

Supporting Educational Settings During and Post the Covid-19 Pandemic

**Information for educational settings on supporting children
and young people to start, return and transition back into
education**



Thank you to Northamptonshire Educational Psychology Service for their permission to reproduce part of their document “Promoting Positive Transitions During the COVID-19 Crisis”.

Introduction

This document provides best practice guidance on how to support the return to the educational setting successfully, together with information on support that educational settings can access with contact details. The principles on which this document is based are that:

- All children and young people have the right to a planned return to the educational setting where their needs are taken into account, including their emotional and mental health needs.
- Emotional and behavioural responses to the pandemic are recognised as a normal response to an abnormal situation.
- There is acknowledgement of the impact of the pandemic on children and young people's learning, social, emotional and mental health.
- All planning should take into account the needs and anxieties of parent/carers, educational staff and other support staff who are key to the implementation of the return.
- Planning for a successful return to the educational setting for everyone and the support that is needed to make this a success and positive experience needs to take a long-term view and to be broken down into different phases to take into account different responses over time.

Key Areas

It is important that children and young people are supported to experience a successful return to the educational setting, recognising that transition is a process and not a single event. We know that an individual's experiences of transition can have a powerful and long-lasting effect on academic outcomes (Alexander, Entwisle & Horsey, 1997; Gutman, Sameroff & Cole, 2003), as well as impacting on their self-esteem and emotional wellbeing. This is particularly relevant for those children and young people who are in the key stage phases of education, are in care, have mental health needs, have SEN and/or a disability. Whilst transition can be a time of great excitement and opportunity, children and young people can also experience:

- A loss of attachment to familiar people, friends, the environment and objects within that environment
- Role and identity uncertainty
- Entry into an environment that is less predictable
- A perceived loss of control
- A feeling of being de-skilled and less valued
- Uncertainty about the future

Support for children and young people on their return

Recent research from Oxford University found that a fifth of primary aged children have felt scared to leave their home during the COVID-19 situation (Weale, 2020). With this in mind, it is important to focus on what emotional comfort and support is needed by those returning to the educational setting. Research by Hobfoll *et al.* (2007) identified five key principles that support recovery following a disaster or serious incident. These principles will be important

to consider when supporting members of staff, children and young people upon their return to school. The five principles are:

1. **A sense of safety:** It is important that adults, children and young people feel safe upon their return to the educational setting.
2. **A sense of calm:** Children and young people are likely to experience a range of big feelings including both pleasant and unpleasant emotions. It is important that these feelings are normalised and that support is provided to help them manage their emotions and return to a state of calm.
3. **Social connectedness:** It is important that adults, children and young people feel they belong and have a social network which can support them within their educational setting.
4. **Promoting hope:** Whilst life may be difficult at the moment, it is important that adults, children and young people feel the situation will improve in the future. Staff and pupils need to be provided with reassurance and understand that in the longer term they will feel positive again.

Managing moves between settings during the COVID-19 pandemic

Some children will be moving from early years settings to primary school, from infant to junior school or between primary and secondary school in September 2020. These are very important transition periods and children/young people and parents/carers may have additional concerns around this given the uncertainty of the current situation. We need to plan carefully for this process for all pupils and particularly for some groups of children with additional needs or vulnerabilities. Here are some possible considerations for each stage of transition.

Planning for transition between all settings

- **Educational Settings Leaders** should prioritise effective and supportive transitions at each stage of every child/young person's journey from EYFS to Post 16
- **Sufficient time and resource** will be invested to ensure appropriate closure from each phase to include a commitment from the educational setting to hold events, ceremonies and celebrations to make the end of one phase.
- **Having friends in the same class** helps children to adjust to being in a new setting and creates a sense of continuity for them when everything else has changed. Ask parents/carers or staff at the child's/young person's previous setting about friendship groups. Staff could also ask the young people themselves if they are transitioning from primary to secondary school.
- **Predictability and routines** are important, especially when children/young people are first settling into their new school. For children entering their Reception year, times of sustained play will still be essential. Providing timetables in advance could be helpful for young people moving to secondary school.
- **Listening to children/young people** provides the opportunity for children/young people to voice their concerns or ask questions. Younger children may find exploring feelings and ideas about transition easier through play-based activities and stories. Therapeutic stories such as those written by Margot Sunderland are also helpful. Check-ins in small groups may be a useful way of exploring thoughts and feelings with older children.
- **Recognise the importance of acknowledging feelings.** Emotion Coaching to support children with anxious thoughts and feelings.

