

Going Forward Guidance for School Staff

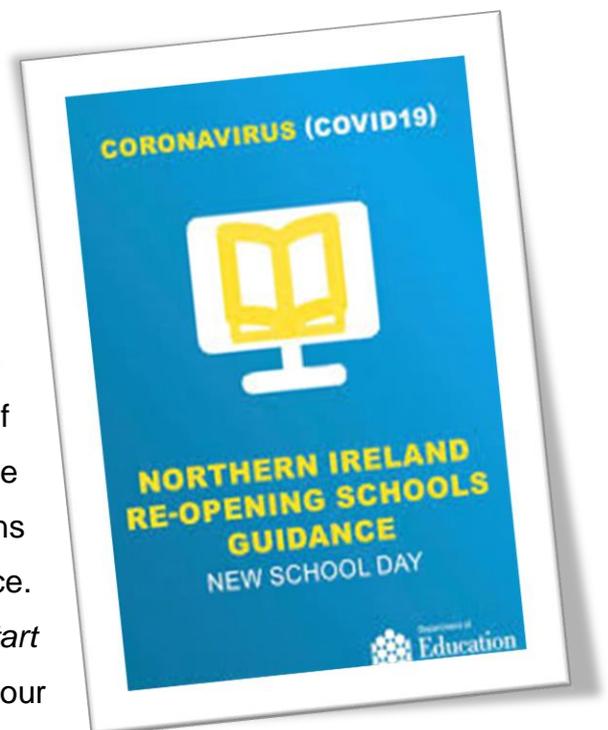


The 'New School Day'

Whilst planning for the imminent return to school, we recognise that these are unprecedented times and there is inevitable uncertainty about how this return will look in reality. We would like to take a moment to acknowledge the hard work of staff in schools who support our students in a nurturing and creative manner.

Moving forward, we know that we will be required to navigate with due care and diligence and, therefore, the most important thing to remember is to ground everything in the familiar by adopting what you and the young person with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) are already familiar with as a starting place. Compassion and understanding will be crucial during this period of change and a *Recovery Curriculum* (<https://www.evidenceforlearning.net/recoverycurriculum/>) which acknowledges that children may have experienced loss through anxiety, trauma or bereavement is worth consideration.

As you may already be aware, the recent publication of *Coronavirus (Covid-19) Northern Ireland Reopening Schools Guidance 'New School Day'* (June 2020) seeks to provide additional practical support and guidance for schools planning the return of our young people to school. We recognise that this project, based on government guidance, sets out a number of recommendations on how schools should operate safely. It is worth noting that these recommendations may change in accordance with governmental advice. Our aim is to support the *Education Restart* programme by suggesting how we can assist our young people with ASD as they return to school.



Before the Return to School

We recommend preparing children for what school may look like **before** they return by communicating with families in advance perhaps with the use of short videos or visuals. Speaking with families to learn what measures were successfully in place at home during lockdown will be valuable, especially if incorporated in school. Take time to listen to children and young people, find out about their lockdown experience and provide them with an awareness of new rules and routines, in advance, to enable a gradual return using a blended approach should assist.

The AAIS have added an additional chapter to our booklet, *Staying Safe: - Dealing with COVID-19. A Booklet for Post-primary Pupils*. Chapter 5 specifically addresses the return to school. This booklet, and further resources, are available in the Home Learning resources section of the AAIS website:

<https://www.eani.org.uk/services/pupil-support-services/autism-advisory-intervention-service-aais>



As we enter a very different phase in education, returning to school after lockdown, we all need to work together to achieve success. We hope the information included here will provide an opportunity for paying attention to some of the important things we may sometimes overlook, for introducing new concepts for consideration whilst also providing time for reflection.

The Swan Approach

Dr Pooky Knightsmith, (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service), advocates the SWAN approach to returning to school:



Safe

- ❖ Communicate as much as possible with the parents/carers of pupils with ASD using simple and clear language to avoid confusion or fear
- ❖ Explain to families what they can expect when the school re-opens using a variety of mediums such as the school website, school Facebook page, school Twitter page, text messaging etc.
- ❖ Repetition and clarity are key to having a message heard and this, in turn, should lead to clearer understanding with the correct messages relayed to the child.

Pupils, staff and families need to feel safe both physically and emotionally as they return to school. It will be important to ensure that rules and routines are clear, simple, consistent and memorable so that everyone understands. Most children with ASD like rules and predictability as these make them feel safe and secure. When we are safe, we make better decisions, we are more able to learn and we can follow the rules.

