Glasgow City Council

Response to Education and Skills Committee
19 March 2021

- **what plans, measures and strategy are in place to help pupils "catch up" following the impact of the pandemic on school education, particularly for those moving from Primary 7 into high school;**

Our primary and secondary schools are focusing in these three weeks on settling children back into school routines. We have been working with our headteachers since August on the importance of continuing the targeted work which we have been undertaking as part of Glasgow's Improvement Challenge, our response to the Scottish Attainment Challenge.

This was the advice we recently issued to headteachers:

Spring break activities
Schools may also wish to consider Spring break activities in partnership with third sector organisations. Secondary schools may wish to offer additional learning opportunities. In both cases, there needs to be an appropriate risk assessment with any school staff attending on a voluntary basis and support study rates would apply. An hourly rate would be available for support staff too.

Blairvadach OEC is also available for delivery in the city. They offer day activities at the centre too.

Summer term 2021 – targeted support
In the summer term, it is recommended that you use your additional staff (108 FTE in primary schools) to focus on P4 and P7 recovery. Term 3 tracking conversations are planned, despite the remote learning settings.

From the analysis you may identify significant gaps between children's current and potential levels.

The school should then develop a short proposal for how the additional teacher time would be used to achieve targets for improvement for two potential identified groups:
- Previously established TIGs (Targeted Intervention Groups) – formed on the basis of established criteria of young people who with additional support would achieve expected levels. The supports already provided to these groups would be enhanced by an additional teaching time giving one to one support to targeted children.
- Newly established groups – formed of children, who either:
  - were predicted to achieve expected levels of attainment but as a result of lockdown require additional support
  - are at a slightly lower level than the established TIGS but, with targeted support, could achieve expected levels of attainment.

Support and training can be provided to the teachers from the Leaders of Learning team.

- confirmation of how blended learning is being delivered in your local authority area, and **here** is a link to our Overview of Remote Learning with some case studies for your information.
- Our secondary schools are continuing to offer a mixture of in-school and at-home learning opportunities in these three weeks until the spring break.

- whether any school building capital projects have been delayed as a result of the pandemic.
  The opening of the new North Kelvinside Primary School has been delayed by a few months.

More generally, the Committee would also welcome any other comments you have to make on the impact of Covid-19 on school education, including the following:

- What will be the immediate priorities as pupils again return to in-school learning?

Our immediate priority is to re-establish routines for staff and pupils to enable them to feel confidence and secure again in school.

- How and when does the local authority plan to assess impacts of the pandemic on learning and wellbeing?

Our assessment has been ongoing throughout the whole period. Our Psychological Services have been carrying out ongoing research taking the views of different stakeholders which helped inform our response to the second lockdown. We have taken these reports to Committee and had headteachers present. The schools have sought the views of parents and pupils throughout the period to enable them to better meet their learning and wellbeing needs.

- Does the local authority anticipate providing additional activities, learning opportunities or wellbeing support to pupils? If so, please provide examples?

We will continue to provide high levels of support to our children and young people. Next term we will be working with our schools and nurseries to ensure that children have well-planned transition as normally this will have taken place throughout the year.
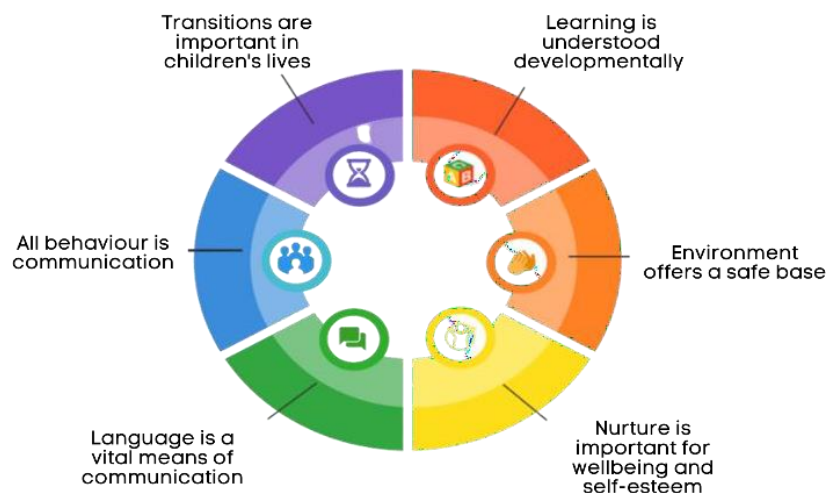
Further Information:

Education Services: Home Learning Case Study: Engagement - Use of SeeSaw and Teams January 2021

Education Services

Framework for Recovery, Resilience and Re-connection (RRR2020)

The Nurturing City – Supporting wellbeing on return from lockdown February 2021

The 6 Principles of Nurture

Nurturing Principle 6 – *transitions are important in the lives of children*

The transition back to school following the COVID-19 closure in 2020 was one that was new to all of us. The circumstances which led to a rapid closure of schools in March 2020 meant that staff were limited in the work they could do to plan for and support the transition out of school and to home for what was to be an unknown and extended period of time. During this time of school closure education staff had been acutely aware of the impact of inequality for some of our families; the challenges of maintaining good mental and physical health and the increased risk for some children and subsequently planned for the return to school and nursery with all of this in mind.

In Glasgow, the recovery plans that staff had in place were heavily influenced by an understanding of the Nurturing Principles and by knowledge of how to support children and staff wellbeing needs. (Nurture Survey 2020). These principles particularly guided thinking around constructing a safe base, managing transitions and understanding all behaviour as a means of communicating unmet or misunderstood need.

Staff teams planned carefully together to ensure this time of reconnection to school was a time of recognising the emotional needs of the whole school community, ensuring children and their families felt welcomed back and looked forward with hope to new learning and renewed relationships.

Whilst education is inherently hopeful and future focused, plans for maintaining continuity of learning and repairing some of the harms from lockdown 2020 have once again been interrupted by a protracted period of learning from home for almost all children and young people. Once again we must plan for returning children to school, this time in a staged and carefully managed way, and once again we must be prepared to support the impacts of separation from friends and family, differences in structures and routines and the loss of places of safety and security for many of our youngsters.

Concerns about the wellbeing and good mental health of children and young people and indeed of many adults have been gaining prominence as this lockdown has progressed. The difficulties encountered last year have been compounded and anxiety about safety, feelings of abandonment, concerns about the future and the impact of separation and isolation have impacted on almost everyone.

However, much has also been learned from that first lockdown. Improved digital access and skills and a better understanding of the importance of keeping in regular contact with children and families will have mitigated some of the difficulties experienced in 2020. Partnerships developed in 2020 will have quickly supported those in most need and processes to ensure financial support for essential school lunches are now well established.

This new learning combined with the solid foundation of nurturing approaches in our schools and nurseries will once again inform planning as children return towards the end of February.

We will continue to have a particular focus on wellbeing; encouraging school communities to reflect on needs, identify appropriate supports and access the wide range of professional learning materials that are now available.

This paper is framed around nurture principles and aims to offer you and your staff teams supportive ideas and points of reflection. Remember that you are not alone – this is a team effort – leading the school or nursery is challenging at the best of times and these are the most challenging of times. Reach out for support – to support wellbeing your link educational psychologist can be a strong source of support for individual children or to support staff as children start their phased return to school.

Nurturing Principle 2 – *school/nursery as a safe base*

As places which encourage curiosity, exploration and creativity our schools and nurseries areproud of the vibrant, playful and safe learning environments they have created for children andyoung people.

Joy in being together and learning together, communicated by warm and friendly adults immediately signals to children that that they are welcome, that they belong and that they aresafe in that environment.

Maintaining this sense of belonging and expectation that communal learning (and fun) will resume when children return to school will go a long way to reassure those who may be feelinganxious and disconnected.