<https://afaeducation.org/free-dt-resources/explore-our-resources/emotion-coaching/>

- **Using a trauma-informed approach** can be very helpful throughout the transition process. More children/young people than ever will be living with anxiety as a result of the pandemic and this will affect their ability to learn. This may include children/young people who were not previously identified as experiencing anxiety. Staff need to have an awareness that children's/young people's learning and development may have been impacted by the crisis, especially for the youngest learners and they may not be where they were predicted to be in their attainments.
- **Joint working** – educational settings need to work closely together and with families to tailor individual to facilitate the smooth transition for children/young people especially for those with additional needs
- **Contacting the families/children/young people** – It may not be possible to offer a visit to the new setting prior to September but it is important for all ages to have a sense of the setting and staff. Be creative with this for example photos of relevant staff or virtual meetings with staff, photos or virtual tours of the building, including the children/young people in appropriate learning that the new setting is offering existing pupils. The important aspect of transition is to make the child/young person feel welcomed and part of the new setting.

Supporting transition for children/young people with additional needs

This section highlights further information you may wish to consider when supporting transition for those children and young people with more complex needs, such as those in the care of the local authority, identified as vulnerable, disabled and / or with special educational needs. Every child/young person should be discussed in a high-quality transition meeting between settings which should focus on the child/young person as an individual.

Supporting transitions for Children/Young People in Care

Children who have had unsettled or traumatic early life experiences are likely to respond to starting school in ways that are different from other children of their age. Major transitions, such as the start of a new school year or moving to a new school, as well as minor transitions such as moving from classroom to classroom or from school to home at the end of the day, can be challenging for many children living in foster care. As a result staff will need to:

- Have an awareness that due to periods of frequent or prolonged stress, the child's/young person's development may be affected in significant ways and they may have emotional responses typical of a much younger child.
- Understand that engaging in learning feels risky. The child/young person may try to avoid risking failure and damage to their self-esteem. No matter the age of the child/young person their efforts in engaging with learning should be recognised and praised
- Share information about the child/young person which may include the One Page Profile, Support Plan, EHCP, Health Care Plan, the care plan
- Create positive relationships with a key adult within the school or setting.
- Establish clear routines and consistency.
- Focus on ways to help the child feel safe.
- Begin preparation in plenty of time and support independence.

Supporting transitions for Children/Young People with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

Children with ASD will need additional opportunities to process their transition back to a school or other educational setting. The following strategies are recommended:

- Allow time for the pupil to readjust to the physical and sensory environment. Be aware that children and young people with ASD are likely to experience additional anxieties around returning to their school or setting after the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Give consideration to different ways that timetables can be displayed for individuals
- Create daily checklists so that children and young people can make sure they have the correct equipment for the day and this will help their independence. Make use of a Social Story or other visual supports and share these regularly with the child or young person. Share virtual tours, photographs or maps of the new school or setting and allow children to access these repeatedly.

Supporting Children/Young People with Social and Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs

- Rebuild Support Networks to support effective transition
- Be aware of anxiety related issues around the transition process in particular self-harm
- The return to the educational setting/transition may well heighten concerns about becoming ill or infecting others and this will need to be carefully managed
- COVID-19 appears to have had a big impact on those already suffering with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) in terms of their focus on hygiene and handwashing rituals. Children and young people displaying OCD behaviours will need understanding and additional support.
- All educational setting staff need to be in contact before transition to share information. It will be vital for existing staff to pass on the wealth of information they have learned about a pupil with SEMH needs to new staff where there is a change of setting including which particular strategies have been helpful.

