

**How did Conifers Primary School
support children's emotional health
and wellbeing following the Covid-19
school closures?**

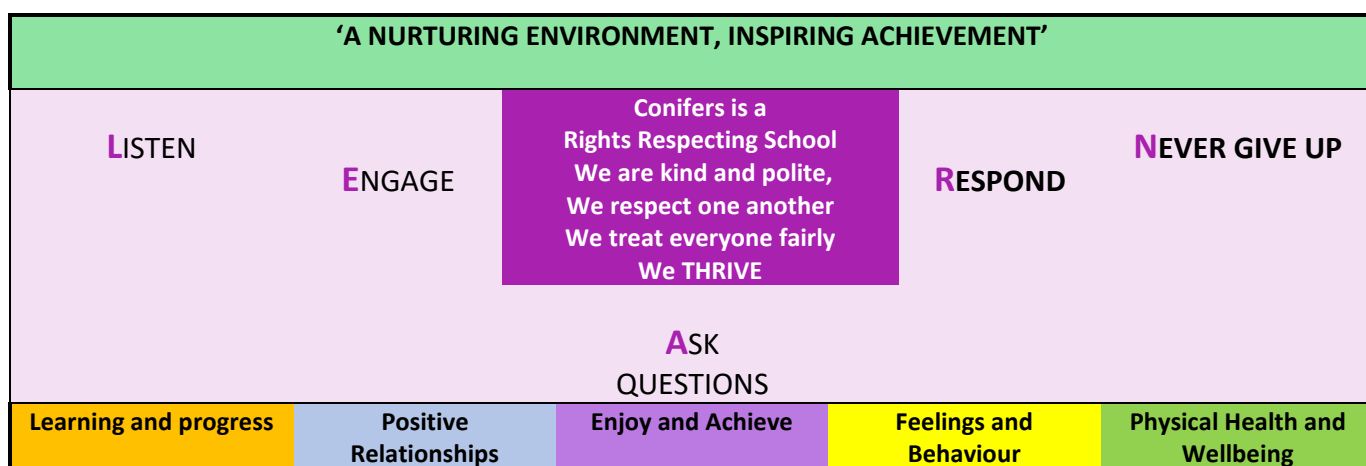


2020-21

INTENT:

Following the significant disruption to school and family life during the Covid 19 pandemic, we used guidance from a wide range of national sources as well as our own Local Authority to develop a “Recovery Curriculum” to help the transition of all children back to school in September 2020 and in March 2021. The “Recovery Curriculum” acknowledged that the children’s learning and progress had been significantly disrupted during the academic year 2020/21 and during the January school closures in 2021. We were aware that children would have had very different experiences of remote learning, and that despite staff providing a digital and physical curriculum that was rich and diverse, not all would have had the opportunity to access it. In addition, children’s mental health, anxiety, trauma and even bereavement would play a large role in their ability to make both academic and social progress.

To help us support children with this, our “Recovery Curriculum” focused on our key school mission statement **‘A nurturing environment, inspiring achievement’** underpinned by our values and ethos as a **THRIVE** and **Rights Respecting School**, which is driven by putting the rights of the child at the heart of everything we do and everything we do is based around supporting the social and emotional development of every child using the **THRIVE** approach. Our key learning aspirations – **Listen**, **Engage**, **Ask Questions**, **Respond**, and **Never give up**, **‘LEARN’** also provide us with our philosophy for the recovery programme.



IMPLEMENTATION:

How we supported the children, staff and families during the lockdown:

- The school remained open for Key Worker children and vulnerable children.
- All children were telephoned by a member of staff from their year group.
- Teaching staff responded to the needs of the children based on these weekly conversations with families which sometimes involved personalised video messages or 1:1 phone calls to children, to support them with their learning and motivation.
- Children and families on the vulnerable list who were not attending school, received a weekly welfare email and/or telephone call from the safeguarding team.
- Identified children who needed additional support for their emotional health received 1:1 phone calls from the ELSA Team and Thrive Base Team.
- Thrive Base team completed weekly Zoom calls for the Thrive Base children.
- Families had access to the Food Bank via the school safeguarding team.
- Referrals were completed for the Mental Health in Schools Team to support children’s mental health.
- Safeguarding Team continued to attend Child Protection Meetings, CIN meetings and TAF meetings to provide ongoing support for the children and families.
- The school continued to provide support for all families through regular communication and updates via newsletters from the Headteacher.

