

A child's legs in a plaid jacket, jeans, and boots walking on a sidewalk with chalk drawings.

PSHE
Association

UPDATED MARCH 2021

**BACK TO SCHOOL
SUPPORT PACK**

KS1-2

CONTENTS

Introduction	3
What this pack contains	3
Whole school approach	3
Managing discussions	4
Supporting back to school transition	5
Identifying pupil needs and curriculum priorities	5
Initial audit	5
Pupil voice	6
Topic cards – PSHE education curriculum topic areas	6
PSHE education curriculum topic areas tally chart	8
Survey approach	9
Baseline assessment	9
Approaches to curriculum planning	10
Immediate considerations	10
Focused input – using assemblies and themed days	13
Addressing curriculum needs	13
Supporting pupils with SEND	13
Re-establishing routines and promoting learning skills	13
Supporting mental health	15
Addressing concerns on change, loss and bereavement	16
Supporting friendships	16
Addressing concerns about bullying	17
Relationships Education and sex education	17
Addressing concerns about online safety	18
Supporting health and healthy routines	19
Final thoughts	19

This Back to School Support Pack is designed to help primary schools in welcoming their pupils back after school closures. Given the significant gaps in pupils' attendance, varied approaches to home learning, and national concerns about the Covid-19 pandemic, schools are continuing to work through significant and unique challenges.

Whatever pupils' individual experiences of lockdown, it is likely they will need reintroducing to classroom routines, structures and learning habits which will help to rebuild their self-esteem, wellbeing and confidence.

This pack supports PSHE leads to develop a transition strategy for their PSHE education programme as part of a whole school approach to reintegration that safeguards pupils and promotes positive wellbeing.

We continue to recommend that PSHE education is taught as part of a planned, spiral programme in regular, timetabled lessons but we recognise that some input may be appropriately delivered as dedicated focus days, or within whole school or year group assemblies, as schools address immediate needs.

The following sections are intended to aid discussions around PSHE curriculum priorities and to support teachers to quickly access relevant materials.

What this pack contains

This support pack is aimed at primary colleagues but can be adapted for use in special school or cross-phase contexts. It contains guidance and activities to help PSHE leads to:

- Identify pupil needs
- Assess priorities for this year's PSHE education curriculum
- Develop plans to address immediate and longer-term pupil needs
- Continue to effectively implement statutory curriculum changes
- Identify additional support available from the PSHE Association and other organisations.

Whole school approach

To ensure a whole school approach to safeguarding and wellbeing, PSHE education leads may find it valuable to liaise with other key staff, such as the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator, Inclusion Co-ordinator or pastoral support staff. Whole school provision might include:

- A bespoke pastoral assembly programme that addresses key concerns, provides reassurance and aims to rebuild and promote learning.
- Providing increased opportunities for pupils to make safeguarding disclosures and ensuring processes are in place to manage an increase in concerns.
- Support to re-establish routines, including how the school might manage issues relating to poor attendance, punctuality and pupils who have become disengaged from school.

PSHE education has a key part to play in not only promoting wellbeing, signposting support, enabling transition and re-establishing learning routines, but also as a means by which pupils can develop the skills and strategies to manage real life situations. PSHE lessons can provide an inclusive environment where pupils feel comfortable and safe to discuss issues they are worried or feel anxious about. Creating

opportunities to discuss both the positive and negative effects of the pandemic will help pupils to understand and adjust to new school practices. Establishing effective PSHE teaching principles – ground rules, employing distancing techniques and having a question box for anonymous questions – will all help to ensure that PSHE lessons take place in a safe and protected environment.

PSHE education can help to prepare pupils to reconnect again with learning in school through explicitly teaching learning skills such as teamwork, listening and negotiating, problem-solving and self-organisation. PSHE also has a key role to play in supporting pupils' self-esteem, motivation to learn, and mental wellbeing.

Parents may be feeling anxious about their child's return to school. There may be misconceptions around aspects of the PSHE curriculum, the difference between PSHE lessons and pastoral support and concerns around children's mental health and emotional wellbeing. It will be essential to reassure parents and re-familiarise them with school routines and procedures. A survey by [Parentkind](#) has highlighted concerns that parents may have regarding their children's return to school. Many will be relieved to know that timetabled PSHE lessons will be focusing on rebuilding relationships and responding to pupils' initial concerns about returning to school following lockdown. If you feel it is appropriate, it may be reassuring for parents to know about the planned PSHE education input for the rest of the year. This would also help parents to be aware of the kinds of questions their children may have during particular periods.