Support available for Educational Settings

Early Years Area SENCo Team:

- Direct contact for Early Years SENCos with Area SENCo for ongoing advice and support.
- *Early Years SEND Action Plan to support transitions back into setting and/or into school in September 2020 for preschool children with additional and complex needs (TSF/EHCNA/EHC Plan)
- Weekly Zoom Early Years SENCo network support meetings (20 SENCos per session)
- Individualised Zoom support meetings for early years SENCos
- *Resource pack to support transitions for children with specific additional and complex needs.

**sent to all EY Sencos 27/5/20 and will also be available on the Area SENCO team resource page on Rainbow Resource once uploaded.*

Contact Details - Early Years - Area_sencos@bathnes.gov.uk
 07530 263041 – Bobbie Rogers
 07875 488027 – Verrity Simons

Early Years Foundation Stage

Provision of information, advice and training on matters relating to provision and practice in the EYFS.

The advisory team will be in contact with settings that are open. Online CPD is in development along with online clusters

Communications - The Early Years Hub is the key location for resources and training. The revised Transitions page contains formats to support the unusual transitions this year <https://thehub.bathnes.gov.uk/>

For the latest updates - Early Years Matters- ebulletin sent to your inbox

Twitter and Facebook - <https://twitter.com/EYBATHNES>

Contact Details - For enquiries relating to issues around Covid-19 childcare@covid19@bathnes.gov.uk

General Enquiries - early-years@bathnes.gov.uk

Team contacts - Richard Hill 01225 394042
CPD enquiries - Donna Biddlecombe 01225 394426

Educational Psychology Service:

- Educational settings can contact the EPS directly to discuss concerns or useful resources
- SENCOs can contact their link EP directly for individual queries
- [The One Page Guide – Supporting Educational Settings During and Post the Covid-19 Pandemic outlines useful resources](#)
- [B&NES Emotional and Mental Health Support Services flow chart](#)

Contact Details - Psychology_service@bathnes.gov.uk or 01225-394901

Social Care

Children in Care Team - Working closely with the Virtual school to support children who are looked after. Risk assessment completed and regularly updated relating to transitions. These will inform care planning and PEPs.

Contact details - 01225 396930

Family Placement Team - Support provided to foster carers to support children in care. Out of hours telephone support line available to foster carers for advice and support.

Contact Details - 01225 395332 and 01225394949

Adolescent Risk and Care Leavers Team - All children in care and those in need will have an allocated social worker who will actively be supporting a return to education/school. The team will be out in the community to work directly with children at risk of CSE/CCE and support a return to education setting. Duty worker co-located within the Children's Social Care duty team to triage and provide advice and support for referrers.

Contact details - 01225 395200

Disabled Children's Team - Duty worker co-located within the Children's Social Care duty team to triage and provide advice and support for referrers.

Contact Details – 01225 396967

For children/young people that should be attending but have not shown up please contact the family in the first instance and then contact the allocated social worker this will then be factored into the social care risk assessment so they can plan the next steps. Where unable to contact the social worker then please let Social Care know by emailing - childcare_duty@bathnes.gov.uk

The Duty Teams are open as usual and accepting referral or for you to talk through any concerns you may have - Duty lines are 01225 396312/01225 396313

Statutory Special Educational Needs Service

Support is available from the SSEN Service in relation to Needs Assessment requests, delivering provision outlined in an EHCP and anything related to the EHCP process and Annual Reviews. For support on individual children/young people this should be accessed through the SEND Practitioner allocated to the setting or individual. For general enquiries the SEN admin staff are always ready to help or to put you in touch with the correct person to deal with the query or to offer support.

Annual Reviews should still be held however may need to take a different form and many of these will now need to take place virtually. However, it is important that they continue to ensure that the child or young person is at the centre of the process and can engage with the process in a meaningful way. A review meeting, even if by necessity briefer than usual, can be reassuring for parents, children and young people, through ensuring that their EHC plan is up-to-date so that they can receive appropriate provision

Duty to Admit on Schools - Section 43 has not changed. Schools must place on roll as before when the final is issued. No change to the 15 day consultation period.