Welcoming

Create an environment that follows the rules, keeps everyone safe and is warm and welcoming. We all need to feel that we belong and students want to know that you are genuinely delighted they are back at school. We feel less anxious when we know what to expect and this is particularly the case for pupils with ASD. It may be that our young people's brains will feel overloaded at first but allow time for them to adapt to the new surroundings, offering support where required.

Have an awareness that certain smells and sounds in school may need some time to adjust to and offer structure to pupils by means of a visual timetable. Calm class transitions should assist in building up learning stamina, beneficial to *all* students. The use of learning breaks, wellbeing displays and mindfulness exercises should assist in creating a welcoming and friendly environment.

All together

Regardless of your role or job title in school, we all need to work together to make the child feel included and create a framework of support as they return. The importance and value of both teachers and classroom assistants working together to build an awareness of the needs of the student should not be underestimated.

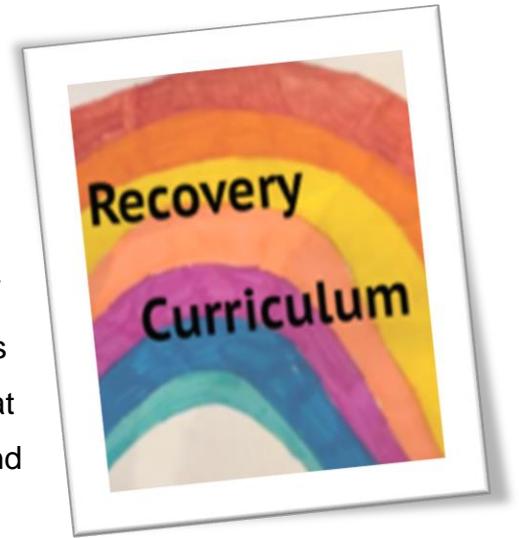
Nurturing

Uncertainty can make things harder to manage and it is likely that we will be on a high state of alert as we return to school, meaning our brains are not primed for learning. Students may have forgotten about how learning takes place in a school environment surrounded by other people and may feel overwhelmed at first. Readiness for learning will need to be progressed slowly and carefully; this has been a long period away from school.

Work with your young person to write down their routine and consider assisting students to identify the things they might find easiest to try first before trying to do everything at once. Overall, there will be enormous value in establishing a nurturing atmosphere where transition can take place gradually and successfully, supported by all involved in the interests of the young person.

The Recovery Curriculum

Professor Barry Carpenter, Professor of Mental Health in Education, Oxford Brookes University and Matthew Carpenter, Principal, Baxter College, Kidderminster, Worcestershire, have developed a think piece entitled, *A Recovery Curriculum: Loss and Life for our Children and Schools Post Pandemic*. This is an analysis of the potential anxiety and trauma that children may have experienced during lockdown and refers to five 'levers':



Lever 1 - Relationships

As our students return to the classroom, discuss coping strategies that helped them cope with big changes in the past and use these once again.

“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”. (Carpenter, 2020, Lever 1)

Re-form relationships with your pupils by discussing and using their special interests, things that make them happy. Investing in relationships, displaying kindness and humanity, will be crucial to support everyone. Relationships are key and if we consider ‘*every interaction is an intervention*’ (Treisman, 2017) to help children thrive and flourish, we will create an environment to laugh together, relax and teach our brain that school is a safe place.



Physical activity can help to manage anxiety and release tension. Using deep breathing exercises can be beneficial; download apps such as *Headspace* or *Smiling Mind* to help them with mindfulness and breathing exercises. Facilitating short brain breaks during the day should ultimately increase students' focus and productivity. Relationship building will lay the foundations for any future learning.



Lever 2 Community

Listening to our young people and finding out about their lockdown experience will give us a better understanding of how this time has affected them. For example, are their parents key workers? Has a family member been infected with coronavirus? Have they lost someone to COVID-19? Allow time to both process information and formulate responses recognising we will all have had different experiences:-

“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” (Carpenter, 2020, Lever 2)

Many pupils will have enjoyed lockdown, feeling less pressure whilst at home. Build in time to talk about emotions through perhaps a daily circle time session, a worry box in which pupils can post their concerns, a mindfulness session or a check-in during your lesson where pupils can use a thumbs up, thumbs down, or thumbs-to-the-side to indicate feelings. If families are initially reluctant to send their child to school it is most likely because of a genuine concern about their child's well-being. A swift personal connection will be important even if it takes place virtually. This reassuring approach might be all it takes to encourage the family to return their child to the classroom. Structure, routine and predictability will be crucial.