[The Department for Education has provided additional advice for special school settings on Supporting children and young people with SEND as schools and colleges prepare for wider opening.](#)

In addition, a number of charities have provided advice and guidance for schools and parents:

[MENCAP – Coronavirus \(COVID-19\) helpful advice and information](#)

[Autism Education Trust – COVID 19 and back to school information for schools and parents](#)

[SCOPE – advice and support for returning to school](#)

Despite the difficulties that the pandemic has presented, it is important that both staff and pupils focus on positive strategies to manage the situation and move forward where possible.

Managing discussions

As with all PSHE education, establishing a safe and inclusive learning environment is essential to enable class discussions to be managed safely and effectively. Establishing and using ground rules is particularly important when pupils return after a prolonged period away from the normal expectations of the PSHE classroom.

As many young people have had, and may continue to face, challenging experiences during the pandemic, it is important to provide space to talk about what has happened but to do so in a distanced way. Using stories, pictures, puppets, scenarios and video clips as discussion stimuli provides a way to de-personalise discussions so pupils can explore sensitive issues objectively. PSHE is not group therapy, nor a space for pupils to share personal experiences. It is therefore not appropriate in a PSHE lesson for teachers to facilitate group discussions around pupils in the class who may have experienced difficulties during lockdown, for example mental health issues or having experienced a bereavement.

More detailed guidance on managing discussions safely is available in our [Handling complex issues safely in the PSHE classroom](#) document.

Our [Discussing coronavirus with children and young people](#) guidance provides further advice on managing discussions sensitively and safely. Mental Health Foundation's [Talking to your children about scary world news](#) and Nip it in the Bud's [Tips for returning to school](#) also carry a range of useful tips.

Supporting back to school transition

A whole school approach will be crucial to establishing routines and supporting pupils to settle back in to ways of learning in a school environment. Most pupils will need to re-establish a sense of community and safety within school in order to learn effectively. This is particularly important if school bubbles/pods/units and new hygiene measures mean friendship groups do not provide the usual opportunities, e.g. playtimes, physical activity clubs and arts and crafts activities, to socialise.

Place2be have produced a [We'll meet again](#) primary resource pack of assembly ideas and class-based activities to use as starting points to promote wellbeing, resilience and recovery.

Young Minds have a downloadable [Transition Tips for Pupils with SEND](#) which although aimed at transition to secondary school, still provides helpful advice re how to support pupils with re-familiarising themselves with school protocols.

The [Youth Sport Trust](#) have created a table of suggested activities to help primary pupils manage the physical consequences of lockdown.

Identifying pupil needs and curriculum priorities

Schools will have been unable to cover the full range of content they would normally have covered this calendar year, including aspects of [relationships, sex and health education](#). Therefore, it will be important to continue to adapt this year's offer to address pupils' immediate and long-term needs. Where possible, it is important that pupils' views and concerns are taken into account in order to determine curriculum priorities and ensure that content is matched to the needs and experiences of the school community.

Initial audit

You may have conducted an initial audit during contact time with pupils at the start of the Autumn term. However, this is likely to be worth revisiting in the light of new lockdown restrictions and time out of school. Therefore, a basic review of the following will help teachers to frame a likely plan for the next term and beyond:

- The PSHE learning pupils may have missed.
- The PSHE content covered during the lockdown period.
- The originally planned curriculum content for this academic year.

This can be used alongside an understanding of current trends and likely experiences to form a framework for discussion and an overview of top priorities.

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health has been compiling studies on the impacts of the pandemic on children and young people's wellbeing which may usefully inform PSHE education provision – available [here](#).

Pupil voice

To ensure that curriculum choices are matched to the needs of pupils, it is important that where possible pupils are involved in determining priorities and that you gain a sound understanding of pupils' experiences during lockdown.

Topic cards – PSHE education curriculum topic areas

The following set of topic cards adapted from our [Preparing for statutory Relationships education Lead's pack](#) can be used to support such discussions. Topic headings may be further adapted to reflect pupils' experiences during lockdown, e.g. managing friendships online, dealing with worries and uncomfortable feelings. Younger pupils or pupils with special educational needs may need the headings broken down into more simplified language or incorporating the use of visual timetables to access the learning.

Pupils can be invited to prioritise the cards or number the topics based on their views of what is most needed. Feedback can be done through group or class discussion or using the tally chart provided below.

It may be useful to consider the aspects within each card further – so if keeping safe is a priority – is this in regards to online safety and social media or physical safety in relation to road/travel safety (especially in relation to post-lockdown measures) or knowing what to do if someone has an accident, for example.

HEALTHY AND UNHEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS

What it means to be a friend, knowing our special people and what makes them special, knowing about how to give and receive permission to do things (consent), recognising positive and healthy relationships, knowing when people are being unkind or hurtful, challenging teasing and bullying, difference between off line and online relationships.

