



*Learning and Growing Together*

## **A Recovery Curriculum – Rationale and FAQs**

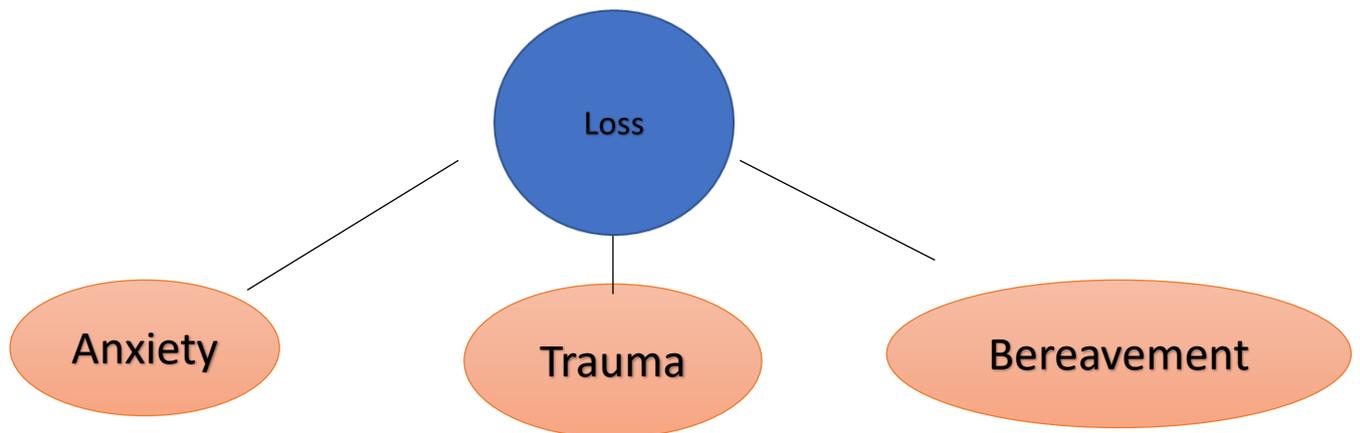
Helping children to recover from their loss of routine, structure, friendship, sleep, opportunity and freedom.

### **Why a Recovery Curriculum?**

#### **Adverse Childhood Experience**

All of our children have experienced an ACE during the COVID-19 pandemic.

All of our children have suffered loss



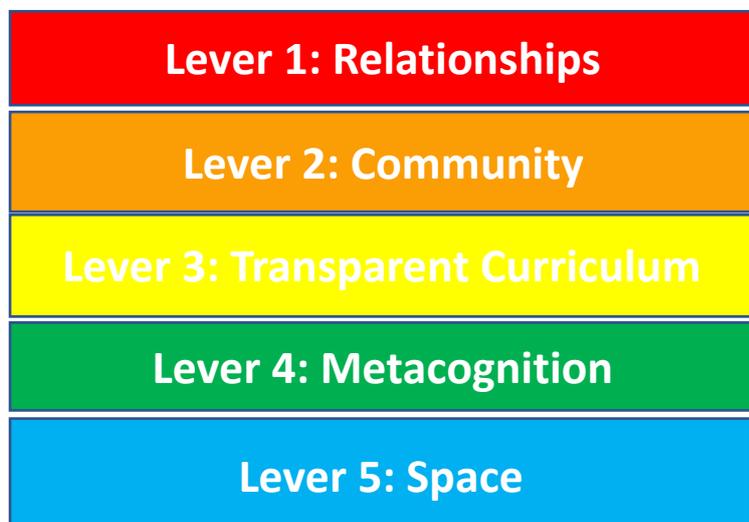
From loss emanates three significant dynamics that will affect the mental health of our children. Anxiety, trauma and bereavement are powerful forces. For them all to appear at once, in an untimely and unplanned fashion is significant for the developing child.

At Park View we recognise that our children are vulnerable at this time, and their mental-health fragile. In addition, children are witnessing adult anxiety, which they may be absorbing.

A recovery curriculum recognises these factors and works to support all children.

## **The Principles of a Recovery Curriculum**

A Recovery Curriculum is built on the five levers, as a systematic, relationships-based approach to reigniting the flame of learning in each child.



### **Lever 1: Relationships**

We cannot expect all our children to return to Park View Primary School joyfully, and many of the relationships that were thriving, may need to be invested in and restored.

