How can schools respond to loss and rebuild life for our communities post pandemic?

There are many matters to consider when planning and preparing the return to school for students and the wider school community. As well as the overriding need to ensure the **safety** of students and staff, there is a growing recognition of the psychological impact of Covid-19 and the wellbeing of children and adults. It is important that **wellbeing** forms the foundation of any approach to opening schools more widely. On this firm foundation, future **learning** will stand.

This document has been heavily informed by Professor Barry Carpenter's thinking regarding a 'recovery curriculum' https://www.ssatuk.co.uk/blog/a-recovery-curriculum-loss-and-life-for-our-children-and-schools-post-pandemic/ which forms a central part of this strategy. This tool is meant to generate productive conversations and help shape a bolder vision of education when responding to what has been lost during lockdown and rebuilding learning and opportunities for the communities we serve.

It's intention is to act as a living document within your organisation - one that is returned to and reflected upon as time moves on. It should help shape a return that is responsive to the needs of your school community. It also recognises that profound change may be needed, not only to our daily practices but to the very purpose of the education we provide.

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What has been lost? Routine, Structure, Friendship, Opportunity, Freedom

In response to the loss our young people are experiencing, Dr Carpenter identifies 5 levers of recovery. These have shaped the questions we ask and possible examples schools may wish to adopt when designing and delivering a holistic return which addresses the multiple needs of the school community.

- **Lever 1: Relationships** – we can't expect our students to return joyfully, and many of the relationships that were thriving, may need to be invested in and restored. We need to plan for this to happen, not assume that it will. Reach out to greet them, use the relationships we build to cushion the discomfort of returning.

- **Lever 2: Community** – we must recognise that curriculum will have been based in the community for a long period of time. We need to listen to what has happened in this time, understand the needs of our community and engage them in the transitioning of learning back into school.

- **Lever 3: Transparent curriculum** – all of our students will feel like they have lost time in learning and we must show them how we are addressing these gaps, consulting and co-constructing with our students to heal this sense of loss.

- **Lever 4: Metacognition** – in different environments, students will have been learning in different ways. It is vital that we make the skills for learning in a school environment explicit to our students to reskill and rebuild their confidence as learners.

- **Lever 5: Space** – to be, to rediscover self, and to find their voice on learning in this issue. It is only natural that we all work at an incredible pace to make sure this group of learners are not disadvantaged against their peers, providing opportunity and exploration alongside the intensity of our expectations

ALL Students and staff will need some holistic recovery.		RESET for SAFETY Routine, Structure	RECOVER for WELLBEING Friendship and Social Interaction	REBUILD for LEARNING Opportunity, Freedom
TIER 1	Questions	● What logistical problems need to be organised to maintain safe social distancing? ● What does this look like for different subjects? i.e practical subjects where learning space is not 'defined' by desks. ● What new procedures might we need to carry out effective medical attention to staff/students? ● What new routines will we have to practise? ● What visual illustrations could we add around the school to reinforce new habits? ● How do we communicate with staff and students? ● How can we encourage a feeling of safety amongst staff, students and parents? ● How much will we need to practice new routines? ● Are there any new roles needed now to accommodate safety procedures? ● How do we minimize the number of people on site whilst ensuring there are sufficient staff to meet the needs of students? ● How do we communicate new roles to staff? ● How have expectations changed? ● How do we go about establishing expectations of school life with students? ● What are effective ways to manage 'unstructured' time (break/lunch) in schools? ● What quality time will be structured into the day for students to spend with their peers? ● How do we replicate year group identity in a safe way? ● How do we manage the emotional and social needs of our students in a socially distanced environment? ● What adjustments do we need to make to ensure students have some physical freedom and space for expression?	● How do we know what staff and students are feeling? ● How do we continue to know what staff and students are feeling? ● What should we do with the information we gather about how people are feeling? ● How are parents' views/concerns included in informing what will happen upon return? ● How are students' views included? ● In what ways can we recover the relationships we've built with students and their families? ● In what ways can we support students to recover relationships with their peers? ● How do we bring social and emotional learning to the heart of the curriculum offer? ● What creative ways can we devise for students to express closeness without human touch? ● How do we maintain a sense of community or cohesion with those who are in school and still at home? ● What pedagogical frameworks will facilitate teaching with compassion? ● How will home learning be celebrated and shared? ● Staff teams and roles may be different upon return; what opportunities are there for team building before and on return? ● How can we foster strong collaborative teams? ● How can we provide support for staff anxious about the pandemic and return to school? ● What support can we provide staff to manage any trauma experienced by students and staff - do we have robust policies and training in place?	● How do we make the skills for learning in a school environment explicit to our students? ● How do we create and use a shared language that heals the sense of 'lost' time and knowledge? ● How do we recognise and reward the extra curricula learning that has taken place during lockdown? Is there a way this can be 'validated' in some way? ● How can we enhance collaborative and dialogic curricula and pedagogies on return? ● How are Heads of Department supported with medium term curriculum planning? ● Have you planned/do you need to outline an alternative/transition curriculum? ● How do we assess where students are and what do they understand in school? ● How do we assess where students are and what they understand remotely? ● How can we adopt an asset based approach to student learning? ● What is the 'best' way to organise learners on their return to the classroom? ● What would effective and meaningful extra curricular provision look like? ● How can we support higher engagement with extra curricular provision? ● How do we keep the lockdown innovation that is good for learning? ● How do we coordinate work for students who are still learning remotely and students on site? ● What training will be required for staff engaged in online or distance teaching? ● How do we plan for potential future lockdowns?

