Yorkshire & the Humber Children & Young People's Mental Health Clinical Network

A Guide for Education Settings Supporting Children and Young People's Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing Needs

Which Have Arisen from COVID-19

Section:

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Background

Education settings in England closed on 20 March 2020 as part of Governmental direction for the management of the Coronavirus pandemic. Settings remained open for vulnerable children and those of key workers to attend where appropriate and possible (see www.gov.uk 1 and 2). Subsequent to this initial response, attention turned to how children and young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health can be supported when settings move towards fully reopening. Acknowledging that there are a number of unknowns, such as when and how settings will reopen, an extensive multi-agency and multi-profession task & finish group (including young people from Stairways, parents/carers and education settings) from across Yorkshire & the Humber recognised the need to proactively combine their efforts and consider what the *mental health needs* of children and young people may be *as a result of COVID-19* and how to respond to these needs. Members of the Task & Finish Group are deeply thanked for all their hard work and contributions in developing this guide. This guide also recognises that many settings have remained open during the whole COVID-19 period and education-based colleagues have worked under extremely difficult circumstances.

Scope

Education settings are the key audience for this framework as it seeks to enable them to appropriately respond to children and young people's mental health and emotional needs as they become more fully open, supported by a coordinated, systemwide approach within local areas, and in line with governmental advice. This piece of work will take into consideration a range of settings, age-groups and needs. It acknowledges that some children have remained in education and that the wellbeing of staff is vitally important. Whilst much of the content is predominantly relevant for school aged children and young people, included within the scope are;

- Early Years
- Primary Schools
- Secondary Schools

- Further Education Settings
- Special Schools
- Alternative Provisions

This guide intends to be needs based, practical and flexible; allowing local areas and settings to make adaptations as relevant and enable education settings to provide appropriate levels of response to the identified needs during and after their phased reopening. It is understood that the culture and establishment of an emotionally healthy learning environment are vital and Senior Leadership Teams are key to this.

Preparation

Much of the success in supporting children and young people during this time will be as a result of *robust preparation* and anticipating what needs might arise. In the context of children and young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing, this may include:

- Reviewing policies and procedures (internal and external)
- Hosting virtual training sessions and coordination meetings
- Partnership working with parents/carers
- Taking the initiative to be aware of the experiences that various pupils have faced, e.g. crowded living spaces, access to green space/garden and changes in family circumstances, perhaps using a Lockdown Journal template
- Joint working between local systems
- Providing clear, understandable information on what changes will be in place, including social distancing measures and staggered start times, and if possible let children and young people know in advance who will be in their bubble (including staff and other pupils). This could include photos, videos as well as written guidance.

Ethos and Principles

The overarching approaches for returning to education focus on key areas such as;

- **R**elationships (through re-affirming sense of connection and belonging)
- **R**ecognition (including the noticing and wondering around feelings)
- **R**egulation (through development of whole setting practices which enable pupils to feel emotionally and physically safe)
- **R**outine (providing preparation for pupils regarding changes of routine/use of spaces which may come into place)
- **R**eflection (allowing time and space for both pupils and a setting's staff to reflect on what has happened including positives and challenges to enable a sense of loose shared experience to be developed).

Key principles of this guide include;

- Not over-medicalising or jumping to diagnostic conclusions
- Appreciate that it is normal for children and young people to have various degrees of worry about returning to education - emotions are a part of normal, everyday life
- Understanding that every child or young person is unique, and their needs may change over time
- Viewing the reopening of education settings from a child or young person's perspective
- Underpinned by a whole setting approach which promotes kindness, compassion, flexibility and takes a positive psychology approach
- Building on existing strengths and skills of children, young people, parents/carers and education provision staff (for example, active listening with empathy can perform an important therapeutic function)
- Complementing existing guidance and practice
- Building on risk and protection factors for a child or young person's mental health

