

September 2020: A Recovery Curriculum Rationale

With the majority of children returning to school at the start of the Autumn Term, the question might reasonably be asked: 'What exactly are they returning to?' So much has happened and changed as a result of the Covid-19 crisis, that it would be unrealistic and naïve to expect the children and young people to simply pick up from where they left off. Consequently, we have prepared a 'recovery curriculum' that will run for the first term until possibly Christmas, reviewing it as we go along. Its aim is to ease the young people, gently and sensitively, back into a structured learning environment that has been missing from their lives over the last few months.

During this time, daily routines and practices have disappeared, and we know that many of our young people struggle with unstructured time. Routine provides a safety and structure within which they can function, and this loss, understandably, has for many led to an increase in levels of anxiety and uncertainty – in adults too. This has been exacerbated by being housebound, by being cut off from the day to day social interaction with friends and peers in school, and the sense of self-worth that a peer group can offer.

Normal learning routines have also been lost, with varying degrees of student engagement with what the school has provided during this period, which in our case has been based on 'blended learning'. This term describes a teaching style that combines the use of technology and online lessons and learning tasks with classroom-based traditional teaching and learning. The on-line learning has been used both for remote teaching – for those pupils who have stayed at home – and within school for those who have continued to attend. However well-planned and delivered this interim provision has been, though, it can in no way compare with the consistency and efficacy of day to day teaching and learning routines.

As a result of all this, young people will be experiencing a whole raft of emotions and feelings as they prepare to return to school: anxiety, uncertainty, fear, a loss of confidence, mental fragility, vulnerability, a lack of security and stability, and for some, trauma.

It is therefore incumbent upon us to help them navigate through these turbulent seas, to a place of calm where some sense of normality gradually returns. Our recovery curriculum – which is our holistic, wrap around provision for our young people – is the framework within which this will be done. In school, learning will focus on Literacy and Numeracy in the first part of the morning, with the remaining time centring on project-based learning and practical activities, all of this within a consistent nurturing environment. We will continue to base our model of delivery on blended learning, so that all pupils will be able to access the teaching and learning opportunities to which they are entitled, irrespective of their individual circumstances and to also allow teaching staff to mainly remain with their own 'learning bubbles' whilst all pupils can still access a comprehensive curriculum offer.

The online curriculum will be quality assured by a member of the middle management team to ensure that lessons are embedded in the existing schemes of work and allow pupils to make progress that can be assessed against baselines.

The extra premium offered by the government will allow school to focus the attention particularly on closing the gap for those pupils who have not accessed sufficient learning opportunities over Covid 19 and might still struggle to re-engage in September.

The full curriculum will be taught latest by summer 2021 as per government guidelines, with the initially recovery timetable being reviewed at least half-termly.