	Examples			
		● New guidelines for social distancing, stickers on the floor, new signage, sanitiser for each classroom, outside assemblies ● Practising the new routines – lining up outside classrooms? ● Creative use of outside space ● Communicate clearly with students and parent/carers what the focus of the initial weeks back at school will be, and how pupils will be supported to re-engage with learning and the curriculum.Informal, as well as formal, communication may be appreciated, such as postcards to children and young people from their teacher with a few examples of what they will be doing once they return. ● Update behaviour policy with a coronavirus addendum ● Use the values of the school to communicate new processes and procedures ● Give each rule and expectation a name, so they're easier for pupils to understand and remember. This could be as simple as the '2-metre rule' so that pupils remember to keep their distance from each other and staff. ● Use the 'now and next' approach to guide each class when they come back. Encourage teachers to slowly reveal activities to students in chunks, rather than overwhelm them with a daily or weekly timetable initially. Staff should write and update 'now and next' plans on the board too (or somewhere else in sight of all pupils in the classroom), so pupils can easily refer to it throughout the day. ● Start each day with a carefully planned activity which builds familiarity and safety. Focus on activities that will rebuild trust and relationships between students and staff.	● Listening – weekly check in surveys with students, how they are feeling? Good examples include: *Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Health Scale, and CAMH's The Strengths and Difficulties questionnaire.* ● Assemblies ● Co-created Charter for Learning - New routines and boundaries can be discussed and agreed to provide reassurance to allow children ● Celebrating acts that live our values. ● Activities/lessons focussing on friendship, emotions, and loss are likely to be especially relevant at the current time. ● Circle time to start the day - emotions, friendship. Connect with yourself. Connect with each other. ● Creative and expressive arts activities to be a central part of everyday. ● Practice Mindfulness ● Talk as the preferred pedagogy - assessments that get students to express their thought processes while doing a particular task, talking therapies. ● Wellbeing risk assessment for staff ● Whole school, online training on how to answer student questions about what happens next. ● Whole school training on trauma management and elevated child protection; policies on domestic violence (staff/students)	● Teachers to have explicit permission to deviate from the typical curriculum ● Support for the 'decolonise the curriculum' movement to equip our students with truth ● Remove the immediate pressure of 'catching-up' on curriculum knowledge and instead think about a curriculum that enables children and staff to feel safe and secure in a school context and re-engages pupils in learning. ● Issues of performance review suspended ● New assessments may be needed ● Curriculum delivered as a rolling programme, or for extended or repeated phases, to accommodate a graduated return of students. ● Make all expectations clear, break tasks down to subsets and provide supportive and clear feedback during and after each subtask ● Scaffold the task and the skills required to achieve learning. ● Acknowledge successes and provide explicit feedback on what has been achieved. ● Modelling optimism and encouraging them to see the strengths and coping skills they have and encouraging them to notice acts of courage and kindness will help develop a sense of personal efficacy and future. ● Teachers should verbalise their metacognitive thinking ('What do I know about problems like this? What ways of solving them have I used before?') as they approach and work through a task. ● Set aside time for departments to build on their bank of recorded lessons - can be very helpful for absent students/cover lessons in the future.