Contact Details - SEN_Admin@bathnes.gov.uk

Virtual School

All CLA children have an individual transition plan as part of their active PEP. This will have been discussed at PEP meetings this term and most are to be reviewed by phone call towards the end of next term.

Transition support will be available on our website and emailed to all designated teachers. EP advice will be available for all CLA and PLAC through the Virtual School EP hotline. Dates for the hotline have been emailed to designated teachers and will be available on our website.

Contact Details - Virtual_school@bathnes.gov.uk

Children Missing Education Service

This Service will support Schools and parents in relation to encouraging children/young people to attend school including but not limited to:

- CMES to share with schools and signpost them to online training resources available to school staff, together with a guide on how they access it.
- Discuss and advise on expectations and process in line with DfE guidance. This will include attendance coding and exclusions, amending of behaviour policy.
- CMES to check with schools that appropriate provision in place for those shielding.

Contact Details - 01225 394241

B&NES Community CAMHS

Please refer to 'Emotional Health and Support Services Document' for details.

- CAMHS Pre-Referral Consultations 9am-5pm Monday-Friday – contact 01865 903889
- Secondary Schools in BaNES can contact CAMHS link Practitioners - contact 01865 903889
- CAMHS Online Referral pathway – contact www.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/camhs/refer/
- CAMHS Helpline 24/7-for parents/carers/young people only – contact via telephone 9am-5pm weekdays: 01865 903777. Weekday evenings and all weekend: 01865 901000
- Sheet of Resources for Schools is being collated by CAMHS, School Nursing and Educational Psychology Department as one central document (to be circulated when available)
- Consultation to staff in schools covered by Mental Health Support Team (MHST) – contact 01865 903889
- One to one and group work in schools covered by MHST
- Referrals through Mental Health Leads and School Nurses – contact Submit Referral Form to Oxfordhealth.banesreferrals@nhs.net

Public Health

- Health protection and infection control advice and guidance - Public Health can provide relevant advice and guidance to schools and settings relating to current Government guidance. Specifically, but not exclusively, this will relate to issues such as hygiene, social distancing, PPE, testing, tracing, cleaning and waste disposal where staff feel Government guidance needs specific interpretation for their situation. Please submit your query via the B&NES Public Health Response email address public_health@bathnes.gov.uk
As and when relevant Public Health England and other sources of information for schools and early years settings become available these will be sent to you
- Public Health in Schools and Early Years Programmes - <http://thehub.bathnes.gov.uk/Page/11017> provides best practice audits, advice and guidance, teaching resources and links to services relating to a range of public health areas including mental health and wellbeing

Contact Details - public_health@bathnes.gov.uk

B&NES School Nursing Service

The B&NES Public Health School Nursing Service have been offering interim wellbeing support for children and young people during school closures and if self-isolating. We will continue to support schools with a whole school health assessment, and work with individual

children/young people referred to the service to provide a holistic assessment of their health needs, support packages as required or onwards referral to partner agencies when appropriate.

We will be introducing new ways of working to include 'virtual interactive sessions' on a variety of health concerns, starting with building resilience. We will work within all guidance with regards to infection prevention and control and PPE. We will also be able to support schools with completing their individual health risk assessments for vulnerable children where appropriate.

Secondary aged young people – confidential telephone drop-in service Monday to Friday from 12-2 pm. Young people can call and talk to a school nurse on any issue relating to their health and wellbeing that is concerning them

Contact Details - 01225 831666 - Bath Area 01761 408111 - Norton/Radstock area.

Young people are also able to speak to a school nurse via the texting service CHATHealth:

Contact Details - <https://www.healthforteens.co.uk/health/about-chathealth/>
or text 07480635513

Parents and carers of children any age - Duty school nurses are available for telephone support and advice for parents and carers Monday to Friday 9 -5 pm should they require any support with their school aged child. If at all possible, please avoid 12 – 2 (as the service would like to keep this for Young People, see above).

