Return to school: managing pupil wellbeing

The coronavirus outbreak may have caused significant mental health or wellbeing difficulties for some pupils. It is important to recognise that while 'getting back to normal' is important and will be reassuring for many, school staff will need to consider how to support all pupils, with additional focus for those who:

• Have found the long period at home hard to manage

• Have developed anxieties related to the virus

• The school have safeguarding concerns about

• May share safeguarding disclosures once they are back in school

To support pupils, staff may wish to provide opportunities for pupils to talk about and share their experiences. This can be done by providing:

• One-to-one conversations with trusted adults, where this may be supportive

• RSHE lessons on relevant topics including mental wellbeing, seeking help etc

• Pastoral activities that promote social recovery

Guidance for talking to pupils

• Plan to speak to every pupil on a 1:1 basis about their experiences of lockdown

• Decide who may be the best adult to speak with the child

• Give staff the tools / resources / training they may need to have the conversation

• Ensure staff working in the child's 'bubble' are aware of appropriate information about any concerns raised so they understand how best to support them.

• DSLs need an understanding of where they could refer/signpost children and families to according to the concerns or issues raised.

• Maintain contact with the families and children who are not attending school.

Providing a recovery curriculum

The purpose of the recovery curriculum is to help pupils deal with the sense of loss that they have developed over the coronavirus pandemic. The aims are to promote the safeguarding, health and happiness of your pupils through:

• Reestablishing positive peer-peer and peer-staff relationships
• Providing a safe space to process experiences and feelings
• Engendering a sense of connectedness and community

- Equipping with self-regulation strategies to manage emotions and behavioral responses
- Developing the knowledge, values and skills to support themselves and others

Resources

Use simple ways of gathering thoughts, feelings and wishes about home, returning to school, family members, events which have happened during lockdown etc. Here are some resources and tools to help facilitate this:

- Pip Wilson: Blob Back to School (Covid Edition)
- Young Minds: How many positives and Find your feet
- Norfolk County Council: Managing my moments
- Phoenix Education: Return to school resources
- NSPCC solution focused practice toolkit
- Norfolk Safeguarding Children Partnership

Reporting concerns

Ensure safeguarding information is recorded and passed to a DSL so any next steps can be undertaken swiftly. Any wishes and feelings work should be kept on the pupil file/uploaded to the electronic system for recording concerns.

Additional support

- The DfE funded wellbeing project
- Just One Norfolk: Return to school
- Safeguarding
- RSHE