One of our underlying principles has been the needs to reconnect with families and re-establish human contact, support attachment needs, rebuild relationships with peers and adults, establish new relationships, and build trust. This began with weekly welfare phone calls from teachers and SLT, alongside safeguarding all our children.

In the classroom, this will be achieved by planning low cognitive load games and modified circle time activities to support recovery conversations.

Loss associated with this pandemic will have caused issues around attachment; relationships in school that have been forged over many years could be the strongest relationships that some young people have. Without daily investments in interaction with others these may have become fragile and as a result, responses may have changed for some children and families.

### **Lever 2: Community**

We must recognise that the curriculum will have been based in the community for a long period and school may seem irrelevant following a period of isolation in addition to some families living with a background of silent fear.

We need to actively listen to what has happened in this time giving it recognition and value. We should strive to understand the needs of the community and engage them in transitioning back into school.

Our parents and families have been consulted to gauge their feelings and intentions around wider opening, staff have actively engaged with families and acted to solve issues and meet need.

In the classroom, this will be crucial on a group and individual basis. Children may share experiences, and will want to share learning and activities from this time. Google Classroom has provided a forum for sharing experiences and learning. Our community recognise how we have served them and supported them and this may be the experience of some children but not all. It is vital that we share these with our class bubbles.

We must reconnect with families and re-establish human contact, considering attachment needs, rebuilding relationships as well as establishing new relationships to build trust.

### **Lever 3: Transparent Curriculum**

Our children (and their parents, and teachers) will feel like they have lost time in learning and we must show them how we are addressing these gaps, consulting and co-constructing with our children to heal this sense of loss.

We will of course focus on the recovery of lost knowledge, however this does not recognise the scale of impact. If we consider the definition of a relevant curriculum as the “daily lived experience”, we must plan for experiences that provide the space for recovery. Re-establish structures and routines, address gaps in learning, learn new skills whilst rebuilding emotional resilience through our Scarf, the PSHE curriculum and other resources.

### **Lever 4: Metacognition**

In different environments, children will have been learning in different ways. It is vital that we make the skills for learning in a school environment explicit to our children in order to to reskill and rebuild their confidence as learners.

Our role as educators should be to embark in a journey with our children through a process of reengagement which leads them back to their rightful status as a fully engaged, independent learners.

Relearning past skills, rebuilding confidence, and developing skills for learning in a revised school environment e.g. following a timetable, less flexibility, social distancing, and behaviour expectations.

In the classroom, we will continue to use familiar and new visuals to support routines for learning these will include child friendly posters for building concepts and child friendly markings on playgrounds. Picture books and social stories around new routines will be used to support all children not just those with social communication needs. We will use visual timetables in all groups to introduce and reinforce new routines as this will reduce anxiety which supports children emotionally, improves self-regulation and as a result allows learning to take place.

## **Lever 5: Space**

At Park View we will ensure that all children are given the space to be, to rediscover self, and to find their voice.

It is only natural that we all work at an incredible pace to make sure this group of learners are not disadvantaged, providing opportunity and exploration alongside the intensity of our expectations.

We will take into account what must be going through children's minds at this strange time? Is school always to be transitory, when previously it has always been a constant, love it or hate it?

We understand the value of recognising and addressing this need and providing planned opportunities to unpick, consider and restore mental wealth to our children. Rediscovering self, addressing mental health and sensory issues with a gradual return to formal learning allowing time for holistic, focused and deep recovery.

*"The anxious child is not a learning child"*

### **Key messages from the Recovery curriculum**

- We will base our curriculum in the lived experiences of the child (e.g. plan lessons around understanding what the children have heard on the news, addressing fact from fiction, matching emotions to news etc.).
- We know that many children will return in a fragile state (what this look likes will vary from child to child).
- We will remember this has happened for *all* children (not just the most vulnerable children).
- We will understand that children may struggle to re-engage.
- We *need* to talk about the virus we will not dismiss it.
- We recognise that our children have gone through a period of neglect. (not wilful neglect but enforced neglect from key relationships.)
- We will ensure that we apply concepts around attachment and ACEs and use strategies from Mental Health First Aid England recognising that Covid-19 is an Adverse Childhood Experience.

Based on a think piece

**A Recovery Curriculum: Loss and Life for our children and schools post pandemic.** Barry Carpenter, Professor of Mental Health in Education, Oxford Brookes University. April 2020.