MONEY

Money, how to keep it safe, choices we have about how we spend money, how we can save money, knowing what the difference is between a want and a need, how we can use money to help others.

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Exploring differences and similarities between people, belonging to different groups, recognising stereotypes, rules we have to follow and responsibilities we have.

TAKING CARE OF OUR HEALTH

Taking care of our bodies and our minds, smoking and alcohol, how medicines and drugs can help us, healthy food choices, physical exercise, sleep and rest, taking care of our skin and teeth, germs and diseases.

KEEPING SAFE

Online safety, first aid, recognising risks in situations, ways of taking care of ourselves, road/travel safety, knowing whom to go to when we are worried or afraid.

COMMUNICATING WITH OTHERS ONLINE

How the media can affect how we feel about ourselves and our bodies, influence of social media on friendships and relationships, attitudes and decisions, recognising the difference between things that are private and things that are public.

HURTFUL BEHAVIOUR AND ANTI-BULLYING

Knowing how to solve disagreements in a kind way, recognising that friends can put us under pressure, recognising all types of bullying and hurtful behaviour including online, knowing whom to go to when we need help with relationships both in and out of school.

VALUING DIFFERENCES AND SIMILARITIES

Celebrating how we are the same and the ways in which we are different, developing mutual respect for people who are different to us, recognising what makes people special to us and to others.

GROWING AND CHANGING

Growing older, changing emotions and feelings, changes in our bodies, taking care of our bodies and protecting them, differences and similarities between boys and girls, acceptable and unacceptable physical contact, how babies are made, different kinds of friendships and relationships, managing change e.g. to new school/leaving school.

FAMILY LIFE

People who care for us, ways family and friends care for each other, how families are different, what to do if worried about something in our family, managing relationships positively in times of change.

PSHE education curriculum topic areas tally chart

Collect pupil responses on this form by adding a tally mark to represent how each group prioritised the ten topics. For example, if three groups put 'Taking care of our health' first, put three tally marks in the '1st choice' box in the 'Taking care of our health' and so on.

	1st choice	2nd choice	3rd choice	4th choice	5th choice	6th choice	7th choice	8th choice	9th choice	10th choice
Healthy & unhealthy relationships										
Money										
Rights and responsibilities										
Taking care of our health										
Keeping safe										
Communicating with others online										
Hurtful behaviour and anti-bullying										
Valuing difference										
Growing and changing										
Family life										

Survey approach

Another way to gather pupils' views could be to conduct a short anonymous survey about the opportunities and risks faced during lockdown, as well as current worries and concerns. It will be important not to make presumptions about what pupils may have felt during lockdown and how they are currently feeling about returning to school. Younger children are on the whole fairly resilient and for many of them the time away from school will be soon forgotten about and they will be more concerned with re-establishing friendships and being part of a class again.

Possible survey questions:

Questions to ask	Teacher prompts to support younger pupils' understanding/pupils with SEND
How are you feeling about returning to school?	Feeling nervous/anxious like last year, excited like I normally am to get back to school, worried about whether I will still have the same friends
Are there any things that happened during lockdown that you would like to have more learning about to be able to better manage them?	Family disagreements, friendship problems, things I found hard to understand/learn about in home based lessons, remembering how to keep safe whilst online
What things about school did you miss the most during lockdown?	Playing with friends, playtimes, after school clubs, teachers, adults in school, learning together, the library corner
Were there any good things about the lockdown?	Having lessons on the computer, more time with family, not having to get up so early, more time outside/time to play, learning a new skill

It is important that any survey tool is clear that there will not be individual follow-up for pupils as the survey is anonymous. However, always remind pupils about who they can talk to in school if they are worried about something or someone, and signpost further support and other safe ways to disclose. Where there are time constraints, it may be quicker to survey smaller groups of pupils in each class who are representative of the make-up of the school's pupil population to determine responses.

Baseline assessment

Baseline assessments such as draw and write, graffiti walls and situation scenarios conducted at the start of lessons help to explore pupils' current understanding of different PSHE education topic areas. By completing baseline assessments, pupils also identify potential gaps in knowledge, skills and understanding, and any misconceptions they may have. Baseline assessments also provide an insight into the beliefs and attitudes which pupils have at the start of a topic, which may need further consideration.

[The PSHE Association Guide to Assessment in PSHE](#) provides a range of suggested baseline assessment activities which could be used to assess pupils' starting points in order to inform long-term planning and adapt lesson priorities.

