

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS and DISABILITY PRACTICAL RESOURCES



INTRODUCTION

Children and young people with SEND may experience a number of difficulties and challenges. This may be because they have difficulty saying what they want to, understanding what is being said to them or they do not understand or use social rules of communication. Some children will need support in all areas of the curriculum due to a level of learning need. As these children and young people return to school following Covid19 – they may have additional challenges which you may need to consider.

A working group has identified what these challenges may be and collated a number of resources which schools and settings may find useful. Each resource was developed in partnership with the Specialist Teaching and Learning Service, Kent Educational Psychology Service, KCC and partner agencies within Kent.

Those who experience **COMMUNICATION and INTERACTION DIFFICULTIES** may need help with the following:

- ✚ Understanding the need for social distancing and being able to do it
 - ✚ Understanding hygiene measures and practices
- ✚ Missing their parents/family after being at home with them for several weeks or missing home
 - ✚ Regular staff changes daily or within the day
 - ✚ Increasing and/or fluctuating levels of anxiety
- ✚ being in different classrooms/areas to work/participate in activities
- ✚ sensory changes in environment – for those who have been at school and those at home
- ✚ lack of support they are used too – e.g. adult support, break out areas, intervention groups

[Resources containing strategies and downloadable resources are available here.](#)

COGNITION and LEARNING NEEDS

Children with cognition and learning difficulties may have:
low levels of attainment, difficulty in acquiring skills (notably in literacy and numeracy),
difficulty in dealing with abstract ideas and generalising from experience and
associated difficulties, notably in speech and language (particularly for younger children)
and in social and emotional development.

On the page that follows you will find suggestions and resources that might help you to help children and young people overcome these challenges:

CONSIDERATION/CHALLENGE	SUGGESTION	ONLINE RESOURCES
Child's concerns around lost learning time, different ways of learning and learning gaps.	<p>Show children how you plan to address these gaps, consult and co-construct. Value and celebrate the learning they have been able to do independently at home.</p> <p>Teach new routines to support learning.</p>	<p>A Recovery Curriculum</p>
Children may have difficulty understanding the pandemic and the new rules required e.g. around handwashing, distancing etc.	<p>Provide the rules before children return to school, for example by PowerPoint with short, clear rules, social story supported by visuals, leaflet/posters with pictures</p>	<p>Communicate in print – Widgitonline.com</p> <p>Carole Gray Social Stories</p>
TA support will be challenging because of social distancing rules.	<p>Use TASK BOARD approach</p> <p>Set out clear steps and self-help strategies</p> <p>Free access to online programmes – Clicker/Sound Progress</p> <p>Use object or visual signs</p> <p>Social Distancing games to play</p>	<p>Now and Next Board Instruction Cards</p>
Manipulatives and other concrete resources may not be available because of hygiene reasons.	<p>Named zippy bags with individual resources for each child. To include for example maths manipulatives, sound mats, etc.</p> <p>Make greater use of technology</p> <p>Utilise iPad apps.</p> <p>Have a clearly labelled box where used manipulatives are put after use by a pupil for cleaning before next pupil can use them.</p>	<p>Printable Numicon Shapes</p> <p>Prioritise laptops / iPads for pupils with SEND / vulnerable pupils</p> <p>Apps that offer Maths and Reading visual support</p>
Difficulty planning learning because of different levels of home learning and assessment challenges	<p>Plan lessons which can be accessed by different ability levels that include:</p> <p>Class challenges</p> <p>Greater use of outdoors</p> <p>Use of Learning Apps</p> <p>Individual programmes and interventions can target specific gaps.</p> <p>Listening books can offer a stress-free way to access high quality texts without the pressure of reading for those who find this difficult.</p>	<p>SWAN framework Plan Bee Teach Your Monster To Read SNIP Literacy programme</p> <p>Harper Collins – Listen for free Stories audible Listening B60Ks Load2Learn</p>
TA is absent or needs to support other pupils, so children are unable to produce written work independently to demonstrate learning	<p>Plan lessons which value alternative ways of reporting back / demonstrate learning without the need to write, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graphic or visual responses • Oral or auditory responses • Dramatic or performance responses • 3-D or spatial responses • Movement or kinaesthetic responses <p>Offer assistive technology to record work, for example dictation.</p>	<p>Choices 4 Learning</p> <p>Speech to text software:</p> <p>MyStudyBar from www.callscotland.org.uk</p>

SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS (SEMH)

This resource has been developed by professionals working in Kent in May 2020 (namely, Andy Young, Liz Ross and Alison Goodsell- Specialist Teachers and Kelly Underdown, Educational Psychologist). Thanks go to Northamptonshire Educational Psychology Service who shared their resources which helped to inform this document.

