

Hartlebury CE Primary School

Recovery Curriculum March 2021

We are writing to explain the rationale behind our curriculum approach when the children return on Monday 8th March. Our curriculum and daily structure may look and feel slightly different to what you may normally have expected.

During this pandemic we have all experienced different levels of anxiety, stress, trauma and loss; our children are no different. The children may also have experienced loss of school and its routines, loss of friends to play with, loss of independence. Whether they display these experiences in their changing behaviours or not, research suggests that all children have been adversely affected, both mentally and physically, to some extent by this pandemic.

We have always held kindness and compassion at the heart of all we do and these values will continue to be key as we take our children through this recovery stage their educational journey.

As a Trust we have received training from Professor Barry Carpenter, an international educational consultant and leading expert in Childhood Well Being. He states that we would be *'naive to think that they (the children) will pick up where they left off on the day their school went into lock down.'*

It is therefore essential that we use this training and professional input to ensure that our **'recovery curriculum'** meets the needs of our children. It is important to consider that all children, no matter what their academic ability and no matter how much support they received with home learning, will initially need an adapted curriculum when returning to school on Monday.

What will our Recovery Curriculum look like?

As professionals we always will and have adapted to our children's collective and often individual needs. Our 'Academic Curriculum' has not changed; we teach the National Curriculum. A Recovery Curriculum is not about changing the content of what is taught, but about being adaptable to the children's needs in our approach. Our priority will be to their well being in the first instance; we will not be in a rush to 'catch up' with missed learning, we will take time to re-establish the emotional resilience, well-being, stamina and joy needed to engage with school life and learning. Engagement is the key.

What needs are we expecting to see in our children?

Remember this will be different in all children and it is no reflection on the home schooling. Much of our curriculum will be based around bringing the children back into school from the isolation of this recent lockdown and the emotional effect of a pandemic. These are the key areas, the areas of potential loss, we will focus on

- **Resilience & Perseverance** – Children are likely to have reduced resilience and perseverance when dealing with situations outside of their comfort zones
- **Relationships & Friendships** – When time is spent away from school children need time and opportunities to re-establish relationships and friendships.
- **Independence & Self-motivation** – In many cases children get used to working at home with one to one support and struggle to work independently when back in class
- **Self-Esteem** – Without peers and teachers to reaffirm children's achievements and support in a way that they are used to, children self-esteem can be affected

- **Physical Strength & Stamina** – During lockdown it has been difficult for many children to maintain their normal levels of physical activity, which can lead to reduced stamina for school-based activities.
- **Routines & Structures** – school routines will be lost for many of our children. These need to be re-established and worked towards. An hour's mathematics may feel like a very long time for some!

Well Being

Our aim in school is to support 'Mental Wealth', to give the children tools in their armoury to protect and develop their mental well-being. We want to invest in the children's mental health and wellbeing. You and your children may be feeling anxious about returning to school. You may have experienced heightened levels of anxiety, isolation, sadness and loss during the last 12 months, they certainly have been very different times for us all! If children are feeling anxious, in any way, the chemical effect on their brain will hinder their ability to learn and remember new things. We will spend time on emotional recovery and restoration. A decline in mental health is the most serious outcome of this pandemic; potentially worse than the pandemic itself. Children need to be given the time and opportunity to find their inner calm and rediscover the joy of learning.

How will our approach look different?

It may be that the children don't notice any difference in the learning approaches in school, however as a staff we will always be mindful to develop strategies that will support learning in its widest sense. These approaches may include;

- Shorter taught sessions at desks, interspersed with 'active' lessons and breaks.
- A greater emphasis on practical learning opportunities
- Lots of opportunities for children to interact; talk, work collaboratively and build relationships
- Brain breaks and mindfulness activities
- An increase in outdoor learning and activity

Teachers will adapt their teaching to the needs of all their learners. We ask you to trust our experience and ability. We are focused on learning, but this will be approached with an appreciation of the differing journeys we have all been through; with kindness and patience.

Your support, as always, is very much appreciated but if you have any queries about how your child's needs are being met please contact your class teacher in the first instance, then Mrs Grand or Mrs Unitt if you still have concerns.

We look forward to seeing everyone on Monday and starting the route back to recovery.