

Addendum in response to COVID-19

June 2020

Woodlands Recovery Curriculum

Recovery is about rethinking our values, not just rewriting our lesson plans - Mary Myatt, 2020

It is widely acknowledged, that educational settings cannot just ‘pick up exactly where they left off’ following school closures to the majority of pupils, as a result of COVID-19. It is understood, most adults and children will have experienced a variety of emotions in terms of the lockdown – and for some, the significant loss associated with this, has been devastating. Those five losses, of routine, structure, friendship, opportunity and freedom, may have triggered emotional anxiety, trauma and bereavement for any of our children. The overall impact cannot be underestimated; it will cause a rapid erosion of the mental health state in our children. So, before we can hope to get back to the business of teaching and learning, we must consider the gradual implementation of any form of curriculum to recover from loss. All of our learners will need a holistic recovery, some may need a focused recovery intervention programme, personalised to their needs; others may need a deeper and longer lasting recovery period, enabling a fuller exploration of the severity of their trauma. (Barry Carpenter, CBE, Professor of Mental Health in Education, Oxford Brookes University, UK, 2020)

Obviously as school leaders, there is a concern relating to the academic losses and how this may affect future outcomes. However, now is the time to return to approaches concerned with the fundamental wellbeing, and secure positive development of the child. Without this, there will be no results that have true meaning and deep personal value to the child in terms of their preparation for adulthood. As Carpenter suggests, our Recovery Curriculum will be based on the five levers; using these as a systematic, relationships-based approach to recovery for each child. Many children will return to school disengaged. Our quest, our mission as educators, will be to journey with that child through a process of re-engagement, which leads them back to their rightful status as a fully engaged, authentic learner.

Lever 1: Relationships – we can’t expect all of our children to return joyfully, and many of the relationships that were thriving, may need to be invested in and restored. We need to plan for this to happen, not assume that it will. Reach out to greet them, use the relationships we build to cushion the discomfort of returning.

Lever 2: Community – we must recognise that curriculum will have been based in the community for a long period of time. We need to listen to what has happened in this time, understand the needs of our community and engage them in the transitioning of learning back into school.

Lever 3: Transparent curriculum – all of our students will feel like they have lost time in learning and we must show them how we are addressing these gaps, consulting and co-constructing with our students to heal this sense of loss.

Lever 4: Metacognition – in different environments, students will have been learning in different ways. It is vital that we make the skills for learning in a school environment explicit to our students to reskill and rebuild their confidence as learners.

Lever 5: Space, to rediscover self, and to find their voice on learning in this issue. It is only natural that we all work at an incredible pace to make sure this group of learners are not disadvantaged against their peers, providing opportunity and exploration alongside the intensity of our expectations.

We will ensure all of our staff:

- understand what the recovery curriculum is and the benefits of successful implementation
- recognise the impact of losing social interaction and daily structure on children's mental health and their holistic development
- can identify the 5 Levers of the Recovery Curriculum and adopt a more systematic, relationship-based approach, as part of the everyday curriculum to re-establishing children's learning
- understanding how to build a framework that is more personalised and considers the needs of children, their wellbeing and which promotes positive development
- use our school aims and values to guide their judgements and apply their own expertise to