

# Guidance for School Staff during COVID-19 Supporting Pupils Experiencing Loss and Bereavement

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Pupils are likely to be experiencing lots of different losses during the covid-19 outbreak including loss of how life was before lockdown, the loss of being able to physically contact family, friends (or even school staff!) and loss of expected experiences such as the ending of a school year. Sadly, many pupils will also have experienced bereavement. This Covid context will significantly impact on their bereavement.

The process of grief can leave pupils feeling a range of emotions including numbness, denial, sadness, anger, guilt and anxiety. Young people seem to express grief in a different way to adults, often moving through different emotions and reactions very quickly and experiencing many of them all in one day. This is sometimes referred to as 'puddle jumping'. Whereas adults may wade through 'rivers of grief' or become stuck in 'oceans of distress', it is natural for children to be extremely upset one minute and then wanting to know what is for tea the next. It is overwhelming and confusing for them to sit with that level of distress for too long so they need distraction.

## Healthy Minds Framework

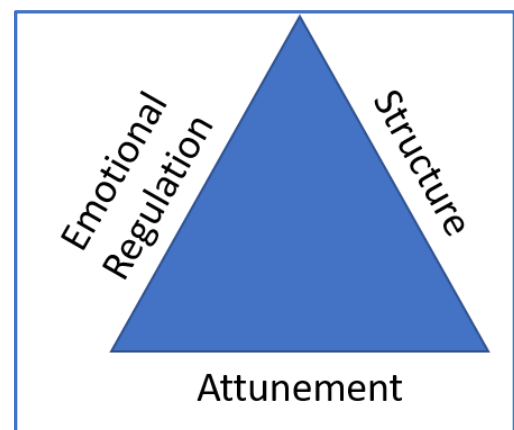
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When supporting a pupil who has experienced bereavement, it is important to ensure that the pupil has a good balance of all 3 elements of the Healthy Minds framework:

**Structure** – ensure that you try to maintain some sort of structure, predictability, routine and familiarity for the student as this will help to offer some containment

**Attunement** – remembering that having healthy, attuned relationships with others is a major protective factor when someone is experiencing grief or loss

**Emotional regulation** – when life suddenly becomes quite unpredictable, it can put many pressures on our emotional ability and ability to cope. Giving pupils the opportunity to offload and teaching them strategies to regulate can support them to get back into their thinking brain



## Strategies for supporting pupils

- **You do not need to be an expert to provide effective help** – the relationship is the most important part! Although it can be incredibly difficult to bear, children need to go through a process of bereavement which means that they will experience lots of difficult emotions. At this time, it is not usually specialist help that is needed, but support from the child's system around them. It is only much further down the line if a child is struggling to adjust and it is impacting on their functioning that we may think about whether specialist services are needed.
- **Acknowledge what has happened and how the child is feeling** - it is ok to talk about the person who has died. Help the child understand that what they are feeling is to be expected. Truly listen and acknowledge how the pupil is feeling - hold back any temptation to rush in and fix problems or reassure.
- **Use clear language** – as well as it being OK to talk about the person who has died, use clear language for example use the word 'death' rather than phrases such as 'loss' or 'gone to a better place'.
- **Difficult questions** - if you are faced with a difficult question, rather than answering straight away, ask the child/parent what they think.
- **Check out the facts** - talk to the family about how they are addressing the situation with the child and make sure that what you say will not conflict with the family's wishes.
- **Keep connected** - offer scheduled points of contact with a member of school staff that the child has a relationship with. For pupils who are known to be vulnerable, offer additional opportunities to check in with a key member of staff and keep in touch with parents and carers especially if you are concerned about their child. Recognise the times they do not want to talk, as well as the times they do.
- **Puddle Jumping** – Children may feel overwhelmed at unexpected times. If you see a child looking lost, alone, struggling to concentrate or becoming agitated it could be that the wave/tsunami of grief is starting to pull them in. Help the child to go somewhere quiet with a trusted adult (where possible) where they feel safe to cry if they need to.
- **Keep an open mind** – they might be feeling upset or frustrated due to other reasons. They may have normal day to day concerns that can easily be resolved or they may be struggling with more complex concerns which are due to the impact of the loss including parental mental health issues, financial concerns on the family, alcohol or substance misuse, feeling out of step with friends, people being awkward around them.

- **Make a plan with the pupil** – ask the pupil what they may need to help them to cope with their grief whilst they are in school. It may be that having a safe place that the pupil can retreat to in school will be helpful or for older pupils, it may be that it is helpful for them to leave lessons early or to attend for shorter days.
- **Give pupils an item that offers them comfort** – suggest that the pupil brings an item in from home that they can carry in their pocket that they may find soothing, such as a piece of fabric, a stone or a small toy.
- **Provide opportunities for the pupil to communicate how they are feeling in school** - for pupils who may struggle to verbalise how they are feeling, it may be useful to give them a diary to fill in whenever they need to that they can share with you at an agreed time in the day. Or for younger pupils, you could use a paper plate to create emotion faces by drawing a face that depicts 'feeling sad' on one side and a face that depicts 'feeling ok' on the other side for pupils to use as a means of signalling that they are struggling.
- **Be proactive and arrange regular check-ins even if things seem OK** – even if someone seems to be coping, it means a lot to still have a regular check in with them, even if just for 5 minutes. Knowing that someone is thinking of them is very important in the grief journey.
- **Think ahead re trigger points**– it is not always possible but try to hold in mind that some pieces of work/topics may trigger strong emotions for the pupil. For older pupils, it may be worth asking them what may be difficult so that you can think about whether a pupil may need to be warned in advance about certain topics/areas covered in school.
- **Supporting the pupil's peer group:** Let the pupil know that it might be helpful if their peer group knew more about what was going on for them and if they agree then plan a time when they can talk about it in a small group where you facilitate a conversation so the pupil can let their peer group know what support they would like. Check in with the peer group too to see if they need any further support
- **Talking to and supporting peers**
  - It can be sad to see your friend so upset, but by just listening to them you are really helping them to feel better
  - Your friend might want to talk about the person that died. Even if you didn't know them it will help if you can listen and let your friend tell you about their memories. These memories might be happy as well as sad.
  - It may seem that your friend doesn't want to join in the same way that they used to. That's ok. You can just support them by letting them know that however they want to join in is ok.
  - Make sure that those children who are supporting their peer also have someone they can talk to. It can be a lot for one child (or group) to manage and contain between them

- **Understanding the wider impact of bereavement on the child** - It could be an opportunity for some whole schoolwork, as grief and bereavement will be affecting a lot of children and staff in a lot of ways.
- **Share your own feelings with colleagues and friends if needed** – supporting a bereaved child can be incredibly difficult and it may bring up lots of difficult emotions for you that can be hard to contain. It may also be that you have experienced a recent bereavement, or you are reminded of a past bereavement. It is perfectly normal to experience a strong emotional reaction when supporting bereaved pupils, however it is important to prioritise your own wellbeing so that you are able to help others.
- **Professional boundaries** – it is inevitable that there may be times when you become over-involved when supporting a bereaved child. However, it is important that you notice and are able to acknowledge when this is happening and that you talk to a trusted colleague.
- **Gather information on resources and organisations** – there are many resources and support mechanisms out there, especially related to supporting others during the COVID-19 outbreak
- **Support colleagues** – try to organise an opportunity for staff to come together to discuss their shared experience of supporting pupil bereavement and allow opportunity for mutual support and reflection.

