



# **Responding appropriately to COVID-19**

**A curriculum to meet the  
needs of our communities**

## **Acknowledgements**

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# Introduction

The worldwide COVID-19 pandemic is an example of a form of trauma that is happening to everyone. The response of schools as children return needs to be compassionate and trauma informed. A trauma informed school is one that:

- is able to support children and young people who suffer with trauma and whose experience of trauma acts as a barrier to learning;
- works in collaboration with children, families and organisations to develop positive relationships and provide interventions for children affected by trauma in order to heal their bodies, minds and brains;
- involves staff in every part of the organisation, taking into consideration the experiences of trauma (among children and staff) and applying trauma knowledge to the way we practice.

A list of the ways in which trauma may affect the learning or behaviour of children and young people, who have experienced traumatic events, is included in the Lancashire Violence Reduction Network's (LVRN) 'COVID-19 Trauma Informed Guidance for Schools'<sup>1</sup> (see p.5). The guidance also reminds us that for other pupils their suffering may not be apparent at all. Quiet and withdrawn students can often go unnoticed, which means their needs are

not addressed. They may have symptoms that are equally serious as children who outwardly display academic and behavioural difficulties.

A trauma informed school therefore needs to alter its curriculum and teaching in response to the national and global trauma that our children and young people are experiencing.

If we are to ensure that Lancashire schools are trauma informed, an appropriate response to our children and young people will include considering how to:

- Create a safe and supportive environment;
- Build trust and help children and young people to regulate their emotions;
- Raise awareness of school staff;
- Modify teaching strategies;
- Inform others, make referrals and coordinate services;
- Support families.

Acorn Psychology Services have prepared some resources to assist schools in the return of children, including guidance on the place of play, links to activities to help children to name their anxieties and a social story to explain the changes in schools (see link below<sup>2</sup>)






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<sup>1</sup> Youansamouth, L. and Collingwood, S. (2020) COVID-19 Trauma Informed Guidance for Schools – [https://www.lancsvrn.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/LVRN-Post-COVID-19-Trauma-Informed-Guidance-for-Schools-FINAL\\_5.pdf](https://www.lancsvrn.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/LVRN-Post-COVID-19-Trauma-Informed-Guidance-for-Schools-FINAL_5.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> Acorn Psychological Services (2020) Transition Back to School (Part 3) Resources to support – <https://www.acornpsychology.co.uk/uploads/Covid-19/Transition%20Back%20to%20School%20Part%203.pdf>

# A recovery curriculum

In the Evidence for Learning ‘Think Piece’ entitled ‘A Recovery Curriculum: Loss and Life for our Children and Schools Post Pandemic’<sup>3</sup>, Professor Barry Carpenter CBE and Principal Michael Carpenter, outline five levers that they believe should be central to schools who are considering what learning and teaching should be like when children return to school. These five levers are detailed below:

Lever	Details
<b>Lever 1: Relationships</b> 	<p>We can’t expect our students to return joyfully, and many of the relationships that were thriving, may need to be invested in and restored. We need to plan for this to happen, not assume that it will. Reach out to greet them, use the relationships we build to cushion the discomfort of returning.</p>
<b>Lever 2: Community</b> 	<p>We must recognise that curriculum will have been based in the community for a long period of time. We need to listen to what has happened in this time, understand the needs of our community and engage them in the transitioning of learning back into school.</p>
<b>Lever 3: Transparent curriculum</b> 	<p>All of our students will feel like they have lost time in learning and we must show them how we are addressing these gaps, consulting and co-constructing with our students to heal this sense of loss.</p>
<b>Lever 4: Metacognition</b> 	<p>In different environments, students will have been learning in different ways. It is vital that we make the skills for learning in a school environment explicit to our students to reskill and rebuild their confidence as learners.</p>
<b>Lever 5: Space – to be, to rediscover self and to find their voice on learning in this issue</b> 	<p>It is only natural that we all work at an incredible pace to make sure this group of learners are not disadvantaged against their peers, providing opportunity and exploration alongside the intensity of our expectations.</p>

