

Supporting Uncertainty at School – Some Suggested Activities

Life for many schools at the moment involves managing continuous change, disruption and uncertainty. There is very little that anyone can do to limit this, however we can support teachers and children by creating a framework of stability and predictability and by focusing on what we do know and the things we feel positive about.

Children and teachers may also benefit from an opportunity to express their feelings about how things are at the moment. This can take many forms, including free painting or other art sessions, games, circle time or other sharing sessions.

We encourage teachers to watch The Heads Up Kids' 'Creating Safety in Uncertain Times' webinar (https://www.pajes.org.uk/creating_safety_in_uncertain_times_session) which provides a deeper understanding of how to create a sense of safety in the classroom and gives practical tools for teachers to use.

A suggested framework to support stability at this time:

'How we start and how we end': Beginning and Ending Rituals for the day

We can help create a sense of safety and stability by introducing predictability using daily rituals. You will already have many daily rituals, the register, daily prayers etc. These new rituals should be something that the teacher and the children in the class create together. Something playful and joyful that connects the children. You may also want to think about how children who are at home may be able to continue to engage with these rituals. Rituals could include:

- A Mexican wave
- A call and response between the teacher and class
- A song
- A dance
- A short game

The rituals to start and end the day could be the same or different from each other but they should remain the same each day. Clear instructions for the rituals should be written up and kept in the classroom so that any teacher who is with that class can easily take over and continue this with the children should their usual teacher be away from school.

"Who is here?"

To help teachers and children keep track of where everybody is and when they will be back, each class can create a board with each child's name or even photo on it. As the teacher goes through the class register, they can acknowledge who is absent, why they are absent and when they are expected back. This could be done on a white board or using post-its so that children can see at anytime where everyone is. It should also include any teachers, TAs or other adults that the children regularly see at school.

Teachers may find it helpful to have a similar staff list up in the staff room.

By doing this we acknowledge and give voice to the uncertainty and changes without creating drama and anxiety about the difficulties.

My Feelings Doodle

The 'My Feelings Doodle' worksheet will enable children to think about their feelings and gives a number of opportunities for them express their feelings in different ways. The teacher can choose to use this worksheet at any time however we suggest that this is used in conjunction with the other suggestions we have made.

The teacher should remind the children that there are no right or wrong answers to this and that everybody will think and feel different things. The teacher should decide what will happen to the worksheets when they are finished – will they form a display, be kept by the teacher, be given back for children to add more next week etc. This should be communicated to the children clearly before they start. Teachers should ensure that they review every child's sheet and pick up any support issues if necessary.

"You can draw shapes or patterns, a comic or a scribble, a self-portrait or a cartoon. It can be simple or complicated, you can label it to help explain what it means or just keep the meaning to yourself. It can be lots of little drawings or one big one."

We hope that this simple framework provides a support structure and an opportunity to talk and share in the classroom.

If your class or school needs any further support you can contact Andy@headsupkids.org.uk

We hope the session goes well,

**Best wishes,
Andy and Claire**