



STEPHEN HAWKING SCHOOL

Supporting children on the Stephen Hawking Outreach Caseload on their return to school September 2020.

Most of the children on the Stephen Hawking Outreach caseload are now returning to school. We have put together this handout to support school staff in planning for the provision of all children on our caseload in this new phase.

This handout should be used alongside the strategies and resources for transition back into school provided in our handout 'Supporting children on the Stephen Hawking Outreach Caseload with their education and provision during the wider opening of educational settings from June 1st 2020.'

We ask that you keep in touch with your outreach teacher regarding any changes to children's provision, including attendance at school, so that we can meet your needs and those of the children in the most appropriate way. We are particularly mindful of the DfE requirement that we support schools "to have the capacity to offer immediate remote education" (September 2020)

The need for a Recovery Curriculum

On 9th July 2020, the DfE, Public Health England and NHS England hosted a webinar about supporting wellbeing during the return to school. This featured a presentation by Professor Barry Carpenter and Matthew Carpenter on implementing a Recovery Curriculum for children. This idea of a Recovery Curriculum has heavily informed this handout.

There may be a tendency to focus on the loss of knowledge that children have experienced during lockdown and the wider Covid-19 period. Children with severe and profound learning difficulties in particular will return to school with fragmented knowledge and skills in many areas. However, Professor Barry Carpenter encourages us to consider and base our provision around these 5 losses:



All children have experienced these losses, and the consequences of the sudden closure of schools will have resulted in some level of anxiety for all children. For children with severe and multiple learning difficulties, their understanding of what has happened during Covid-19 and why is likely to be limited.

While some children will have had a good experience of being at home for an extended period, with new opportunities to learn and build different relationships, for many children the outcomes may include:



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Loss of trust- that consistent and reliable adults and setting of school has been removed

Clinginess and difficulty in separating from parents and carers

Awareness of adults' anxiety in the home

Slower processing speed and lower levels of engagement



Loss of sleep and its effects




Fear of returning to school (and awareness of parents' and carers' fear)

Bereavement in some cases due to Covid-19

Loss of social skills and effect on empathy of being absent from wider peer group

Planning a Recovery Curriculum for children with severe and profound learning difficulties.

We have adapted and built upon the work of Dr. Chris Moore's 'Creating a Safe Base' referenced by Dr. Tina Rae in her podcast 'Resourcing Recovery through Nurture', alongside Barry Carpenter's '5 'Levers' of the Recovery Curriculum in suggesting the following framework for provision for children returning to school.

<p>Belonging We need to ensure that children feel that they belong securely in their schools as safe and trusted spaces.</p>		
<p>Ensure the child is greeted warmly by a familiar adult on arrival at school. This is an opportunity to be creative and safe with ways of greeting!</p> 	<p>Display photographs and share videos and special books of the child engaged and happy at school before the lockdown. Bear in mind that increased access to screens during Covid-19 may mean this is best done with hard copies.</p>	<p>Show trust in the child by creating <i>authentic</i> jobs or responsibilities for them- for example wiping their own table after learning periods or getting out the resources for an activity from a visual checklist</p>
<p>Relationships It is vital that we plan for relationships, don't expect them. For children with severe and profound learning difficulties, engagement and learning will only develop once children are securely attached.</p>		
<p>Meet the child where they are. Establish as much as</p>	<p>In the early days, explicitly model social skills, even if this</p>	<p>Be kind and compassionate. We have all been through a</p>



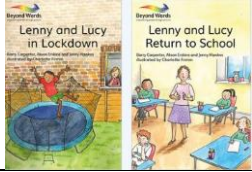

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<p>possible about the context at home during lockdown and how that may impact on the child rebuilding relationships with peers and adults at school. Identify the child's strengths and interests, which may be different after a long absence. Resources such as All about Me boxes, bags and paper profiles will support this process.</p>	<p>was not necessary before lockdown. Plan for plenty of games and playful activities and consider opportunities to teach social skills through these.</p>	<p>difficult time and we need to rebuild our relationships with each other. Use rituals each day to celebrate successes, such as identifying and sharing (ideally through a photograph) something that the child enjoyed and/or was successful at.</p>
<p>Predictability After the unpredictability of lockdown and gradual relaxing of measures, we need to make sure the school day is predictable and reassuring.</p>		
<p>Use visuals such as photographs (remember the child may not immediately be so comfortable with more abstract representations) to communicate the routine, and prompts such as music and countdowns to support transitions and tidy up times.</p>	<p>Use resources such as a now/next board to ensure a less preferred task is followed by a favourite one. The child may be less willing to engage in learning tasks that previously were successful, particularly more formal and abstract activities.</p>	<p>Use photographs of people and places in school to communicate the new routine- for example who the child needs to maintain a distance from if possible (children in other bubbles) and spaces that can/cannot be currently used.</p>
<p>Organisation In order to provide consistency and predictability, there is an onus on staff to be highly organised.</p>		
<p>Ensure new learning spaces (including seating) are clearly labelled with the child's photograph and that seating is consistent for different activities.</p>	<p>Keep resources close to hand using a system that builds independence, such as coloured trays or drawers that are clearly labelled using pictures or photographs.</p>	<p>Use a visual checklists for activities to support the child to access the resources they need where appropriate.</p>
<p>Regulation If the child cannot regulate their emotions, they will not be able to engage meaningfully. They will need to be given plenty of space to do this.</p>		
<p>It is essential that as adults we have understood our own feelings around the pandemic and feel able to regulate them. If we feel</p>	<p>Provide opportunities throughout the day for regulation through sensory and imaginative play. You will need to include how</p>	<p>Expect that the child's awareness of different emotions, their capacity to identify and/or label them and link them to people, places,</p>





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<p>anxious about the return to school, we need to discuss it in a safe space with a line manager or member of the senior leadership Team. Looking after our own wellbeing is essential at this time.</p>	<p>resources for this will be cleaned and stored on the child's risk assessment, and it will probably be more appropriate to provide these times in the classroom rather than in a sensory room or breakout space.</p>	<p>objects and events may not be where it was in March. A Happiness Box is a great way to begin building these skills again (see reference at the end of this handout) Barry Carpenter has also produced two wordless books that may support discussions around feelings about the pandemic.</p> 
<p>Differentiation We already differentiate heavily for children with Severe and Profound difficulties in mainstream settings. We now need to do this even further by addressing the unique effects of the pandemic on this group of learners</p> 		
<p>Reduce memory, processing and time demands in all activities. Keep activities short, simple and allow plenty of extra time, particularly in the early days of returning to school.</p>	<p>Through a thorough transition process from both the previous class team and the family make sure that activities are planned around the child's interests and likes.</p>	<p>Provide plenty of appropriately limited choices to support the child's sense of ownership and autonomy. For example, choosing from two construction kits to explore or from two photographs of peers to play with.</p>

By putting provision into place which addresses these areas first, the time needed before children with severe and profound learning difficulties can engage meaningfully and begin to repair damage to their learning will be shorter, and we can move forward with hope.

References

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