## When a child needs more support

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There are no limits to how long grieving should last or what it should look like, however most children will go through a process that leads to them adjusting to life without the person that they have lost. However, a small number of children may struggle to cope with the emotional impact of their grief and possibly develop unhelpful ways to cope that may mean that they may need a little more support.

Children that develop a prolonged reduced interest in daily activities, appear withdrawn, are not sleeping or eating or have started to engage in behaviours such as self-harm or are getting into lots of fights may be a cause to worry. If you do become concerned about a pupil in your school, please speak to your school designated safeguarding lead and/or your school designated mental health lead who will be able to advise further action and make contact with the pupil's family.

## Recommended links

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- ▶ <https://www.cruse.org.uk/schools>
- ▶ <https://www.winstonswish.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/ww-0163-schools-info-pack.pdf>
- ▶ <https://childbereavementuk.org/for-schools/>
- ▶ <http://hopeagain.org.uk/hope-again-talking-about-it/>
- ▶ <https://www.samaritans.org/deal>
- ▶ [Young Minds](#) Supporting your child with Grief and Loss

## Helplines

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- ▶ **The Listening Ear – 0800 048 5224 Monday to Friday 110am – 5pm is a regional service**
- ▶ [Child Bereavement UK](#) - 0800 028 8840 Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm
- ▶ [Hope Again](#) - 0808 808 1677 Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 5pm
- ▶ [Winston's Wish](#) - 0808 802 0021 Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm

## Tips for School Staff

# Supporting Pupils Experiencing Separation Anxiety

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It is likely that as a consequence of pupils being off school due to COVID-19, some of them will experience a level of separation anxiety when they return to school. The below tips are for school staff who are supporting pupils that are experiencing separation anxiety in the gradual return to school:

- **Make sure you give a good greeting** - have a member of staff present that the pupil has a good relationship with when they arrive.
- **Hold parents in mind** – It is likely that some parents/carers of pupils that are struggling with the separation will also be struggling themselves with being separated from their child. Voicing and acknowledging the parent/carer's anxieties and letting them know that you have a plan to support their child will help to contain the parent/carer
- **Have a graded return** - Consider allowing pupils to have a gradual return back to school, for example starting with short days.
- **Transitional object** - Suggest that the pupil brings in a small item that reminds them of home or their parent/carer and gives them some comfort, for example a pebble that they have decorated with their parent/carer and can keep in their pocket or a spray of perfume/aftershave on their sleeve.
- **Acknowledge how you think the child is feeling** - It is tempting to try to distract or reassure the pupil but the best way of supporting them is to voice how you think they are feeling, for example, "I wonder if you are feeling really sad that you are back at school and are missing your mum/dad/carer", "You just found it really difficult saying goodbye just now to your mum/dad/carer", "I am wondering if you are feeling angry that you have had to come back to school today and leave your mum/dad/carer/house".
- **Make a plan** – Ask the child what will help in school when they are finding it difficult to cope, for example, it might be that they need an adult identified or a safe place they can go to in school.
- **Teach pupils about anxiety** - Talk about what anxiety feels like (e.g. heart beats faster, tummy feels jumbly, feel hot and tense) and remind them that everyone experiences some anxiety sometimes and it is a completely normal feeling to have when we feel scared, worried or stressed.
- **Teach strategies** - Teach the pupil ways of calming themselves such as deep breathing, counting, muscle relaxation, drawing a picture, writing down their feelings, squeezing an object, thinking of a funny time and self-soothing statements such as, "I will be ok and I will be going home at 3.20pm".

- **Try not to get into a pattern of reassuring** - If a child asks questions like, “will I be okay, is my mum coming back, when am I going home,” try not to reassure them over and over again as this could feed into the anxiety. You could say something like, “I can see that you are feeling really worried about this.” You could create a worry book that they can write in or a worry box or create a time of day where they have ‘worry time’ and can talk to you about their worries.
- **Don’t be tempted to get the parent to leave once the child is happy with the hope they won’t notice** – it is important they can trust what’s going on around them and ultimately they will be comforted by knowing when it’s time to say goodbye and that it will be OK
- **Discourage long goodbyes** – encourage parents to say goodbye to their child and leave as soon as possible.
- **Circle time** – Create a time where your whole class has chance to talk about what it feels like to be back at school. It is likely that lots of pupils are finding it difficult being away from their family and house.
- **Contain pupils by giving them structure** – let pupils know when you are going to be moving on to a different activity in advance and give them a plan of what you are going to be doing that day.
- **Find activities the child or young person enjoys doing and which they can become absorbed in to psychologically extract themselves from their worries.**
- **Structure activities so they can experience having fun and getting on with their peers**
- **Remember the Healthy Minds triangle** – pupils (and parents/carers) need a good balance of attunement, structure and emotional regulation in order to support their well-being at a time of change and uncertainty

## When a pupil may need extra support

For most pupils that have developed separation anxiety, this anxiety will pass as they get back into the routine of being in school. For some pupils, you may notice that their anxiety does not reduce and is starting to impact many activities. If a pupil is refusing to go to school, has an excessive fear of leaving the house, has withdrawn from friends and family and is experiencing prolonged high levels of distress in relation to leaving their parent/carer or house, it may be cause for concern. If you have concerns that a pupil is struggling to this extent, please speak to the Safeguarding Lead or Designated Mental Health Lead in your school who can advise and make contact with the family and then follow usual processes for support.

# Tips for looking after YOU

## STAY CONNECTED



It's really important to stay connected with friends, social groups and family - online, phone or post

Reach out to:

- Those you haven't spoken to for a while
- Someone who may be feeling isolated
- People at home
- Help those less techy to get on social media
- Arrange a virtual party / gathering
- Host a virtual game night

## BUILD SKILLS



Set yourself a challenge - now is a great time to learn a new skill

- Who do you want to be? Go for it
- Find at least one thing to do each day which makes you happy
- Do a job around the house
- Choose a set time and place to complete school work

## BE HEALTHY



Keep to a healthy routine

- Sleep: set a time to be up by
- Eat
- Exercise
- Chill
- Fresh air

If you're feeling sluggish and tired you probably need to move!

## EMOTIONAL CHECK IN

Notice your emotions

- Share concerns with other people - it helps
- Take time to listen to other people's concerns - you might not be able to fix it for them but being heard helps
- Have fun with someone
- Avoid constant news feeds

Notice your mood and what makes you feel better or worse



## BE IN THE MOMENT

Calm your body and mind - it's important to take a break from our thoughts even only for a few minutes

- Change focus
- Be in the now
- Relax your body, breathe into your tummy
- Absorb yourself in an activity
- Try a mindfulness app
- Take a break from screens



The more you practice the more it will help when you most need it

## PLAN YOUR DAY

When normal routines have gone it can be disorientating

- Make the most of this time
- Take care of yourself

Make a plan and  
#BeatTheBoredom





# Coping when things get tough

## How to 'cool down' and 'warm up'

### When you feel too 'hot' emotionally

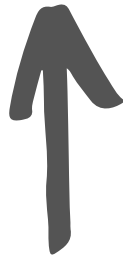
Angry, terrified, feeling out of control...