Whole Setting Approach

Addressing many of the following common mental health and emotional wellbeing needs could be incorporated into whole setting opportunities, such as PSHE lessons on living life with and after Coronavirus, assemblies, open door policies, safe/calm spaces, regular class room check-in circles and dedicated mental health and emotional wellbeing sessions. Members of staff within education settings are not expected to become mental health or emotional wellbeing experts, however modelling exemplary behaviours and values will have a high impact on how well children, young people and colleagues can adapt to this unique time in history. Some of these values and behaviours are laid out in a Positivitree, created by young people from across Yorkshire & the Humber:
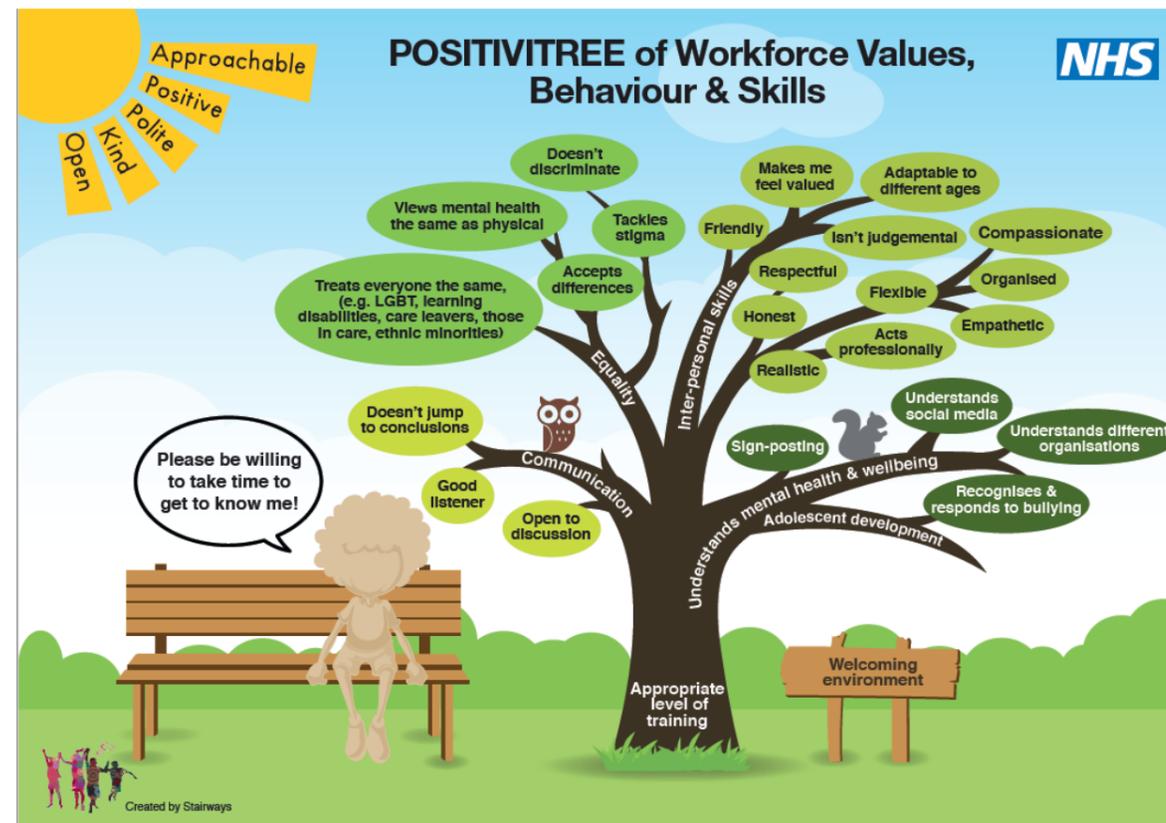
Identifying Early Warning Signs of Emotional Wellbeing Needs of Children and Young People

It is normal for a child or young person to feel worried or anxious when returning to education. These worries and anxieties may manifest themselves in a variety of verbal and non-verbal ways and therefore education colleagues are encouraged to be alert to uncharacteristic and unexplained changes in behaviour.

> **Examples of early warning signs:**
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> Withdrawal. Unusual aggression. Erratic behaviours and mood changes. Significant weight gain/loss. Agitation and poor concentration. Developmental regression (such as wetting in younger children).
> Worsening of any pre-existing mental health needs.
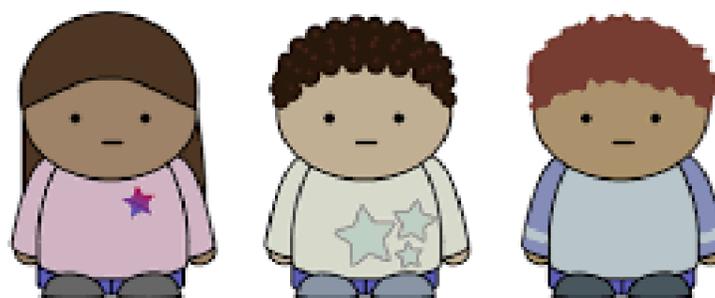
Depending on the implementation for returning to education, colleagues within settings might find it beneficial to discuss individual pupils so that colleagues who might be less familiar with them can identify any uncharacteristic changes. If a cause of concern is spotted, education colleagues are encouraged to talk and listen to the child or young person, and their parents/carers, so as to delve deeper and unearth how long these changes have been occurring; understanding that everyone can experience a rough day or two, but prolonged changes are more likely to be of significance and require escalation either internally or externally. If talking with a child or young person doesn't bear fruit, using play as a way of exploring feelings may be an alternative approach.

For a more in depth knowledge of signs and symptoms of various mental health needs, education settings can access free online training at MindEd or the Anna Freud Centre for Children and Families: Mentally Healthy Schools. It is recommended that all staff within education settings have at least a basic knowledge and understanding of children and young people's mental health and *know how to escalate concerns*. The In It Together: SEMH Competency Framework for Education Settings provides setting and role specific advice and resources. Additionally, settings which have access to Mental Health Support Teams may find that local training is available. Health Visiting Services should be able to provide advice and guidance to parents/carers with children in the early years, along with PACEY's re-opening toolkit for early years settings.

Potential Universal and Common Needs

The following is a set of common worries and anxieties that children or young people may have, how a setting can respond to them, along with clinically reviewed resources. It should not be presumed that any of the following identified needs will exist; for many children and young people a return to education settings is eagerly anticipated. It should also be noted that the following content is not an exhaustive list of mental health or emotional wellbeing needs that have arisen as a result of COVID-19. Task & Finish Group members contributed useful links and resources to support settings with their response. Alongside these, families are to be reminded that they can contact the local health visiting or school nursing service for advice and support around any physical health or emotional wellbeing concerns.

