

Welcome!

Welcome to another newsletter from the SEAL Community, focused on practical ideas for building essential social and emotional learning into your work with children and young people during the coronavirus epidemic.

Sharing practice

Keeping up the sense of belonging when children are not in school



At Goldfield Infants' and Nursery School staff created a slogan 'We stand together even though we are apart' and planned a display featuring members of the school community joining hands around the perimeter of the school, to reflect this message.

Children, parents and staff were asked to contribute A4 full body self-portraits in any medium with hands outstretched to the edge of the paper so that they would link up when the pictures were set next to each other. These were emailed or taken to the school's post box at the end of the school drive. When the works of art arrived they were displayed along the school's fence. Families have been walking, cycling, or scooting to see their picture, to spot those of their friends/teachers and watch the number grow. The school also made a video of the portraits so that everyone could feel part of the project. "Over 200 of us now stand together and the portraits continue to arrive", says headteacher Debbie Stevens.

This case study has been adapted from guidance from the Anna Freud Centre, *Managing unexpected endings and transitions*

How one school kept up its work on character during remote schooling

At Northampton Academy secondary school staff have developed a whole home-learning programme on character development.



School of
CHARACTER

Character at Home Pupil Passport

Name: _____

Form: _____



Northampton Academy
The best in everyone™
Part of the Learning

Respect ■ Determination ■ Ambition ■ Tolerance ■ Integrity

They developed a theme, 'Crisis doesn't create character, it reveals it', and designed a series of resources to be hosted on their website.

There are weekly assemblies; enrichment activities to do at home; leadership opportunities; 12 character education lessons; TED talks; and a student passport where pupils record their progress and can work to gain an award.

On the website is a helpful introductory video which explains for students what they need to do.

The school are happy to share the 'Character at Home' resources with others. Just follow the link for all the free, fully downloadable resources.

<https://www.northampton-academy.org/students/character-at-home>

Practical tools and tips

Back to school

When children return to school after staying at home for many months, they will bring with them accumulated baggage of anxiety, frustration, low mood and in some cases trauma and bereavement. There will be ongoing economic stressors and more children affected by poverty. There will also be feelings of excitement, and hope.

If you don't know how to deal with the lack of control of your future, or the feelings of uncertainty that you're having, your brain is going to stay in a constant fight or flight mode. And if our brain is in fight or flight mode, then it's not in learning mode.



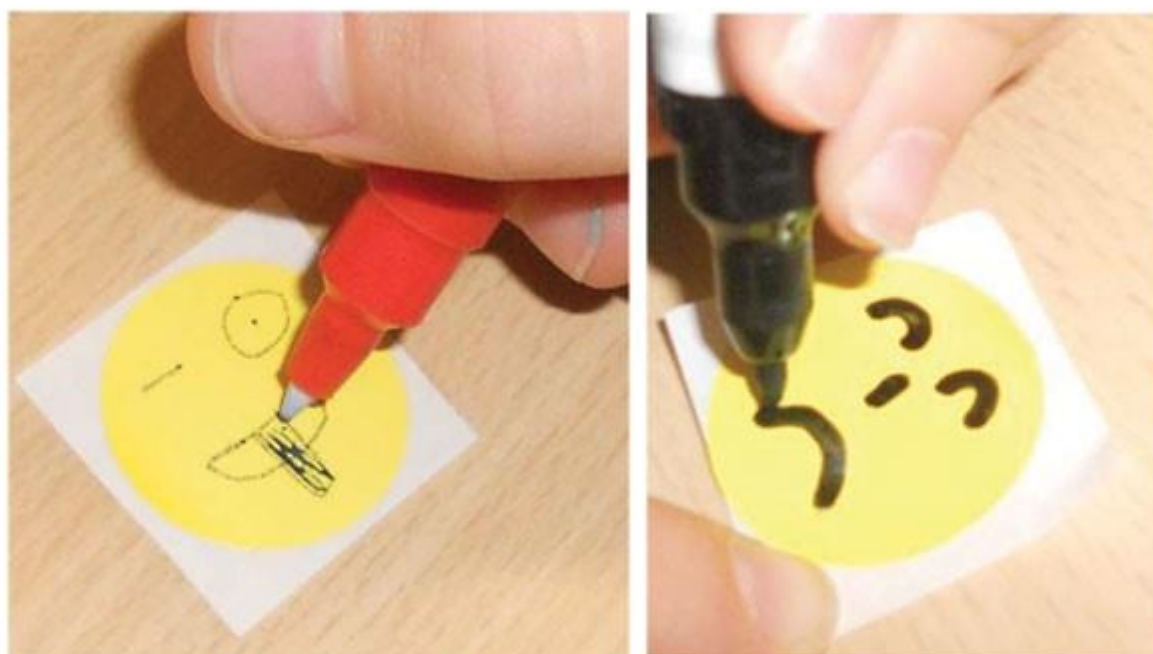
So....

