

Introduction

These are a collection of practical tips that may help when you are planning the return of your pupils with SEND. It should be used alongside the Transition and Reintegration Plan for Vulnerable Pupils as well as any updated Government Guidance.

These are SEND specific – you will need to use this alongside your own school planning for re-opening guidance. This document looks at some solutions around SEND. They have been collected from best practice or from examples that schools have shared.

1 What support documents are available for me to look at ?

- The Barnet SENCo Zone on the Local Offer – Recovery and Transition Planning

https://www.barnetlocaloffer.org.uk/senco_zone/blog_articles/2713-supporting-transition-and-the-reintegration

Here you will find a range of resources and links as well as shared ideas that can help to support planning for transition and reintegration.

- Recovery Planning for SEND Documentation, Strategic Planning, Guidance and Transition & Re-integration Plan template

https://www.barnetlocaloffer.org.uk/senco_zone/blog_articles/2676-covid-19-latest-send-news-and-updates

- The LNI briefings to Head Teachers (via email)
- The BPSI School Support Page
- Recovery Planning and Support BPSI

- Government Guidance regarding Pupils with SEND and the wider opening of schools

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-send-risk-assessment-guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-send-risk-assessment-guidance>

- DFE Briefing Slides on the SENCo Zone

https://www.barnetlocaloffer.org.uk/senco_zone/blog_articles/2676-covid-19-latest-send-news-and-updates

- Autism specific support on the SENCo Zone

https://www.barnetlocaloffer.org.uk/senco_zone/blog_articles/2705-barnet-autism-advisory-team-transition-tips

2 Risk Assessment: what do I need to have?

- **Update the risk assessment for vulnerable and EHCP pupils who remain at home**

Are there any changes? Increased risk? Less risk? Ensure these are completed with families. **THESE ARE A MUST AND SHOULD BE REVIEWED REGULARLY**

- **Risk Assessments for pupils returning to school**

For pupils with SEND or vulnerable pupils who are returning to school, your school will complete a whole school risk assessment as part of planning for wider opening. These pupils can be part of that risk analysis or you may choose to do an individual assessment if you feel there is a potential risk that needs further analysis and support.

When doing this it is helpful to plan potential risk and actual. There is a section in the Transition & Re-integration Plan template that you can use. You could complete a combined risk assessment with all your pupils on one spread sheet – this will be easier to make accessible and keep in one place. You can also use a spreadsheet to keep an overall log and record of the pupils with risk assessments, and use the RAG rating system to keep track of this.

3 How can I promote the wellbeing child and family and staff?

- See resources and guidance on the SENCo Zone – promote with staff and families.
- New Local Offer Parent and Carer Zone which can be signposted to families.
- Attend training run by the Educational Psychology Team encourage parents/carers and staff to attend too: https://www.barnetlocaloffer.org.uk/senco_zone/events
- Remind staff about Qwell and the access they have to these sessions and individual support for their wellbeing.
- There is a communication strategy around mental health support – the team have been invited to attend the SENCo Conference.

4 The Curriculum – Creating a safe space – “a place for landing”

- See resources and guidance on the SENCo Zone and in the Guidance Document.
- **Wellbeing** – begin by focusing on activities that help settle pupils.
- **Building Relationships** – it is key to establish positive connections with the familiar adults and new adults. What does this look like for the pupil and family? Make time to do this every day, play fun games together, share stories and reading, art work, share the fun activity with home.
- Tri Borough Recovering after a Pandemic – a helpful resource.
- For our pupils with SEND – think about how they will access what is on offer and allow time to repeat and revisit.
- Teach in a multisensory way.
- Repeat it each day; present in a visual form; allow the opportunity to explain what has been said; use any pre-existing teaching methods around emotions; create safe spaces.
- Talk about where other pupils are and other staff they would normally see.

Helpful Link: <http://www.thesensoryprojects.co.uk/covid19-resources>

5 How can I promote and teach social distancing?

- Photo story, videos to illustrate what this looks like in different parts of the school. Share these before the pupil returns to school, give a copy to home, have larger copies around school. Do these need to be multisensory?
- Walk around the building pointing out the new markings that are in place. Make this a game or activity to frame it positively.
- Teach in a multisensory way – make up a song or a rap with the pupils about keeping apart for now; How many steps is 2 metres? Count how long this takes to walk.
- Rehearse with them what a 2 metre gap looks like; use hoops to teach about personal space; use the same language when you are describing it to the pupil; share this script within the team and home as everyone being consistent will help for this to normalise the experience. E.g “STOP, LOOK, WAIT”
- Have a symbol, physical prompt such as hand up and ‘wait card’; count with them if a pupil is coming too close; sing a song; show the photo if they may not respond to verbal prompts only.
- Use the social stories resources that are on the SENCo Zone as well as links to pre-made social stories; share with all the team and home so everyone is using the same language.
- Pre-teach new expectations in a fun calm way – try not to create anxiety – remind this is for now.
- Do not get cross if pupils forget – they will need reminding and supporting in a positive way. This will be your key to success.
- Remind adults to be good role models, to demonstrate all the time, praise when it is going well, teach it when it is going well, point it out when you see it happening, catch them doing it.
- Have the same response across all staff teams when a pupil forgets the new rules – **they will**. This maybe a visual prompt carried on a lanyard, a hand signal, keep it calm, a simple response, let the families know about this too so everyone can practice.
- Acknowledge there will be times when this will be difficult and provide a space to express or talk about this.
- Let the pupils know when staff are going to be wearing PPE. You can use visuals to explain.
- Explain what PPE is to the pupils before they see you wearing it.

