

Supporting wellbeing during recovery through a local authority focus on nurture

North Ayrshire Council



Nurturing North Ayrshire's Recovery

Return Recover Respond Refocus Restart



This period of school closure and wider lockdown across the country has led to a significant shift in the way we lead our lives and, in many ways, led us to change the way we see the world. For some they have enjoyed a slower pace of life and welcomed the opportunities for connection. However, this period has also led to a loss of routine, structures, friendships, opportunities and freedoms for many alongside increased anxiety and uncertainty about the future. Not only has this period increased the number of children and families facing difficult circumstances, it has also further exacerbated the situation for those who were already experiencing difficulties.

North Ayrshire already has a key focus on embedding nurture and wellbeing across educational establishments. Nurturing approaches can have a central role to play in helping children and young people come to terms with the impact of the pandemic and in enabling them to thrive, whatever difficulties they and their families have been through. Nurturing approaches have the capacity to help heal loss, support children to recover from trauma, help staff to understand where children are in their continuum of readiness and support resilience and wellbeing for children and staff as we return to school.

As we move into a recovery phase, schools and early years centres will be at the forefront of supporting the needs of *all* children and young people as well as those who require more targeted support.

Universal Approaches has three main components

1. Whole school nurturing approaches that help support re-connection
2. Curricular approaches that support children and young people's resilience
3. Support for staff wellbeing and self care

Nurturing approaches to support recovery - Whole school nurturing approaches will focus on providing a model of blended learning which allows staff to take time as a staff group to reflect on the impact of stress, trauma during this time. Each of the 6 nurture principles will be used to help staff to set up their establishment in a way that will support recovery and ensure the wellbeing of staff, children and young people and the wider school community. On-line learning has been implemented focusing on Stress, Trauma and Resilience and the Nurture Principles - Environment offers a Safe Base and Transitions are significant in children's lives. Next Steps will ensure further learning around the remaining principles will take place in terms 1 and 2 to ensure staff develop the skills to implement nurturing approaches across the whole establishment.

Approaches to support Resilience for staff and children - the online training resource contains information and activities to support the development of resilience. Staff are encouraged to use evidence based curricular resources 'The Compassionate, Connected Classroom', 'Change and Loss (updated to reflect Covid-19)' and the newly released 'Knowing Me Knowing You 2' from Ice Pack. Next Steps include evaluating the impact of these approaches using the wellbeing surveys included in the pack and developing professional learning opportunities to support the use of these resources in schools.

Staff Wellbeing and self care - At the heart of Nurturing North Ayrshire's Recovery is staff wellbeing. We recognise that many staff will also have experienced the same losses our children and young people have. We have produced staff wellbeing resources and supports for both corporate education staff and school staff. Staff wellbeing is a focus throughout our NP units and will continue to remain high on our agenda as we progress through next session. Staff wellbeing resources will be put on the Connex pages along with helpful links and resources. We will also hold session for staff going forward.

Targeted Approaches have 5 main components -

1. Targeted nurture groups and targeted groupwork with a nurturing approach
2. Multiagency work with other professionals around supporting anxiety
3. Counselling support
4. Change and Loss Supporting children and Young People who have experienced bereavement/loss during Covid 19
5. Suicide prevention work.

Targeted Nurture - Targeted groupwork which follows a nurturing approach will continue to allow for more flexible assessment and planning based predominantly on the Boxall as a measure but also including assessments such as the Glasgow motivation and wellbeing scale. Targeted sessions will begin when children have been identified following the original period when all pupils will benefit from whole school nurturing approaches.

Multi-agency work to support needs – Education staff will working closely with NES (NHS Education Scotland) and CAMHS (Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services) staff to deliver resources and strategies which aim to improve poor mental health will help break down the barriers to school. There will be a particular focus on anxiety management resources such as LIAM Next steps will ensure training opportunities are offered to all appropriate staff.

Counselling Support - One- to-one Counselling for secondary pupils will continue to operate a telephone counselling service until schools re-open. Following the re-opening of schools, we will continue to offer telephone counselling alongside face to face counselling (once it is deemed safe to re-instate). Telephone counselling could be a useful tool in providing a service to young people who have not returned to school. Counselling will be extended to include 10 and 11 year olds as per SG guidance. Next steps will include tendering for additional counselling support in younger age primary children.

Change and Loss - Many children and young people (C&YP) encounter stressful change and loss events, the Coronavirus pandemic is one such event and C&YP will all have experienced change as they adjust to learning from home, conducting relationships with friends entirely on-line and coping with restrictions on movement. The updated **Change and Loss** materials can be used by Education staff to support Children and Young people who are struggling with bereavement and loss.

Suicide Prevention - We need to remain alert to possible warning signs and act on any concerns, the Suicide prevention Toolkit outlines appropriate steps to take. North Ayrshire will also continue to roll out its ASSIST and Safe Talk training where required and will look to support staff working in primary settings through the use of Assessing for Suicide in Kids (ASK) resource.