One of the striking features of how this pandemic had been managed has been the use of public health messaging to ensure compliance with safety measures alongside restrictions inhow we live our lives on a daily basis. By far the greatest majority of people have accommodated their lives to meet these requirements, however the cumulative effect of messages about safety, fear of contamination and mistrust of other people who may be 'carriers' or 'spreaders'- including children - will have undoubtedly affected both adults and children.

Some children and young people will have experienced direct harm and threat from abuse orthe abuse of those they love. Home is not a safe place for these children and young people and the time spent at home away from supportive and safe adults in school will have had a significant impact on them.

For children and young people to learn well and connect with their peers and supportive adults,school and nursery must feel safe and familiar, think Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs.
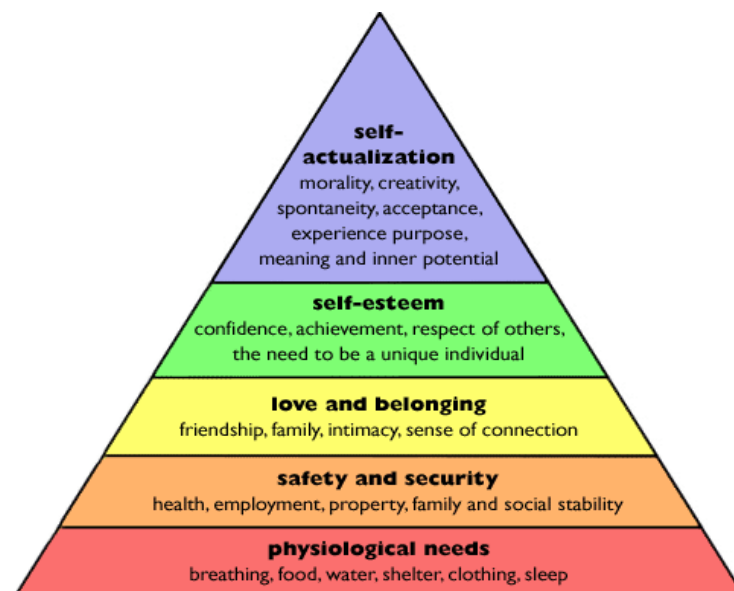
For those who have suffered particular harms re-establishing safe relationships and re- creating safe spaces will be particularly important. The following questions will

guide your staff team in thinking about how safety messaging – both physical and emotional safety – is used in your establishment:

- How can messages of safety be communicated?
- What changes have there been to the classroom?
- How do children understand and adhere to these?
- How do you support children with additional needs to understand theserequirements?
- How is emotional safety communicated?
- How are staff skills in empathy and co-regulation supported?
- Some children will be adversely affected by COVID-19 measures, how will you knowwho they are?

Some ideas:
- Basic needs met first – remember Maslow!
- Re-establish routines to help establish feelings of safety. Reminder of what is still the same can be a comfort. Changes to daily routines explained in a developmentally appropriate way using visuals as a reminder. Language and communication friendly establishment (LCFE) will support this.
- Create a sense of belonging through personalising the environment.
- Environmental checklists could be used - such as from 'Applying nurture as a while school approach'

Nurturing Principle 5 – *all behaviour is communication*

Whilst many children and young people (and colleagues) will have sufficient resilience and family resources to cope well with the challenges of lockdown for some the experience will have been challenging and perhaps traumatic. Some children may be grieving a range of losses and others will have experienced abuse.

The impacts on children and young people of disruptions to learning and routines, the disconnect caused by limitations on peer group interactions and the worries and anxieties related to Covid safety, loss of opportunities and uncertainty about the future will all have affected their sense of self- worth, motivation and agency over their world.

The impact of lockdown measures has left many feeling confused by the emotions they are experiencing and worried about the longer-term impact of these. Putting these feelings into words and expressing our fears and doubts can be difficult even for adults. As we know, children and young people will also communicate to us through their behaviours and as educators it is our job to interpret and understand their needs.