Worries and Anxieties	Response	Useful Links, Guidance and Resources
What is my risk of catching Coronavirus now I have returned to school? This may relate to concerns regarding use of public or school transport and a setting's cleaning. There may be questions such as can I now play with friends? Or is it safe to touch my friends?	Measures put in place should be in line with governmental advice, and settings should be able to explain the basics of any governmental advice in clear, understandable language for various age groups, including 'bubbles'. Provide effective information to children, young people and families ahead of settings reopening, using existing materials where possible, which explain what measures will be in place. Acknowledge and normalise concerns but be explicit about physical safety; provide verbal and visual guidelines. Do not make anyone feel guilty/weak for wanting to be close to friends. Support parents/carers to be able to have the same conversations for consistency of messaging. Consider copying/mimicking games for young children to increase non-touch social interaction.	A resource pack for teenagers to help manage difficult feelings about coronavirus. A resource pack for children under 12 years old to help manage difficult feelings about coronavirus. Anna Freud Centre – Mentally Healthy Schools: Coronavirus Resources PSHE Association: Coronavirus Hub Living with worry and anxiety amidst global uncertainty PHE School Zone: e-Bug
I am worried about not being able to wash my hands enough times and touching other surfaces. This may relate to concerns about catching Coronavirus and could escalate to OCD like behaviour, with non-verbal displays of stress and increased requests for breaks.	Clearly communicate the precautions that have been put in place to ensure good hygiene and minimising contact and mixing. Reduce undue fears by providing empathetic reassurance and reminders as appropriate that the majority of those who may become unwell only experience mild symptoms. Do not view hand-washing or personal hygiene anxieties diagnostically, but acknowledge, support and reassure. Praise their diligence in wanting to following guidance and protect themselves and others.	PHE School Zone: e-Bug Busy Bees: Hand Washing Song
I don't understand what Coronavirus is or why I had to stop going to school.	Be able to explain the basics of what Coronavirus is in an age appropriate manner, reassuring a child or young person that the changes in education attendance were necessary. As age appropriate, share videos and links with a young person which they can watch in their own time. Remember to stick to factual information and use sensitive narrative. Help them see the big picture, along with personal application. Support parents/carers to be able to have the same conversations for consistency of messaging.	Young Minds: Talking to your child about coronavirus Young Minds: What to do if you're anxious about coronavirus Children's Commissioner: Children's Guide to Coronavirus British Psychology Society: Talking to children about Coronavirus Coronavirus - a book for children (Primary School Age) MindHeart: Coronavirus Comic Early Years Story Book: Don't Worry Little Bear Twinkl: Dr. Dog eBook A Better Start Southend: PIP's Guide to Covid-19 for Early Years Children

I'm worried about some vulnerable members of my family becoming poorly.	Provide reassurance and reminders about public health guidance and shielding which in place for protection. Whilst ensuring that public health guidance and social distancing is adhered to, suggest activities that a child or young person can do for a family member who is vulnerable, such as making cards or kindness boxes. Follow DfE guidance regarding living with a with a shielded or clinically vulnerable person and be able to communicate the differences between shielded groups and extremely clinically vulnerable.	NHS: People at higher risk from coronavirus PHE: Guidance for households with grandparents, parents and children living together where someone is at increased risk or has symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) infection DfE: COVID-19: guidance for young people on shielding and protecting people most likely to become unwell if they catch coronavirus Kindness Box Template
I'm worried that things won't be like they used to be, and I don't understand the changes. What are the changes? Some may hold the perception that school is no longer the safe, constant place they thought it was. This may also include questions around why some children/siblings are back at school and others aren't.	Provide clear information ahead of a setting fully reopening which is reassuring, explains the changes (such as the establishment of staggered start times and bubbles) and who to contact if any questions arise. Acknowledge there may be a lot of unknowns, but communicate in an age-appropriate reassuring manner, using active listening, clarity of language and a supportive approach. Don't be quick to reprimand children for breaking a bubble; rather work with them in supportive way to communicate the need to adhere to guidance, but acknowledge the desire to be close to friends. Highlight what has stayed the same and help a child or young person appreciate that they are only having to adapt a small number of changes. Consider ways to emphasise the positives and look to the future optimistically, embracing the changes as an opportunity to grow. Frame the changes/new rules within a setting using simple, positive language that can easily be remembered, i.e. Do…as opposed to Don't. Be able to explain the basics of what Coronavirus is in an age appropriate manner including why a phased return might be necessary to protect the population and control it's spread, doing so without causing need for alarm or anxiety.	Anna Freud – Mentally Healthy Schools: 10 ways for helping children struggling with change PHE Lesson Plan: Dealing with change Social distancing video for early years: While We Can't Hug Hygiene Regime Widgets Busy Bees: Two metres apart activity
I am finding settling into a change of routine difficult.	Be clear on what the new routine is, preferably in advance of a setting reopening, such as visual timetables, seating plans and when break times will be. More frequent breaks may be necessary for a period whilst routines resettle. Consider different (and maybe fun) sounds for transitions during the day. Some children or young people may be concerned about not being able to go to the toilet whenever they need to, so additional flexibility around this will be needed. Highlight what has stayed the same and help a child or young person they are only having to adapt a small number of changes. Early years colleagues to reflect on existing skills around setting and supporting routines.	How to Establish Classroom Routines ELSA Support: Year 6 What If Cards
I am having trouble sleeping.	Be able to provide advice to parents/carers on establishing sleep hygiene practices and routines. Encourage families to re-set sleep cycles prior to a setting opening by gradually moving bed times earlier and waking their child or young person in the morning.	NHS: Healthy sleep tips for children The Children's Sleep Charity: Leaflets Chilypep: Sleep Toolkit
I can't get motivated anymore.	Apply existing motivational skills; creating a sense of hope, teach them about purpose, building relationships, allowing opportunities for choice and providing a sense of autonomy. Ask a child or young	