You need to 'cool down' to get back into your thinking brain

'cool  
down'



I'm okay



'warm  
up'

### When you feel too 'cold' emotionally

Sad, bored, tired...

You might need to 'warm up' to feel more alert and comfortable

### TIPS: to 'cool down' when your emotional brain is taking control

#### Cold water

- splash your face with cold water
- hold your hands under the cold tap and breathe slowly

#### Intense exercise

- 'burn off' some of that horrible feeling inside
- you could do running on the spot, star jumps, press-ups, or whatever works for you

#### Hand breathing

- use a finger from your writing hand to trace round the fingers and thumb of your other hand
- breathe in deeply as you trace up your fingers, and breathe out deeply and slowly when you trace back down

### TIPS: to 'warm up' when you feel low

#### Get moving

- you might feel like staying still but move if you can - exercise
- if you can't, get out of bed or move to a different room

#### Be social

- you might want to hide away, but being with other people helps when you're low
- speak to someone if you can, in person, phone or video
- if you can't, could you text, write a letter, or just be with someone even if you're not talking, it helps

#### Look after yourself

- you might not care how you look right now, but it helps to: have a shower and brush your teeth; change into some 'going out' clothes; do your hair or your make up

# ATTUNEMENT

Every day interactions make a huge difference

We all need to feel noticed, heard and understood

Acknowledge, acknowledge, acknowledge

Build relationships when not at crisis point

- Give a personal welcome
- Good eye contact
- Ask how they are today
- Gently comment on positives you notice
- Offer more rewards than sanctions

Support Peer relationships

Have fun!

Build in turn taking activities

Know your vulnerable students and their needs

When confused - stand back, observe, assess and be truly curious

Its OK to have ruptures in relationships. We're human and no matter how frustrating things might be its important to repair the relationship

Start each lesson afresh

# Emotional Regulation

Every day interactions make a huge difference

Be proactive - from the very start of the day notice who may need a listening ear or a sensory activity to help them to regulate

Think about your own emotional regulation needs

- Be calm to bring calm
- Notice the tone of your voice
- What are you communicating non verbally
- Think about what pushes your buttons and notice any patterns

Build in sensory breaks

Think about the hot spots across the school day

Build in appropriate physical contact

Know your pupils needs - complex children often have an uneven developmental profile

Work within the Zone of Proximal Development - their emotional age may differ from their chronological age

If someone has become dysregulated then make sure all are safe, acknowledge how you think they are feeling and signal you want to help them work it out

Think carefully about where a student feels safest in class

# Structure

Every day interactions make a huge difference

Be clear about your role and the boundaries of that role

Create an ethos of calm

Respond to the need rather than react to behaviour

Rewards impact more on behaviour change than sanctions

- Vulnerable pupils may struggle to hear / receive praise
- Recognise success in a way a pupil can accept - verbal, non verbal, private, public
- Make it clear you are talking to them
- Be specific about what it is you are praising

Choose carefully if and when to challenge

Use gesture or touch to avoid public shaming

Give space when needed

Know your pupils and their particular needs

Know who you can turn to for support and how you can access this

Start each lesson afresh

Remember its not personal!

# Active listening skills

## Stay calm, connected, open minded and curious

- Acknowledge how you think the person is feeling - simply saying what you think you've heard: 'That sounds really upsetting' or 'You must be feeling really confused.'

## Feeling heard and understood restores our ability to think

- It will help them to process what's going on, start to understand their emotions, make links as to why they are feeling that way, get to the root of the problem and find solutions
- This is true no matter what the age - acknowledging emotions to infants helps them feel heard, understand their emotions, say more about it and move on.
- Let the other person talk at their own pace

Emotional  
regulation

## Build relationships when not at crisis point

- It's so much easier to deal with issues as they arise if you already have a connection.
- Offer prompts "That must have been hard" or "What happened then"
- If in doubt as to what to say next say: "Can you tell me more about that"
- Say "And" not "But" - it allows different points of view to exist at the same time

## Notice how you're feeling and if you can truly bare to listen

- It can be hard to hear that someone is having such struggles and naturally we want to make it better but its important to not dash in with a false reassurance or a quick fix, they need to properly think it through and get to the root of the issue.
- Listening to other people's worries can affect our own mood so make sure you are looking after yourself too.
- Think about non verbal and body language - it can be helpful to sit side by side

Attunement

## Be honest about your availability

- If someone approaches you when you are short of time
- Acknowledge how you think they are feeling,
- Be clear that you only have (however) minutes,
- If the issue is not resolved acknowledge that this needs more time and
- Arrange a time to meet later or suggest who else is available

## Offer regular check ins

- Agree with the person who is going to do what (if anything) and that if things don't improve as a result what they should do
- Don't be afraid to tell the person that you don't know what to do, but assure them that you will ask and find out what to do.
- Recognise if you're going round in circles, gently let them know and work out what else might help to move things on

Structure

## Be clear about your role and who you will share the information with

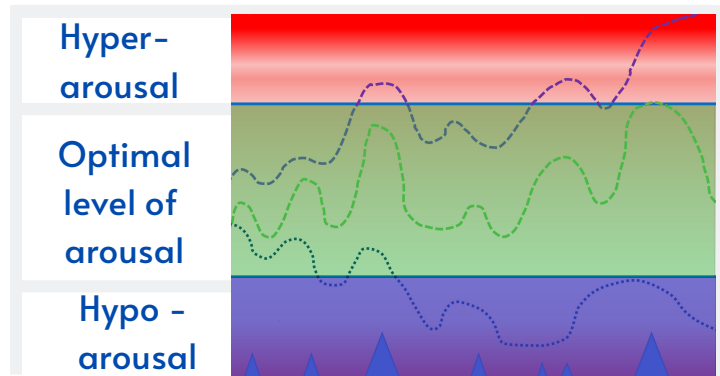
- Consider if you need to pass this on/record the conversation?

