



Children's Wellbeing Policy COVID-19 Addendum

June 2020

Headteacher's Signature:

Chair of Governor's Signature:

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[Context and Aims](#)

From 20th March 2020, parents were asked to keep their children at home to prevent the spread of Covid-19, and for schools to only open for vulnerable families or the children of key workers. Schools are now being asked to invite pupils back into school from Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and Year 6, alongside continuing to offer places for vulnerable families and children of key workers.

The aims of this addendum are to:

- Outline how school staff can best support pupil wellbeing when they return to school, including those with special educational needs.
- Explain consequences that will be put in place for any pupils who deliberately do not adhere to the [Home School COVID-19 Agreement](#).

This addendum should be read alongside our [Wellbeing Policy](#) which explains how our school fosters a positive learning environment and our system of rewards and sanctions.

Supporting Wellbeing and Mental Health

We recognise that the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, and the resultant disruption to the everyday lives of our children and families, may have had an impact on the wellbeing and mental health of our children and families.

Anxiety, stress, sadness and feelings of loss are all very normal responses to the challenges brought by coronavirus, including:

- The psychological and social impact of being quarantined
- Safety concerns, fear of infection and/or feeling unsafe
- Perceived loss of control
- Uncertainty about the future
- Bereavement and / or illness in the family, in the school community, or beyond it
- Safeguarding concerns, linked to potential exposure to domestic violence and abuse, online safeguarding risks, neglect and separation from social support networks
- Changing family circumstances, e.g. economic hardships, risks to housing, income, livelihood, plans, hopes and / or aspirations
- Disruption of structure and daily routine
- Fewer opportunities for transitional experiences, supported endings and closure

At Seven Mills we have commissioned our educational psychology service to create resources to support children's wellbeing. These resources cover support for children who are being educated at home and those who return to school. They have developed the acronym 'SWAN' to describe 4 principles:

Safe

Welcoming

All together

Nurturing



Knightsmith, 2020

In surveys of primary-aged children, around one fifth of children reported feeling anxious about leaving home and a third reported anxiety about missing school (Weale, 2020). It is important to note that parents, carers and other adults reported much higher levels of anxiety, and that children learn anxiety through contact and communication with anxious adults. All adults at Seven Mills should emulate the swan: appearing calm and composed even while they are working hard beneath the water.

Safe: creating a safe, calm, containing environment for children

Promoting a sense of safety and calm is essential to reduce children's anxiety during the coronavirus pandemic. Feeling safe involves both physical safety measures and a sense of emotional safety.

While children are at home we will:

- **Hold children in mind** - continue to send positive messages via school ping, e.g. 'we are all missing you', 'we will meet again soon - I'm very excited!'
- **Consider individual needs** - pay particular attention to those children who cannot return to school due to medical or special educational needs. Teachers should liaise with the SENCO to think about how to include these children in classroom life.
- **Engage parents** - acknowledge and address concerns raised by families through regular contact via phone or email. Despite any personal anxieties, always communicate that schools are only opened when expert advice tells us that the risk is significantly reduced.
- **Inform** - keep families informed about evolving plans relating to class sizes, staffing, handwashing etc.

When children return to school we will:

- **Rules and routines** - be very clear about new rules and routines and have these displayed visually throughout the school.
- **Model** - adults should noticeably model and reinforce rules for staying safe. Adults can narrate their actions as they do them to reinforce rules (e.g. I'm washing my hands with soap. I'm making sure I clean every part of my hands for 20 seconds).
- **Manage media exposure** - limit too much talking about coronavirus and ensure any media content is age appropriate. Address any inaccuracies and 'fake news'.

- **Share** - allow children to share worries 1:1 with a trusted adult. Our ELSA-trained TA, Victoria, will have bookable slots to see pupils who are particularly concerned.
- **Exercise** - provide daily opportunities for exercise to tackle feelings of stress.
- **Drama and stories** - explore drama and stories which deal with anxiety and, if appropriate, bereavement in a sensitive manner. The SENCO has ordered a series of appropriate books for different age groups. A complete booklist is available [here](#) and a specific story about school in bubble groups [here](#).
- **Seek help** - if adults feel they need help managing a child's anxiety, speak to the school SENCO, who can direct the teacher and family to our ELSA-trained TA, the school's link EP or CAMHs for further help and support.

Welcoming: fostering a sense of calmness and normality

When children return to school, it should be a place of calm and normality for children. We will create a calm environment by creating opportunities for::

- **Normalising stress reactions** - understand that children will behave differently and that this is to be expected. Instead of saying 'why are you acting like this?' communicate the message that the child is 'reacting normally to an abnormal situation'.
- **Emotional regulation** - explore strategies for different groups of children, such as guided meditation, 'calm me' time or breathing techniques. For older children, more resources can be found at <https://www.annafreud.org/>.
- **Circle time** - build in circle time for reflection, discussion and sharing thoughts and feelings.

All together: developing a sense of individual and collective efficacy

Self-efficacy is the sense that one's own actions lead to positive outcomes, or that collective actions lead to collective positive outcomes. Developing a sense of efficacy restores the sense of self, family and school following a crisis such as the coronavirus pandemic which can leave children and families feeling helpless.