A child or young person might identify a lack of motivation through indicators like not wanting to get out of bed, not finding joy in things they used to like, irritability, lack of concentration.	person what has previously helped them get motivated, then build on what they enjoy and incorporate into activities. For a period, focus on play and activities rather than academic achievement. The capacity for concentration may be affected but it can be re-developed through existing teaching strategies, support and adjustment to the school environment over time. Make expectations and tasks clear, break tasks down into chunks with check-ins on progress and provide feedback, building on successes. Remember the importance of physical exercise, including opportunities within the classroom to move around and stretch. If a setting has a tuck-shop ensure there are healthy snacks readily available that support brain function. Be open and honest, willing to share as an adult that you at times also struggle to get motivated and give age appropriate examples on what you do.	
I am missing being with my family.	Spend time welcoming children back, display empathy and positive affirmations. Have a trusted, familiar member of staff present when the child or young person arrives if possible, preferably the same person every time, at least until the anxiety is reduced Allow use of transitional objects which may be comforting (such as photos or a toy for younger children), particularly at the start of the school day as social distancing may prevent parents/carers from 'settling' a young child into a classroom. Consider allowing phone calls for a period to check-in with family members. Consider phased returns as appropriate (remembering that some siblings may still be at home whilst others return to education). Consider initiating projects that can be done at home and then brought into the setting for completion.	ELSA Support: Separation Anxiety York City Council: Helpful tools for schools supporting a child with separation anxiety.
I've felt lonely whilst away from school and am not sure how to re-establish my friendships. A phased return may mean that some children and young people are not at school with their previous friendship groups. The loss of friendship(s) and social interaction could trigger a bereavement like response in some. May have heightened at transition points. Many may have been away from peers their own age and being in larger groups, so have not had to share or take turns. This may result in them experiencing conflicts, frustrations and anger.	Reach out to actively welcome children and young people back as a group and individuals to cushion the discomfort of returning. A setting's staff can give positive messages about belonging such as 'we are all looking after each other'. Use communal language, such as 'our class'. Consider allowing opportunities for friendships to be built through paired/group activities and play, peer mentor programmes, buddies, and participation groups. Consider longer break times to allow for social opportunities, play and friendship building. Consider games such as shadow-tag. A play rota for outside activities may be necessary for maintaining social distancing. Provide social skill reminders and help children and young people learn/re-learn social skills and emotional self-control in larger groups/with peers. Be able to explain any phased return approaches that are recommended and why certain children or young people are not currently attending. Consider converting extra-curricula activities to virtual ones.	Childline: Feeling Lonely Childline: Top tips for making friends Action for Children: Tips for Young People The Communication Trust: Top Tips for Developing Talk Anna Freud – Mentally Healthy Schools: Peer Support
I'm struggling with my emotions and am unsure where to find help.	A setting's Senior Leadership Team should be proactive in understanding what local support is available and then cascade this to colleagues.	Get Self Help: The worry tree NHS: Talking to children about feelings

A child or young person who is struggling with their emotions may display a range of behavioural responses as a form a communication. Struggling with emotions may link to frustrations as a result of children and young people not being able to 'test' their emerging selves with a peer group. Losses of routine, structure, friendships, opportunity and freedom may trigger the emergence of anxiety. Mood swings, irrational and illogical behaviours may be displayed.	Whilst all staff members should be able to provide basic emotional support, settings must provide clear communication on who the *key staff* are who can help, and how to reach out to them. Aside from operating an 'open door' environment, consider various ways to enable someone to ask for help, such as texts, worry cards and posters. If a setting has mental health champions, ensure these are visible and easily accessible. Openly acknowledge across the setting's environment that its okay not to be okay and consider creative activities (such as feeding worry monsters) that allow children and young people the opportunity to share how they are feeling. To help reduce any frustrations, understand and focus on what is outside a child or young person's control and what is inside their control. Allow them opportunities to exercise choice and access to pupil voice opportunities. Be able to actively listen, know how to escalate concerns and understand what menu of local support is available and how to access it (both within settings and externally). Remain positive about the future with clear messaging. Use age and developmentally appropriate play as a way of exploring feelings. Sign-posting examples include: KOOTH (where available and appropriate), local websites, apps (e.g. Think Ninja) and Mental Health Support Teams, Mental Health First Aiders. Use emotion coaching for lower level needs to be able guide and teach a child and young person about effective responses to heightened emotions. Maintain awareness and be vigilant on identifying delayed responses in children and young people.	NHS: Talking to your teenager NHS Apps Library: Mental Health Edutopia: The value of active listening Cumbria County Council: Whole School Collaborative Planning Activity Emotion Coaching Place2Be: Coronavirus: wellbeing activity ideas for schools Chilypep: Mental Health First Aid Toolkit Chilypep: Posters on Top Tips for Supporting a Friend NHS: How I Deal with Stress Booklet PHE: Rise Above
I'm happier being at home.	Encourage active engagement in education life to normalise this again, focusing on the positives of returning to a setting, such as seeing friends again. Create a safe environment that is nurturing and structured. Engage with parents/carers to find out what worked well at home and how this may be assimilated into returning to education. Send preparatory work materials home in advance. Encourage parents to start walking/driving to a setting in preparation of settling into a routine again. Re-establish boundaries with consistency. Use age and developmentally appropriate play as a way of exploring feelings. Be alert that some parents/carers may not want to send their child back to an education setting and may be influencing their child's behaviour. If this is suspected be prepared to work with parents/carers to understand and address their concerns. Taking a positive psychology approach may help reassure them.	Childline: Calm Zone
I'm worried that I will be bullied when I return to school because of my family's background.	Apply existing anti-bullying policies. Undertake activities that celebrate differences and promote a cohesive, kind society, such as a paperchain of kindness.	Anti-Bullying Alliance: Tools and Training Paperchain of kindness template

