Key Considerations

- **CYP will have spent months away from school and transition will be ongoing.** Adjustment will take time as routines at home may have been very different (including sleep patterns) and it will likely be a long time before the school day resembles anything like it did pre-lockdown.
- **Some CYP will have been accessing remote learning, others won't.** The Sutton Trust reports that 24% of teachers say that fewer than 1 in 4 children in their class are returning work they have been set. This might be because of limited access to technology resources, anxiety, lack of structure and routine, home environment or motivation.
- **CYP will differ in how they reengage with learning** just as they will have differed in how they've worked during school closure. Some may find the pressure of academic demands too much whilst others will seek more challenge. For some CYP not being able to learn in school could feel like ambiguous loss.
- **The impact of school closures on the attainment of disadvantaged CYP** has been widely discussed in political and media reports, so schools may be feeling pressure on addressing curriculum needs and how to address gaps in learning.
- **Learning has predominantly been online/ remote and CYP will have been learning in different ways.** Whilst technology has enabled positive leaning opportunities to happen, the 'depth' of learning may have been affected as students 'skim' information and capacity for concentrating may have been affected.
- **Many students will have felt a sense of social loss** during the lockdown and they will require time to reconnect with peers and adults in school in order to build up relationships again.

Key principles to consider when addressing a recovery curriculum

- **CYP need to feel safe** in their class and environment. Some CYP will need help to regulate their emotions so they can settle and engage with learning.
- Remember, **stress and anxiety impact on learning** (as well as physical and psychological wellbeing) and problem solving and retention can be affected. Seek ways to help CYP protect themselves from stress by encouraging them to reflect on how they've coped and by building up resilience.
- Risk and resiliency literature emphasizes that schools are critical environments for individuals to:
  - develop the **capacity to bounce back** from adversity,
  - **adapt to pressures** and problems encountered,
  - and **develop the competencies** – social, academic, and vocational – necessary to do well in life.
- You may need to think about how to motivate CYP after such a long period of home learning.
- Make the skills for learning in a school environment explicit to students to reskill and **rebuild their confidence as learners**. Carpenter suggests showing students how gaps in learning will be addressed and consulting and co-constructing with them to heal this sense of loss.
- Schools will need to **allow time for relationships to be re-established**/ social connections to be made. Being part of a wider school community after being at home for so long may be difficult for CYP who have maintained social distancing and where social distancing measures are still in place.

Strategies to help CYP settle to learn

- Focus on wellbeing and building resilience by using The Resiliency Wheel (**slide 7 of the presentation**). Adults can help to restore a sense of control and personal efficacy by building on the CYP strengths and capacity to cope. Promote opportunities for CYP to experience success and help them to work out ways they can put these skills to use in other areas of their learning and life by using **solution focused conversations**. **Here are some examples of solution focused questioning:**
  - "What have you been doing to cope during lockdown"
  - "What would your friend/ parent say they admire most about how you've been managing?"
  - "Have you ever had this problem in the past?" If Yes "How did you solve it? What helped you?"
  - "What is different about times when you don't feel like this?"

- Praise and celebrate resilience – think about **community assemblies which celebrate achievements or acts of kindness which pupils can share about themselves**, their families or communities.

- Use a **relational approach** for example, by **welcoming and reassuring pupils,** letting them know when key adults are available and by adapting to emotional needs as they present.

- Respond to emotional needs of students by **ensuring school and class environments are both high in nurture and structure** as this helps CYP feel physically and psychologically safe. Ensure children know what is happening with regards to changes in the environment and how the things that were familiar have changed, using both verbal and visual reminders. Introduce new routines straight away but stress this doesn't necessarily mean working in the same way as schools did before they closed. **It will be helpful to think of all pupils as new starters, in need of clear and reassuring instruction.**

- For some individuals, behavioural changes whether overt or passive may indicate ongoing distress. In order for children to learn they must be calm and regulated. **Teach strategies to self-calm.** Activities to support this can include **having access to a calm, quiet space or other activities such as colouring, listening to music, engaging with a physical activity** (**refer to Module 2 for further information**).