# Emotional Regulation and Sensory Breaks

Emotional regulation is the ability to adjust our internal state to cope with the external demands and maintain an optimal level of arousal

## Key skills for emotional regulation

- Being able to notice emotions and feelings
- Being able to label emotions / feelings
- Having internal strategies to calm or stimulate
- Being able to utilise external sources of support
- Being able to ask for support



## Quick grab ideas

**Check in** During registrations ask pupils to rate how they are feeling: red = hyper, green = fine, blue = sluggish - if this is recorded in patterns may emerge to help you offer individual support

**Build in sensory breaks** at key points across the school day . For example it's helpful to have a calming activity or circle time after lunch break to resolve any upsets and conflicts

### Practice simple emotional regulation activities such as:

- Squeezing from your shoulder to your hand and then pump the hands together three times
- Give yourself a hug
- Practice slow deep breathing, into the tummy with a focus on the breath out
- Tracing the outline of the hand with a focus on breathing as you go round the fingers
- Progressive muscle relaxation
- Mindfulness activities - listen to the sounds around us, notice five things in the room, imagine you are sitting by a stream with leaves floating by - put any worries onto the leaves
- Spend time on an engrossing activity - playing games, creative work, singing, parachute games

**Circle time** both for primary and secondary is a valuable way to build in a set time in the day / week to discuss any concerns and to develop emotional literacy, empathy, listening and negotiation skills

**Get pupils to keep a diary** - which can include text, drawings, mood charts, top tips

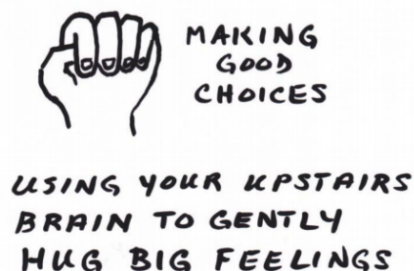
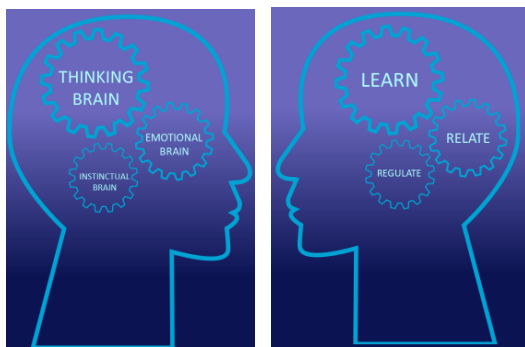
**Prepare for transitions** - visual timetable, calming activity before movement

**Emotional literacy** - word of the week, use literature or film to discuss emotions.

**Encourage debate** - choose any topic - 'is social media harmful?', 'is it good to feel angry?' and facilitate conversations between peers, enable emotional literacy and enabling them to see others have similar concerns thus reducing a feeling of being on their own with their concerns.

**Teach about the Hand Model of the Brain** - Dan Siegel

## Understanding brain states can help emotional regulation

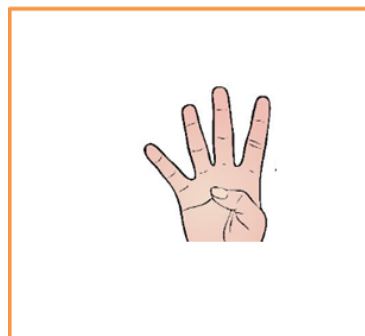


- Notice feelings
- Name feelings
- Learn strategies to help

We can use our hand to show what happens to our brain. Our fingers are our upstairs brain and our thumb and our palm is our downstairs brain.



Our brain works best when the upstairs (thinking) and downstairs (emotion) brain work together by sending messages to each other.



When we experience big emotions, our upstairs thinking brain flips up and our downstairs brain is in charge! This means that it is hard for our upstairs brain to help our downstairs brain to stay calm.



When we flip our lid, we need to get our upstairs and downstairs brain talking to each other again so that our upstairs brain can calm our downstairs brain down. We need our upstairs brain to hug our downstairs brain!

## Circle Time

One of the most important factors in supporting children in returning to school after lockdown is giving opportunity to talk, share and connect with each other.

- **Think routine:** Have a regular agreed time
- Set ground rules at the start
- Plan ahead to meet the needs of the group
- Most effective as an embedded whole school approach



### Circle time ideas:

Circle time creates a wonderful learning opportunity for all ages: enhancing emotional literacy, negotiation skills and experiential learning of being supported by peers

It can even be offered over video

- **Create a safe space** use a consistent method to mark the start and end
- **Plan:** Have a circle time basket with resources to hand to flex to the groups needs. Song sheets. Puppet. Props. Books. Activity ideas
- In COVID: Each pupil could have their own circle time resource bag
- **Think emotional regulation** across the group - do they need calming or activities to become more alert - end on a calming activity
- **Structure** - Agree rules. Create a circle. Allocate time appropriate to age. Keep it short and build up over time. Don't overrun
- **Engagement** - choose activities so all get involved, fun warm up activities. Consider children's individual sensory and emotional needs
- **Challenge** - choose activities to match the needs of the group.
- **Nurture** - help children be respectful and kind and to listen to each other
- **Scaffold** - the more regularly circle time is used the more successful it will be. It will enable more challenging conversations and can be used outside of the timetabled time to resolve specific issues.
- **Stay calm to bring calm** - be aware of your own emotional regulation - body language and tone of voice. Notice positive behaviours.

**These links have great tips whatever the age:**

- [www.circle-time.co.uk](http://www.circle-time.co.uk)
- [www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/introducing\\_circle\\_time.pdf](http://www.unrwa.org/sites/default/files/introducing_circle_time.pdf)
- <https://www.notimeforflashcards.com/2015/06/how-to-save-circle-time-ideas-for-preschool.html>



# Turnaround Table Guide

Resources needs to be consistent with the approach that your school is taking regarding resources within a bubble of children, this is a useful resource could be adapted to have individual sensory boxes

A Turnaround Table is a collaborative inclusive tool to help children:

- Emotionally regulate
- Engage more in learning and lessons
- Improve relationships
- Empower children to gain mastery over their own emotions and reactions to the world

## What does it look like?

A typical Turnaround Table might be a simple table placed at the side of the classroom, with a number of activities and resources that can help children regulate their emotions and re-join the class. It should be attractive, comfortable and all the children in the class should know where it is. Its helpful if Turnaround Tables across school, are easily recognisable for children. This can be done in the form of a consistent sign on the table, colour schemes, or similar resources on the table (differentiated according to age group). For example, having a worry monster (a cuddly toy that children can tell their worries to, or write down their worries and post into its mouth) on each table across school could help children recognise the purpose of the table in each class.



## What should go on the Turnaround Table?

Any items that help children to regulate their emotions – whether that is using sensory items, reducing stimulation or just having a safe space for a short time; feel included in the classroom and feel empowered and valued not shamed. It's helpful to ask the class to come up with ideas too.



## Ideas for resources

- Sensory toys – e.g. fiddle toys, calming scents, relaxing music (with headphones if necessary), different coloured/textured items.
- Activities that help calm - e.g. instructions for breathing exercises, colouring, mindfulness activities
- Worry box/worry monster – somewhere for a child to sit and write down their worries/anxieties and put in a safe place, ensuring that there is a system in place so that the child knows what will happen to what they have written (e.g. a teacher will read it and respond, or no one will read it)
- Books – on specific subjects that someone may be struggling with, e.g. worry, anger
- Worksheets – to fill in and help children understand what is happening for them
- Sand timers – so that they know how long they have got left on the table in a visual way
- Use of secondary senses - e.g. seat that rocks, swing/hammock, chewing/blowing bubbles, deep pressure such as weighted blanket, list of physical activities e.g. crawling, press ups, jumping on a trampoline, star jumps
- Nature and seasonal items – e.g. plants, acorns, leaves, using the senses, school pets, water
- A covered space - (e.g. underneath the table with a cushion, perhaps covered by a table cloth) - when a child is very dysregulated and feeling unsafe, having that space in the classroom could give them the feeling of physical safety that they need.