This may relate to concerns about perceptions that a culture or race is to blame for starting Coronavirus and its subsequent spread around the world.	Highlight the acts of kindness displayed during the lockdown and promote the continuance of this type of behaviour.	
I'm worried I'm now behind in my education. e.g. compared to those who have had more home-schooling access and IT access, or those who have continued to attend school. They may be worried about their ability having to do tests/exams again. They may have temporarily forgotten how to do certain things that were previously second nature, having not done them for a while. Undue pressure on teachers may translate into pressure on children and young people, particularly at secondary/GCSE/A-Level. This will also apply as shielded children and young people later return to education settings. They may feel particularly behind as their friends/siblings have been able to return.	Avoid formal assessments during the transition period; priority should initially be on emotional wellbeing and the transition. Gradually assess learning progress through teacher assessment. Acknowledge that many children and young people had less time for doing academic work but avoid using language that indicates a child or young person is now 'behind' or has to 'catch-up'. Focus on sharing and celebrating skills and activities that they have been done during lockdown – this could include crafts, games or new life skills such as cooking, helping with younger children, getting along/ sharing with siblings. Reframe these as successes. Hold 'what have we missed' group sessions and phased academic learning to help all reach a fair level. Consider ways of helping pupils 'catch-up' and prioritise disadvantaged ones. If applicable, ensure the laptop scheme can remain in place and research the availability of data/WiFi support locally.	Edutopia: Positive Words go a Long Way DfE: Remote education practice for schools during coronavirus (COVID-19) DfE: Coronavirus (COVID 19): online education resources
I'm not sure what impact this will have on my future.	Be transparent about the curriculum; pupils will feel like they have lost time in learning so explain how these gaps are being addressed. Some of these gaps will include missing work experience opportunities as well as exams. Acknowledge these fears with understanding and empathy. Avoid quickly making assumptions and if age appropriate know how to sign-post to career advice. Focus on successes during lockdown, such as any new life skills.	Edutopia: Positive Words go a Long Way YoungMinds: Hope Clouds activity
My parents/carers need some support.	Be aware of what help is available locally for families and how to signpost to it, e.g. parent/carer groups. Take advantage of opportunities to ask parents/carers how they are, be able to listen empathetically and ensure adequate and up to date signposting (such as website links and leaflets) on issues is available, such as; financial difficulties, food banks, debt, mental health, substance misuse, domestic violence. Help the child or young person to manage their worries, actively listen and reassure them that family units can still be strong, positive environments during hardships. Help them appreciate simple things in life, that are often free.	Childline: Money issues Edutopia: The value of active listening Anna Freud – Mentally Healthy Schools: How to start a conversation with parents
I'm worried about my family because they have been arguing more.	Refer to the reducing parental conflict agenda. Training for professionals on supporting parents is available. Reassuringly acknowledge that some increased friction between family members is normal during this time.	NSPCC: Arguments, conflict and family tension during coronavirus Relate YoungMinds: Contact with separated parents

Additional Considerations

Some children and young people who weren't vulnerable prior to education settings closing, may have since become vulnerable, for a variety of reasons. It is therefore recommended that settings do no assume a child or young person's status when they return to education. It is also here acknowledged that some children and young people have been able to continue attending education and receive support because of their pre-existing vulnerabilities. However, the prevalence and severity of many vulnerabilities may have increased due to COVID-19. For many of the following groups education settings will already have policies and strategies in place for supporting them and these should form the foundation for the response to the needs.

Missed Transitions	Response	Useful Links, Guidance and Resources
I don't feel prepared to start a new school or transition between years. This may also apply to military families, for whom many postings have been put on hold and the uncertainties of when school moves may occur are causing additional stresses and anxieties.	Review existing school to school transition procedures and consider how these can be enhanced or supplemented with additional information, including a focus on promoting an emotionally healthy environment. Additional information may include offering children and young people the opportunity to create a personalised transition passport. In preparation hold virtual meetings and tours with parents/carers and a child or young person which introduce a setting's key members of staff, teachers if possible, and new premises. No formal curriculum lessons should be conducted to start with; rather time should be provided to establish relationships and friendships, such as class building (team building) sessions. Enable befriending opportunities/buddies from older children. If available to a setting, liaise with a Mental Health Support Team	Young Minds: Transitions Activity for Year 6 Pupils Young Minds: Find Your Feet: Transitioning to Secondary School Anna Freud – Mentally Healthy Schools: Transitions Childline: Moving schools The Key for School Leaders: Coronavirus: supporting transition into reception The Key for School Leaders: Coronavirus: supporting pupil transition to secondary
I don't feel prepared to leave school.	Provide opportunities for 'goodbyes' and endings. These may have to be virtually in compliance with social distancing but consider hosting virtual proms and the creation of year books. Provide transition and career advice as appropriate, and signpost to Connexions if locally possible. Just as in school to school transitions, young people may be moving on into apprenticeships and partnership working with these providers can equip them to receive a young person and support their emotional wellbeing.	Childline: Your future Childline: Making decisions MindMate: Independent Living