<sup>3</sup> Carpenter, B. and Carpenter, M. (2020) A Recovery Curriculum: Loss and Life for our children and schools post pandemic – <https://www.evidenceforlearning.net/recoverycurriculum/>

# Key messages supported by research

- Teachers themselves believe that teaching is ‘inevitably linked’ with the emotional health and wellbeing of the students being taught<sup>4</sup>. In fact, Maslow’s<sup>5</sup> hierarchy of needs even indicates that emotional support may be a prerequisite to higher-order functions such as learning.
  - Overworking in stressful, overwhelming classrooms can lead to unhappy learning. A standard of work and expectations still need to be clear for the children, but reflective time is essential in any learning. It is imperative to set aside time for children to have a “brain break” and reflective time to help re-energise them<sup>6</sup>.
  - Creativity is a core aspect of successful learning<sup>7</sup>, and early twenty-first century creativity is seen as ‘generative problem identification and problem solving, across life’ (p.7). This is referred to as little ‘c’ creativity, which is built upon the skills of everyday problem solving that we all process and develop<sup>8</sup>.
  - Creativity in education comes from successful planning<sup>9</sup>; to achieve a successful, creative environment we must use current, existing learning objectives and lesson ideas within a context that encourages links and connections with all subjects and the wider world around us. Creative teaching is beneficial to successful learning; it allows children to develop a way of thinking which has been referred to as “possibility thinking”, whereby a person can use a range of skills they have learnt<sup>8</sup>.
- ‘Everything which surrounds us in the physical world can be seen and understood from multiple perspectives’ (p.1)<sup>10</sup>***
- Creativity can be used in classrooms to explore and examine the ways children think in ‘alternative ways’; it is ‘about using those connections to help children learn through a range of experiences, representations, teaching approaches and activities, enabling children to be active agents in their own learning’ (p.vii)<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> Kidger *et al.* (2010) Part and parcel of teaching? Secondary school staff’s views on supporting student emotional health and wellbeing. *British Educational Research Journal*, 36(6), 919-935.

<sup>5</sup> Maslow, A. H. (1943) A Theory of Human Motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50(4), 370-396.

<sup>6</sup> Weslake, A. and Christian, B. J. (2015) Brain breaks: Help or hindrance? *Teach Collection of Christian Education*, 1(1), 38-46.

<sup>7</sup> Craft, A. and Hall, E. (2015) ‘Changes in the landscape for creativity in education’. In Wilson, A. (ed.) *Creativity in Primary Education* (3<sup>rd</sup> ed.). London, SAGE, pp. 6-24.

<sup>8</sup> Craft, A. (2000) *Creativity Across the Primary Curriculum*. London, Routledge.

<sup>9</sup> Desailly, J. (2015). *Creativity in the primary classroom*. London, SAGE.

<sup>10</sup> Barnes, J. (2007) *Cross-Curricular Learning*. London, SAGE.

<sup>11</sup> Turner-Bisset, R. (2005) *Creative Teaching: History in the Primary Classroom*. London, Routledge.

# Curriculum adaptation

The following may form a blueprint / route map for schools as they start to design what learning and teaching will look and feel like during and post COVID-19.

1. **Audit** what the experience of lockdown learning has been. What have been the successful characteristics of children and young people's learning? Is there learning to take forward on metacognition and pedagogy that could enhance our post COVID curriculum? (See Appendix 1 for an example of findings from Morecambe Bay Primary School).
2. **Speak to staff** about elements of pedagogy that support the characteristics from existing practices and the current curriculum offer; identify which characteristics are not supported or blocked by existing practice. (See Appendix 2 for a 'Characteristics of Effective Learning: Self-Review Tool').
3. **Identify resources** to support children and young people in identifying their emotions and experiences (See the LVRN Trauma Informed Guidance for Schools<sup>1</sup> and Acorn Psychology Services Transition Back to School resource documents<sup>2</sup>).
4. **Identify learning opportunities** for building relationships (see Appendix 3).
5. **Agree in staff teams on catch up** what is essential within the curriculum, whilst identifying what is less of an urgent priority. Slim down key learning objectives across each year group.
6. **Speak to children / young people** about what they have found out about themselves as learners. What has helped them to learn well? What has stopped them from being able to learn successfully?
7. **Share these objectives with children and their families**, with links to on-line / homework that will support learning.
8. **Assess planned work** in collaboration with colleagues, against newly agreed characteristics of successful learning. For example, have we created space for children to pursue their own ideas and interests?
9. **Reassess timetables** to check that there is space for self-reflection and relationship building?
10. **Establish what interventions there will be to focus on children with more intense needs.** Who will deliver these interventions (both PSHE and academic)?

# Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

## Transition and recovery curriculum

The following section provides information and signposts to resources to support a transition and recovery curriculum for EYFS. For our youngest children, the four themes of the EYFS – **a unique child; positive relationships; enabling environments; learning and development** – underpin all the guidance contained and referenced in this document. The Development Matters<sup>12</sup> document, together with the EYFS Statutory Framework<sup>13</sup>, show how these themes, and the principles that inform them, work together for children in the EYFS, not only during recovery but as part of high-quality early years practice.

Themes				
Principles	Every child is a unique child who is constantly learning and can be resilient, capable, confident and self-assured.	Children learn to be strong and independent through positive relationships.	Children learn and develop well in enabling environments, in which their experiences respond to their individual needs and there is a strong partnership between practitioners and parents and carers.	Children develop and learn in different ways. The framework covers the education and care of all children in early years provision, including children with special educational needs and disabilities.
Practice	<b>Practitioners:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- understand and observe each child's development and learning, assess progress, plan for next steps</li> <li>- support babies and children to develop a positive sense of their own identity and culture</li> <li>- identify any need for additional support</li> <li>- keep children safe</li> <li>- value and respect all children and families equally</li> </ul>	<b>Positive relationships are:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- warm and loving, and foster a sense of belonging</li> <li>- sensitive and responsive to the child's needs, feelings and interests</li> <li>- supportive of the child's own efforts and independence</li> <li>- consistent in setting clear boundaries</li> <li>- stimulating</li> <li>- built on key person relationships in early years settings</li> </ul>	<b>Enabling environments:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- value all people</li> <li>- value learning</li> </ul> <b>They offer:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- stimulating resources, relevant too all the children's cultures and communities</li> <li>- rich learning opportunities through play and playful teaching</li> <li>- support for children to take risks and explore</li> </ul>	Practitioners teach children by ensuring challenging, playful opportunities across the prime and specific areas of learning and development.  <b>They foster the characteristics of effective early learning:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- playing and exploring</li> <li>- active learning</li> <li>- creating and thinking critically</li> </ul>

Source: Adapted from the British Association for Early Childhood Education<sup>12</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> British Association for Early Childhood Education (2012) Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage - <https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/files/2012/03/Development-Matters-FINAL-PRINT-AMENDED.pdf>

<sup>13</sup> Department for Education (2017) Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage - [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/596629/EYFS\\_STATUTORY\\_FRAMEWORK\\_2017.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/596629/EYFS_STATUTORY_FRAMEWORK_2017.pdf)

Against the backdrop of these four themes, the Lancashire Early Years Consultants have produced a range of guidance documents<sup>14</sup> to support transition and recovery.

- Early Years and Well-being – Supporting children's well-being as they return to schools and settings;
- Helping My Child Return to Nursery – A guide to share with parents and carers to support transition to nursery;
- Help My Child Return to School – A guide to share with parents and carers to support transition to school;
- Helping My Child Get Ready for Starting School – A guide to share with parents and carers to support induction into Reception class;
- Transition from Nursery to School – A guide for practitioners.

Whilst these documents and the practice case study (Appendix 1) relate to early years and primary age children respectively, a recovery curriculum is equally important for secondary school pupils and post-16 education. Many of the themes and principles referred to in this guidance document are relevant to all ages. We are hoping to produce further materials that are more specifically aimed at supporting secondary schools and higher educational establishments.