Approaches to curriculum planning

The best approach to delivery of a PSHE education curriculum is to take a spiral approach, revisiting themes across the phase, gradually progressing learning and adding depth of understanding and new skills as pupils mature. However, the disruption caused by the recent pandemic means that many schools will need to temporarily amend this approach to catch up on what was missed and respond to new challenges and priorities. You may wish to condense your curriculum offer in order to cover key areas quickly but appropriately, in order to safeguard pupils.

Immediate considerations

One way to achieve quick coverage of a range of topics (which can be revisited and embedded later) while still responding to current challenges, is to address a number of common risks and topic areas through different post-lockdown scenarios. This provides opportunities to recap on key points and signpost pupils to immediate support, while also providing valuable baseline/needs assessment.

This feedback can be used alongside your audit to amend the year's PSHE curriculum, prioritising the most appropriate topics for your cohorts. This model addresses immediate needs without overloading pupils and staff by attempting to catch up on everything within the first term. Some pupils may have had limited access to PSHE education over recent months, so it will be essential that an understanding of basic concepts and how and where to access help is re-established.

The following scenarios for KS1 and KS2 provide opportunities to address key safeguarding content on a range of areas. Your school may need to prioritise different scenarios including loneliness, anxiety about the return to school, sadness about not being able to see relatives or friends and feeling distressed over news accounts of the pandemic. Each scenario carries very different potential opportunities to explore so it is best to be selective or to take a number of lessons to cover the content.

These scenario activities must be embedded within a full lesson plan which incorporates specific learning outcomes and assessment and follows the usual key principles to ensure a safe and inclusive learning environment:

For each scenario, encourage pupils to follow a structured set of questions, such as:

- What might be the potential risks for each character?
- What could each character do, say or think to help themselves in each situation?
- Who and where could the characters get further information and support?
- How could their friends at school help them?

Remind and reassure pupils that the coronavirus and resulting lockdowns and social restrictions are totally unprecedented in modern times; the situation has heightened emotions and created unusual situations and dilemmas. There are many reasons for why people may feel unhappy, worried or stressed and this can sometimes affect the way in which they think and make decisions.

Key stage 1	
<p>Kiera lives with her Mum and Gran and loved spending lots of time together while school was shut. Now she is back at school she really misses them and feels like crying every day when she gets there.</p>	<p>David has been playing games on his brother's phone during lockdown. Often, pop-ups and messages would come up on the screen. Some look frightening and now David finds it difficult to fall asleep because he is feeling afraid all the time.</p>
<p>Tolu lives far from his school. He couldn't see his friends or play outside much while school was closed. He is very excited about returning to school but is worried that his friends may have forgotten about him or made new friends.</p>	<p>Jenna wasn't able to do much school work at home when the school was closed. She had to share the computer with her older brother and her Mum also had to use it in the mornings for her work.</p> <p>Jenna is worried that she will have fallen behind in her work and will get into trouble.</p>
<p>Ayesha has been staying up late with her older sister watching TV and playing games while her step dad was at work. Now Ayesha is back at school, she keeps falling asleep in class.</p>	<p>During lockdown, Mahroof had been watching lots of news on TV. The stories all seem negative and some are scary. In one story, a family member became ill and had to go to hospital. Mahroof is worried this could happen in his family too.</p>

Key stage 2	
<p>Lena's grandfather became very ill during lockdown and Lena wasn't able to see him. Now that lockdown restrictions have eased Lena is looking forward to seeing her grandfather again. But she is worried that she might spread the virus to him, as she saw on the news that sometimes people have the virus and they don't know it.</p> <p>Her feelings have made it difficult for her to concentrate in lessons and be interested in her school work.</p>	<p>Jayden has spent a lot of time playing computer games with friends he met online during lockdown.</p> <p>The others were buying upgrades for their characters, so Jayden asked his Dad if he could too. Jayden reached the limit his Dad set, but now the others are teasing him about not getting new upgrades and skins. They are sending nasty messages on the game chat. It has been a long time since Jayden spent time with his face-to-face friends and they have stopped knocking on the door asking him to come out to play.</p>
<p>Mala is finding all the changes since the pandemic started overwhelming.</p> <p>She has autism and is finding the new rules and routines at school hard to follow.</p> <p>Mala also finds that face coverings make it difficult to understand what a person is saying. This is making it harder for her to talk to people.</p>	<p>At home, Joni was helping to look after her little sister. Her teacher sent her work and activities but she didn't have time to do it.</p> <p>Now Joni is worried she is the only one who didn't do the work and might get into trouble at school.</p>
<p>Armani is worried about his Mum. She lost her job during lockdown and now is stressed about paying bills and being able to buy enough food. Armani knows his Mum has not been sleeping well too.</p>	<p>Riley found having extra time at home with her family lots of fun. She knows how scary it was for many people but she really liked having more time to do things she enjoyed. She is feeling anxious about returning to school.</p>

Each scenario explores a different aspect of lockdown and the impact it may have had so it will be important to consider the key learning you want pupils to derive from each scenario, e.g. reminding them of who to talk to in school if they are worried, recognising that everyone feels worried at some point in their lives and understanding how to manage feelings of anxiety.

