



Preparing your child for returning to school

We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for all your hard work, dedication and support throughout this challenging time as we fully understand and appreciate the demands home-schooling has placed on families. We look forward to continuing to develop and strengthen our parent partnership as we move forward into the new school year.

We understand that you may have concerns as your child returns to school. Your child might feel excited, worried or both. You too may be experiencing the same emotions and concerns.

We can assure you that we have carefully planned every consideration from health and safety, mental health and wellbeing, re-engaging children in learning to simply coping with change. We will be continually reviewing all of these elements in response to national and local guidance and student, parent and staff feedback.

Back in 2016, in response to the global epidemic of physical and mental health problems amongst children and young people, Professor Andy Hargreaves stated that:

“We need creativity, care and compassion on a scale that we have never witnessed before.”

This has never been more fitting than in 2020 when children, parents and staff have been through a global pandemic never experienced ever before!

This is why at Great Alne Primary School have carefully been considering and planning for our return to school in September by researching the work of Barry Carpenter and the Evidence for Learning team: **“A Recovery Curriculum: Loss and Life for our children and schools post pandemic” (2020).** www.evidenceforlearning.net/recoverycurriculum

There are 3 levels of Recovery identified in the 'Recovery curriculum' which are:



At the heart of all this is the Social, Emotional, Mental health and Wellbeing of all pupils.

We aim to restore the mental health, wellbeing and rebuild the resilience of our pupils to support 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/supporting them for transition

At Great Alne Primary School we have always placed a high priority on supporting the mental health and wellbeing of all our pupils and staff. We established a dedicated Wellbeing Team who, meet regularly to, plan how to support our children to have good mental health and wellbeing through whole school approaches, (mental health week) class activities, small group intervention work and individual 1-1 support. This will continue to be a high main concern for all staff from September.

We have carefully planned our PSHE (Personal, Social, Health and Economic) lessons for the first half term by focusing on supporting our children to 'feel safe' both physically and emotionally, to reconnect and re-establish secure attachments with teachers and peers and rebuild their emotional resilience which is key to all children's wellbeing.

There will be daily opportunities for children to talk, express their emotions, share any worries or concerns both as a class or individually through circle time sessions and class worry boxes. Safe Spaces will be provided within school for those children who may need 'time out' to work through any anxieties they may be experiencing with the support of staff.

We will also continue to use and build upon our mental health and well being practices, which we had previously established within the classroom, such as; using breathing techniques, listening to calming music, developing children's emotional literacy, motor movement breaks, building resilience skills and celebrating success amongst a range of other strategies.

Engagement is... a journey which connects a child and their environment ... to enable learning and achievement” (Carpenter et al 2011)

We will be supporting our children to ‘learn how to learn’ once again by ‘re-engaging in learning’ and developing their confidence as a learner. We are leveraging the children back into their rightful status as an effective and successful learner.

We will support them to **reskill, rebuild** their self-confidence and **re-ignite** their love of learning. They will be given the time and space they require to transition successfully back into school and at the heart of everything we provide there will be kindness, care and compassion.

We have put together some tips to support you as a family, and focusing on the things we can attempt to have some control over, in a time when many things are very much still out of our control.

- Focus on what you know will be the same for them to build their confidence and give them something to look forward to – e.g. what familiar adults/friends will they see? What familiar activities will they enjoy doing?
- Validate their feelings. Be curious and listen to their views – try not to dismiss their fears. You might say, “It’s perfectly fine to feel like that at the moment” or “I can really understand why you would feel like that.”
- Support them getting back into good routines, e.g. waking a little earlier each day, eating a healthy diet, washing their hands thoroughly and regularly, spending a balanced time on technology and getting some type of daily exercise as these are all key to everyone’s physical and mental health.
- Once your child returns to school, please communicate any feedback to us as it enables us to review our practice and ensure we are providing a level of support which meets all our children’s needs.

If you require any further information please do not hesitate to contact us and we look forward to welcoming everyone back in September.