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<sup>14</sup> The documents are available via the following weblinks:

<http://www3.lancashire.gov.uk/corporate/web/?siteid=2997&pageid=48919&e=e>





<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/practitioners/supporting-children-and-families/childcare-and-early-years-settings/coronavirus-guidance-for-childcare-and-early-years-settings/childminders-and-pvi-coronavirus-documents/>

# Appendices

# Appendix 1: A practice case study





## Morecambe Bay Primary School Lessons of lockdown learning (May 2020)

The following table contains characteristics of successful curriculum experiences identified in an audit, which explored the perspectives of staff and parents. Individual schools could identify characteristics that their children, parents and staff have found to be positive during lockdown learning and use the insights to create their own school's characteristics for optimum learning.

	Characteristic	Details
<b>A</b>	Time 	Time to learn in depth  Time and space and value for relationship building, between children and adults, and with peers  Time and opportunity to celebrate children and young people's achievements  Relaxed, not pressured
<b>B</b>	Engagement 	Self-direction: following the child's interests and prior learning  Independent research / lines of enquiry, questioning and curiosity  Desire to learn and stay on task, be resilient in seeing a task through  Relevant / life skills
<b>C</b>	Active / creative learning 	Outdoor learning  Fun, laughter and humour  Learning through play, skilfully supported by adults  Creative learning experiences alongside routine tasks  Imagination stimulated
<b>D</b>	Environment 	Safe, belonging, security of routine, consistent expectations, positive adult role models  Colourful, bright environments  Receiving praise and positive feedback

*Note.* Pre-requisites to develop these characteristics are children who have developed early skills of creative and critical thinking alongside personal, social and wellbeing characteristics.

## Pedagogy to deliver these characteristics

	Characteristic	Details
<b>A</b>	Time 	1:1 / small group work, time to just be with children and build relationships, focus on team building and mindfulness  Time to expand, get things wrong, refine and perfect  Time to share, appreciate and show off quality work  Quiet time to enjoy reading  Time to sit and concentrate, persevere and do their best - reward diligence, perseverance and take pride in a task well done
<b>B</b>	Engagement 	Hook children emotionally with a task  Child initiated learning and exploration  Metacognition – understand how we learn  Life skills – interactive, cooperative, problem solving activities, e.g. baking, cooking, arts, crafts and sewing  Writing creatively, for a purpose, playscripts and letters  Encourage a love of stories and rhymes  Use role play areas / lessons to engage and stimulate imagination and empathy
<b>C</b>	Active / creative learning 	Learning by doing, exploring and playing – practical maths, measuring and researching individual projects  Learning from our surrounding outdoors – gardening, designing maps and nature studies  Singing and music  Physical education and activity, e.g. bikes, running, playing and gymnastics  Designing and making, e.g. junk modelling  Good use of I.T.
<b>D</b>	Environment 	Adult role modelling and scaffolding  High order questioning  Use displays to celebrate diligence, perseverance, problem solving, kindness, imagination etc.

## Appendix 2: Characteristics of effective learning – Self-review tool

When a school has defined their optimum characteristics for learning, they could use the following tool to agree pedagogy to support the development of the identified characteristics.

Characteristic	Pedagogy / practice that supports	Pedagogy / practice that blocks
<b>Time to learn and build relationships</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learn in depth</li> <li>• Relationship building between child and adult and with peers</li> <li>• Opportunity to celebrate their work and achievements</li> <li>• Relaxed, not pressured</li> </ul>		
<b>Engaged learners</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-direction, following the child's interests / prior learning</li> <li>• Independent research / lines of enquiry, questioning, curiosity</li> <li>• Desire to learn and stay on task, be resilient in seeing a task through</li> <li>• Relevant / life skills</li> </ul>		
<b>Active / creative tasks</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outdoor learning</li> <li>• Fun, laughter, humour</li> <li>• Learning through play, skilfully supported by adults</li> <li>• Creative learning experiences alongside routine tasks</li> <li>• Imagination stimulated</li> </ul>		
<b>Environment</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Receiving praise and positive feedback</li> <li>• Safe, belonging, security of routine, consistent expectations, positive adult role-models</li> <li>• Colourful, bright environments</li> <li>• Receiving praise and positive feedback</li> </ul>		

## Appendix 3: Curriculum design

When characteristics of learning have been identified and pedagogy to support them has been agreed, learning activities can be planned. In order to address the issues raised within this resource pack, the following format (or similar) can be used as a guide, to allow practitioners to develop learning opportunities that:

- 1) deliver essential learning of knowledge and skills;
- 2) support the development of characteristics of learning;
- 3) facilitate some of the levers of the Carpenters' Recovery Curriculum.