Lever 3 Transparent Curriculum

Limited executive function impacts upon organisational skills and moving to a 'new normal', navigating through different demands and modifications will no doubt be challenging for all. Employing a few simple strategies to support students, understanding that we learn in different ways and making the curriculum more accessible can make school life a little more manageable: -

"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" (Carpenter, 2020, Lever 3)

Temple Grandin states, *'words are like a second language to me...when somebody speaks to me, his words are instantly translated into pictures'* (Grandin, 2006) Visual supports help to provide routine and structure, encouraging independence, understanding and avoiding frustration and anxiety. One particularly useful visual is a timetable to assist students to follow the structure of the day. Remember to include a 'change card' to highlight any alterations to the normal schedule and pre-warn students of this change.

Checklists can be valuable as they capitalise on the visual strengths of the individual whilst also preparing the student for what is expected and assisting them with organisation. These lists take the uncertainty and associated anxiety out of tasks as students feel prepared for what lies ahead. Checklists for school bags ensure equipment is packed and unpacked appropriately whilst checklists used at home to remember additional equipment such as PE kit makes access to the curriculum that little bit easier.



The use of colour can be a powerful and motivating learning tool and, consequently, colour coding subjects and maps of the school can help young people with autism to develop independence by establishing clear, visual categories. For example, assigning yellow to the subject French ensures equipment is prepared in the yellow folder and the room for study identified easily on a map of the school using the colour yellow. Please remember that colour coding needs to be subtle and unobtrusive to make it a success. This all creates a sense of order, reduces anxiety and can aid communication, organisation and coping with change.



Lever 4 Metacognition

During lockdown, approaches to learning and the use of appropriate skills or strategies to solve a problem will have been very different for each of our students: -

“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”. (Carpenter, 2020, Lever 4)

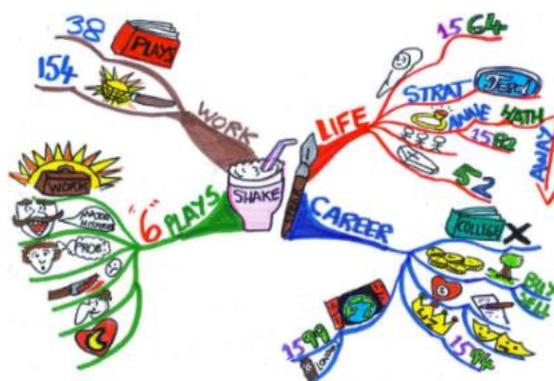
Baron-Cohen and Bolton (1993) proposed that children with Autism experience challenges in ‘Theory of Mind’. This is the ability to understand that other people have their own feelings, thoughts, ideas and opinions. This will have had less impact on routines whilst at home. Using visual strategies, such as the use of thought bubbles, social stories or comic strips will be helpful to provide perspective in a variety of situations.

Encourage students to think about how to recognise emotional needs and address these in a range of situations by providing children with subtle tools to assist emotional regulation.

These can take a variety of forms: emotional thermometers; pass cards to exit the classroom; different pen lids – red for I need to leave, blue for ready to work. If a child is struggling to self-regulate, remain calm and use a lower but firm tone of voice. Be aware of possible triggers and avoid these if possible. Reduce expectations of behaviour if the child is anxious and if a child displays challenging behaviour, take a step back and analyse the situation; a simple visual support or fidget toy to cope in the anxiety-provoking situation may be all that is required. During lockdown, meeting sensory needs might have been very different for pupils with ASD. Pupils may stim, meaning that some may flap, rock, fidget or use verbal stimming more often than normal in order to self-regulate as they adjust to new routines and expectations.



Visual learners could use mind maps to create memorable and organised diagrams to recall important information. Verbal cues of “First this... (a non-preferred activity) Then this...” (a preferred activity) may help the student with a better understanding of what is expected and the use of a visual timer allows the student time to prepare for change and avoids abruptness.



Build an awareness of personal thoughts, behaviours and physical state associated with emotions and take note of changes when feeling anxious.

Lever 5 Space

Many people on the autism spectrum have difficulty processing everyday sensory information with senses being over or under sensitive, or both, at different times, affecting behaviour and responses,

“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”. (Carpenter, 2020, Lever 5)

Furniture arrangement in classrooms provides the physical structure that students with ASD often need to create physical boundaries. It is also worth considering the environmental impact on students. *Is the classroom too busy with display materials? What about the seating location of the child in the classroom?*

Having a chill out space to visit if they feel overwhelmed. If this is not possible, a portable sensory bag may be worth considering – this could contain lotions, car fresheners with chosen smells, a whistle with the pea removed, stress balls etc.



Brain breaks are important for students and for teachers! Often, we expect students to sit and work on learning activities for an extended period. When students sit for a long time, it is more difficult for them to listen attentively and they become restless. Introducing brain breaks allows space to take a break from concentrating on a task, enabling the brain to rest and recuperate ready to begin the next phase of learning. Research on the benefits of mindfulness is ever expanding and there are many resources widely available for use in the classroom to encourage simple mindfulness exercises to aid relaxation and concentration.