Bereaved	Response	Useful Links, Guidance and Resources
I'm sad because a family member or someone very close to me has died. This may be a friend, a neighbour, a member of the school community or a friend's relative.	Identify and promote (e.g. through posters around a setting) key adults who can be emotionally available to listen and signpost to further support if needed. Settings may wish to hold a formal act of remembrance as a community. This could take a wide range of forms, such as a whole school clap or moments of silence dedicated to those who have died. Be aware of how different cultures approach grief and bereavement. Senior Leadership Team to ensure they are aware of any bereavement helplines or local services. Allow a child or young person to express their feelings their way, whilst attentively listening and letting them know that grieving and crying is okay. Use age and developmentally appropriate play or arts and crafts as a way of exploring feelings.	Winston's Wish: Supporting children through coronavirus Winston's Wish: Bereavement Training for Schools Together in Mind: Coping with the coronavirus and bereavement

I'm worried what others will think about me; will they want to avoid me? This may link to feelings of being stigmatised or awareness of social media behaviours around judging people because they are 'unclean', not having washed their hands enough.	Hold activities to promote social connectiveness. Model inclusive language and behaviours such as 'our class'. Hold assembly/whole setting work on loss in the community and displaying kindness. Adhere to anti-bullying policies if needed. Help bereaved children or young people connect with each other, perhaps across year groups to form a peer support network.	
I'm worried to leave my family member alone after a family member has died.	Provide reassurance and opportunities to connect with that family member, e.g. a phone call. Be able to signpost the bereaved family member to local support as relevant, including bereavement support.	

Other Groups	Response	Useful Links, Guidance and Resources
LGBTQ+ **I've been able to be 'myself' whilst home and am scared to do this back in school.** Some (not all) are able to 'be themselves' at home, but not in school and vice versa. The switch between environments for longer interrupted periods of time may cause higher anxiety than pre-Coronavirus.	Apply existing inclusion policies and initiatives. Be able to signpost and enable access to support.	The Be You Project: Resources
Abuse and Neglect **I have been treated extremely badly whilst at home** This includes witnessing or experiencing emotional, physical or sexual abuse, being exploited or neglected. They may also be worried about a family member/sibling who is still at home and feel guilty for leaving them behind.	A setting's staff must be prepared for disclosures and vigilantly follow existing safeguarding policies, procedures and training. Note that timeframes for disclosures vary immensely. Ensure supervision and support for safe guarding leads is in place and readily accessible. Establish clear behavioural boundaries, support a child or young person to stick to these, yet understand that they may act-out but this is an expression of their emotions and not a cause for punishment or getting into trouble. Look out for behaviour changes, including deliberate self-harm and respond according to previous knowledge and procedures. Help a child or young person to understand what is safe and who a safe adult to talk with is, e.g. preferred teacher.	Childline: Domestic Abuse Childline: Physical Abuse Childline: Sexual Abuse Childline: Emotional Abuse NSPCC: Child sexual exploitation Coping with self-harm NSPCC: Safeguarding during coronavirus: school governors and trustees
Young Carers **I'm caring for a family member at home** This includes those who were carers pre-COVID-19, were drawn into caring during this period and/or may be caring for shielded groups. Many of these children or young people may not return to education straight away due to shielding or caring responsibilities.	Ensure they have access to a phone to be able to privately and discreetly contact a family member to ensure the 'cared for' person is ok, especially if they are showing signs of becoming increasingly distracted. They may be relatively new to caring so treat them with kindness, seek to understand their individual situation and signpost to wider support opportunities. Allow attendance at school to enable them to enjoy being young and put their worries aside, even if just for a short period of time.	MindMate: Are you looking after someone else? Carers UK: Coronavirus information Ann Craft Trust: Young Carers and Covid-19 PHE: Guidance for households with grandparents, parents and children living together where someone is at increased risk or has symptoms of coronavirus (COVID-19) infection