Theme:		
Date:		
<b>Activity 1</b> 'Floating and Sinking' STEM challenge <sup>15</sup> .	<b>Activity 2</b> Morecambe Bay is very important environmentally. Find out about this amazing place that is right on our doorstep.  What changed during COVID?  Research a creature that lives in our bay. Create a PowerPoint to present your findings.	<b>Activity 3</b>
<b>Key subject specific knowledge</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♣ Explain that unsupported objects fall towards the Earth because of the force of gravity acting between the Earth and the falling object.</li> <li>♣ Identify the effects of water resistance and density.</li> </ul>	<b>Key subject specific knowledge</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♣ Describe the differences in the life cycles of a mammal, an amphibian, an insect and a bird.</li> <li>♣ Describe the life process of reproduction in some plants and animals.</li> <li>♣ Describe and understand key aspects of physical geography, including: climate zones, rivers, mountains and the water cycle.</li> </ul>	<b>Key subject specific knowledge</b>

<sup>15</sup> Further details of 'Activity 1' can be found under 'Challenge 6' via the following link: [https://www.jamesdysonfoundation.co.uk/resources/challenge-cards.html?gclid=EAlaIqobChMImbaivr36QIViLbtCh3ovAS9EAAAYASAAEgKafvD\\_BwE](https://www.jamesdysonfoundation.co.uk/resources/challenge-cards.html?gclid=EAlaIqobChMImbaivr36QIViLbtCh3ovAS9EAAAYASAAEgKafvD_BwE)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♣ Human geography, including: types of settlement and land use, economic activity including trade links, and the distribution of natural resources, including energy, food, minerals and water.</li> </ul>	
<b>Key subject specific skills</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♣ Record data and results of increasing complexity using scientific diagrams and labels.</li> <li>♣ Use test results to make predictions to set up further comparative and fair tests.</li> <li>♣ Report and present findings from enquiries, including conclusions, causal relationships and explanations of and degree of trust in results, in written forms.</li> <li>♣ Identify scientific evidence that has been used to support or refute ideas or arguments.</li> </ul>	<b>Key subject specific skills</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♣ Participate in discussions, presentations, performances, role play, improvisations and debates</li> <li>♣ Gain, maintain and monitor the interest of the listener(s)</li> <li>♣ Use fieldwork to observe, measure, record and present the human and physical features in the local area using a range of methods, including sketch maps, plans and graphs, and digital technologies.</li> <li>♣ Use search technologies effectively, appreciate how results are selected and ranked, and be discerning in evaluating digital content</li> </ul>	<b>Key subject specific skills</b>
<b>Characteristics of learning</b> <p>Self-direction, following the child's interests / prior learning.</p> <p>Independent research / lines of enquiry, questioning and curiosity.</p> <p>Desire to learn and stay on task, be resilient in seeing a task through.</p> <p>Relevant / life skills.</p>	<b>Characteristics of learning</b> <p>Time to learn in-depth.</p> <p>Time and opportunity to celebrate children and young people's work and achievements.</p> <p>Independent research / lines of enquiry, questioning and curiosity.</p> <p>Outdoor learning.</p>	<b>Characteristics of learning</b>
<b>Recovery curriculum lever</b> <p>Make the skills for learning in a school environment explicit to our students to reskill and rebuild their confidence as learners</p>	<b>Recovery curriculum lever</b> <p>Listen to what happened during COVID, understand the needs of our communities and engage children and young people in transitioning back into school and the wider community</p>	<b>Recovery curriculum lever</b>