How we supported the children, staff and families when the children returned to school:

- In September 2020, the timetable for the first two weeks focused on supporting the children's return to school using the 'Recovery Curriculum' with allocated time slots for daily reading, writing, phonics and maths. After 4 weeks, the timetable returned to a full timetable prior to the Covid school closures.
- Whole school art project to create a whole school collaborative art piece. Together we are stronger. Together we can.
- Continued to teach an ambitious and broad curriculum in all subjects.
- March 2021, the children returned on the 8th March and the children completed a morning of Thrive activities to help build relationships, to reconnect with their class and to help reduce anxiety on their return to school. 3 rainbow balloon arches were installed at the entrance gates to welcome all the children to school.
- Curriculum planning in both September 2020 and March 2021 was informed by an assessment of children's starting points and addressed the gaps in their knowledge and skills by making use of formative assessment (for example, quizzes, observing pupils in class, talking to pupils to assess understanding, looking at children's work).
- Following the assessment of all children, targeted and rigorous intervention was put in place for identified children in reading, writing, maths and emotional health.
- In September 2020 and in March 2021, The Leuven's scale was used in all classes to assess children's emotional health by assessing their levels of wellbeing and their involvement.
- Individual ELSA provision for identified children
- Thrive Base for identified groups of children
- Referrals completed for the Mental Health in Schools Team to support children's mental health
- Relevant school staff participated in the Wellbeing for Education Return training and webinars.
- Identified school staff have participated in the new 'Stormbreak' training to enhance the whole school emotional and mental health provision.
- Staff have completed a variety of modules using the National College online CPD.



IMPACT:

Well-being and Involvement Assessment:

All classes completed a Leuven's scale for Well-Being and Involvement for their class. This assessment was completed during the first week back at school in September 2020. The same assessment was repeated at the end of the first half term. This assessment was repeated in March 2021.

- Analysis from the Leuven's scale assessment in September 2020, showed evidence of progress in all classes for either wellbeing or involvement between September and October 2020.
- Following the 'Recovery Curriculum', analysis showed that all year groups now had at least 90% or more of their children working at either a band 3, 4 or 5 for well-being. 3 of these year groups had at least 95%+ for well-being.
- Progress had been made in all classes in the involvement band and at least 80% of children in each year group, was now at either band 3, 4 or 5. 2 year groups had at least 95%+ for involvement at band 3, 4 or 5.

Feedback from children (Oct 2020) about the Recovery Curriculum:

Questionnaire completed with a random selection of 29 children from year 1 – year 6.

1. On a scale of 1 – 10, how did you feel about returning to school in September 2020? (1 I didn't want to go to school, 10 excited and looking forward to it)

- 27 children answered with a score 5 or more. 13 of these children scored a 10.

2. On a scale of 1 – 10, do you think the activities you completed in class in the first few weeks, helped you feel happier and settled in school? (1 it didn't help at all, 10 yes it really helped)

- 28 children answered with a score 5 or more. 14 children scored 10.

3. Explain which activities you enjoyed. How did they help you feel happy and settled in school?

Some of the answers from the children:

- I enjoyed doing the splat and balloon game. I enjoyed these because we didn't have to go straight into learning.
- The science activities because everyone did it with me and I felt quite lonely in lockdown and getting to do it was fun.
- Fun activities woke me up in the morning.
- Splat games make me happy
- Activities enjoyed include: forest school, show box tower, marshmallows and chocolate, learning about brains, being outside, making and eating smores

4. Did the activities help you (circle any that apply):

Make new friends?

Talk about your worries?

Get to know the adults better?

Get to know the children in your class?

Be active?

have fun?

The children felt the activities were able to help with all of these suggestions. 7 children circled all of the statements.

Monitoring of work linked to supporting children through the Recovery Curriculum:

Monitoring of evidence files, showed a range of work and activities were completed across the school for the 4 areas of the Recovery Curriculum. Examples of activities include:

Positive relationships	Enjoy and achieve	Managing feelings	Physical
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whole school collaborative art work 'Together Rainbow' in the hall • Parachute games • Team games and challenges • Games – splat/would you rather? • Creating a class jigsaw puzzle with individual children as a puzzle piece 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shoe box tower challenge • Exploring the nature area and the outdoor instruments • Making and eating smores in the forest school fire • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circle time discussions and games • 'Walter and the no need to worry suit' shared with children. The children then made worry monsters and discussed the talk box. • Class Dojo rewards • Discussions and work linked to the emotions - happiness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HIIT workouts • Boot camp style physical activity • Physical games • Relax Kids sessions with Relax Kids Coach • Dance coach visit year 1 • PE coach • 'Whiffy Wilson' book to learn about personal hygiene • Exploring the nature area • Blackberry picking and eating

Feedback from parents/carers:

Online parent survey completed in January 2021:

Do you feel you and your child are supported by the school? 95.83% reported yes.

Attendance:

Attendance for the autumn term 2020:

Attendance	Late	Persistent Absence
☒ Overall No EYFS	96.21%	8.68%
☒ Overall	96.31%	8.59%

Attendance on 8th March 2021: 98.5% (6 children did not attend)