When they do return, they may be distracted, have poor attention.	Ensure they are not unduly disadvantaged in their educational progress by discussing with them what is/isn't possible and jointly work out solutions and maximise the use of technology where possible, such as remote learning. Support them to maintain social interactions with their peers, such as video chats, letters and sharing life skills. Signpost to adult social care so they can provide an additional assessment for the parent/cared for relative. Refer the child or young person to the local Young Carers provision for a statutory young carers assessment if not already done so.	DfE: Get technology support for children and schools during coronavirus (COVID-19) DfE: COVID-19: guidance for young people on shielding and protecting people most likely to become unwell if they catch coronavirus
Looked After Children **I have experienced placement changes.** This may include those in foster care who have not been able to have their regular contact hours with families.	Identify the key adults with whom a child or young person can spend time building a positive relationship with. Continue joint working with the child or young person's wider support network and the virtual school which has maintained regular contact. Keep a keen eye on these children and young people and regularly check in with them. Consider linking them to or establishing nurture groups. Continue or adapt to a P.A.C.E way of working: playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy.	Childline: Living in Care DDP Network: What is meant by PACE? Adoption UK: COVID-19 Hull City Council: Trauma/attachment guide for schools
Existing Mental Health Needs/Accessing CAMHS **My mental health needs have changed whilst being away from school.** Pre-COVID-19 children and young people may have had existing mental health needs and will have had challenges, success and changes to cope with, such as receiving therapy/support virtually or needing to be re-referred for specialist support.	Build on what was in place pre-COVID-19, with a local system wide response being easy to access with clear pathways and consultation/advice available to schools from specialist services. Senior Leadership Team to ensure that colleagues know how to escalate concerns and seek additional support for a child or young person. Provide discreet but dedicated check-in opportunities with a setting's relevant lead(s), e.g. pastoral leads or mental health leads. At these check-ins ask a child or young person how they have coped and what may have changed whilst being away from education. Have they had a CAMHS appointment? Provide reassurance that the setting is a safe space and caring for their mental health is a priority. Relevant leads who have the check-in conversations to cascade information to colleagues as relevant, appreciating at times a child or young person's request for confidentiality. Work in partnership with parents/carers to find out how a child or young person has coped whilst away from education and what the challenges/successes have been and discuss ways to maintain coping strategies whilst in education.	Beyond Blue: How to talk about mental health (age 13+) NHS: Talking to children about feelings NHS: Talking to your teenager Anna Freud – Mentally Healthy Schools: Eating Problems Anna Freud – Mentally Healthy Schools: Range of mental needs NHS: In It Together: SEMH Competency Framework for Education Settings (age bespoke) North East Lincs: Self-Help Menu with links to apps, organisations, helplines etc National Crisis Text Line SHOUT Papyrus: Save the Class

Neurodevelopmental/SEN Needs	Response	Useful Links, Guidance and Resources
I don't want to return to school.	Note and cross-reference to ways of responding to neurotypical children and young people as already noted in this document. If they have an EHCP, use the information in this to support the transition back to education and liaise closely with parents/carers to find out what their experience of being away from school has been. Tailor the reintegration to school life to the individual. Seek advice from SEN Leads who can advise colleagues on identifying those who might need additional support and reasonable adjustments. Consider using social stories as a way to present information about Coronavirus. Allow time and opportunities to readjust to the physical and sensory environment and reestablishment of key, familiar relationships. For those particularly vulnerable to changes in routine, consider enabling a virtual 'walk-through' either with photos or by video conference in advance of returning. This should make clear any physical changes to the building due to social distancing. Consider setting up a 'calm' sensory space. Use age and developmentally appropriate play as a way of exploring feelings. Understand that some Autistic children need more physical interaction i.e. hugs and do not have a sense of boundaries. Consider the impact this may have on other children and young people who may feel uncomfortable getting too close to someone, even though it is not done to intentionally cause distress. Closely monitor behaviours and enable easy, frequent access to personal hygiene facilities.	The Autism Educator: What is the coronavirus National Autistic Society: Bereavement Books Beyond Words: Resources to support people during coronavirus NSPCC: Supporting children with special educational needs and disabilities Stars: Social Stories Stars: Transition Resources for Autistic Children Preparing Autistic & SEND Children for going back to school Hull City Council: Communicating loss with those who have additional needs. Hand Washing Tips for People with Sensory Difficulties DfE: Conducting a SEND risk assessment during the coronavirus outbreak

Those for Whom Attending School is a Severe Cause of Anxiety	Response	Useful Links, Guidance and Resources
I'm having panic attacks now I've returned to school.	Work with a child or young person to utilise or establish their coping mechanisms. Be able to apply techniques which calm an individual's breathing.	MindMate: Panic attacks
My anxiety and stresses have risen again now that I am back at school.	Apply existing skills and strategies for working with a highly anxious child or young person, reminding them that emotional responses are natural and normal. Consider a phased return to build up routines, interactions and familiarity. Include relaxed and friendly welcomes at the start of the school day. Use age and developmentally appropriate play as a way of exploring feelings. Employ partnership working with their parents/carers to find out what they enjoyed whilst being at home and consider what can be replicated/adapted within the education setting. Develop a first day/Monday morning plan for attending education and Sunday night plan for parents/carers to implement. Focus on positive things and consider coping mechanisms, such as worry boxes, mindfulness and creative activities. Establish designated safe places and clear advice on how to use them safely.	Edutopia: Why Are Some Kids Thriving During Remote Learning? Childline: Calm Zone Sheffield Children's Hospital: Self Care Kit

Children of Key Workers (across sectors)	Response	Useful Links, Guidance and Resources
I'm worried I will be treated differently by my friends because I have continued to be at school.	Setting's staff to model messages of belonging and inclusion and do not unduly single out key worker children. Enable class room activities to allow children and young people to share their experiences and new skills, learnt either in school or at home. Acknowledge that the environment will feel start to feel different as more children return. Remind them of how things used to be, using positive language to embrace change and opportunities to strengthen friendships.	Cumbria County Council: Covid-19 Time Capsule activity Lockdown Journal template
I'm highly worried that a family member will catch Coronavirus.	Listen with empathy and recognition. Be able to hold a conversation about governmental advice, such as PPE and social distancing and the basics of what Coronavirus is in an age-appropriate manner. Do this in an honest and reassuring way, acknowledging the risks they face but avoid giving complicated explanations. Make sure they understand that adults know what to do if they become unwell (based on advice). Reduce undue fears by providing reassurance that the majority of those who may catch the virus only experience mild symptoms. Help them to think about things they could have control over e.g. being helpful for their family member such as preparing soap and towels for when they come home. Try and discuss any plans in place with the family for if they were to become unwell.	Anna Freud Centre – Mentally Healthy Schools: Coronavirus Resources
I'm worried that I might catch Coronavirus from a family member at home who is a key worker.	Listen with empathy and recognition. Be able to hold a conversation about good hygiene and public health messages, such as hand washing reminders etc. Provide reassurance that the majority to catch the virus, especially children and young people, only experience mild symptoms. Reassure them that key workers have been given equipment, advice and training on how to minimise the risk of transmission of the virus.	Anna Freud Centre – Mentally Healthy Schools: Coronavirus Resources

