

ACTION PLAN FOR DEALING WITH SEPARATION ————— ANXIETY

The coronavirus lockdown has meant that children have spent a significantly increased amount of time with their families, and a return to school may mean an increase in anxiety for some pupils.

Some children may be more nervous about being separated from their parents or carers than they normally would. Parents and carers may also feel anxious about being away from their children.

It may be helpful to acknowledge this increased anxiety throughout the school setting, and action plan support for this throughout the first term and beyond. This plan can include extra opportunities to involve parents and carers in school activities, with appropriate social distancing where needed.

We have created an example action plan with some ideas to reduce separation anxiety, and then a blank plan for you to fill in. You could work through this as a whole staff group or individually, to help you think through how best to support your pupils.

Action plan (example)

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| Issue | Increased anxiety about returning to school due to increased time spent at home, lack of transition to new class. | |
| Expected presentations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children anxious to leave parents • Parents anxious to leave children • Pupil absence • Poor pupil concentration • Challenging behaviours • Staff health concerns or absence | |
| Groups affected | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils • Staff • Parents and carers | |
| Hoped-for outcomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced anxiety • Smooth drop offs in the morning • Reduced absences for staff and pupils • Pupils are able to express their concerns in a healthy way • Pupils and staff feel confident their health and wellbeing is important to the school | |
| Whole-school actions | Staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Displays for mental health and wellbeing in the staffroom • Introduce wellbeing sections to all staff meetings and Inset days • Allow staff to complete PPA from home • Introduce a staff wellbeing survey at half termly points – follow up at least two suggestions from this • Select wellbeing champions from each area of school staff |

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| | Pupils | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timetable daily slots for wellbeing activities • Displays around the school reminding children to prioritise wellbeing • Assemblies to focus on wellbeing • Elect wellbeing champions for each class |
| | Parents/ carers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold a 'welcome back' parent assembly/seminar live with a Q&A to alleviate worries • Promote wellbeing activities on school website and social media that can be done at home |
| Class-based actions | Staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan several opportunities to include wellbeing for yourself in your week • Allow extra time in your teaching timetable for foreseeable issues to reduce pressure on you • Work with your teaching assistant to take short breaks when each of you is feeling the strain |
| | Pupils | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Display wellbeing prompts in the classroom to support • Incorporate more activities about identifying feelings • As a class, discuss coping strategies for anxiety • Create a 'wellbeing' area of the classroom environment for self-reflection using activities from Mentally Healthy Schools for identifying emotions |
| | Parents/ carers | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow some parents to come into class to drop off (on a rota if social distancing allows) • Arrange after-school e-meetings for concerned parents in place of parents' evening |

Action plan

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