1. If you can, prepare children for the changes they will find on return by making a short video for them to watch.
2. Plan ways to help children re-establish a sense of belonging, maybe in a slightly different group from their usual class, or with a different teacher, drawing on the type of 'getting to know you' activities normally used at the start of the year.
3. If possible, provide appropriate factual information about what has happened to friends and staff who are not back in school and whether they are likely to return.
4. At whole-school level, build the sense of belonging by communal reflection on difficulties and losses resulting from the pandemic, but also on the positives it has brought and those elements children and adults would like to keep going after the lockdown ends.
5. Undertake a whole-school exercise to review how everyone (children and adults) wants to feel at school, and decide intentionally how everyone needs to act and treat each other to make sure people are able to feel safe, respected and listened to.
6. Rebuild the sense of community by creating a school tree where branches symbolize classes and children add leaves with their name and a sentence or picture about themselves. These could focus on their strengths, or their successes at school, or special memories of their time there. At the end of the year give your students a photo of the tree and perhaps part of their branch to take home.

7. Involve children in thinking about creative ways that they can connect with their peers while staying two metres apart. At the same time, acknowledge that this may initially feel difficult and there may be an element of loss around this

8. Make lots of time in the day to acknowledge and discuss the feelings children will be experiencing, in class time and through whole-school structures such as worry boxes, e-mail inboxes or drop-ins where an adult is available to listen.

9. Many emotions are communicated through touch; at a time when social distancing makes this difficult, it will be particularly important to encourage children and adults to put emotions into words. Support emotion expression through circle time rounds and emotional check-in displays. Have children create emojis to show how they are feeling using sticky labels.



10. Stock up the school library with books from this brilliant illustrated [list of 44 best books](#) that help children identify and manage emotions, thoughts and behaviour

11. Follow this link for lots of teaching ideas to revisit learning about [self-regulation](#).

12. Help children change their internal scripts. Encourage them by asking, for example ‘What would I do to support my best friend who was telling me they were really worried about the coronavirus/ a parent losing their job etc? What would I say to them?’ This prompts children to start thinking about all of the strategies that they would use to be compassionate to someone else, but that they may not use for themselves.

13. Model positive self-talk: “The uncertainty is worrying, but I know it will not go on for ever.”

14. Involve children in activities that give them the sense of agency they will have lacked when feeling powerless in the face of COVID19 – from preparing welcome packs of information for children who will be moving up to their year group, to raising money for those most affected financially by the virus, and to campaigning on an issue it has highlighted.

15. Take extra care of adults' wellbeing – use [ideas from SEAL newsletter 19](#) and these suggestions from the US organisation CASEL:

*Allow space for connection, listening, and healing among all leaders and staff in the school building. This may include carving out time during existing virtual or in-person meetings for staff to process and share their **feelings**, reflect on how they can use their own **social and emotional competencies** to support one another and their students, and create individual plans for ongoing **self-care**. Capture this moment to identify new opportunities. Engage staff in reflecting on what they've learned from the past few months and how this experience will shape the coming years. Provide time for staff to discuss with one another: How have disruptions to class and school revealed strengths in ourselves and students? What are some new ways to facilitate learning? Where may there be disengagement and inequity? How can we better partner with families? Offer ongoing opportunities for staff to collaborate on ideas for how to use this learning to inform a collective path forward.*

16. Consider staff training on how to understand bereavement and support bereaved children – the SEAL [primary staff meeting](#), this [TES article](#) or this [virtual course](#)

Tips for remote learning

And for your remote teaching....

