The Six Principles of Nurture for Phased Education Return

NP 6) The importance of transitions.

- ✓ For children transitioning to a new stage (P1, secondary school etc.) the following may help:
- • Undertaking virtual visits to new schools - classrooms, corridors and communal areas will likely look very different under social distancing guidelines, the use of photographs and videos of the new environment could help to show young people what they can expect,
- • Having seating plans, timetables and school transition booklets posted out to home addresses,
- • Completing transition passports and 'about me' booklets for their staff,
- • *"Inviting children back to have closure, say goodbye and mark the transition" (Alston, 2020)*
- ✓ Supporting children with the transition from home to school by asking them to record in creative ways their feelings and apprehensions (i.e. letters, pictures or little videos of their concerns).
- ✓ Initial modelling of new routines by staff i.e. arriving in school, transitioning through corridors etc.
- ✓ A transitional object can be a comfort to bridge the gap between home and school.
- ✓ Books centring on the key themes of change and transition can be read and discussed with children.
- ✓ Some children may benefit from a soft-start when re-entering class for the first time since lockdown.

NP 5) All behaviour is communication.

- ✓ Dan Hughes highlights the need for connection before correction with his formula of PACE:
- • Playful interactions give students a sense of safety and belonging and diffuse potential situations before escalation.
- • Acceptance is being non-judgemental and showing the child that we understand i.e. *"It must be tricky to not think of your parents at home. I understand you loved spending time at home with them."*
- • Curiosity is when the adult shows an active and genuine interest in the child's experience i.e. *"I've been looking out for you and noticed that you've been quiet. I think you might be worried about something?"*
- • Empathy is a genuine desire to "feel with" another person and connect with their emotional perspective.
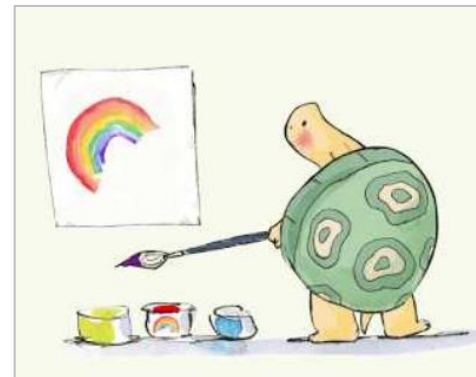
NP 4) Language is a vital means of communication.

- ✓ Staff to use the language of reassurance and belonging: e.g. *"You are safe here", "I remember you and I've missed you", "I've missed your smile."*
- ✓ Helping children to put their feelings into words is key: 'Name it - to tame it'. Using children's books to help them process their emotions and build coping strategies for anxiety.
- ✓ Methods that support pupils to share their emotions should be available i.e: visuals, short scripts, emojis, social stories.
- ✓ The South Ayrshire bereavement guide 'When Crisis Calls' can help staff support children who have experienced loss during the pandemic.

NP 1) Learning is understood developmentally

"Having lofty academic expectations too soon will undoubtedly add to children's stress" (Carpenter, 2020).

- ✓ Going over past areas/topics and reminding pupils of their achievements and successes.
- ✓ New learning activities should be introduced via engaging, meaningful and multi-sensory means.
- ✓ Re-establishing relationships via providing positive and fulfilling experiences such as play.
- ✓ Staff should be mindful to use the contact principles of communication to re-establish key attachment bonds with children.

NP 2) The classroom offers a safe base.

- ✓ A sense of emotional and physical safety should be created.
- ✓ Social Stories can be useful to support the transition back for whole school. They can also be adapted for a class or individual children.
- ✓ Information videos can also ease anxieties for parents/children, by presenting information in an accessible, friendly and engaging manner.
- ✓ It may be beneficial for children to start the school year with the same teacher and/or in the same classrooms they had last prior to lockdown.
- ✓ It is important that we create safe, cosy spaces for children who need a sensitive, personal approach to 'talk'.
- ✓ Children feel physically safe when there is routine and predictability.
- ✓ There are also useful, child-centred online videos that could be used to help explain to children complex terms like 'PPE'.
- ✓ *"Making school a secure base will require a pro-active and consistent approach" (Moore, 2020).*

NP 3) The importance of nurture for wellbeing/self-esteem.

- ✓ Positive strength-based lessons can remind children of their own skills and other's skills, creating a shared sense of achievement.
- ✓ Staff may wish to consider decorating an area of their classroom with photographs of each child (create a sense of belonging) and celebrate children' home-working achievements e.g. rainbow pictures, lego creations made with carers, dance video with siblings etc.
- ✓ In terms of Growth Mindset, it is important to reward the child's effort undertaking new tasks during this time. Staff may wish to create an 'achievement wall' or send home success-pictures via twitter.