This list of behaviours was developed by the Royal College of Psychiatrists (2004) to help usthink about children who have experienced abuse, but they are also seen in children who haveexperienced a wide range of adversities and subsequently may have emotional support needs.They can be helpful when thinking about how to understand behavioural challenges and address needs.

- They may become anxious or depressed
- They may have difficulty sleeping
- They have nightmares or flashbacks
- They can be easily startled
- They may complain of physical symptoms such as tummy aches and may start towet their bed
- They may have temper tantrums and problems with school
- They may behave as though they are much younger than they are
- They may become aggressive or they may internalise their distress and withdrawfrom other people
- They may have a lowered sense of self-worth
- Older children may begin to play truant, start to use alcohol or drugs, begin to self-harm by taking overdoses or cutting themselves or have an eating disorder

Children may also feel **angry**, **guilty**, **insecure**, **alone**, **frightened**, **powerless** or **confused**.

As children and young people are re-introduced to school some will still feel frightened and may be struggling with anxiety and mental health issues and will find it difficult to leave theirfamilies and reconnect to school. Others may have had traumatic experiences whilst off school and/or may have been abused. We may see a regression in behaviours.

The following questions will help staff teams to think about the behaviours they may see andunderstand the needs they may be communicating:

- How will we know which children and young people are finding it difficult to cope?
- What changes do we have to make to reassure and support them?
- Who are the child's key adults? Do we have a team around this child?
- Which resources have we found most useful?
- What new resources have we found?
- What did we know about this child previously? What might have changed for them?
- How will we know when to seek additional help?
- Who might we contact for advice?

Some ideas:
- Systems in place to identify which children and young people may need additionalsupport
- There may have been a regression in behaviour so revisiting previous strategiescould help
- Key people are available for children who know them well to help

redirect andreassure.

- ☐ Staff use their knowledge of attachment and trauma responses to think about what isbehind behaviour

- ☐ Staff use co-regulation strategies for very distressed or very emotionally youngchildren

- ☐ Time for reflective discussion is built in as a supportive structure – with children andalso for staff too

- ☐ Brainstem calming activities built in throughout the day

- ☐ Focus on attunement strategies, such as using the attunement (contact) principlesfrom VIG and VERP or the attunement profile from [Applying Nurture as a whole](#) [School Approach](#) for ideas

It is important to recognise and acknowledge that some adults may also be experiencing heightened anxiety and distress. In addition to the support of a nurturing team help is alsoavailable for them through Workplace Options. This paper by the British Psychological Society may also be helpful: https://www.bps.org.uk/coronavirus-resources/professional/anxiety-distress-workplace

Resources:
https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/glasgowpsychologicalservice/mental- health/anxiety-resilience/

https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/glasgowpsychologicalservice/coronavirus-and- education/

https://www.bps.org.uk/coronavirus-resources/public/managing-uncertainty

Nurturing Principle 3 – *nurture is important for the development of wellbeing*

As well as thinking about safe environments and emotional support needs as children returnto school educators will have a very particular focus on wellbeing for all their school community. Through the work of Glasgow's Improvement Challenge staff in Glasgow are well prepared to address disrupted learning and identify learning gaps and through the Nurturing City vision and emphasis on inclusion for all children and young people they will also be able to think about those aspects of school life that promote flourishing, competencyand resilience.

Key aspects of school life which will promote wellbeing for all as children return will focus onbelonging, competence and self-worth.

Belonging & relationships

Nurture principle 2 which considers 'safe base' also looked at the key role relationships playin supporting our wellbeing. In educational environments key relationships are with the adults who teach and support you but also with your peer group, those you learn with and those you play/socialise with. Whilst there may not have been major changes to the key adults children relate to, during lockdown there may have been shifts and changes in friendships and peer relationships. These can be significant, and staff are advised to pay attention to friendships. Feeling lonely, left out or forgotten can all contribute to difficulties in re-engaging with school life and it is within relationships that we heal and repair hurts and harms.