The following guidance may be helpful when feeding back to pupils on the above scenarios:

- The coronavirus pandemic and lockdowns are unprecedented and something that none of us has ever experienced before, so pupils in school will have had lots of different experiences during this time.
- It is important to remember that for most pupils, lockdown will have brought positive experiences, with many pupils enjoying more time with their family.
- However, some pupils may have had less positive experiences during lockdown and their families may have experienced lots of challenges. Whatever pupils are feeling, it is good to acknowledge the variety of different responses and experiences and to affirm with pupils that it is perfectly okay to feel however they feel, even if their feelings are not the same as their friends'.
- For some pupils the transition back to school may feel very strange and they may have anxieties and concerns which they have carried over from lockdown or which are a result of returning to school.
- It is helpful to acknowledge that – even though school now looks and feels very different to the way it used to look – fundamentally, it is the same, with teachers and adults all wanting the best for the pupils in their care. Different routines, practices and procedures can take time to get used to and some pupils may miss the way things used to be, prior to lockdown. Ensuring that information about changes in school are presented in a clear and consistent way and that pupils are provided with prompts, signs, posters and reminders will help pupils to adjust to new ways of working.
- Pupils will benefit from being reassured that they will soon get used to the new ways of doing things in school. Reminding them of the people in school that they can talk to about any of the concerns they may have and the language and techniques they can use to access support and help will be paramount.
- In the aftermath of lockdown and the return to school, some pupils may feel worried about having missed out on learning, or perceive themselves as falling behind. It will be essential to listen to any concerns pupils may have and to explain the steps that are being taken in school to support learning and to address any gaps, e.g. Year 6 pupils may be worried about their SATs, Year 3 pupils might feel worried about the expectations on learning now that they are starting key stage 2.
- Providing structure and routine alongside enjoyable activities will help pupils to feel more secure and relaxed. Allowing time for pupils to reconnect with their friends and providing the class with opportunities to take regular breaks, partake in physical activities or team games will all help them to manage their wellbeing.

Focused input – using assemblies and themed days

Well-planned themed days or assemblies can provide valuable PSHE learning experiences as long as they are supplemental rather than the whole PSHE education experience for pupils. They are not the preferred delivery model as school absences can mean pupils miss out on key aspects of learning. One-off inputs also provide reduced opportunities for deeper exploration and follow-up.

However, given the current predicament, schools may consider using such events as a way of addressing/ reinforcing PSHE teaching in a short space of time. If this is well-planned, with suitable processes in place for those who may have missed the learning, this structure may provide a suitable interim approach.

Best practice when planning focus days or assemblies is to:

- Use baseline understanding to plan suitable, relevant content
- Explain to pupils how the days or assemblies will work and how they will be followed up
- Ensure the learning is a useful addition to the school's PSHE curriculum and provides opportunities for pupils to reflect on and ask questions about what they have learned
- Incorporate assessment opportunities to ensure teaching is effective and will provide an understanding of what is needed next

Addressing curriculum needs

Once you have determined what your pupils' PSHE education needs are, then PSHE Association materials and quality assured resources can support you to quickly put appropriate provision in place.

This guide provides relevant suggestions and signposts suitable materials to support delivery on topic areas PSHE leads are likely to need to respond to in the autumn term.

Supporting pupils with SEND

It is important to address the needs and concerns of pupils with SEND/additional needs and mainstream content may need to be further differentiated so that they can access these lessons. Using the revised edition of the [PSHE Planning framework for pupils with SEND](#) can help to ensure that learning opportunities are appropriate for these pupils. This framework is fully aligned with the [Statutory Guidance for Relationships Education, Relationships and Sex Education \(RSE\) and Health Education](#) from the Department for Education (DfE) and the [PSHE Association Programme of Study](#).

Re-establishing routines and promoting learning skills

Common PSHE learning techniques such as group activities which entail creating mind maps, graffiti walls, responding to dilemmas, role play or hot seating can help build team-working. However, it is important to be realistic about whether hygiene restrictions in your school would limit the use of such activities.

On the next page is a selection of activity ideas that can support collaboration skills and learning to work together as a class:

Team work

Use a rope about 3m long and loosely tie four or five knots evenly spaced and lay the rope stretched out on the floor. In groups of eight, pupils pick up the rope with both hands (not on the knots). Without moving or taking their hands away, pupils try to untie the knots without letting go of the rope, in the fastest time.