SOME students and staff receive focussed school based interventions, personalised to their needs.		RESET for SAFETY Routine, Structure	RECOVER for WELLBEING Friendship and Social Interaction	REBUILD for LEARNING Opportunity, Freedom
TIER 2	Questions	- In light of what we know about the disparities in the risk and outcomes of Covid-19, what implications does that have for our student and staff base? - How do we train staff in new roles or procedures on a rolling basis? - Are there staff/students who cannot return for a lengthy period of time? - What can be done to enable staff to work flexibly?	- How can schools identify those children and families who may require more support at this time? - How will all home learning experiences be valued? - How are parents' views/concerns included in informing what will happen upon return? - Have there been bereavements within the school community? How can you find out? How will you provide support around this? - How will we support staff who have experienced bereavement or other trauma? - How do we support staff who have substantial or increased caring responsibilities?	- How do we effectively identify learners who have fallen behind? - How do we respond to learners who have fallen significantly behind? - Are there any additional services the school can draw upon to help close the knowledge gaps? - In what ways can motivation and aspiration levels be increased for 'disengaged' learners? - How can we equip students to support their peers? - How can we use student experience of this global shift to help them identify their individual learning styles or ways they retain information?
	Examples	- One to one support around routines - Support with sleep routines - Meet with family **Staff** - Flexible start/finish times - Working from home in non-contact periods if possible	- Offered Art / Music therapy sessions - Use of garden/green space to help with healing process - Encourage children and young people to share their stories about ways in which their community helped each other - Have more than one caring adult in the room to be available for additional support or work with children and young people in small groups. - Have a bereavement policy in place - Taxi/liftshare budget for those reliant on public transport	- Use solution focused conversations to find out about these. (Asking with interest, 'what are you good at? And what else?' and if possible deepening the conversation 'When you are at your best what are you pleased and proud to notice about yourself? What does this tell you about what you might be capable of?') - School based mentoring to develop students' metacognitive knowledge of how they learn—their knowledge of themselves as a learner, of strategies, and of tasks—is an effective way of improving pupil outcomes. - Provide a place to calm down such as a 'peaceful corner', where children or young people take time out in a quiet place to regain composure and reduce stimulation.

A **FEW** students and families may need a longer and deeper recovery period. Schools work with multi agency support to facilitate this.		**RESET for SAFETY** Routine, Structure	**RECOVER for WELLBEING** Friendship and Social Interaction	**REBUILD for LEARNING** Opportunity, Freedom
TIER 3	Questions	● In light of what we know about the disparities in the risk and outcomes of Covid-19, what implications does that have for our student and staff base? ● Are there staff/students who cannot return for a lengthy period of time? ● Who will have overview/responsibility for students who are not on site?	● How will we know when a young person's mental health has become a barrier to them being able to function? ● Do we have knowledge of and links with external organisations who can provide expertise and support for students and staff?	● How do we effectively identify learners who have fallen behind? ● How do we respond to learners who have fallen significantly behind? ● Are there any additional services the school can draw upon to help close the knowledge gaps? ● In what ways can motivation and aspiration levels be increased for 'disengaged' learners? ● How can we use student experience of this global shift to help them identify their individual learning styles or ways they retain information?
	Examples	● Phased reintroduction ● Maintain small group teaching for longer period ● Home/School link worker	● Offered counselling from CAMHS/ PlacetoBe ● Family conferencing ● Regular check ins with staff who are struggling ● Cook & Talk activities Groups of 8 children with 2 adults come together to make something. The table leader gives step by step cooking instructions and at each step the leader reads out a scripted question for the pairs or groups to discuss. ● CPD and information sharing about vulnerable students ● Consider workload reduction / phased reintegration to face to face contact	● Focus on what has been learnt and build on that ● The strategy of 'Stop, Think, Do' is a good mantra for teachers. Stop and think about what the behaviour might be communicating, were these patterns of behaviour evident previously or could they be a reaction to recent events and a result of painful memories being stirred up? Respond calmly and clearly. These children and young people need to be aware that their behaviour has consequences however they require patient teaching, reminders and clear boundaries and expectations that are repeatedly explained in different ways and enforced consistently. Respond to the underlying emotions rather than the behaviour.