Physical Health and Psychological Wellbeing	Response	Useful Links, Guidance and Resources
I haven't been eating well whilst away from school.	Reinstate breakfast clubs if possible in accordance with social distancing. Review the take up of free school meals and encourage families to access food or vouchers. Be able to signpost a family to local provisions and how they can be accessed. Understand the links between poor nutrition and behaviour and brain function when learning. Display patience with pupils, avoiding putting undue pressure on them. Nutritional foods may have been eaten, but the relationship to food may have changed. Be alert to the emergence of body image concerns, particularly in older children and teens, and the use of food to 'control' feelings/the Coronavirus situation.	PHE: A whole school approach to food YoungMinds: Body Image DfE: Providing free school meals during the coronavirus outbreak Bite Back: Free Schools Meals Voucher ideas SYEDA: Early Signs of Eating Related Concerns
I haven't had much chance to exercise and play outside whilst away from school.	Understand the links between low mood, poor motivation etc. and restrictions on physical activity that children and young people may have experienced. Be alert to the emergence of body image concerns, particularly in older children and teens. Understand increased access to social media may have distorted some self-perceptions or a triggered a sense low self-esteem from not being able to achieve a so called 'isolation transformation'. Risk assess outdoor spaces within the setting to enable the establishment of measures to allow for adequate movement in accordance with safe social distancing guidance. Ensure that P.E. lessons are fun, engaging and not overly exertive to allow for a period of readjustment.	PHE: What works in schools and colleges to increase physical activity?
I'm worried about my physical health needs. This may relate to missed or delayed medical appointments or being in a shielded category based on clinical vulnerability. Older ones may have concerns or queries about relationships/sexual health.	Be able to listen to concerns about physical health and communicate messages that the NHS is 'open for business', but likely in a different format for a while, e.g. video consultations, and that all types of physical health care are as important as before. Settings to work closely with school nursing teams. Undertake partnerships working with parents/carers of children and young people who may have to remain at home longer due to shielded based on clinical vulnerability. Reach out to ensure them that they are not forgotten; either by their friends or from an academic perspective. Class mates could undertake activities to send them videos or cards. Be able to explain in an age appropriate way to those returning to school why some might not be in attendance at this time. Do this in a way that does not cause alarm, but reassures children and young people that their safety is of highest importance. When those in shielded categories do return, reassure them that guidance has been followed and the setting is a safe place.	Edutopia: The value of active listening

Staff Wellbeing

Many members of staff from education settings have continued to work throughout the Coronavirus restrictions. Like the children and young people they care for they too may be experiencing loss, abuse, burn-out or other difficulties. The phased re-opening of settings will likely add to their existing emotional burdens. Senior Leadership Teams must be proactive in ensuring that mental health and emotional wellbeing is a visible priority.

What settings can do together:

- Follow the principles of consultation, communication and collaboration.
- Recognise and acknowledge the difficult circumstances collectively and model behaviours of kindness, empathy and compassion.
- Create opportunities to recognise and reward colleague's hard work, e.g. random acts of kindness.
- Have identified mental health leads with an open-door policy.
- Make the most of informal opportunities to check-in with each other.
- Change the narrative where– 'staff meetings' become 'wellbeing check-ins', discuss what went well and even better ifs and ensure school leaders themselves have support.
- Be aware of what local/national support is available and how to access it, such as helplines, IAPT, voluntary organisations and remember the NHS is still accessible for mental and physical health needs.
- Be as clear as possible on ways of working, per government advice, addressing concerns around use of restraint if applicable.
- Gather views on what is manageable and what staff feel is appropriate so there is a whole school approach and that this is consistent.
- All to have access to supervision and mentorship, but especially newly qualified members of staff.
- Minimise academic pressure to achieve.

What individuals can do to look after themselves:

- Take time out to get sufficient sleep and rest, relax and eat regularly and healthily, staying well hydrated.
- Talk to people you trust and allow yourself to be comforted.
- Reduce outside demands and avoid taking on additional responsibilities.
- Spend time in a place where you feel safe and calm to reflect on what's happened over the course of the day/week. Acknowledge and allow feelings during this reflective time.
- Try to reduce your time spent looking at the news from media outlets and social media. Try scheduling 'digital power off' times, especially before bed.
- Use relaxation strategies e.g. slow breathing, self-talk or mindfulness
- Create a wellbeing planning tool for yourself, including knowing where to get outside support from if needed (Local Offer websites can inform this):

Useful Links for Staff Wellbeing

Mentally Healthy Schools: Staff Wellbeing

Anna Freud: Looking after each other and ourselves and Anna Freud: Supporting staff wellbeing in schools

Mind: Five ways to wellbeing

Education Support

MindEd: CBT Art Workbook for Managing Stress