1. Secure your own safety belt first. Put self-care at the top of your list – take time for a [mindfulness meditation](#)

2. Prioritise connection as well as content.

- Some schools are offering virtual playtime for primary children through live chatrooms, so that people who may not be in each other's circle of friends will still have social contact.
- Keep up the personal connection between school, teacher and children with birthday cards and specially 'thinking of you' postcards at random times. Something as simple as having a photograph of the physical building or classroom to see if children log onto a website for their school work can help.
- Try to build in at least some small group online meetings. Follow the example of Cornerstone Academy Trust: "Each member of staff has a small group of children they meet with every week virtually to discuss any issues picked up by the teacher, or the child. The mentor can discuss reading progress, share work completed and offer support in the areas needed. It is also an opportunity to talk through how they are coping during this time and provide some pastoral support to ensure mental health and wellbeing is monitored for all the children."
- If you are teaching live online, start a lesson with an activity that connects the group. This is a nice one:

Ask everyone in the group to share an object that's on their desk or in their room that has a certain backstory that relates to something they care about. Each person has 30 seconds to tell the backstory of this item and why it's significant. Have a sharing order prepared in advance, in a form you can easily access and drop into the chat window of the call. This makes it easy to transition from person to person, and you can even try out a visible countdown timer to keep everyone within the time constraints.

3. Help children identify how they are feeling .We suggested ideas for remote learning check-ins in the last newsletter. Here are a few more:

- Choose a landform to represent your mood today (river, volcano, jagged rocks etc)
- If your mood were a colour, what colour would it be?
- What sport resembles your mood right now? (marathon, sprint etc)
- Decide where you are in the zones of regulation. If someone is on blue, they may need a few quick star jumps or to listen to an upbeat song. If they are yellow or red, they may need to do some [five finger](#) or [hot chocolate](#) breathing.



4. If you haven't done this already, get them to write a diary about their time at home - feelings, events, observations, hopes and fears. This [film](#) made for the Book Trust by children's author Helen Peters is a really useful starting point.
5. Set children a mindfulness exercise each day. If they can access the internet [Mind Yeti](#) is a good source of short videos.
6. Tell families about Childline's Calm Zone for children, with breathing exercises, activities, games and videos to help let go of stress. <https://www.childline.org.uk/toolbox/calm-zone/>
7. Try sending home this nice home wellbeing activity <https://www.scouts.org.uk/activities/build-a-wellbeing-box>
8. Share this useful [guidance on supporting child and family wellbeing](#) with families – it's all about social and emotional learning at home

9. Offer remote teacher and pupil wellbeing initiatives such as yoga, cafe time for meeting, chatting and support, and music groups such as informal choirs.

Tips for helping children manage unexpected endings and transitions

1. Make explicit that unexpected endings and transitions are difficult, and that it is normal to feel unsettled or upset.

2. If you have previously worked on the feelings associated with loss (for example, in the SEAL Relationships theme resources), help children understand that even without bereavement the lockdown period will have involve loss for everyone – whether of a holiday or special event or normal ‘moving in/moving up’ events in school. Revisit what the children learned about loss and how to get through it.

3. Find different ways of saying goodbye if the children cannot all be together, such as writing about and sharing their successes and memories of school. Or you could involve them in making a class year book. Each child/family sends a photo of their child and the children fill in a questionnaire so you can make a yearbook page for each of them:

- Best moment at school ...
- Most likely to be seen...
- Least likely to be seen...
- Favourite colour ...
- Favourite food...
- Favourite game ...
- Favourite book...

4. Involve them virtually in making a welcome pack of information that can be copied and posted to the year group who will be ‘moving up’ into their year in September

5. Link them by email , phone , post or Zoom/Microsoft Teams with a child who is now at the school they will be going to or the class they will be moving up to so they can ask questions

Resource Round Up

COVID-19 resources

We’ve uploaded a batch of new resources to the SEAL website:

- The pick of the best COVID19 resources from Mentally Healthy Schools: a *sentence starters* sheet primary children can use to about feelings and hopes, an *emotional check-in* sheet for older children , a *feelings thermometer* for 1-1 or small group work, an *emotion wheel* for primary children to make and use, a lovely primary *Self Care Kit* to send home to help children manage stress , a delightful early years/KS1 ‘Relax like a cat’ *Relax leaflet* relaxation exercise
- Some lovely resources from the wonderful ELSA support site : colour-in flower and rainbow *mood trackers*, a really nice *2020 review* reflection sheet on what children have learned from the lockdown period, and a *We are the class of 2020* poster for children with speech bubbles for children to write in .