INTRODUCTION

Research has identified five key principles for supporting all children and young people manage the transition back to education after covid-19. These will be particularly relevant when considering supporting pupils with SEMH needs.

Strategies/support should be implemented in a graduated approach depending on the developmental needs of the child/young person and the response to intervention. For further details around supporting vulnerable pupils (e.g. children in care) and pupils experiencing high levels of anxiety please see the resources developed by the relevant working parties.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS FOR SUPPORTING CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SOCIAL, EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS (SEMH) TO REINTEGRATE BACK TO EDUCATION SETTINGS FOLLOWING COVID-19

CREATE A SENSE OF SAFETY

- ✚ Ensure staff wellbeing first (this is key!)
- ✚ Communicate with parents to help reduce their anxieties
- ✚ Create a climate of nurture and structure
- ✚ Support the transition to the education setting

SUPPORT EMOTIONAL LITERACY

- ✚ Staff to understand the link between emotion and behaviour
- ✚ Provide graduated approaches to supporting emotional literacy at the child's developmental level
- ✚ Consider creative learning opportunities

PROMOTE A SENSE OF SELF-EFFICACY

(belief that we have control over what is happening and that our actions generally lead to positive outcomes)

- ✚ Consider ways to gain children and young people's views
- ✚ Celebrate strengths and progress

SUPPORT SOCIAL CONNECTEDNESS

- ✚ Reinforce a sense of community (in the education setting)
- ✚ Consider peer support systems
- ✚ Provide opportunities to re-connect with key staff members

PROMOTING HOPE

- ✚ Staff to model optimism and a 'can do' attitude
- ✚ Provide opportunities to recognise and celebrate courage and kindness



CREATE A SENSE OF SAFETY: It is important that all adults, children and young people feel safe upon their return to their education setting, especially those with SEMH needs. This can be supported by:

- ✚ **Ensuring staff feel emotionally** contained themselves before working with vulnerable children and young people so that they can provide containment and reciprocity solihullapproachparenting.com/working-with-covid. For helpful, practical strategies on supporting staff wellbeing see the documents 'Transition, recovery and learning in the aftermath of a pandemic' by Biborough Educational Psychology consultation service. This can be accessed via: services2schools.org.uk.
- ✚ **Acknowledge that parents** will be feeling (understandably anxious) about reintegration. Hence, it is important to communicate regularly with all parents (providing clear information e.g. around risk assessments). Consider vulnerable parents who may need more personalised/intensive support.
- ✚ **Supporting the transition** to existing or new education settings is fundamental, particularly for children and young people with SEMH needs (who may require more intensive support). Ideally this should begin prior to the transition, for example, through meeting virtually with parents/carers to explore the child/young person's experience of lockdown and helpful resources/strategies (e.g. considering transition objects). It may be helpful to offer children/young people resources to familiarise them with the setting (e.g. virtual tours, pictures of key staff etc). For some, opportunities to re-connect with trusted staff members will be helpful.
- ✚ **In order to support children and young people's emotional wellbeing**, the environment should provide nurture and structure. Where possible, continue with routine activities or use visual support (e.g. Social Stories and visual timetables to communicate changes/new routines/expectations).
- ✚ **Staff should provide clear information** to children and young people about the strategies that they will implement. This should include explicit information about physical safety and how they can access pastoral support in their education setting.
- ✚ **It may be helpful to support children and young people's understanding of covid 19** (e.g. to challenge any misinterpretations). There should be consideration of how to explain social distancing to vulnerable children/young people (e.g. those experiencing attachment difficulties) as this may be interpreted as a hurtful rejection by key adults. Resources such as Social Stories are likely to be helpful). Provide opportunities for asking questions about these (e.g. through check-ins with a trusted adult or opportunities to write down/draw any thoughts or questions they have). In Early Years settings, these opportunities are likely to come about when you are engaging with the children in play or at story time. Be honest with them but keep your language simple and matter of fact (reinforced through visuals).

SUPPORT EMOTIONAL LITERACY: upon the return to education following covid-19, children and young people are likely to experience a range of emotions. It is important that these are normalised, and they are given support to help them manage their emotions and return to a state of calm. This can be supported using the following strategies:

- ✚ **It is important that staff** (particularly those working with pupils with SEMH needs) **recognise the link between emotion and behaviour**. Staff should provide opportunities to reflect on this with others (e.g. using functional behavioural approaches such as ABC charts or the STAR approach) and ensure there are support systems in place for staff.
- ✚ **Staff should model emotional regulation** and staying calm through providing opportunities for co-regulation (e.g. whole class/group mindfulness or yoga exercises).
- ✚ **Make use of emotion regulation strategies** in the classroom or nursery setting for all children/young people (e.g. feelings boards, calm corners, relaxation resources, ‘happiness boxes’). Some children may require more intensive support (e.g. using resources such as the zones of regulation or the Incredible 5-point scale (by Buron and Curtis) and through access to individual or small group emotional literacy intervention. Such intervention should be implemented using an assess-plan-do-review approach, overseen by a qualified teacher/SENCo. If there are wider professionals involved it may be helpful to liaise with them (if deemed appropriate by the SENCo).
- ✚ **Research has clearly demonstrated the effectiveness of creative learning opportunities to help create calm during the coronavirus pandemic**. For example, see research by [Karen Mak](#) from UCL and research from the March Network on [Creative Isolation](#).