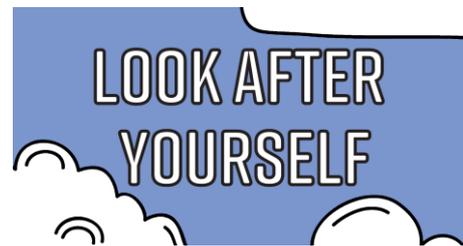
To reduce anxiety, there are a few other simple tips to consider. For example, to gain a young person’s attention at the start of an activity use the pupil’s name; keep instructions short and precise; explain idioms and metaphors; avoid sarcasm and ambiguity and always allow the student processing time to provide a response or follow an instruction. There will be times when it will important to take a step back, have a deep breath and create some space which might be physical or, equally as important, emotional space.

Conclusion

We hope this booklet has provided you with the opportunity to reflect on the support that is already in existence in your classrooms. As you ask what you might start, stop, continue or change to support learning for all, perhaps alongside this consider why it matters and what you will need in order to make these changes occur. We have included links to a few additional resources that you may like to explore at your leisure to assist with this reflection.

During the weeks that lie ahead there will be obstacles to overcome but once you have started your new routine, stick to it. It will be of great assistance to your pupils to know that you are on

their side and, if they know what to expect, they will be better equipped to manage emotions and behaviour. Take care of your own emotional health and well-being as you make a physical return to school, let your students know you are on their side, acknowledge difficulties, focus on solutions and, above all, learn from your young person.



Reference Section

Baron- Cohen. S & Bolton, P. (1993). *Autism: The Facts*. Oxford University Press

Carpenter, B. (2020) *Evidence for Learning*

<https://www.evidenceforlearning.net/recoverycurriculum/> (last accessed 24/08/2020)

Grandin, T. (2006). *Thinking in Pictures*. Bloomsbury Publishing PLC.

Knightsmith, P. (2020) *Support a Safe and Secure Return to school using the SWAN Framework*. <https://elearning.creativeeducation.co.uk/courses/support-a-safe-successful-return-to-school-using-the-swan-framework/> (last accessed 24/08/2020)

Treisman, D. K. (2017). *Every Interaction is an Intervention*. Retrieved from Safe Hands Thinking Minds. <http://www.safehandsthinkingminds.co.uk/covid-anxiety-stress-resources-links/> (last accessed 24/08/2020)

Useful Websites

Below you will find links to some websites that may be useful for you to explore.

Education Authority Autism Advisory and Intervention Service (AAIS)

<https://www.eani.org.uk/services/pupil-support-services/autism-advisory-intervention-service-aais>

Department of Education Northern Ireland 'The New School Day'

<https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications/northern-ireland-re-opening-school-guidance-new-school-day>

Reach out ASC

There are a range of resources available on the Reachout ASC website, outlined below are links to those that you may find most valuable:

[https://www.reachoutasc.com/resources/transition-to-new-class.](https://www.reachoutasc.com/resources/transition-to-new-class)

About my Feelings

<https://www.reachoutasc.com/attachments/article/13/About%20my%20feelings.pdf>

My Lockdown Experience

<https://www.reachoutasc.com/attachments/article/13/My%20lockdown%20experience.pdf>

What is a School Bubble?

<https://www.reachoutasc.com/attachments/article/13/School%20Bubble%20SS%20.pdf>

Autistic Teenager's Guide on Returning to School

<https://www.reachoutasc.com/attachments/article/13/Teenager%20Guide%20by%20OT%20.pdf>

Sensory Needs:

<https://www.reachoutasc.com/blog/what-is-a-sensory-diet-and-how-do-i-implement-one-in-my-busy-classroom>

Recovery Curriculum:

<https://www.evidenceforlearning.net/recoverycurriculum/>

Mindfulness:

<https://www.smilingmind.com.au/>

<https://www.calm.com/>

Mental Health Support:

<https://www.pookyknightsmith.com/>

Social stories and Comic Strips:

<https://www.autism.org.uk/about/strategies/social-stories-comic-strips.aspx>



Appendix A: Additional Support and Suggestions for the New School Day

The following table identifies some of the *New School Day* protective guidelines issued by the Northern Ireland Executive to help decrease the spread of Covid-19 in schools. Included in the next few pages are the positive and negative impacts of each of these changes alongside recommendations and reasonable adjustments associated with the facilitation of a *Recovery Curriculum*. The information is a general outline with individualised approaches recommended for every child returning to school.