Catch a Story

Have a box or container containing the names of every pupil in the class written on separate slips of paper. Begin a story, e.g. a well-known fairy tale or a story. Pause after a few minutes. Pull a name slip out of the box inviting that pupil to continue the story for a timed minute (encourage them to make it as different/unusual/funny as possible. Pupils who are less confident can choose to just add a sentence to the story. The teacher can continue the story if pupils run out of ideas and then pause again and retrieve a name. Ask the class to vote on the pupil version that they enjoyed the most!

Square moves

Use masking tape to mark a grid made up of nine squares for eight pupils to stand in and one square free. Give each person a number 1 - 8 sticker (not in order). A leader stands in front of the grid and they have to give instructions to get the group in order. Numbers can only move horizontally or vertically into an empty space.

The Line Game

Divide the pupils into equal groups. You will announce an order that you wish them to line up in, first group to do it and sit in a line on the floor wins a point. Use any of these categories: ages (oldest in the front – youngest in the back), alphabetically, shoe size, birthdays etc.

Buzz

Pupils stand in a circle and count to 10 (over and over) one at a time around the circle. When they get to an allocated number such as 9, that pupil must say 'Buzz' and sit down. Days of the week can be used with younger pupils and when they get to 'Sunday' that student must sit down. For older pupils, continue counting past 10 using multiples of certain numbers: pupils say 'Buzz' and sit down when they get to 6, 12, 24 etc. The game ends when everyone has sat down. Alternatively, the last pupil standing can be considered the winner.

If this is the answer...

This is a game called "If this is the answer, what is the question?"

Give pupils individual whiteboards, then say a number, or give a colour and ask the pupils to think of different questions for which the number or colour given could be the answer. Invite pupils to share their different questions and take a class vote on the best questions!

Supporting mental health

A survey by [Parentkind](#) asked parents and carers to prioritise three things schools should focus on in autumn – mental wellbeing came top of the list with 70% of parents and carers prioritising this – above curriculum learning with 57%¹.

In addition, a report by [Barnardos – Time for a Clean Slate: Children's Mental Health at the Heart of Education](#) identified the importance of putting wellbeing at the heart of the learning environment.

However, as stated earlier, it is important not to assume that all pupils have found recent events traumatic or negative – pupils will have had different experiences of the pandemic's impact and may have developed new skills and coping strategies.

PSHE education is one component of a school-wide strategy to address mental health. Further guidance to support a whole school approach, released by the NAHT, can be found [here](#).

As part of your PSHE education curriculum, you may wish to address:

- fear, confusion and uncertainty about the future
- managing difficult feelings
- managing feelings about change and loss – both positive and negative
- how to use healthy coping strategies
- ways to reframe negative thinking
- signs of emotional or mental ill-health including disrupted sleep patterns and loss of concentration
- sources of support in school and wider
- ways to support friends and family

The PSHE Association Programme Builders for KS1 and KS2 provide learning opportunities to support this topic in both the [Question-based model](#) (Health and wellbeing section) and [Thematic Model](#) (Physical health and mental wellbeing) section. Key resources include:

[PSHE Association – Mental Health and wellbeing lessons KS1 and 2](#)

[Rise Above – What to do about worry – Year 6 lesson](#)

[NewsWise: National Literacy Trust and Guardian Foundation – KS2 Lesson 3: Managing feelings about the news](#)

[Premier League Primary Stars KS2 PSHE Self-esteem](#)

www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/resources/a-whole-school-approach-to-supporting-loss-and-bereavement

Mental Health Foundation's [Talking to your children about scary world news](#) also carries a range of useful tips.

It is worth noting that the above section draws out potentially helpful material but is not intended as an exhaustive list of prescribed content to include within a school's recovery curriculum. Each school will need to be selective, taking into account their initial needs assessment and the curriculum time available.

¹ <https://www.parentkind.org.uk/News/Parentkind-survey-finds-parents-want-more-say-in-how-their-child-returns-to-school>

Addressing concerns on change, loss and bereavement

Sadly, many school communities will be facing a significant amount of change, loss and potentially bereavement as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. They will be rightly considering how to support pupils through the grieving process when they return to school. Pupils who have experienced bereavement within their own families during this time (either as a direct consequence of Covid-19 or due to other causes) may have been unable to visit their relative when they were ill or been unable to attend the funeral due to lockdown restrictions. They may also have witnessed intense family distress as a result of these restrictions.

