

TRANSITION BACK TO SCHOOL

What we can do to psychologically support pupils, families and staff

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Balance



Pupils and families concerns

- Separation - fear of letting go
- Socialization – making friends
- Fear – anxiety related issues
- Lack of routine and continuity – school day may look very different
- Fear of catching or spreading the virus

Headteacher and school staff concerns

- Responsibility - for staff and pupils
- Fear of ill health - vulnerability
- Managing expectations - what is feasible
- Balancing work life and home life
- Looking after and being kind to yourself
- Anticipation makes anxiety worse

Be a role model



Building back a school community

- Enhancement of general teaching good practice
- Use evidence-based techniques that have been used successfully in other situations
- Encourage children to want to be at school rather than at home
- Understanding your impact on colleagues – sharing anxiety induced conversations is unlikely to help
- Avoid endless circumnavigating and discussing the news
- Demonstrate good practice to pupils and colleagues
- Acquire local knowledge each child's situation and experience of lockdown. Has there been a bereavement, family health related issues or relevant event that have taken place during lockdown.
- Plan ahead with correct safeguarding procedures in place

RESILIENCE

Definition:

- The ability to achieve full potential and development in the face of life's ordinary adversity and/or in the face of unusual or extreme adversity

How to bring this about:

- Through working on wellbeing and good general psychological health – the best source of resilience may be societally based wellbeing

The best thing for children's wellbeing is to get them back to school

POWER OF POSITIVITY

What we learned from the Thai boys trapped in the cave

- No one complained
- They remained calm
- They knew how to look after themselves
- They stayed positive and supported each other

West can learn from the East, the many benefits of understanding the temporary nature of feelings



Queen tells nation: Never give up, never despair

“At the start, the outlook seemed bleak, the end distant, the outcome uncertain. But we kept faith that the cause was right – and this belief, as my father noted in his broadcast, carried us through.

Never give up, never despair.”

What Determines Happiness



Source: Sonja Lyubomirsky, Ph.D.
University of California, Riverside

Heads Up Kids – Back 2 school programme

- **HUK Back 2 School** is a teacher-led, **universal** programme, written as a direct response to Covid-19. It has been designed to support the **transition** back to school and provide an opportunity to reconnect, a forum to talk and share, and a means to look towards the future.
- The programme is a group experience where children learn through games, drama, art and discussion.
- Each child will be given a HUK Back 2 School handbook on their first day back. The handbook will contain session materials and key messages allowing children to be brought on board at different times.

Heads Up Kids – Back 2 school programme

Aims – for children

- Enable children to transition back to the school environment and feel safe and secure through routine, consistency and ritual.
- Enable children to adapt to the ‘new normal’ and take on board new measures that might be in place.
- Enable children to process their experiences and feelings.
- Normalise worries and other big feelings.

Heads Up Kids – Back 2 school programme

Aims – for staff

- Model optimism.
- Build a hopeful outlook.
- Remind children of their strengths.
- Build resilience from a strengths-based approach – new coping mechanisms will help combat negative feelings.
- Re-affirm relationships with children and build relationships with children that might not have been in your group before.
- Give the whole school community, an opportunity to re-form bonds and a sense of connectedness through play, fun and sharing.
- Build children’s emotional literacy, social competency and coping skills.
- Encourage growth and resiliency.
- Contribute to a whole school sense of what’s happened.
- Normalise the situation without catastrophising.

Thank You