Government guidelines for schools on protective issues to reduce the risk of Covid-19	Potential impact on children with autism: Positives (+) Negatives (-)	Reasonable adjustments	Reasons for changes to be communicated with pupil	How this relates to the concept of a <i>Recovery Curriculum</i> .
Start of term is 24 August 2020 for Primary 7, Year 12 and Year 14 and all vulnerable children.	(+) This may provide a quieter, more controlled environment for those pupils who dislike larger groups.	✓ Provide clear and regular communication between school and parents/carers.	To reduce anxiety about returning to school by preparing the student for changes to the school environment.	Importance of wellbeing for pupils and parents. Staff need to be aware of own trauma and increased need for nurture. Pupils need to feel a sense of belonging, predictability, organisation, regulation, differentiation and relationships. Make time for personal greetings.

	<p>(-) Those pupils not part of these year groups may feel anxious due to the change in school routine.</p>	<p>✓ Arrange a visit to the school before returning. Alternatively, send students a video message or photographs of the school environment.</p> <p>✓ Access the AAIS <i>Transition Moving on Up, Restart Resources</i> and <i>Staying Safe: - Dealing with COVID-19. A Booklet for Post-primary Pupils</i> on the EA website.</p> <p>✓ Ensure there are other students</p>		
--	---	---	--	--

		familiar to the child returning at the same specified time.		
Staggered arrival and pick up times to limit interactions.	<p>(+) This will enable the pupil to enter the school in a regulated fashion, avoiding congestion.</p> <p>(+) Pupils led to a well-structured demarcated area will make it easier to follow direction and instruction.</p> <p>(-) Pupils will have limited opportunities for socialisation when entering school.</p>	<p>✓ Pupils issued with the same regular arrival and pick-up times each day.</p> <p>✓ Provide <i>Wait Cards</i> if a visual is required.</p> <p>✓ Use of a timer adhered to during these times.</p> <p>✓ A separate entrance may be beneficial.</p> <p>✓ SENco could identify those children that may</p>	<p>T</p> <p>o provide the opportunity to pre-plan for change therefore building confidence.</p>	<p>The use of friendly greetings on arrival.</p> <p>Provide clear organisation i.e. allocated time slots for arrival and pick-up times.</p> <p>Clear communication ie defined boundaries and areas clearly demarcated.</p>

	<p>(-) There will be less opportunity for role modelling of socialisation i.e. parents talking to teachers.</p> <p>(-) Some may feel anxious waiting for extended periods.</p>	<p>find waiting difficult and make all staff aware.</p> <p>✓ Use social stories or comic strips to prepare children for this wait time.</p> <p>✓ Prepare a plan in advance with the child about how this staggered time might look in reality.</p>		
<p>Where possible protective bubble strategy (for younger years)</p> <p>- Where full classes can not be accommodated –</p>	<p>(+) Pupils consistently grouped with at least one friend.</p> <p>(+) Limited interaction between unfamiliar groups.</p>	<p>✓ Identify at least one friend to join the ‘bubble’ to give a sense of control and reduce anxiety.</p>	<p>To provide a choice of peer to work with and gain a greater understanding of social distancing rules.</p>	<p>Identify pupil’s strengths/interests/needs and barriers to learning.</p> <p>Gather important contextual information and advice from external agencies.</p> <p>Completion of Individual Pupil Passport (see AAIS “Moving on Up” transfer pack).</p>

<p>minimum 50% face to face teaching contact time (remainder by remote learning).</p>	<p>(-) Pupil may become reliant on one individual.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Explain new system prior to starting school. ✓ Members of 'bubble' identified in advance. ✓ Use a motivator or identify a role that the student may like to play in the group eg counting students to ensure all are present. 		<p>Increase autonomy by selection of individuals that young person feels relaxed to work with during the day.</p>
<p>Hands should be washed thoroughly and regularly in the school at existing facilities using soap</p>	<p>(+) Reassuring as this will emphasise protection against virus.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Allow pupils to use unperfumed soap if required. ✓ ✓ 	<p>To gain a better understanding that cleaning removes the virus.</p>	<p>Provide reassurance using clear communication. Identify a place to go to if overwhelmed. Self-regulation - using pictures, photos or an activity sequence to prompt hand washing.</p>

