

Recovery Curriculum



Context

From 20th March 2020, schools were closed for all except a few pupils because of the worldwide pandemic. The UK went into lockdown, meaning that people could only leave their homes to buy food, exercise and carry out critical work.

This left parents and carers home educating their children with the support of school. Children have experienced loss of social interaction with their friends, extended family and their teachers. They have lost their usual structure and routines as they are not able to attend school and extracurricular activities. They have been without their usual freedoms, playing outside and visiting leisure areas. Some may have experienced bereavement of friends or family. All of our children have suffered some form of loss.

The Laurels will address this through the development of a recovery curriculum, which is based on the work of Barry Carpenter and the Evidence for Learning team: "A Recovery Curriculum: Loss and Life for our children and schools post pandemic". See further reading for more references.

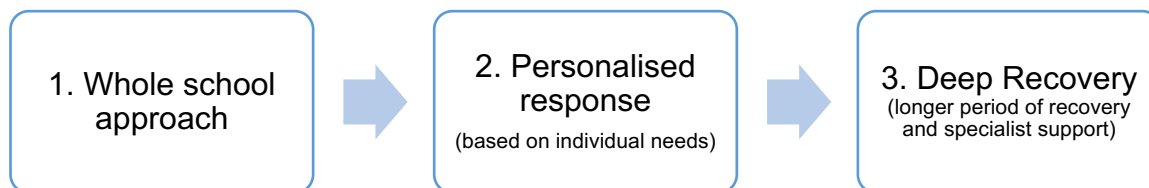
Aims

Our recovery curriculum aims to restore the mental health and rebuild the resilience of our pupils to allow them to become learners again by:

- recognising the experiences had by all
- restoring trust and relationships with staff
- re-establishing friendships and social interactions
- regaining structure and routine
- rebuilding a sense of community
- regulating their emotions and managing behaviours
- re-engaging them in learning
- preparing them for transition

How to support pupils:

There will be a three phased approach:



1. Whole school approach

This will encompass the main curriculum upon our return. For most pupils, this will be sufficient to meet the aims set out above, although their journeys will happen over different time frames. From the activities planned along with the use of the Leuven scales, staff will be able to identify those who need more support in their recovery which will lead to a personalised response.

2. Personalised response

Where pupils are unable to engage in the holistic curriculum, further work will be undertaken by school staff to enable them to meet the above aims.

3. Deep recovery

For pupils who have experienced severe trauma or bereavement, specialist support may be required in their recovery.

Whole school approach

“Now is the time to return to more humane approaches concerned with the fundamental wellbeing, and secure positive development of the child. Without this there will be no results that have true meaning and deep personal value to the child in terms of their preparation for adulthood.” (Barry Carpenter & Matthew Carpenter 2020)

Recognising the experiences had by all:

We will create time to share our experiences of lockdown. Some pupils will be more open to share, whereas for others it will take some time or require anonymity. We will create space within our day to allow for these conversations. It is important to note that although lockdown has caused losses, it will have been a positive experience for some, allowing for more quality family time and child led learning. We will encourage discussions around learning, play, relationships and more. This can be facilitated through circle time, 1-1 conversations, increased free-time, social stories and worry boxes.

Restoring trust and relationships with staff

Children, especially young children, will have felt a level of abandonment from school staff, through no fault of the school. It will take time to build up their trust and restore relationships. Staff will continue to nature and support through positive words and role modelling the school values. Within the day there will be plenty of opportunity to talk and play together, allowing time for 1-1 conversations. Staffing will be kept as consistent as possible.

Re-establishing friendships and social interactions

Taking into consideration the safety procedures put into place, pupils will be given plenty of free-time or play-time in which they can re-establish their friendships. Daily circle time will allow for thoughtful discussion surrounding the value of friendship. Shared activities, like daily exercise will bring the pupils back together into teams.