When children return to school we will:

- **Create classroom communities:** when they return to school, many children will be taught in smaller groups with unfamiliar adults. Consider how to develop a new 'bubble community' - create a new class name, compete with the other bubble, take photos of your bubble class to display on the wall.
- **Set goals** - set individual or group goals within your bubbles. At an individual level this could be learning goals, monitor jobs or other responsibilities. As a class, this could be a fitness or a positive behaviour goal.
- **Create shared stories** - create positive stories about your bubble/ class experiences and revisit these. Stories could be about coming together as a class to restart school, supporting one another or completing a shared goal.
- **Peer mentoring or support** - encourage children to support one another and celebrate when they do so. E.g. 'I really liked the way that X checked Y was okay when she saw he was crying'.

Nurture: a sense of hope, personal control and achievement

Every child has strengths, aspirations, hopes and dreams, and it is important to nurture hope and re-connect children with a sense of achievement and personal control.

We will nurture children by:

- **Celebrating strengths** - identify children's strengths and celebrate these regularly.
- **Nurture connection to something bigger** - develop a sense of belonging within the school through virtual assemblies, virtual communication with other children.
- **Hear and tell stories** - make time to hear and tell stories about children's hopes for the future, what they learnt during lockdown and how their lives have changed. Celebrate and amplify positive experiences.
- **Use cognitive behavioural principles** - identify and celebrate moments when a child's action led to a positive outcome and tell this story to the class to develop a sense of being in control.

We recognise that effectively supporting children's wellbeing relies on staff feeling safe and happy to come to work too. The school's senior leadership

team will work hard to ensure staff wellbeing is supported. If you have concerns, there are lots of ways to get additional help:

- Speak to your line manager or the school SENCO.
- Arrange an appointment with our school's educational psychologist through the SENCO.

Temporary Adjustments to Wellbeing Policy

This section outlines the changes that have been made to the school's wellbeing policy.

Positive environment for behaviour

Teachers are expected to maintain a positive environment for behaviour in line with the school's wellbeing policy. In addition to this, teachers should:

- Clearly display the new rules for reducing the risk of COVID-19
- Use visuals to support children's understanding of rules
- Refer to rules when reminding children about behaviour expectations
- Link new rules to existing rules, e.g. 'Well done, you are being responsible by remembering to wash your hands'.

Positive behaviour management

All staff will continue to use positive behaviour management strategies to promote compliance with risk-reducing rules. Staff will praise children for following specific rules, e.g. 'I like the way you remembered to wash your hands as soon as you came in from the playground', 'Well done for remembering the one-way system'.

Consequences

When children return to school, it is important for staff to remember that it will take time for children to re-adjust to school life and behaviour expectations in school.

Due to changes to the school layout, and the bubble class system, the way we deal with poor behaviour will change in the following ways:

Regular consequence	Updated consequence
5 minutes out of class	5 minutes with bubble TA/ teacher in neutral area.
Child sent to member of phase leader	Skip stage - send to deputy headteacher
Child sent to deputy headteacher	Deputy headteacher meets with child in Headteacher's office, maintaining 2m separation. Deputy headteacher phones home and speaks to parents.
Child sent to headteacher	Headteacher meets with child in Headteacher's office, maintaining 2m separation. Headteacher phones home and speaks to parents.

Consequences for breaking rules for reducing risk

Upon returning to school, children and parents will be asked to sign the [Home-School COVID-19 Agreement](#) which outlines the behaviour expectations for children in school.

Where children break the new rules for reducing risk, this will almost always be because they have forgotten. Where this happens, putting a consequence in place is not appropriate - instead, staff should reiterate the rules for reducing risk and explain why this rule is in place. However, if children deliberately break the rules for reducing risk, the following sanctions should be put in place:

1. Class teacher/ support staff talk to child about severity and consequences of breaking rules for reducing risk
2. Child sent to Deputy Headteacher who will put a consequence into place and phone parents.
3. Child sent to Headteacher who will put a consequence in place, including the possibility of sending the child home, and phone parents to discuss if child is able to attend school.

Meetings between SLT and individual children will always take place in the Headteacher's office, with a 2m distance between the member of SLT and the child.

Special Educational Needs

As a school, we recognise that pupils with special educational needs may have difficulties understanding or adhering to the new rules for reducing risk. Where this is the case, children have individual risk assessments in place to reduce risk where possible. If a member of staff is concerned about a child they should speak to the school SENCO.

Exclusions

Alternative arrangements for exclusions have come into force on 1st June 2020 and will apply to all exclusions from then until September 24th 2020. Full guidance on the changes to the exclusions process can be found [here](#).

Links to other policies and relevant documents

[School Wellbeing Policy](#)

[Behaviour Principles Written Statement](#)

[Home-School COVID-19 Agreement](#)

[Updated governmental guidance on school exclusions](#)

[School Safeguarding Addendum](#)

[Book List for supporting emotional wellbeing](#)

[Bereavement policy](#)

[Place2be return to school guide](#)