<p>and water, and this can be with tepid / lukewarm water.</p>	<p>(+) Some may enjoy the sensory experience of water. (-) Sensory issues may be affected eg the smell of cleaning products. (-) Some may not like wet/soapy hands. (-) Some may dislike the smell of soap.</p>	<p>✓ Discuss the importance of hand washing.</p>		<p>Modelling may be required for reluctant hand washers.</p>
<p>Where pupils cannot be in school for all or part of the time, a 'blended learning' approach will be implemented.</p>	<p>(+) Pupils shielding who feel anxious when in school will feel less anxiety if not returning. (+) Online lessons may be a preferred</p>	<p>✓ Potential to arrange Zoom/Skype meetings for the pupil to chat with a friend or adult.</p>	<p>To understand this approach will help to avoid larger groups and lessen the chance of contracting or spreading the virus.</p>	<p>A range of technology and social media platforms should be used to re-connect staff and pupils. Reassure pupils and facilitate peer-mentoring sessions/buddy systems to allow pupils to re-connect and develop a feeling of safety, both in the home and moving forward towards the school environment.</p>

	<p>learning style for some.</p> <p>(+) Those who feel social anxiety will feel less pressure learning from home.</p> <p>(-) Less social interaction.</p> <p>(-) Less opportunity for face-to-face time with a trusted adult outside the home environment.</p>			<p>Encourage creation of Covid-19 time capsules, scrapbooks, short films/clips to record experiences during lockdown. Share stories, identify emotions and celebrate successes to develop a sense of wellbeing.</p>
<p>While travel in corridors is viewed as low risk, schools should encourage a 'one way' system to maintain distancing.</p>	<p>(+) Pupils may feel comfortable about social distancing, as other children will not be entering their personal space.</p> <p>(-) Students may have little</p>	<p>✓ Place arrows around the school to show the direction to walk.</p> <p>✓ Mark out lines or a divider through the middle of the</p>	<p>To provide pupils with an understanding of how to move through the school in a safe way.</p>	<p>Develop risk assessments to identify and reduce risks while travelling around the school.</p> <p>Use visual cues as reminders.</p> <p>Provide opportunities for pupils to ask questions if uncertain.</p> <p>Use a reassuring tone to create a culture of calm.</p>

	<p>awareness of personal space, so may unconsciously approach others. (-) Pupils may feel frustrated if there is a more direct route to their destination.</p>	<p>corridor to establish one-way systems. ✓ Allow the pupil to leave class earlier than their peers. ✓ Give the pupil a map and identify key areas using colour coding. ✓ Provide both verbal and visual reminders about the new systems.</p>		
<p>The safe and practical use of toilets and hand-wash facilities should be considered by each school.</p>	<p>(+) Pupils will feel safer where social distancing measures are in place. (+) Toilet areas may be less congested if</p>	<p>✓ Additional staffing may be required to assist pupils who require regular trips to the toilet. ✓ Toilet passes may be useful to help</p>	<p>To enable pupils to access toilet facilities at particular times to help reduce anxiety and physiological stress.</p>	<p>Reassure pupils about safety in the school environment. Use visual cues or reminders to communicate a visit to the toilet.</p>

	<p>usage times are staggered.</p> <p>Therefore, there will be less social interaction.</p> <p>(-) Pupils may find it difficult to follow potential time structures.</p> <p>(-) Pupils may find it hard to wait for a specified time to go to the toilet due to urgency.</p> <p>(-) More frequent handwashing may result in times when toilets are more congested.</p>	<p>students discretely communicate when they may need to leave the room.</p> <p>✓ Ensure that toilets do not become crowded.</p> <p>✓ Visual cues and reminders may be beneficial.</p>		
--	---	--	--	--

<p>...thought should be given to alternative approaches to the safe provision of lunches, physical education (PE) or other activities usually undertaken in such spaces. This may, for example, require increased use of outdoor amenities... Staggered lunch breaks should also be considered... Potentially this may require pupils to eat at their desk, or alternative locations such as outside,</p>	<p>(+) Less social interaction. (+) Fewer people in the lunch hall reduces the level of noise. (-) Sensory issues- the smell of food lingering in the classroom if lunches are eaten in this environment. (-) Not being able to socialise with peers. (-) Limited movement opportunities.</p>	<p>✓ If the pupil needs time out of the room or hall, allocate a safe space or alternative room for them to access.</p>	<p>To understand that if limited areas are accessed this will reduce the risk of virus potentially spreading.</p>	<p>Provide opportunities for additional choices during lunch periods such as motivational activities, self-regulation, calm boxes etc. Buddy system to develop social interaction and reduce levels of anxiety.</p>
---	---	---	---	--

<p>using disposable containers, packaging and cutlery, which will be supplied as part of the meal service by the catering team.</p>				
<p>Increased Separation – the default position is that adults should stay 2m apart in line with PHA guidelines but children and young people should aim to maintain 1m where a protective bubble strategy is in place.</p>	<p>(+) Increased personal space. (+) Reduced sensory sensitivities. (+) Less social interaction. (-) Less social interaction. (-) Feeling of being unsupported.</p>	<p>✓ Clear markings and visual cues. ✓ Where relevant, place pupil’s desk in the same area prior to lockdown.</p>	<p>To increase understanding of the benefits of reducing touching and potentially transmitting the virus from one person to the next.</p>	<p>Provide validation and reassurance for pupils and explain the reason why there has to be clear separation. Use markings to identify boundaries around seating areas. Provide visual reminders.</p>