PROMOTE A SENSE OF SELF- EFFICACY: Children need to feel they have some control over what is happening to them, and a belief that their actions are likely to lead to generally positive outcomes (Bandura, 1997). This will be particularly important now (following the covid-19 pandemic). This can be supported in the following ways:

- ✚ **Consider ways to seek children/young people’s views about strategies** that they would find helpful to support their reintegration (e.g. through circle time activities, suggestion boxes, sessions with a key adult for more vulnerable pupils). In nursery settings liaise with parents regarding how the child has responded to the coronavirus at home and any helpful strategies/resources. Ensure a consistent approach is used in the nursery setting.
- ✚ **Build strengths and capacity** - explore children/young people’s strengths and aspirations. Provide opportunities to experience success and to use their strengths.
- ✚ **Teach children and young people problem solving skills** (at a developmentally appropriate level) and help them to recall times when they have coped with change in the past.
- ✚ **Support children/young people to develop self-regulation strategies** (at a developmentally appropriate level) so that they feel in control of their emotions (see above).

PROMOTING HOPE: Whilst things may feel difficult at the moment, it is important that adults, children and young people feel things will get better and work out in future. They need to be provided with reassurance and understand that in the long term they will feel positive again.

- ✚ **Creating a sense of support for staff in the education setting is key.** Work together as a team and agree on how you will answer key questions and concerns.
- ✚ **Adults to model optimism and kindness.** 'If kindness is shown; then kindness will be received'. It is important to remember to be kind to yourself too.
- ✚ **Support children and young people to notice acts of courage and kindness** (e.g. using developmentally appropriate activities such as gratitude diaries or gratitude jars or just a simple 'you were kind' sticker for younger pupils).



LINKS TO STAFF TRAINING/FURTHER SUPPORT:

Reintegration Resource: (LINK) we have developed a resource for reintegration based on the 5 key principles in this document. This is in the form of two power points, one for Early Years/KS1 and another for Year 6/KS3/KS4. These resources can be used for SEMH first aid training for staff. Each power point consists of three sections – key messages for the Children and Young People and supporting staff

- ✚ [Training for staff around attachment theory by Andy Young](#) (Specialist teacher for SEMH):
- ✚ [Training for staff around emotional intelligence by Andy Young](#) (Specialist teacher for SEMH):
- ✚ [For further information](#) around implementing a Recovery Curriculum in Early Years settings.



HELPFUL WEBSITES/ONLINE RESOURCES:

- ✚ [Young minds website:](#)
- ✚ Schools in Mind resources via the [Anna Freud Centre:](#)
- ✚ [Beacon House website](#) particularly useful for supporting children and young people who have experienced trauma:
- ✚ [Kooth](#) offer web-based confidential support for young people aged 11-18 years around supporting mental health and emotional wellbeing
- ✚ 'Transition, recovery and learning in the aftermath of a pandemic' by [Biborough Educational Psychology consultation service.](#)
- ✚ [Social Story about the coronavirus](#) by Carol Gray:
- ✚ [ELSA network coronavirus story:](#)
- ✚ Free resources to support emotional wellbeing from [MINDUP:](#)
- ✚ [Free app for 10-18 year olds](#) specifically to support emotional wellbeing related to Covid 19:
- ✚ [Mindheart.co](#) - Online book about the coronavirus for younger children (under 7 years old):
- ✚ Relaxation and Calming Ideas for young children:
- ✚ [Childline.org.uk](#) – calm zone
- ✚ [Books Beyond Words](#) - Wordless stories-

THE AUTISM APPRENTICE

(in partnership with MMK Mind)

This free programme consists of 2 x 45 minute ZOOM sessions a week, one with [The Autism Apprentice](#) to discuss anything autism related that you may require support, advice or guidance. The emotional wellbeing session will be run with Maidstone and Mid-Kent MIND, with a trained counsellor.

[Parents/carers can self-refer](#). Please contact:
Sarah: 07713 482458
Donna: 07863 044632

NHS/KCC – provide a [Handbook for Families](#) on autism and ADHD in children.