Contact Details - If you would like this support please call: 01225 831666 - Bath Area 01761 408111 - Norton/Radstock area.

Further support available from school nurses will be communicated with schools once available.

SLIP Service

We want to work with schools to ensure we are offering a flexible service that meets the needs of the students with speech, language and communication needs. Throughout the current pandemic we have been supporting schools, families and students through regular contact by telephone, sharing resources and writing targets and reports.

With some years starting to attend school from term 6 we will follow the government advice around social distancing and can continue to support pupils remotely. We are here to support in whichever way best suits your needs, with safety of course being the top priority. I appreciate that some schools will be able to accommodate some direct contact between the SLIP therapists and students, while others may need us to work in a different way.

We want to work with you by working within your school's COVID Safeworking Protocol.

Recommendations for remote training - [The Communication Trust's Short Course](#) for a general awareness raising course for school staff. For more of a deep-dive there is this [fantastic podcast about supporting Speech and Language needs in the classroom](#). For more bespoke training please do get in touch, we will be able to offer this remotely to schools. As a service we will be providing more virtual training for schools to access.

Contact Details - 01225 831 708

ASD Support Service

The ASD Support Service team will be offering limited direct work with children and young people in their settings (not at home) with a focus on preparation for transition. Settings should contact the service by Monday June 15th (if they haven't already) to request such support.

Individualised support packages are discussed with ASDSS and can include:

- Suggested resources such as diaries, social scripts, templates for sharing key information with new setting etc
- Liaison with new setting about providing key information that is meaningful for CYP
- Supported, personalised visits
- Member of team who will follow up CYP in autumn term

Contact Details - The team continues to offer advice and support to professionals and parents by email and telephone/video call 01761 412198 (Ext 2) please leave a message if no answer or asdss@fossewayschool.com

Children's Therapies (Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy)

The teams will be flexible with continuing to provide support to children/young people by telephone/email and remote vision contacts. We can also offer visits to schools where this meets with individual schools' policy and parental consent. Where a visit to school is not possible our team can contact school staff to demonstrate and discuss prescribed activity programmes through a phone all or remote vision contact e.g. Microsoft teams/ Visionable

For children and young people transitioning schools our Occupational Therapy team can offer advice and support for children already known to their service who are displaying particular anxieties about their return and school transition. Specific plans to help children/young people re-engage with school can be suggested and support offered where needed around personal care such as toileting, eating and drinking.

Our Physiotherapy team can offer support and advice around physio activity programmes, mobility around school and specialist supportive equipment/mobility aids if required.

Contact Details - ruh-tr.childrenstherapies@nhs.net or Tel. 01225 824220

Other Contact Details:

Sensory Support Service - for advice and support sensorysupportservice@bristol.gov.uk or if it is not possible to email please ring on: 0117 9038441 / 2 / 3

SEND Partnership Service – SPS offer free, impartial and confidential information, advice and support to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their parents/carers. Website: <https://www.spsbathnes.org.uk/> Telephone: 01225 394382, email address: SEND_PartnershipService@BATHNES.GOV.UK

Vulnerable Families (Domestic violence or abuse) - **do not** contact any known families as Southside staff will be aware of the risks and sensitivity of each case.

If any queries arise please contact Jackie Watts CMEO 01225 394158 or 07980 998738

Or Social Care duty as above

Youth Offending Service - If you would like to discuss any aspect of YOS support, please use the main office number which is 01225 396966 or if the query is specifically related to the education support the YOS provides, please contact Mary Clappen on 07530 263500

Compass - are on hand to support schools when presented with risks around offending and can offer staff telephone support. In some instances, they can also offer telephone parenting support using the Family Links Talking Teens programme. Alan Douglas can be contacted on 07977228338

Home to School Transport - please contact the SEND Travel Officers
SENDSchool_TravelTeam@bathnes.gov.uk

Useful information and resources: -

<https://www.rainbowresource.org.uk>

<https://www.rainbowresource.org.uk/pages/autism-information>

www.bathnes1bd.org.uk/pages/coronavirus-covid-19