<p>Very large spaces may be repurposed to accommodate multiple groups, for example, by repurposing a dining hall or assembly hall to provide general classroom accommodation. Temporary screens may be used to divide the space to provide appropriate separation between groups. If this approach is adopted, thought should be given to alternative approaches to the</p>	<p>(+) Provide additional movement breaks. (+) Classes may be in larger spaces i.e. gym hall (+) May prefer learning outside, not confined in classroom with sensory overload. (-) May be overwhelmed if classes are in larger areas or screens are in place. (-) Reduced interaction. (-) Increased anxiety regarding change in routine.</p>	<p>✓ Identify areas for lessons on daily schedule. ✓ Inform pupils of changes well in advance. ✓ Facilitate a physical or virtual visit of new class areas. ✓ Visual cues as reminders. ✓ Identify an area as a safe place.</p>	<p>To reassure that changes are temporary to ensure the health and safety by limiting social contact with large groups.</p>	<p>Provide additional time i.e. time to talk to peers. Organisation- inform about changes and allow pupils to ask questions. Pupil could potentially decorate new spaces to establish ownership and a sense of belonging.</p>
---	--	---	---	---

<p>safe provision of lunches, physical education (PE) or other activities usually undertaken in such spaces. This may, for example, require increased use of outdoor amenities.</p>	<p>(-) Sensory sensitivities. (-) Unfamiliar with outdoor lessons. (-) Risk of less structure to lessons and may find it difficult to differentiate between lesson time and break time.</p>			
<p>Schools should also consider discouraging or prohibiting children from bringing anything from home and, at the end of each school day, limiting/preventing shared resources</p>	<p>(+) This may assist with personal organisation and prevent additional items being lost or left in school. (-) Pupils may not have a motivator/personal comforter.</p>	<p>✓ Identify clearly and in advance personal items allowed into the classroom. ✓ Provide a “drop-off” box/area to place personal items.</p>	<p>To reassure that this is for personal health and safety.</p>	<p>Identify personal objects that can stay in school. Use motivator/special interest pictures on work desk. Create and provide access to a Happiness Box. https://www.evidenceforlearning.net/recoverycurriculum/</p>

<p>from being taken home.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Reassure pupil of times or spaces when they can access personal items, identified on the daily schedule. ✓ Communicate clearly with pupils and parents/carers about requirements using equipment checklists. 		
<p>Limiting Teacher and Pupil Movement – to minimise the need for large numbers of pupil transits, it may be beneficial to keep groups of pupils in one location and</p>	<p>(+) Pupil may feel safer. (+) Decreased anxiety as pupil will not be in close proximity to others or have to move as often.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Daily schedule to indicate movements. ✓ Inform pupils about transitions or changes in advance. ✓ Additional supervision and 	<p>To explain this is to reduce the number of children in the class and avoid cross contamination.</p>	<p>Practise mindfulness as a class. Incorporate movement breaks within the daily schedule i.e. calming and regulation exercises. Provide a map/seating plan for the pupil. Provide the opportunity for student to select a peer to be seated nearby.</p>

<p>have teachers move to them.</p>	<p>(+) May prefer the familiarity of being in the same place (-) Decreased opportunities for self-regulation. (-) Increased stress/anxiety levels if groups are kept together in one place for protracted period. (-) May need movement breaks.</p>	<p>support to provide movements throughout the day to assist with self-regulation. ✓ Schedule breaks into timetable. ✓ Regular monitoring with a trusted adult to ensure emotional regulation.</p>		
<p>Consideration may be given to a “no bell” strategy, which allows a degree of flexibility on class start/finish times and avoids the</p>	<p>(+) Sensory sensitivities decreased due to reduction in noise. (-) Limited cues to initiate movements.</p>	<p>✓ Use different cues to identify changeovers. ✓ Use countdown timers to indicate time.</p>	<p>To reassure pupils that small changes are necessary to keep everyone safe.</p>	<p>Engage pupils in mindfulness and self-regulation throughout the day, building in regular movement breaks. Reassure pupil frequently. Provide validation about reasons why we have to change times etc.</p>