# Turnaround Table Guide

Getting the children's views on what they would find useful on the table is key, noting that this may be different for different children. If a child finds a particular item (e.g. a fiddle toy) useful, this can be incorporated into the rest of their day in a structured way

## Putting rules around the Turnaround Table

In order for the Turnaround Table to function effectively and efficiently, it is important that a clear structure is put around it, in terms of when it is used, by whom and for how long. This will be different depending on the context of your own class/school, what you want to use the table for and who you may want to use it for, but some aspects to consider are:

- Who decides who uses the table – is it an adult who tells a child to go and have some time at the table, or can a child request to spend some time at the table (and how will that be achieved – perhaps a card that says 'I need a break')?
- How long is someone allowed to stay at the table – sometimes it is useful to have a visual aid such as an egg timer or countdown clock – or are some of your students aware enough of their own emotional state and readiness to learn that they are able to say when they have had long enough?
- Negotiate some ground rules with the class – e.g. how quiet you have to be, how many times you can go on it in a day, what to do next if it hasn't helped.
- How will you record who is using the table – and review how well it is working for individual children?
- How will you prevent children going there to do their work just because they like being on that table – or worse, showing difficult behaviour in order to go on the table. This could be addressed by restricting each child to a number of turns each day, or for some children that you know struggle to last a whole day/half day/lesson, scheduling in short periods of time on the Turnaround Table.

The most important thing to remember in terms of having rules relating to the table is that they need to be clearly communicated to all (including any staff members who are in the classroom), are consistently followed by all (including any staff members who are in the classroom!) and regularly reviewed.

The more the children can have a voice in forming these rules, the more investment they will have in them and the more likely they will adhere to the boundaries that are agreed on



# Turnaround Table Guide

## Top Tips

- Use change-oriented language – the child is taking a short break to engage in an activity with the aim of regulating their emotions so that they are then ready to return to their learning
- Acknowledge feelings – some children may not have the emotional literacy to recognise how they are feeling, so acknowledging, or naming the feelings for them can help them normalise and understand their emotions
- If a child is resisting going to the Turnaround Table it may be that they have the belief that nothing can help them, or that they do not trust the adult to help them deal with these emotions. They may need short periods of time at the table that are then built up, or adult support at the table if this is feasible. Or the table can come to them using a sensory box
- Some children may need support to understand the purpose of the table and reminders as to how and when to use the table.
- If a child is going to the table a lot, use this as a communication that something is getting in the way of their learning and that they need some extra support. Talking to them and acknowledging their difficulties can go a long way to helping them deal with the issue.
- The table can be used to reduce the intensity of emotions that a child is feeling, or to help them become more alert and focussed.
- If considering Turnaround Tables across the whole school, a trial in one or two classrooms can help develop a strategy for the roll out across all classrooms, and give some positive feedback on effectiveness to help all staff get on board with the concept
- Differentiation according to age, ability of the children in the class and to each child's particular needs can be important – there are no set resources or activities that should be on the table, it will depend on you class/school's individual needs
- Consider a rota system if the table is being consistently used by children so that its use is fairly distributed



**Coming back to school after lockdown can evoke many different feelings in students. Having a worry box can give those who find vocalising these feelings difficult (and others) the opportunity to process and share their emotions in a safe, contained place.**

### **Top tips for using worry boxes**

Anything can be used as a worry box—most common is a small cardboard box that is brightly decorated (with help from children), with a slot to post handwritten pieces of paper

Ensure children know who will read the notes and how they will be responded to (e.g. staff will follow them up, or there will be no follow up)

Set up clearly when children can put notes in the box— is it easier to have one time when everyone is writing one, or can they put them in at any time during the day?

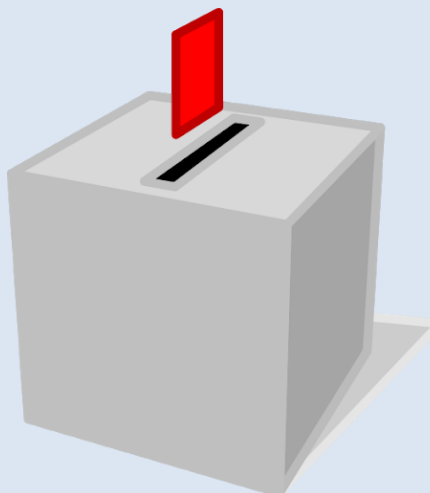
Ensure each child has access to small pieces of paper to write on

If a particular worry needs following up then consider a discreet check-in with the child

If a theme of topics comes up, or one topic that you feel may be sensitive to a particular child to follow up individually, consider doing a whole class discussion (see circle time guide)

Get the children's input on how to use worry boxes—they may want to use them during the return to school after lockdown in a different way, or more regularly than normal

Consider where in school and how many worry boxes to have—is one in a corridor best, or one in each classroom?



Talk to children about the worry box beforehand, in terms of it being normal to have lots of different feelings during COVID and coming back to school, and having the box as somewhere safe to 'contain' these feelings

Consider individual worry boxes/jars etc during the return to school and current uncertainty

**One of the most important factors in helping children feel emotionally safe in the transition back to school after lockdown is feeling connected to others.**

One way to help build connectedness with others is to incorporate **random acts of kindness** activities into the school day.

Random acts of kindness can include:

A class/group activity where the students discuss and plan how they can do a random act of kindness for someone else a) in school, b) at home and c) in the community

A 'buddy' scheme where each person is secretly assigned another student/staff member and has to do covert acts of kindness for them during the day

Having students reflect on acts of kindness that they have witnessed during lockdown, e.g. clapping for carers, people shopping for vulnerable neighbours

Students looking out for random acts of kindness that they observe during the school week—and designing small 'thank you' rewards for the people who have done them!



Students thinking about who they have been most grateful to during lockdown and doing something kind for them (e.g. thank you card, design a small gift)

Students coming up with truly random acts of kindness for people who would not expect someone to think of them—who do they think are the real unsung heroes of the COVID-19 outbreak?

# Multi Agency Support Team: [EHWB@sheffield.gov.uk](mailto:EHWB@sheffield.gov.uk)

This a brief list of useful resources to support your school with PHSE, particularly surrounding Emotional Health & Well Being. It is not extensive and we are aware of the resources that you already have in school around nurture and PHSE.

## Books & Authors

Below are some books that have excellent activities and ideas that are easy to translate into classroom activities for small groups and individuals. They can also be recommended for parents if they are asking for activities to do at home. We would encourage parents and teachers to use the resources as a starting point for discussion or even join in with the activities to support their own well-being.



The co-author Pooky Knightsmith, is an educational psychologist who also posts useful videos for teachers and other professionals on YouTube which are well worth a watch.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6IQXA3Sjlk4> - 3 ways to calm things down.

As you know, teaching these strategies whilst children are calm help embed the strategies for when they are needed.

We would suggest The Huge Bag of Worries; Wilma Jean, the Worry Machine and The Mental Health & Wellbeing Workout for Teens by Paula Nagel. Further reading resources can be found using this link.