Competence & Self-worth

Knowing that we are safe and valued allows us to develop a positive sense of ourselves, ofcontrol over our lives and of being able to make a positive contribution. Learning gaps and altered plans for examinations and post-school destinations can all impact on how we feel about ourselves in learning situations. Keeping motivated about learning can be difficult when structures have been altered, teaching practices changed and positive and encouraging input from adults restricted.

Reassurance about how learning gaps will be addressed, regular constructive and positive discussion about learning progress and support to focus on goals and aspirations will all helpwellbeing as will helping children and young people to re-engage with (or find new) hobbies, sports and areas of particular interest.

Staff should also be aware that new learning may have occurred and some children will haveacquired new skills. Exploring these with children and young people will enhance their senseof competence and help with confidence as new learning tasks are introduced.

During this time there has been a plethora of materials produced to support wellbeing; webinars, visuals, guidance and apps have all featured regularly in social media and on GCC websites. Staff wellbeing has not been overlooked, we have developed a very goodunderstanding of our own need for self-care if we are to support others. Our Nurture Development Officer and Glasgow Psychological Services have produced a very helpful suite of materials to support both young people and staff.

Questions to consider:
- How do we ensure children and young people have an opportunity to contribute toschool and individual planning?

- What has been the impact on wellbeing for your school community?

- For example physical and mental health, friendships, opportunities?

- What do children and young people think the future might hold?

- How do you help children re-engage with learning? How do you identify gaps?

- What new learning has taken place? How will this be used in the classroom?

- How can we build resilience?

- What opportunities are there for play and re-establishing friendships and socialgroupings?

- How do you motivate in a time when traditional examination structures have beenremoved and post-school opportunities altered?

- How are taking care of our own wellbeing? As a team? Individually?

Some ideas:
- Gathering views of children and young people in a variety of ways to feed intoplanning

- Use of the wellbeing indictors to monitor wellbeing in a holistic way

- For some children the resilience matrix and the 6 domains of resilience (Daniels &Wassell, 2002) could be used to analyse and plan next steps

- Systems in place to acknowledge and discuss feelings and worrying thoughts

- Use of positive approaches to communicate hope and gratitude such as 3 goodthings, facts of kindness and focus on strengths

Resources:

Mental; Health and wellbeing
https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/glasgowpsychologicalservice/mental-health/
https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/glasgowpsychologicalservice/mental- health/anxiety-resilience/

Staff wellbeing
https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/glasgowpsychologicalservice/nurturing-staff-wellbeing/
https://www.bps.org.uk/coronavirus-resources/public/teacher-resilience-during-school- closures

Play
https://www.bps.org.uk/coronavirus-resources/public/psychology-play

Identifying a need for additional support

All children will need individual consideration on return to school and staff will already be aware of many children who will need additional support and will have planning in place for them however, given the circumstances of this period of closure, staff should be prepared to rapidly identify children who are not coping with the readjustments required to return to school. We should be aware that this might apply to our colleagues too.

In these circumstances we need to:

- Quickly identify those who are experiencing difficulties,
- Personalise supports for them,
- Be aware of a possible need for specialist assistance and how to access this.
- Remember to use a holistic approach when gathering baseline data – thinking about learning, social and emotional development. Universally the wellbeing indicators can be used or developmental checklists for some children, such as the early skills checklist from teaching talking can be used to gather information and monitor progress.

https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/glasgowpsychologicalservice/coronavirus-and- education/young-people-with-additional-support-needs/

Children living in Children's Houses

Our children and young people currently residing within Children's Houses across the City remain safe and well. Despite challenges to staffing across the sector the Houses have been well supported to maintain good staffing levels throughout lockdown. Whilst our children and young people have found it difficult not being in school or seeing family and friends, staff report on the whole that Houses have remained safe, calm and in good spirits. All Houses have received learning resources and supports from all of their schools. The children/young people where possible have been accessing these to keep themselves engaged in learning and teaching. Similar to the first lockdown some young people have reported that they

are feeling less anxious about not going into school and more relaxed and less pressured learning within their House environment, this may cause some challenges when schools reopen and they have to prepare to return. As a result this continued transition back may be harder and require more support.

