Flexibility – a way of demonstrating that wellbeing is the first priority. • Awareness of any Key Worker children, if they have remained in school and their feelings towards others who have not been attending school. • Consideration of the day especially in the first instance to think about activities that build on relationships, feeling safe, repetition of routines and structures. This can involve Circle Time, games, welcome back assembly (re-establishing school community) to celebrate any missed birthdays, show appreciation for key workers, reinforce everyone safe and back together. • Time within the curriculum to acknowledge that everything has not just 'returned to normal' • Thought around displays in school to reflect the situation, for example things that we are sad about and things we should be happy about. • Adults to model appropriate behaviours and talk about experiences when needed. • The use of visual resources to explain and reinforce routines and structures of the day. This could be via visual time tables, checklists etc…	www.boingboing.org.uk www.nurtureuk.org www.emotioncoachinguk.com https://www.annafreud.org/ https://www.camhs-resources.co.uk/coronavirus https://www.calameo.com/read/000777721945cfe5bb9cc?authid=Xu9pcOzU3TQx Books Attachment in the Classroom – Louise Bomber Inside I'm Hurting – Louise Bomber Everybody worries – a picture book for children https://www.calameo.com/read/000777721945cfe5bb9cc?authid=Xu9pcOzU3TQx

		• Clear and consistent rules and routines expressed – re-teach these. • Use of social stories. • Repetition and reminders that are supportive rather than assertive. • The use of positive praise at all levels. • Staff to not directly question children/young people on what work they may or may not have completed at home. • Children/young people who have completed home working to be praised privately. • Parents/carers to be included in plans of the school with opportunities for parents/carers to share if their child has experienced any difficulties during the lockdown (e.g. emotional, bereavement, illness). • Safe spaces for children/young people to talk about experiences. • Ensure pastoral support is available throughout the day and is not by timetable/appointment only. • Clear communication regarding the whereabouts of members of the school community. • Opportunities to celebrate members of the school community who have died, this could be in the form of a remembrance assembly where names could be read it of family members of children/young people, as well as celebrating the work of the NHS and key workers (in line with family wishes and only when consent from bereaved families has been sought to do this). • Opportunities to talk about feelings/emotions embedded throughout the curriculum. • Careful balance of prioritising wellbeing and also ensuring boundaries are in place, as these are safe, i.e. (it's OK to feel scared about being at school but it's not OK to hit staff). • Expect 'behaviours' – plans in place for these.	<u>Activities</u> Hope Cloud Activity (from Young Minds website) All About Me Therapeutic Story – The Little Elf Growth Mindset – Big Life Journal Well-being rating scales/Daily emotion 'check ins' (i.e. placing name on chart to show how children are feeling). <u>Other</u> Loss and Bereavement Guidance produced by NYCC EPS NYCC Bereavement guidance for schools to support during COVID-19 and NYCC General Bereavement guidance for schools NYCC Ladder of Intervention https://www.safeguardingchildren.co.uk/Resources/ladder-of-intervention/

		• Gradual approach to reintroducing academic demands. Children and young people have to be emotionally ready before they can learn. • Staff wellbeing also a priority – "need to feel nurtured to nurture". • New rules and restrictions articulated as 'do' statements rather than 'don't' – such as 'do wash your hands'. • Use of therapeutic stories for the whole class. • Peer mentoring schemes. • The use of transitional objects to be used with younger children. • DSL to be in contact with Virtual School if support needed.	
Targeted School Response	• Building Relationships • Resilience • Nurturing Principles • Mindfulness • Emotion Coaching • ELSA	All of the above and: • A number of adults being 'available' to support children/young people if and when needed. • Ensure that key members of staff such as SENCo and DSL have additional time to attend to any matters that have arisen. • Small group work, specifically targeting area of need, such as specific work around emotions, emotional regulation, bereavement… • Examples of support: ELSA, Zones of Regulation, FRIENDS, Lego Therapy, Talking Partners.	Websites www.elsanetwork.org https://www.elsa-support.co.uk/ Books The Zones of Regulation: A curriculum designed to foster self-regulation and emotional control. Activities Advice and guidance from Inclusive Education Services
Individual Targeted Response	• Building Relationships • Resilience • Nurturing Principles • Mindfulness • Emotion Coaching • ELSA • Anxiety	All of the above and; • Provide a consistent adult that a child/young person can develop a positive and trusting relationship with. • Specific targeted work with a familiar adult trained in delivering the programme. • Information gathering and action plan set out to meet needs. • Personalised timetable in the short term	Websites http://www.em-edsupport.org.uk/coronavirus-eps https://www.winstonswish.org https://www.cruse.org.uk https://www.samaritans.org