<https://reading-well.org.uk/books/books-on-prescription/children>

We enjoy using the Gnat's Handbook for Mindfulness; **The Mindful Gnats workbook can be found on [www.PeskyGnats.com](http://www.PeskyGnats.com)**

## Going Back to School

Coronavirus is a new virus that makes people unwell. To help stop the virus from spreading, almost everyone has had to stay at home. Schools have been closed. Lots of other places have been closed too.



Scientists have been working hard to find out more about the coronavirus. Scientists say it is now safe for schools to re-open.



Going back to school might be a bit different than before. This is to keep everyone safe and stop the virus from spreading. These are some of the things that might be different when I go back to school: **(edit as appropriate and include relevant pictures)**

- I might only go to school on certain days
- There won't be as many children in school
- There won't be as many children in my class
- There won't be as many children in the playground at break time.

- Lunchtime and break time might be a different times than before
- Children will be sat further away from each other in the classroom.
- My teacher and other adults might be wearing masks.

These are some of the things that will stay the same when I go back to school: **edit**  
**as appropriate and include relevant pictures**

- I will still go to the same school
- I will still have the same classroom
- I will still sit in the same seat
- I will still have the same teacher
- Break time will still be in the same playground
- I will still have computer time
- I can still use the quiet area if I need a break

Scientists say it is now safe for some children to go back to school. School might be a bit different when I go back but lots of things will stay the same.



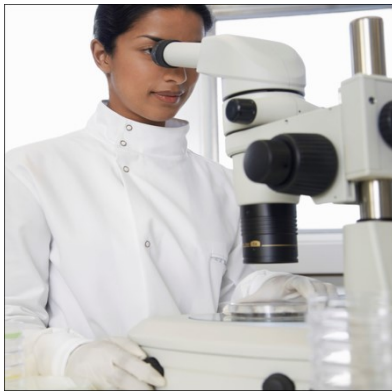


## Going Back to School

COVID-19 is a new virus that makes people unwell. COVID-19 is sometimes called coronavirus. Because it is new, lots of people have become ill with the virus. To help stop the virus from spreading, almost everyone has had to stay at home. Schools have been closed. Lots of other places have been closed too.

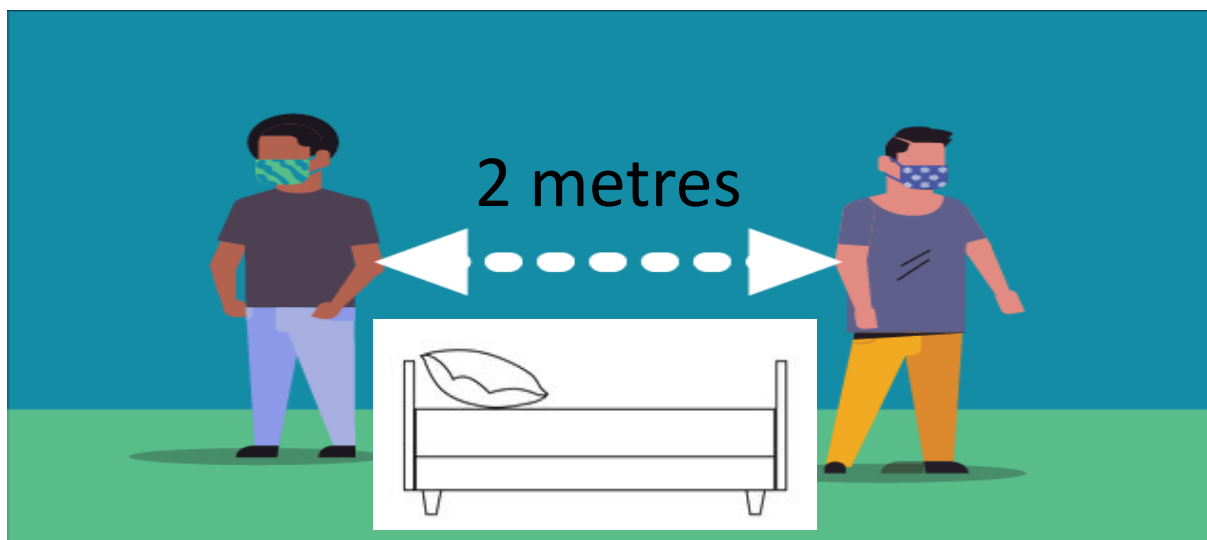


Scientists have been working hard to find out more about the coronavirus. Scientists have also been counting how many people have been getting ill with coronavirus.



The number of people becoming ill with coronavirus is getting lower and lower. Scientists say it is now safe for some places to re-open. People in your family might be able to go back to work. Schools are also going to re-open. Some other places will also re-open too. Your family will know which places are open.

Because some people are still getting ill with the virus, it is important that we don't get too close to other people when we are out of the house. Scientists say we must stay at least 2 metres away from people that we don't live with. This is about the same length as a double bed. Scientists say that in some places people should also wear masks.



This means that going back to school might be a bit different than before. This is to keep everyone safe and stop the virus from spreading. These are some of the things that might be different when I go back to school **(edit as appropriate)**:

- I might only go to school on certain days
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- I will still have computer time
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Scientists say it is now safe for some children to go back to school. School might be a bit different when I go back but lots of things will stay the same.

# Tips for looking after YOU

## STAY CONNECTED



It's really important to stay connected with friends, social groups and family - online, phone or post

Reach out to:

- Those you haven't spoken to for a while
- Someone who may be feeling isolated
- People at home
- Help those less techy to get on social media
- Arrange a virtual party / gathering
- Host a virtual game night

## BUILD SKILLS



Set yourself a challenge - now is a great time to learn a new skill

- Who do you want to be? Go for it
- Find at least one thing to do each day which makes you happy
- Do a job around the house
- Choose a set time and place to complete school work

## BE HEALTHY



Keep to a healthy routine

- Sleep: set a time to be up by
- Eat
- Exercise
- Chill
- Fresh air

If you're feeling sluggish and tired you probably need to move!

## EMOTIONAL CHECK IN

Notice your emotions


- Share concerns with other people - it helps
- Take time to listen to other people's concerns - you might not be able to fix it for them but being heard helps
- Have fun with someone
- Avoid constant news feeds

Notice your mood and what makes you feel better or worse



## BE IN THE MOMENT

Calm your body and mind - it's important to take a break from our thoughts even only for a few minutes

- Change focus
  - Be in the now
  - Relax your body, breathe into your tummy
  - Absorb yourself in an activity
  - Try a mindfulness app
- 

The more you practice the more it will help when you most need it

## PLAN YOUR DAY

When normal routines have gone it can be disorientating

- Make the most of this time
- Take care of yourself

Make a plan and  
#BeatTheBoredom



# BRAIN DUMP

## List

- What you like doing
- What you want to achieve
- People who are important to you

# Ideas & Apps

## Stay Connected



Start a podcast with friends  
Give someone a call/ videocall  
Eat a meal with family  
Do a gamenight with family  
Catch up online through gaming  
Organise a quiz online