<p>intensity of flow which many schools experience. It also provides a calm and managed experience which better prepares staff and pupils for the next session.</p>	<p>(-) Increased stress especially for those with rigidity of thought.</p>			<p>Explain physiologically what is happening and reassure that they can manage moving, starting or finishing at different times. Celebrate success.</p>
<p>Schools should consider flexible timetabling as a means of reducing movement of pupils and staff around the school environment.</p>	<p>(+) Pupil may not be required to be in school every day due to blended learning. (+) Additional structure to the school day- limited surprises/ad hoc activities. (+) Fewer demands.</p>	<p>✓ Use of a daily schedule. ✓ Use <i>First and Then</i> reward system. ✓ Use countdowns to transitions. ✓ Build in movement, sensory breaks during the day.</p>	<p>To understand that this should help to reduce crowding and risk of virus transmission.</p>	<p>Predictability – try to keep the time for each activity the same each day. Allow a familiar peer to share the same timings. Facilitate preferred activities to follow less preferred activities. Provide countdowns to transitions. Reassure pupils in advance which staff member will be teaching them. Allow pupils to ask questions.</p>

	<p>(-) May not be learning favourite subject.</p> <p>(-) Activities may not follow previous daily schedule.</p> <p>(-) Additional stress as pupil may not be aware of changes.</p>			<p>Punctuate the day/schedule with additional activities that allows self-regulation and co-regulation with peers.</p> <p>Enable the pupil to engage in creative/sensory activities to contribute to a calm environment.</p>
<p>Every effort should be made to decrease interactions between groups and, if workable, ensure social distancing is considered within such groups and adhered to between</p>	<p>(+) May prefer smaller assemblies.</p> <p>(+) May have found sitting in assembly difficult due to sensory overload.</p> <p>(-) May no longer feel a part of a wider school community.</p>	<p>✓ Seat the pupil at the end of the row if meeting in small group so they can leave if feeling overwhelmed.</p> <p>✓ Ensure any adaptations to environment are in place to support sensory needs.</p>	<p>To explain that this will reduce the number of children in the hall in close proximity to each other.</p>	<p>Display happy achievements or memories around school to enable feeling of community.</p> <p>Predictability – consistent day/time if having small group assemblies.</p> <p>Set clear rules.</p> <p>Seat child near familiar peer.</p> <p>Encourage self-regulation.</p>

<p>such groups at all times. <i>Therefore, initially there will not be whole school assemblies to attend.</i></p>				
<p>The opening of doors and windows should be encouraged to increase natural ventilation and also to reduce contact with door handles. However, propping open of doors into corridors, external doors, security access systems and</p>	<p>(+/-) May reduce/increase sensory overload depending on the circumstances. (+/-) May prefer doors and windows closed or open depending on circumstances.</p>	<p>✓ Seat the pupil away from or near the door or window, depending on personal preference. ✓ Monitor environmental factors, which may affect the students' sensory needs.</p>	<p>To limit use of door handles and aid ventilation.</p>	<p>Provide reassurance to child. Clearly communicate why this has to happen. Visual signs on door as reminders.</p>

<p>any other fire safety doors is prohibited. It should be sufficient for windows to be open dependent on climates and for existing mechanical ventilation where desired to achieve thermal comfort.</p>				
<p>Frequently touched surfaces should be cleaned regularly, with cleaning products appropriate for the purpose and surface. A system to confirm regular cleaning (frequency</p>	<p>(+) May prefer a tidier, cleaner environment. (-) Sensory issues eg smell of cleaning products.</p>	<p>✓ Ensure child is aware of how to communicate needs if overwhelmed by smells to enable prompt action.</p>	<p>To acknowledge that cleaning eliminates the virus.</p>	<p>Reassurance. Clear communication. Space – allow child access to a safe place if feeling overwhelmed. Self-regulation.</p>

<p>and standard) should be implemented.</p>				
<p>Schools should follow latest guidance on attendance for children and young people who have health conditions, who live with people with health conditions or who are pregnant.</p> <p><i>Attendance at school may be varied depending on situation of each pupil- shielding or</i></p>	<p>(+) Pupils may enjoy staying at home, as they feel safe. (+) Pupils will want to engage in social interaction with their friends (-) Less social interaction. (-) Concerns with missing activities. (-) Difficulties with transition back to school.</p>	<p>✓ Use social stories to explain why children may not be able to attend school everyday. ✓ If anxious about returning to the school building, use motivators or transition cards to assist. ✓ Encourage the use of technology to allow pupils to engage with teachers and friends.</p>	<p>To reinforce that social distancing and shielding at home helps to keep everyone safe and prevents transmission of the virus.</p>	<p>Visual record of attendance. Celebrate attendance. Listen to experience of the child at home.</p>



We can beat
this.

<i>vulnerable Pupil(s)</i> <i>etc.</i>				
---	--	--	--	--

