



Our Recovery Curriculum

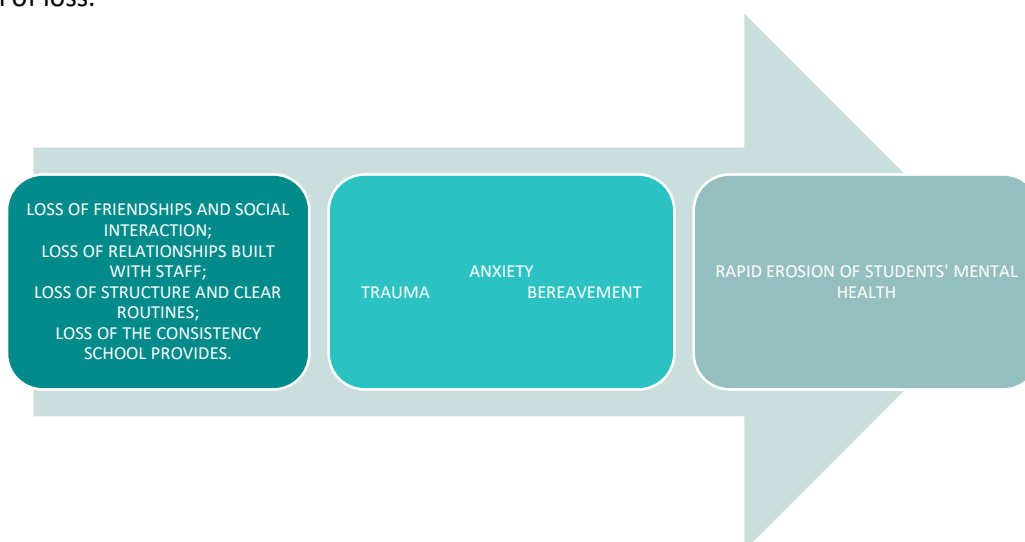
Supporting students to re-engage at school with a focus on relationships

“The loss the children experienced during this pandemic will have caused issues around attachment – in their relationships in school that they have forged over years; these will be some of the strongest relationships the young people have, but bereft of the investment of those daily interactions, will have become fragile.” (Barry Carpenter 2020)

Context

From 20 March 2020, schools were closed for all except a few students because of a worldwide pandemic. The UK went into lockdown, meaning that people could only leave their homes to buy food, exercise and carry out critical work.

This left parents and carers home educating their children with the support of school. Children have experienced loss of social interaction with their friends, extended family and their teachers. They have lost their usual structure and routines as they are not able to attend school and extracurricular activities. They have been without their usual freedoms, playing outside and visiting leisure areas. Some may have experienced bereavement of friends or family. All of our students have suffered some form of loss.



ACE Tiverton will address this through the development of a recovery curriculum. Our priority is to support students to re-engage with school and develop the confidence to be active learners again. Irrelevant of the needs, anxieties and challenges that students presented prior to the pandemic, all students will be experiencing some uncertainty about the return to school – even those who cannot wait to return.

Aims

Our recovery curriculum focuses on restoring the mental health and rebuild the resilience of our students to allow them to become learners again by:

1. Recognising the experiences had by individuals
2. Restoring trust and relationships
3. Re-establishing friendships and social interactions
4. Regaining structure and routine
5. Rebuilding our sense of community
6. Regulating emotions and managing behaviours
7. Re-engaging students in their learning
8. Preparation for transition

All staff have undertaken recovery curriculum training and will be taking part in further training on mental health first aid and trauma informed practice over the coming weeks.

Questions students may have

<i>Is it OK to go out?</i>	<i>Can I rebuild my friendships?</i>	<i>Is school different now? How?</i>	<i>Will I be abandoned?</i>
<i>Can I trust my teachers?</i>	<i>Am I safe in school?</i>	<i>Can our lives reconnect?</i>	<i>What now? What next?</i>

How can we support students?

1. Recognising the experiences had by individuals

We will create time to share our experiences of lockdown. Some students will be more open to share, whereas for others it will take some time or require anonymity. We will create space within our day to allow for these conversations. It is important to note that although lockdown has caused losses, it will have been a positive experience for some, allowing for more quality family time and child led learning. We will encourage discussions around learning, play, relationships and more. This can be facilitated through circle time, 1-1 conversations, increased free-time, social stories and worry boxes.

2. Restoring trust and relationships

Students, especially younger students, will have felt a level of abandonment from school staff, through no fault of the school. It will take time to build up their trust and restore relationships. Staff will continue to nurture and support through positive words and role modelling of the school values. Within the day there will be plenty of opportunity to talk and play together, allowing time for 1-1 conversations. Staffing will be kept as consistent as possible.

3. Re-establishing friendships and social interactions

Taking into consideration the safety procedures put into place, students will be given appropriate free time in which they can re-establish their friendships. Regular circle time will allow for thoughtful discussion surrounding the value of friendship. Shared activities, like breakfast club and group exercise, will bring the students back together into teams.

4. Regaining structure and routine

The process of returning to a 'normal timetable' will be a phased one. Initially, students will return for two days per week and there will be more free time and low demand, child-led learning. A clear, simple timetable is being used to create structure to the day, starting with three double lessons to reduce movement around the building. The timetable will be re-evaluated on a regular basis to ensure that all students within the group are coping with the transition back to school.

5. Rebuilding our sense of community

Communication between school and home will be maintained through phone calls, emails and face-to-face contact. Parents and visitors will not be allowed into the building in order to limit physical interactions with staff. Students will have the opportunity to take part in whole-school projects that promote togetherness, such as the Headteacher's Challenge. Work produced during lockdown will be shared and celebrated on our social media platforms. Through talk, groups will gain understanding of their peers and support each other.

6. Regulating emotions and managing behaviours

PSHE lessons and circle time will focus on managing emotions and behaviours. A new behaviour contract will be re-established with students and parents. Students will be given space to explore their feelings and seek out help to manage them. School needs to be a safe and happy place before learning can begin.

7. Re-engaging students in their learning

Once the students feel safe and happy, they can begin to engage with their learning again. To help transition, focused learning will be kept to short bursts initially, with frequent learning breaks in an adjacent room or designated outdoor space. Child-led projects and learning based on their specific interests will aim to re-engage the students with their learning. Subject-based learning will mirror what is being set on our Teams virtual classroom for those learning at home.

8. Preparation for transition

Transition back to school will be aided by regular contact with staff by telephone, email and during socially distanced home visits. Students will be given time to adjust to their new routines, spaces and adults, especially new staff. Transition between schools will take place every Friday until the summer holidays, with new students taking part in tours and workshops in small groups. Those who are unable to attend will be offered the opportunity to take part in virtual meetings and tours.

A message to staff

If you are seeing common themes of behaviour or anxieties with your class, then let SLT know and we can share supportive resources to help you with this or at least signpost you in the right direction. Remember: getting to know your students as much as possible will allow us to support them and re-engage them as active learners as soon as possible. Please reach out if you personally need support. This has been, and continues to be, a challenging time and we are here to support you as well.