There are lots of platforms to connect with friends and family. School may send info about ways to link up  
Always stay safe online - talk about concerns with someone responsible. FOMO and cyberbullying can affect mental health - check out [Thinkuknow](#) or [Own It](#)

## Build Skills



Craft activities like amigurumi  
Learn a signature dish  
DIY / Gardening  
Music production  
Begin learning a language  
Master the flip-flap football trick

[Duolingo](#)  
[Seek by iNaturalist](#)  
[Tasty](#)  
[Sign BSL - learn British Sign Language](#)  
[Fender Play Guitar lessons](#)  
[BBC Bitesize Daily](#)

## Be Healthy



Go for a run  
Try yoga  
Practice a tik tok dance  
Set a regular alarm to wake up  
Try an online fitness routine/class  
Do Dry Monday - no energy drinks

[Map my run](#)  
[Habitica](#)  
[Yoga on YouTube](#)  
[7 minute workout](#)  
[Couch to 5k](#)

## Emotional Check In



Keep a note of how you're feeling  
Be kind to yourself  
Keep a gratitude journal  
Check in with a friend  
Express yourself through art

[EpicFriends](#)  
[Door43](#)  
[Rise Above](#)  
[Childline Toolbox](#)  
[Kooth](#)

## Be in the Moment



Play with pets  
Try a three minute mindfulness exercise  
Look for cloud animals  
Do a jigsaw  
Take time doing makeup / hair

[Headspace](#)  
[Smiling Mind](#)  
[Online puzzles](#)  
[Podcasts](#)  
[Spotify](#)

# Create your ideas bank

Stay Connected: Name who you are going to check in with



Build Skills: What skills would you like to develop?



Be Healthy: List your top tips to keep you healthy



Emotional Check In: Who can you talk to if you have worries?



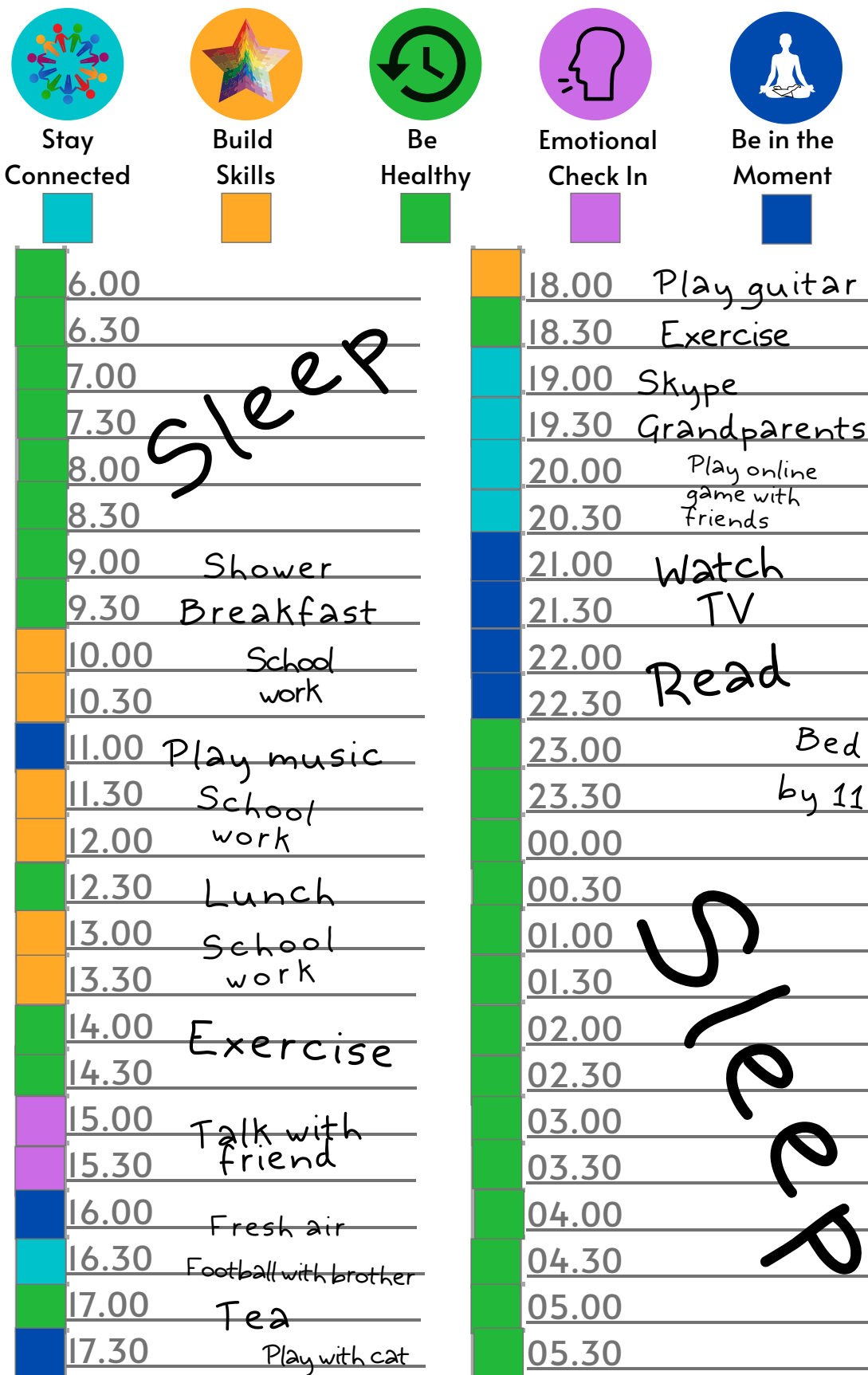
Be in the Moment: What activities do you find help you to feel calm?



# Set some goals

	Activity	M	Tu	W	Th	F	Sa	Su
Example	Walking the dog	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Stay Connected 								
Build Skills 								
Be Healthy 								
Emotional Check In 								
Be in the Moment 								

# Plan your ideal day





# Plan your ideal day



Stay  
Connected



Build  
Skills



Be  
Healthy



Emotional  
Check In








Be in the  
Moment



6.00	18.00
6.30	18.30
7.00	19.00
7.30	19.30
8.00	20.00
8.30	20.30
9.00	21.00
9.30	21.30
10.00	22.00
10.30	22.30
11.00	23.00
11.30	23.30
12.00	00.00
12.30	00.30
13.00	01.00
13.30	01.30
14.00	02.00
14.30	02.30
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15.30	03.30
16.00	04.00
16.30	04.30
17.00	05.00
17.30	05.30