	• CBT approaches • Loss and Bereavement work	• Allocated a member of staff/key worker, in the short term to help re-adjust. • The use of both social and therapeutic stories with individuals if needed. • Some specific children/young people may experience separation anxiety from parents/carers – individual support may be needed to offer reassurance. • Some children/young people may experience specific anxiety. Looking at individual ways that they can be supported to offer reassurance, such as the use of CBT approaches. • Some children/young people may have experienced loss and bereavement and will need some additional adult support, such as an ELSA or other suitably trained adult.	https://youngminds.org.uk Books The Invisible String – Patrice Karst Think Good, Feel Good – Paul Stellard Therapeutic Stories – Margot Sunderland Starving the Anxiety Gremlin – Kate Collins-Donnelly (primary and secondary editions). Huge Bag of Worries – Virginia Ironside Conversations that Matter – Margot Sunderland What to Do When You Worry Too Much? A Kid's Guide to Anxiety - Dawn Huebner The Mindfulness Journal for Teens – Jennie Marie Battistin Activities The use of Therapeutic Stories – The little Elf http://www.em-edsupport.org.uk/coronavirus-eps

			Creation of a five point scale, for any emotion, including anxiety (Dunn Baron and Curtis).
			Hierarchy of Support
			RAG rating timetables
			Other Loss and Bereavement Guidance, produced by NYCC EPS NYCC Bereavement guidance for schools to support during COVID-19 and NYCC General Bereavement guidance for schools
Outside Agency Support	Inclusive Education EPS Compass Buzz Kooth CAMHS	To have tried all of the above strategies: • This should be done following the graduated response with the Plan, Do and Review Cycle. • Referral to Inclusive Education SPA Panel	www.compass-uk.org www.kooth.com

Appendix 4: Additional Considerations

Issues to be Aware of …	Possible Impact	Practical Activities
Everything is NOT Normal	Expectations of normality amongst pupils, staff and parents will be high	- Schools to manage expectations and uncertainty in their communication to all stakeholders. Time must be available to do this. - The ways in which school is likely to be different is considered and communicated to all prior to the return to school. - There may need to be activities and displays in school which reflect upon this time. Things that we are sad about / things that we are glad about. - Time provided within the curriculum to consider this.
Ongoing Social Distancing / Hygiene Considerations	Impact on attendance and distribution of classes within the school, as well as routines and practices. Understanding how social distancing measures might affect emotional wellbeing	- Part time attendance, spacing in the classroom, time for hygiene. - Plan, communicate in advance, and reinforce expectations consistently. - Communicate with families what measures are in place before children/young people return so they know what to expect. - Film the classrooms and make available online so children and young people can see the environmental changes before they return. - Reinforce and explain that the measures are in place to keep everyone safe.
Routines have Changed	Not just for children but for whole families. There may need to be some sympathy and understanding around this.	- Plan clear routines, share these in advance, including any phased returns. - Consider the impact of these new routines on attendance. How can families be supported/encouraged to prepare themselves for going back to school? - Communicate with them to proactively plan for those who might need additional support.
Relationships	These need to be re-established and this may be an opportunity for renewal	**PRIORTISE** Staff to focus on creating relationships with children and young people, such as, greetings, individual conversations, 'checking in', modelling and expressing calmness and warmth, emotion coaching approaches and PACE approaches. Treat all children as having attachment needs.