Although teaching about bereavement is included within the PSHE education curriculum, it is not recommended that schools teach specific lessons about bereavement in the immediate aftermath of the bereavement or event such as the pandemic. Pupils are likely to still be highly emotional if they have experienced a recent bereavement, and engaging in a lesson may actually increase feelings of distress and re-traumatise those who have been most personally affected. Pastoral or therapeutic interventions are a more appropriate response for those who need immediate and personal support and the following bereavement resources may be of help:

[Winston's Wish](#) provide specialist child bereavement support services as well as for school professionals who are supporting bereaved pupils.

[Child Bereavement UK](#) helps children, parents and families to rebuild their lives when a child grieves or when a child dies.

[Grief Encounter](#) provides free services and support to bereaved children, young people and their families.

[Cruse Bereavement Care](#) provides local services to support children and young people with bereavement. They also provide booklets and materials for parents and carers.

Supporting friendships

Friendships form an essential aspect of enabling pupils to reintegrate into school. Due to lockdown restrictions, many pupils may have been unable to see their friends from school, extended family members, as well as their teachers and familiar adults in school. Losing access to these networks may have had an effect on their social and emotional development as well as their wellbeing. Re-visiting and consolidating the skills and understanding associated with forming and maintaining friendships will be an important part of helping pupils reintegrate into school life.

Alongside a whole school approach, you may wish to provide PSHE learning opportunities such as:

- How to re-establish connections with peers and to consider ways of developing new friendship groups (friends might not have returned to school at the same time or may have been placed in different 'bubbles')
- Exploring what it means to belong and how we can help others feel they belong to our groups
- Reminding pupils of support networks in and out of school and revisiting vocabulary and techniques for accessing help and support

The PSHE Association Programme Builders for KS1 and KS2 provide learning opportunities to support this topic in both the [Question-based model](#) (Relationships section) and [Thematic Model](#) (Families and friendships section).

Resources that can support this learning include:

- [NSPCC – Making sense of Relationships; Year 6 – Lesson 2 Changing friendship](#)
- [Medway: Relationships and Sex Education: Year 3 – Lesson 1: What makes a good friend, Lesson 2: Falling out with friends](#)
- [Medway: Relationships and Sex Education: Year 6 – Lesson 3: Positive and healthy relationships,](#)

Addressing concerns about bullying

Many pupils will have used social media as a way of keeping in contact with their peers during lockdowns. This will have provided them with the opportunity to maintain friendships and will have helped to support their wellbeing. However, the increased use of online communication may have contributed to cyberbullying which may be specific to the pandemic. In the NSPCC's report² into children's concerns around coronavirus, some young people described experiencing bullying that included racist name calling, rumours and belittling comments.

With the many societal changes that have recently occurred on a global scale, the kind of bullying that often takes place within school may be different. Whilst it is essential to address any such instances through pastoral provision, it is also important to pick up on these aspects when planning any anti-bullying input. Schools may wish to reflect on whether a longer-term input on hurtful behaviour and bullying – in particular racist bullying – might be needed, particularly where this has become a trend rather than there being an isolated incident. This could include revisiting learning on belonging, stereotyping and inclusion.

You may wish to address:

- how words and actions can affect how people feel
- why name-calling, hurtful teasing, bullying and deliberately excluding others is unacceptable
- how to respond if they witness or experience hurtful behaviour or bullying, including online
- about the importance of respecting the differences and similarities between people
- what discrimination means and different types of discrimination
- how to recognise stereotypes in different contexts and the influence they have on attitudes and understanding of different groups

The PSHE Association Programme Builders for KS1 and KS2 provides learning opportunities to support this topic in both the [Question-based model](#) (Relationships section) and [Thematic Model](#) (Safe relationships and Respecting ourselves and others sections).

- [PSHE Association – Inclusion, Belonging and Addressing Extremism KS1 and KS2](#)
- [Premier League Primary Stars KS2 PSHE Diversity](#)

Relationships Education and sex education

Due to the lockdown, pupils may have missed out on core teaching on healthy relationships, puberty and sex education. These key elements of PSHE education will need to be re-planned, to ensure essential knowledge and understanding is covered. A safe learning environment must also be re-established, to deliver such teaching effectively. Schools must also comply with the regulations regarding engagement with and notification of parents, including the right of withdrawal from sex education.

² <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/media/2195/what-children-are-saying-to-childline-about-coronavirus.pdf>

It became a statutory requirement for primary schools to teach Relationships Education and Health Education aspects (sometimes referred to as 'RSHE') of PSHE education from September 2020. In recognition of the difficulties facing schools this past year, the Department for Education (DfE) has offered some flexibility with implementation of these requirements. Schools are now expected to have provision in place by the start of the summer term 2021, with a focus on teaching on the immediate needs of their pupils, and the requirement to have a comprehensive RSHE programme in place for September 2021. Read the February 2021 DfE update on implementation of the statutory requirements here: <https://www.pshe-association.org.uk/news/dfе-update-statutory-rshe-expectations>

The PSHE Association has provided tools and guidance to support PSHE leads implementing these requirements on our '[Statutory Changes](#)' page.