DR RACHEL HUSSEY

delivers information sessions to families awaiting an autism assessment. She provides helpful information about:

[Anxiety](#)
[Sleep](#)
[Emotional Regulation and relationships](#)



PD, Complex Medical Needs and RISK ASSESSMENTS

In support of the [DfE Guidance](#) to help us identify pupils who are at greater risk for any reason, including shielding, further resources can be found on the [google](#) drive. These help to identify challenges to support those who are able to return to school and gives advice and recommendations to try to keep them and staff working with them safe and healthy. A [further section](#) highlights issues associated with those starting in a new school or setting.

In accordance with [DfE Guidance](#) all students with EHC plans should have a [risk assessment](#) completed to look at whether the identified provision can safely be delivered in school or their vulnerability indicates that they should continue to receive their education at home, in which case, school will need to make further arrangements to meet their needs.

[Risk Assessment guidance](#) is here.

SHARON McLAUGHLIN – SEND Family Engagement Officer

is responsible for building trust and confidence between SEND families and the local area. My key partners in building engagement are: Kent PACT, IASK and Healthwatch.

Moving back into whatever the new normal is when children and young people begin to return to school will offer a range of challenges for families from practicalities of maintaining social distancing to anxiety about coming out of social isolation.

NOTE TO SCHOOL STAFF: If I can help in any way by talking to parents/carers and trying to find out what might work to ease these anxieties, please feel free to contact me: **03000 419493** or **07824 707374**

[www.kent.gov.uk](#). If social distancing rules permit, I am happy to meet groups of parents and try to workshop ideas about how this might be made easier for them.



EARLY HELP SUPPORT FAMILIES and provide services that can be accessed locally at a time and place that suits families to help them do well, stay safe and resolve problems at the earliest possible opportunity, before they become more serious. Read their [Leaflet](#) on supporting families.



have an [active grant scheme](#) for families experiencing hardship: help families across the UK who are raising a disabled or seriously ill child or young person aged 17 or under.

[MIND.ORG.UK](#) – provides advice, support and information on an extensive set of topics from [sleep problems](#) to [suicidal thoughts](#).

KCC – COMMUNITY RESOURCES –

(document needs to embed). A list of up to date information about community resources and service news to support families in response to the Coronavirus situation across Kent.



[SAFE HANDS THINKING MINDS](#)

Dr Karen Treisman is a Highly Specialised Clinical Psychologist focusing on [dealing with trauma and stress through new and useful information](#), including videos.

NEED HELP SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD'S EMOTIONAL WELLBEING?

[KENT RESILIENCE HUB](#) – aimed at parents of children aged between 10 and 16. A place where you can increase your understanding and find tools and approaches to help build your child's resilience.

[YOUNG MINDS](#) – have information, resources and a helpline for parents: 0808 802 5544.

[MindEd](#) is a free educational resource on children and young people's mental health for all adults.

[MINDS ACTION CHILDREN](#) – a resource that helps parents/carers support children in managing life's ups and downs.

[ANNA FREUD CENTRE](#) – offers a range of resources that include free podcasts to help parents/carers manage child and family mental health

Here you will find videos of various mindfulness practices that can be undertaken individually or as a family:

EVERY MIND MATTERS - [progressive muscle relaxation](#)

HEADSPACE – Sunday Scaries – [Take a Mindful Walk](#)

HEADSPACE – Sunday Scaries – [A Mini-Meditation on Self-Care](#)

HEADSPACE – Sunday Scaries – [A Mini-Meditation for our Wellbeing this week](#)

HEADSPACE – [STRESSED?](#) – Learn to reframe stressful situations with this short meditation.

[PARTNERSHIP FOR CHILDREN](#) - have produced a [worksheet](#) of activities (including growing seeds) which can help conversations surrounding difficult changes and loss.

[KENT AUTISTIC TRUST](#) – have produced Covid19 – [guidance](#) for parents and carers on supporting children and young people's mental health and well-being during the coronavirus outbreak. This also provides guidance for parents on what to do if a child shows any of the symptoms or signs.

[COUNCIL FOR DISABLED CHILDREN](#) - we are the umbrella body for the disabled children's sector bringing together professionals, practitioners and policy makers. We have a [library of resources](#) that you can access.

[BEAMS](#) - is a local charity that supports disabled children, young people and their families. The disabled children and young people who access our services will typically have one or more learning difficulty, complex health needs, physical or sensory impairment, challenging behaviour, Autism or severe ADHD.

Telephone: 01322 668501

Other Resources supporting Emotional Wellbeing

[Staff Wellbeing](#)

[Emotional Wellbeing Vulnerable Pupils](#)

[CYP Kent Emotional Wellbeing flow chart](#)

[Emotional Wellbeing in Education Settings Covid-19](#)

[Emotional Wellbeing Support for Primary School Aged Children - Covid19](#)

[Practical Resources for parents and carers](#)

[Practical and Emotional Wellbeing Support Following Bereavement](#)