Regaining structure and routine

The process of returning to a ‘normal timetable’ will be a phased one. At the beginning, there will be more free-time and child-led learning. A visual timetable will be used to create structure to the day, even if some of these times are unstructured. There will be elements of the timetable that will be constant each day, like exercise, mindfulness and circle time. The timetable will be re-evaluated on a regular basis to ensure that all pupils within the group are coping with the transition back to school. See appendix A.

Rebuilding a sense of community

Communication between school and home will be maintained through headteacher's updates, phone calls, social media and google classroom. Parents will be encouraged to communicate through the phone or email, to limit the physical interactions with staff. Pupils will have the opportunity to take part in whole-school projects that promote togetherness, like the clay portrait challenge. Work produced during lockdown will be shared and discussed in classes. Through talk, groups will gain understanding of their peers and support each other.

Regulating their emotions and managing behaviours

PSHE lessons and circle time will focus on managing emotions and behaviours. The school rules and behaviour policy will be re-established with the pupils, emphasising the school values that run alongside them. Recognition boards will be a central focus within classes. Pupils will be given space to explore their feelings and seek out help to manage them. School needs to be a safe and happy place before learning can begin.

Re-engaging them in learning

High levels of both well-being and involvement allow children to experience deep learning. A happy, involved child is one who can experience the world at its fullest. They truly learn from those experiences. Once the children feel safe and happy, this will be recognised via the Leuven scales they can begin to engage with their learning again. To help transition, focussed learning will be kept to short bursts in the beginning, with free-time later in the day for finishing up if requested by the children

Preparation for transition

Transition back to school will be aided through social stories, a transition piece of work and communication from staff. Pupils will be given time to adjust to their new routines, spaces and adults. Transition pages have been created for the school website offering support for parents when discussing the transition process at home.

Further reading and resources:

Thinking and research

Think piece. A Recovery Curriculum: Loss and Life for our children and schools post pandemic.
<https://www.evidenceforlearning.net/recoverycurriculum/>

How we plan for the return to the classrooms, playgrounds and corridors of schools.
<https://restoreourschools.wordpress.com/>

Support a Safe & Successful Return to School using the SWAN framework
<https://elearning.creativeeducation.co.uk/courses/support-a-safe-successful-return-to-school-using-the-swan-framework/>

Five ways to help children heal after the pandemic <https://www.tes.com/news/five-ways-help-children-heal-after-pandemic>

Reducing Anxiety in Kids Returning to School After Isolation
https://www.teachstarter.com/podcast/reducing-anxiety-kids-returning-school/?utm_source=facebook&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=podcast&utm_content=Reducing+Anxiety+in+Kids+Returning+to+School+After+Isolation

Resources to use in school:

Posters to use in school <https://www.griefrecoverymethod.co.uk/schools/>

How can we best support children and young people with their worries and anxiety?

<https://emergingminds.org.uk/supporting-children-and-young-people-with-worries-and-anxiety-coronavirus/>

Worksheets and workbooks <https://www.yesfutures.org/resources-for-parents>

Books beyond words <https://booksbeyondwords.co.uk/coping-with-coronavirus>

Supporting staff to support children:

Supporting Parents and Children Emotionally <https://rockpool.life/course/space-supporting-parents-and-children-emotionally/>

How to start a conversation with children about mental health

<https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/getting-started/how-to-start-a-conversation-with-children-about-mental-health/>

Tips on various issues regarding mental health during the pandemic:

<https://www.headstogether.org.uk/60-second-support/>

How to have difficult conversations with children <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/safeguarding-child-protection/how-to-have-difficult-conversations-with-children>

Talking to a child worried about coronavirus (COVID-19) <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/childrens-mental-health/depression-anxiety-mental-health/>

Appendix A

Example Daily Timetable

1. Exercise
2. **Breather / Drink**
3. Circle Time Activity
4. **Break**
5. Grid activity
6. **Lunch**
7. Mindfulness
8. Grid activity
9. **Free time** (time to chat, finish work if they wish to or play)
10. Story Time