- Be realistic in expectations – it will take time for pupils to re-establish and relearn routines. State ground rules and discuss new routines and boundaries. **This could be achieved through extending PHSE times**.

- There may be changes in pupil behaviour as they adjust to new ways of working and being back in a school environment, therefore **there may need to be some flexibility and adjustments to school behaviour systems**.

- Be explicit about what pupils need to do (**Emphasise Dos rather than Don'ts**), discuss ground rules and remind them of boundaries and expectations.

- Pupils will have been isolated from friends for many weeks. Understand the need for social connectedness and consider how this can be achieved within the parameters of safety and social distancing as part of new structure and routines. **Could there be an additional break or a longer lunch?**

Applied Psychologies
COVID-19 Transitions Pack

MODULE 1 Communication During Transition
MODULE 2 Staff and Pupil Wellbeing
MODULE 3 Settling to Learn
MODULE 4 SEND and Vulnerable Children

www.appliedpsychologies.com | 01482 643458 | @AppPsych | info@appliedpsychologies.com

Strategies to help CYP settle to learn

- Reduce the pressure of curriculum demands and make adjustments to allow opportunities for play, emotional growth and social connection. Some academics are urging play to be prioritised because it can help the CYP manage uncertainty and challenge. **Consider how child-led learning experiences which facilitate free play could be used beyond Foundation Stage. Cultural and arts activities that have been restricted during lockdown could be used to stimulate learning opportunities.**

- It may be the case that some children will have forgotten previously taught information despite home learning, so **build up tasks over time**. Respond to what they have learnt not what they were expected to learn and to seek ways to help support the gaps in learning without creating a sense of guilt or failure. It is important to remember that even though home learning has been in place, children are likely to feel overwhelmed with academic work. **Growth Mindset strategies could therefore be useful in reassuring pupils that the difficulties they are experiencing can be mastered.** For Example; encouraging CYP to use positive statements e.g. **instead of saying "I can't do this." say "I need feedback and help from others." or instead of saying "I am not good at this." say "I am not good at this YET but I will learn."**

- **Metacognitive strategies** (learning to learn again) should be considered e.g by scaffolding tasks and promoting skills for effective learning. This can be achieved through developing CYP own knowledge of how they learn through process questions such as:
  - **"When have you completed a task like this before what strategies did you use?"**
  - **"What have you learned from the examples you've been shown?"**
  - **"What would you do differently next time?"**
  - Teachers can model their own metacognitive strategies as they talk through a task e.g. *"What do I know about problems like this?" "What ways of solving them have I used before?"*

- Promote intrinsic motivation by creating a sense of **autonomy**, **competence** and **relatedness** (Self-Determination Theory). For example:
  - Autonomy – **pupils can choose who they work with or given a choice of activity**
  - Competence – **reducing demands or differentiation to enable success, helping CYP recognise their skills and strengths**
  - Relatedness – **by promoting a culture of well-being both in the class and at a whole school level and focusing on the importance of relationships**

References

- Barry Carpenter A Recovery Curriculum: Loss and Life for our children and schools post pandemic. April 2020 www.recoverycurriculum.org
- Transition, Recovery and Learning in the aftermath Bi-Borough EPCS (April 2020)
- Prioritising play to promote wellbeing Cathy Atkinson and Marianne Mannello http://blog.policy.manchester.ac.uk/posts/2020/05/prioritising-play-to-promote-wellbeing/
- COVID-19 and Social Mobility Impact Brief #1: School Shutdown Carl Cullinane and Rebecca Montacute Sutton Trust (April 2020)
- Henderson, N., Milstein, M. (2003) Resiliency in Schools (Updated Version). California: Corwin Press, Inc.