6 How can we support transitioning back into school?

- See the Guidance document for tips and suggestions for a graduated reintegration.
- Videos, photos, social story about new arrangements for collection and drop off shared in advance.
- Speak to families as part of the preparation – help them to know the routine and what to expect – planning is the key to the success.
- Smiling familiar faces to welcome them – this will be key.
- A transitional toy or object to distract upon arrival that can be washed and cleaned e.g.: a plastic toy or a particular object of meaning for older pupils.

- Use of bubble machine as they come into the classroom or open space as a welcome distraction – have it up high so bubbles go up – want to avoid chasing and bumping into each other.
- Follow the same routine each morning to create predictability.
- Practice during the day.
- Can there be a playground space or zoned area that can be used to direct a family to if they are need more time to separate.
- If they appear upset could there be some favourite, easily cleanable, resources ready to hold as they separate from their carer e.g. plastic dinosaurs, a transitional object, a preferred game or activity such as Lego.
- Do staff know about the kinds of things that the pupil has been enjoying or doing previously, or are favourite topics at home, to help them establish a connection and quickly initiate conversation with the pupil upon arrival?
- Use pupils' interests as hooks to capture their attention e.g.: if they like numbers have number activities for them to go and engage in straight away.
- Support families in advance so you can help them feel more confident; this will help the pupil to feel calmer.
- Once the pupil has washed hands have a very motivating activity to start the session. Use the visuals and resources that helped before so that there is something that is familiar.
- Following a familiar routine will support the transition and the pupil's experience; it will create and promote feelings of security.

7 Key resources/ routines/ break out spaces/safe zone

- Limit resources – ensure they can be cleaned following guidance.
- Decide with the pupil what is important; explain where other resources are going to be stored for now; what are the new rules; keep language simple, be clear.
- Have jigs to support new routines e.g.: hand washing jig, lunchroom routine jig.
- Can they be involved in the cleaning as part of their routine (if appropriate)
- Plan for a break out space for that group of pupils make sure they know where it is – can it be in a quieter zoned off area of the playground; could you use a gazebo as a zoned space; limit furniture in the area so it can be easily cleaned after a pupil has used it. Consider whether you need a breakout space per group or can you have one space that can be cleaned after use.
- Can there be plastic sensory equipment in the space that can be wiped down in between use.
- Can the pupil have their own small sensory suitcase that they take with them to use in the breakout space.

8 MITA Principals – teach and use these

- Least amount of help first
- Stand back and WAIT
- Prompt from a distance – don't intervene – let them work it out
- Give the pupil 3 concrete strategies they can use before they ask you and have this on a visual prompt to support them
- Give a clue if necessary from a distance

Produced by IAT with support and ideas from Barnet SENCOs

- Model and remodel – take time get the pupil’s attention from a distance, get them to repeat it, to join in with you
- Make a MITA Lanyard with prompts for staff and pupils

9 Home Learning at Home for other Year Groups and pupils not in school

- Can you use activities for both groups of pupils – saves thinking time.
- Can you set up a bank of challenges at the start of the week and release them daily.
- Need to readjust your diary to make time for catch up, checking in, you will be in school teaching and managing pupils still at home.
- Share tasks amongst your team. Think strategically.
- The Transition and Re-integration Plan for pupils could go on one excel spreadsheet so it is in the same place – easily accessible for the team.
- Use of Recovery Planning and Strategic Planning Tools on the SENCo Zone.

10 Useful Links for talking about loss

Barnet Educational Psychology Service are available for support and planning, and are running a range of free training. Please attend a training session or contact them individually for specific support and advice.

Organisations that have produced helpful materials:

- Feels you may have if someone dies – Marie Curie resource
<https://www.mariecurie.org.uk/blog/feelings-you-might-have-when-someone-dies-a-new-booklet-on-grief-for-people-with-learning-disabilities/259254>
- Supporting Children with Autism with bereavement
<https://www.childbereavementuk.org/information-bereaved-children-with-asd>
- Winston’s Wish – resources for returning to school, How to Talk about Covid19,
<https://www.winstonswish.org/coronavirus-schools-support-children-young-people/>
- Grief Encounter – a range of resources for discussion and support
<https://www.griefencounter.org.uk/>