

# 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.
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# 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