Addressing concerns about online safety

Since the beginning of the pandemic, pupils may have spent more time online, whether through contacting friends, watching videos, sharing pictures or playing games. Many of these experiences will have enhanced their digital skills and understanding. It is therefore likely that pupils may have had experiences online that aren't currently addressed in the school's PSHE provision planned pre-lockdown, so there may be a need to re-adjust expectations of what pupils have done and encountered online (for example they are much more likely to be familiar with video calling). It will also be important to consider how this may have impacted on other topics such as friendships, healthy lifestyles and keeping safe, to ensure that pupils revisit and consolidate the skills and strategies needed to recognise, manage and respond to risks they might encounter online.

It is therefore important to address the safeguarding aspects of this topic sensitively and you may wish to address the following aspects:

- basic rules to keep safe online and the importance of keeping personal information private
- how to manage requests for personal information or images of themselves and others
- what to do if frightened or worried by something seen or read online and how to report concerns, inappropriate content or contact
- how to recognise and ask for support if an online friendship is making them feel unsafe or uncomfortable
- strategies to respond to hurtful behaviour experienced or witnessed online
- how to evaluate the reliability of sources and identify misinformation

The PSHE Association Programme Builders for KS1 and KS2 provide learning opportunities to support this topic in both the [Question-based model](#) (Relationships section) and [Thematic Model](#) (Media literacy and digital resilience) section. Key resources include:

- [Google/Parentzone Be internet legends](#)
- [NSPCC – Making sense of Relationships; Year 6](#) – Lesson 3 Healthy online friendship
- [Childnet International – Trust Me](#)
- [Thinkuknow: Jessie and Friends resource pack](#)
- [Thinkuknow: Play, like, share](#)
- [Every Mind Matters](#) – Social media – Yr 6 lesson

- [Newswise – KS2 lessons on Managing feelings about the news, Spotting fake news and Understanding that news is targeted](#)
- [UK Council for Internet Safety: Education for a connected world framework – 2020 edition](#) This resource assists in developing, auditing and evaluating a whole school curriculum to support pupils to be safe, healthy and thrive online.

Supporting health and healthy routines

Pupils may have experienced limited structure or routines that are different to their typical school day. They may need time to adjust to the rhythm and pattern of school procedures that look and feel very different to those before the pandemic. In addition, some pupils will not have been able to enjoy a healthy lifestyle. Access to a healthy diet may have been limited, there may have been an imbalance between time spent online and doing other activities, and opportunities to be physically active may have been greatly restricted. Sleep patterns may also have been affected and family environments may have been exposed to different levels of stress caused by the impact of the pandemic.

You may wish to address:

- ways to develop habits that have a positive effect on a healthy lifestyle
- different ways of keeping healthy
- how to be physically active on a daily basis
- routines that support good quality sleep
- benefits of eating nutritionally rich foods to health and wellbeing
- routines that support dental health

The PSHE Association Programme Builders for KS1 and KS2 provide learning opportunities to support this topic in both the [Question-based model](#) (Health and wellbeing section) and [Thematic Model](#) (Physical health and mental wellbeing) section. Key resources include:

- [PSHE Association: Dental Health – home learning lessons on keeping teeth healthy](#)
- [PSHE Association and Department of Children’s Sleep Medicine – The Sleep Factor](#)
- [Rise Above – Sleep – Year 6 lesson](#)

Final thoughts

In these extraordinary times we are living through, the role of PSHE education in the school curriculum has never been so important. It has a crucial role to play in helping to create a ‘recovery curriculum’ that is both relevant and meaningful to the experiences that pupils have had during the pandemic. By equipping pupils with the understanding and skills to successfully manage their transition back to school, we will be ensuring that they are resilient and well-prepared to navigate any future uncertainties. School communities are places of growth and transformation and it is our hope that the above guidance will be a useful contribution to making this happen.

The PSHE Association remains dedicated to supporting its members through these challenging times. For further guidance and support, you may wish to view the accompanying Recovery Curriculum webinar which can be accessed [here](#). We also have further advice and tips within our [Ask a Subject Specialist](#) video series.



The PSHE Association is the national body for personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education – the school curriculum subject that supports pupils to be healthy, safe and prepared for modern life. PSHE education incorporates health education, relationships education/RSE and economic wellbeing and careers.

A charity and membership organisation, the Association works to improve PSHE education standards by supporting a national community of teachers and schools with resources, training and advice.

Find out more and become a member at www.pshe-association.org.uk