- A useful *Coping in hard times* leaflet for secondary students on dealing with the fall-out from COVID19
- An illustrated list of the best books to share with children who are worried or anxious, from the NSPCC

Find them all at : <http://sealcommunity.org/member-resource/new-covid-19-teaching-resources>

When the tension goes

'For when you're not feeling great about something, or someone, or about yourself, here are some things you can do to feel a bit better.' We really liked these free resources from People Intelligence. Suitable for KS2 and 3, they are attractive worksheets for a class, small group or individual and cover topics such as identifying and expressing feelings, calming down, and self-care. They have engaging titles like 'how to not feel so alone', 'how to feel good enough', 'how to sort out your head'. Find them at

<https://whentheensiongoes.com/#howto>

The Connect PSHE Wellbeing Curriculum

This has around 250 detailed lesson plans (all with PowerPoints, handouts and resources) for YR through to Y6. Every one has an opening mindfulness activity and brief follow up enquiry. The initial online training, and a sample of lessons and resources, is currently being offered for free to support teacher CPD during the global response to COVID19. Schools and educational professionals can sign up here:

<https://www.connect-pshe.org/sign-up>

Go Noodle

Have you discovered Go Noodle www.GoNoodle.com ? It has lots of free energising wellbeing activities in short films, some helpful for social and emotional learning. We liked [this one](#) in which children mood-walk, to practise emotion recognition.

Making a self-soothe box and other calming strategies

This is a very useful film for teenage girls, made by teenage girls, about making a self-soothe box to help with anxiety

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TTYIS3u3A_E&t=4s

For other children Young Minds have this guidance

<https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/how-to-make-a-self-soothe-box/#memories>

and four calming techniques

<https://youngminds.org.uk/blog/four-coping-techniques-for-when-you-feel-anxious/>

Brilliant video on dealing with anxiety and stress

In case you missed this in an email we sent to members, this is an excellent presentation for children and young people about how to understand and deal with anxiety and stress caused by the coronavirus events - good for them to watch at home.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M5z0GaNTM1g&feature=youtu.be>

Research round up

Can digital interventions for wellbeing work as well as face to face?

A report by the Early Intervention Foundation (EIF) finds that despite services “rapidly mobilising” to provide online interventions to replace services such as counselling for children with mental health issues, participants are more likely to drop out of programmes than if they were seeing a professional face-to-face.

The results of a rapid response survey carried out by the EIF in the first few weeks of lockdown measures in the UK, found that of 88 providers of intervention services for young people 76 per cent were forced to make “major adaptations” to their programmes because of coronavirus.

Just three in 10 providers (32 per cent) delivered their programme “predominantly through remote methods” prior to the Covid-19 crisis.

EIF’s research found only three per cent of remotely delivered programmes were carried out on a one-to-one basis. Most had no direct practitioner input or contact, with 84 per cent instead involving self-guided or unguided content, such as quizzes, games, videos and apps.

This review of evidence found 116 virtual and digital interventions for children and young people. The majority of these focused on education or physical health; there were fewer interventions focused on issues such as mental health, substance misuse, risky sexual behaviour, crime and antisocial behaviour and child maltreatment.

The interventions identified covered a wide range of delivery models, including one-to-one or group-based services, unguided self-help, and games and apps, aimed at various age groups and target cohorts. Of the interventions identified, only 22 per cent showed evidence of having been effective.

Synthesis studies, aggregating findings from multiple studies investigating the impact of individual interventions, provide a clear and consistent set of messages about virtual and digital interventions:

- Virtual and digital interventions can be effective in improving outcomes for young people across a wide range of intervention types and outcome measures.
- There is little evidence to suggest that virtual and digital interventions are more effective than traditional face-to-face approaches. When these comparisons are made, typically, virtual and digital interventions are found to be less effective, or equally as effective.
- In general, interventions which have some form of personalisation and/or contact with a practitioner – rather than self-directed, non-interactive learning – are more likely to improve outcomes.
- In common with other interventions in the field, the evidence is strongest for short-term outcomes measured immediately after the intervention has been completed; there is less evidence on long-term outcomes.
- In terms of achieving larger and more enduring effects, the evidence seems to be stronger for interventions focusing on mental health and wellbeing than for those focusing on substance misuse, risky sexual behaviour and teen pregnancy, or crime, violence and antisocial behaviour.



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Virtual and digital interventions often face high levels of attrition, where participants fail to complete the intervention. Many effective traditional interventions rely on a strong relationship and regular contact between a practitioner and participant. This helps to prevent drop-out. Overcoming challenges in keeping children and young people engaged in an intervention will therefore be an essential element of successful remote delivery.

Find the report at

<https://www.eif.org.uk/report/covid-19-and-early-intervention-evidence-challenges-and-risks-relating-to-virtual-and-digital-delivery>