The Care Experienced Team (CET) have strong partnerships with all of the Children's Houses across the city. House Managers and Education Champions have been contacted on a regular basis to ensure they have educational support during these times. A small number of Houses have asked for additional support for school aged children to attend school, where possible this has been granted. Children/young people continue to keep in touch with family

and friends online and by phone. In the main this has been very positive, however, no face to face contact with loved ones has caused some emotional challenges for our children/young people. The staff within our Children's Houses continue to support, care and nurture our young people in their educational journey throughout the pandemic.

https://www.bps.org.uk/coronavirus-resources/public/supporting-care-experienced-children

Children who don't return to school

Attendance may have been an issue for some families prior to lockdown and it is possible that this extended period out of school will have exacerbated this. Others may have embraced the time out of school as a time of reduced anxiety and challenge and, if this is the case, will be reluctant to return to a context and routine that increases their discomfort.

Quickly re-establishing contact and connection with these families to understand why their children have not returned to school will be especially important and will most likely have to comprise safe outreach to some children's homes. Key adults with whom these families already have good relationships should be part of the planning to link with children and families and agree appropriate next steps.

Some families may still be frightened about the possibilities of COVID-19 in relation to their own circumstances, for example for family members with underlying health conditions and will require additional reassurance about the measures taken in school to maintain social distancing and good hygiene practices.

Grief and loss

Loss has been a feature of the COVID-19 lockdown for almost all of us. Loss of routine, income, safety and security and connection to friends and family will be factors affecting many children and their families.

This, combined with anxieties about the coronavirus and what it effect it might have on themselves, friends and family, means that children may require additional time to explore their feelings and reassurance that what they are experiencing is normal given the circumstances we all find ourselves in.

Unfortunately, during the time away from school some of our children and our colleagues will experience bereavement. This may or may not be COVID-19 related but the restrictions on the normal grieving process will have had a particular impact. Contact with loved ones who have been ill has been limited and funeral processes changed significantly.

Staff should be aware which children and colleagues might be affected and the additional support they may require. The Glasgow Loss and Bereavement Toolkit can be accessed here [A Whole School approach to Supporting Loss and Bereavement](#)

If you feel you require more specific guidance and support please contact the educational psychologist linked to your establishment and they will be able to advise you.

The NHS Education for Scotland bereavement team has developed a charter for good bereavement care, it can be accessed here: [Bereavement Care Charter](#)

https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/glasgowpsychologicalservice/covid-19/

Whatever your school plans are to support children, young people and their families as we return to school, the core principles of re-establishing safety, connectedness and a sense of belonging will ensure that the wellbeing needs of everyone within your school community will be central to your thinking. Reflecting on what we already know about what children need to feel safe in school and maximising opportunities to re-establish relationships and listen to their experiences will help everyone make the adjustments needed to re-engage in school life.

For more information on Nurture training materials and resources contact jenni.kerr@glasgow.gov.uk

Useful links

Glasgow Psychological Service Website:

https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/glasgowpsychologicalservice/

Looking Ahead to When Schools Re-open:

http://smhp.psych.ucla.edu/news.html

Glasgow stories:

https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=49752&p=0

Compassionate and connected classroom:

https://education.gov.scot/improvement/learning-resources/compassionate-and-connected-classroom

Trauma sensitive approaches:

https://youngminds.org.uk/media/3091/adversity-and-trauma-informed-practice-guide-for- professionals.pdf

Wellbeing and mental health

supports:

https://clearyourhead.scot/

http://www.healthscotland.scot/media/2951/supporting-teachers-mental-health-and- wellbeing-english-feb2020.pdf

https://www.annafreud.org/

https://www.samh.org.uk/about-mental-health/elearning-for-teachers

Suicide and self harm
http://www.chooselife.net/Home/index.aspx

Bereavement support

Child Bereavement UK

https://www.childbereavementuk.org/Winston's Wish:

https://www.winstonswish.org/

Care experienced children and young

peoplehttps://www.celcis.org/