Gaps in Learning	Huge variation in the experiences and opportunities available to young people.	- Do not begin with formal assessment, assess knowledge more informally. Start curriculum with what children/young people know … not what you think has been taught. - Topics may be revision for some…this will not harm them. Plan additional tasks / topics for those who have covered more to enable those who haven't to catch up. Give children/young people the opportunity to share what they have learned (even if it is having watched films or played Minecraft). - Catch up intervention for those who need it.
Some Children/Young People have Remained on Site	Possible stigmatization, potential feelings that safe space is being intruded upon when all children/young people return.	Preparation of those children who have remained on site for the arrival of others. Perhaps plan a welcome back event or ask them to help with the planning and decision making about how they can welcome other children/young people back to school.
Trauma and Bereavement	Many children/young people and staff will have experienced trauma and bereavement	- Provide opportunities and encourage communication from parents / carers around child experiences. Plan information sharing. - Staff to be vigilant (update awareness training prior to schools opening). - Provide safe spaces for children/young people to talk about experiences. - Clear communication regarding the whereabouts of members of the school community. - Opportunities to celebrate members of the school community who have died.
Safeguarding	There is likely increase in safeguarding issues including those related to poverty, Domestic Violence, parental mental health, substance abuse etc.	- Ensure that training is refreshed and up to date so that staff are aware - Provide opportunity for children/young people to share experiences if needed. - Extra time and support for DSL upon re-opening to work with relevant agencies to safeguard children/young people.
Ongoing Illness Anxiety	Concerns about illness are heightened and are likely to be continually reinforced	- Balance between acknowledging the issue and managing anxiety. - Use of Social Stories. - Opportunity to teach coping skills. - Implementation of nurture and attachment principles to reassure and re-establish trusting and safe relationships.

Separation Anxiety	Children/young people (and staff) are used to being home with their families. This is particularly comforting when the world feels so unsafe. This may particularly impact where there are key workers or vulnerable people in the family.	• Clarify communication lines so that children and young people are confident that contact could be made with them at school, in case of emergency (phones as transitional objects). • Again, acknowledge feelings (Emotion Coaching / PACE) and teach coping skills.
Additional Needs, especially children/young people with ASD	Any time of change can be challenging …	• Additional preparation will be required, such as videos of any changes to the school; new routines and expectations shared in advance; additional adult support available to check in, explain, answer questions and reassure, as well as use of social stories/comic strip conversations to prepare for going back to school.
Sensory Needs	Potentially overwhelming environment for staff and children/young people. A development of fear of being around people – unused to people in their personal space.	• Consider a phased return, staggered starts and/or part time timetables. • Availability of calm spaces, ear defenders, ability to protect personal space and choose who accesses it. • Use of markers on the floor may be necessary.
Placement Transitions	Loss of 'ending' activities Loss of transition activities during the previous term.	• Online transition activities, such as virtual school tours, sharing of videos the school has (sports / concerts) photos of classrooms and teachers. Virtual meeting with class teacher if possible. • Phased starts. • Real opportunities to meet the class teacher in home environment in September. • Walks past the school. • Acquisition of uniform when this is possible.
Uniform Issues	Outgrown, not replaceable at current time, financial issues	• Not the time for strict adherence. Show flexibility and aim to return to uniform at a later date. Consider how to organise uniform swops (may need to consider washing and handling of clothes at this time).

Staff Issues	Burnout, lack of downtime, bereavement, illness, stress and anxiety, childcare issues, financial issues	- Consider how staff wellbeing has been monitored. What have their experiences been and have they been bereaved of family members/friends? - What are their current circumstances and family pressures? Are their children back at school? How can they be supported to balance work and home life? - What information do you know to help create flexibility and support for them upon their return? - Have staff had sufficient time and information to prepare for their return to work? Are expectations and plans to transition children/young people back in to school clear? - Initially, limit demands made of them, such as reducing pressures outside of the classroom (paperwork, unnecessary meetings and observations). The focus should be on relationships and supporting one another to re-adjust, rather than performance. - Ensure that they have space and time to talk not only to each other but the children and young people.
Frustration for Some Children/Young People	Some children/young people may feel frustrated that they want school to just get back to normal and feeling they have coped well with the crisis and schools being shut. Some will have developed resilience through various coping strategies and approaches.	- Acknowledgement that children/young people will respond to the situation in lots of different ways, some better than others and that this is fine. There is no shame in not coping. - Celebration of the ways in which children/young people coped and managed to keep going and feeling positive or hopeful. - Recognise and celebrate the resilience and coping seen amongst our schools, settings and families and in so doing, consider ways to connect people to share how they have coped with these times, what sources of strength and even joy they have discovered, what reserves within themselves and their communities have taken them by surprise.

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