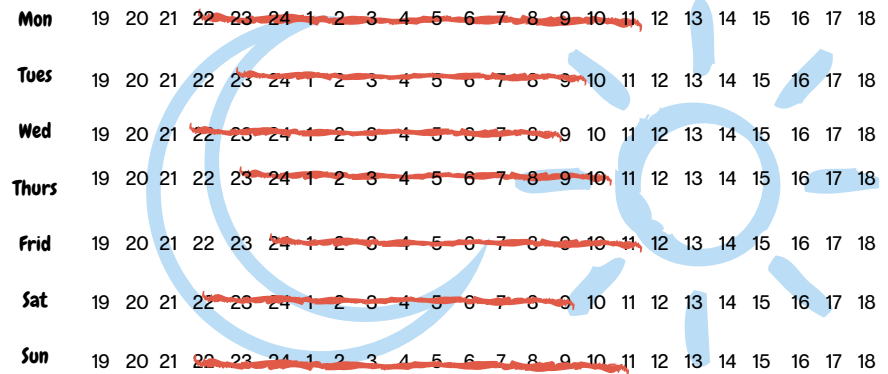
# Example Review your week

## #BeatTheBoredom Highlights

 Talked to grandpa Played cards	 20 mins guitar most days
 Managed 1 mile run Got up before 10 am every day	 Been enjoying talking to Emma every evening
 Made a playlist Spent 5 mins listening to birds Downloaded a mindfulness app	

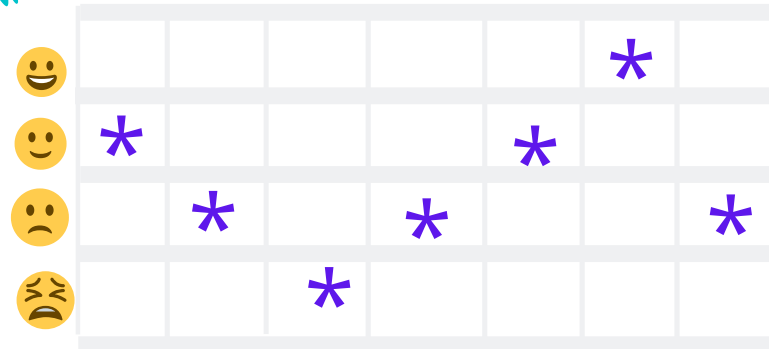
## Track your sleep

Week commencing: May 4th



## Rate your Mood

Mon Tues Wed Thurs Frid Sat Sun



# Review your week

## #BeatTheBoredom Highlights

A 2x2 grid for weekly highlights. Each cell has a grey sticky note attached. The grid is surrounded by five circular icons: a group of people (top-left), a star (top-right), a clock (bottom-left), a head with sound waves (bottom-right), and a person meditating (bottom).

## Track your sleep

Week commencing:

Mon	19	20	21	22	23	24	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Tues	19	20	21	22	23	24	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Wed	19	20	21	22	23	24	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Thurs	19	20	21	22	23	24	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Frid	19	20	21	22	23	24	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Sat	19	20	21	22	23	24	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Sun	19	20	21	22	23	24	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18

## Rate your Mood

Mon Tues Wed Thurs Frid Sat Sun




## **BeatTheBoredomSheff (April 2020 – COVID-19)**

There is a growing concern as to the impact on the COVID-19 measures on children and young people's mental health. The loss of structure, activities and social contact combined with the pressures on families are a toxic mix which can eat away at even the most resilient of young people.

We know schools are doing an amazing job under the most challenging of circumstances and we know schools offer key pastoral support to all children and young people. We would like to support you to enhance the emotional wellbeing of your pupils at this challenging time.

School staff can make a massive difference to pupils' wellbeing by helping them to structure their day, engage in healthy lifestyle activities and reduce social isolation. We have developed the BeatTheBoredomSheff Plan to help school staff engage with pupils about these issues.

It will add great value to this exercise if key staff, preferably those the young person has a good relationship with, could be assigned to particular pupils to show interest in their progress and give individualised feedback

The purpose of the planner is to support engagement with pupils in thinking about their day and the things which help them to feel motivated and comforted - not about performance as such, as we know the children and young people who will need this support the most are likely to be those who are doing the least.

For some pupils the planner will help them to enhance their routine for others the focus may be on establishing a routine, it's important to join the young person where they are at and help them to build healthy coping strategies, even if these have to be small steps to start with.

### **Engaging pupils with BeatTheBoredomSheff**

- The planner can be sent out electronically or in paper format. **Pupils need to download the electronic copy in order for them to be able to write into the pdf.**
- The planner is connected to Instagram campaign #BeatTheBoredomSheff to help engagement.
- It will also support this process if there is a school wide campaign, such as daily challenges, or tutor group tasks or intra-school competitions to encourage participation across pupils, with a focus on thinking about what will engage the most vulnerable
- If a particular pupil is struggling to engage with the activity the priority needs to be on building the relationship, trying to meet them where they are at and work out what would be a good next step for them.
- It is important to be mindful that some pupils may be experiencing an extremely stressful family environment and thus in all conversations with them it is important to maintain an open mind as to why they may be acting in certain ways and find ways to best engage them in your support even if that is by offering a simple check in.
- Please see Healthy Minds guidance on supporting pupil emotional wellbeing via telephone if further information is required to support particular vulnerable pupils
- An excellent resource for staff wellbeing can be found at [Every Mind Matters](#)

## Guidance for BeatTheBoredomSheff for Children and Young People (April 2020 – COVID-19)

Dear Parent /Carer

We have prepared BeatTheBoredomSheff to help children and young people plan their day during COVID-19 measures, to support them to engage in activities which we know will best support a healthy lifestyle. Schools are sending out work and activities to their pupils and some may also directly send out this planner, as sometimes a prompt from an outside source might encourage more children and young people to engage.

The purpose of the planner is to support engagement with your child in thinking about their day and the things which help them to feel motivated and comforted.

We know that for some children and young people the planner will help them to enhance their routine and for others the focus may be on establishing a routine, it's important to tune into what would be most helpful for your child and help them to build healthy coping strategies, even if these have to be small steps to start with.

The most important element is to focus on your relationship with your child and if you think they are struggling at this time, spend time with them, try and understand what they are thinking or feeling by asking questions and listening. It will be so much easier to give them the support you want to give them if you can get on the same page as them.

Be mindful of your own stress levels when you engage in these conversations so you can stay rational, calm and connected and if you are struggling to do so, think about what will best help you and acknowledge that maybe you need to have the conversation at another time.

[Every Mind Matters](#) has some useful strategies to support wellbeing

- The planner can be used electronically or in paper format. **You need to download the electronic copy to be able to write into the pdf.**
- The planner is a way to help your child think about how they can best spend their day, with the hope of supporting some healthy lifestyle choices.
- It will depend on individual circumstances as to whether this is helpful to you as a family at this time.
- The younger the child the more input they will need from parents and carers – some young people might engage more if they see it more as a school task.
- Remember that your idea of 'making the most out of your day' might look different to your child's and that's okay. Meet them where they are at.
- Encourage them to tap into their special interests and see how creative they can be with their planner.
- We are promoting young people's engagement through the social media campaign #BeatTheBoredomSheff. Your child might want to post what they have done with their day under this hashtag.
- We are hoping schools will also offer creative way to link up their pupils to reduce social isolation and support motivation so do check their websites or messages.
- Have a go at completing a planner to see what it's like, you could stick it to the fridge so your child can see what you've done - it might encourage them to do the same.
- When your child engages in the planner focus on what they have done, how easy/challenging was it and encourage them to notice any changes in their mood before and after?
- If they are really struggling to plan their day at all – just focus on the things they like doing and think about small steps.