

There is uncertainty about the number of children and young people who may experience elevated levels of wellbeing or anxiety concerns as a result of the coronavirus pandemic and/or returning to school in August 2020.

This leaflet is to assist education establishments and teams around children and young people, working in partnership with families, to consider how they may understand and respond to wellbeing and anxiety concerns that arise.

Most children will be anxious. This does not mean that they have a mental health difficulty or illness. The best course of action is to support children into school and reassure them. Some children may have a bit more difficulty. This leaflet helps you tease out what to do and when. If in doubt look at the Educational Psychology Service Practitioners Pages or call 01324 506600 and ask for your link Educational Psychologist.

## Expectations and Environmental Considerations

Most anxieties are temporary and are to be expected and understandable when significant life changes have been experienced. Experiencing anxiety and being able to overcome it is an important part of child development. Routines and predictability are protective for those experiencing anxiety and returning to school should provide this. Children's responses will be significantly influenced by adults around them. Children may need higher levels of reassurance, both through verbal and non-verbal communications. Children are highly attuned to the emotions and behaviours of adults so if adults are anxious or act in ways that are highly different and unpredictable for the children/young people, this is likely to elevate rather than reduce any anxieties children experience.

## Resilience and Universal approaches

Resilience, which is directly related to wellbeing, is having the ability to cope with the inevitable challenges and problems individuals encounter in their life. Resilience is also important in helping us cope with changes and new situations we encounter in our lives. And importantly to learn from these experiences. For most children, attending education establishments with strong relationship-based practices including nurturing approaches will effectively meet the majority of children's wellbeing needs. Adults and children can enhance their wellbeing by investing in the following wellbeing self-care elements. This is particularly important when additional life changes or challenges are encountered.



## Understanding wellbeing/anxiety concerns

All children need a reasonable period of time to adjust and adapt to being in school. Adults should provide ongoing monitoring of changes – both positive and negative in the child/young person's wellbeing. Continue to assess their wellbeing. Education establishments and teams around children should continue to use the **Getting It Right for Every Child and Child's Plan** processes to assist them.

## Targeted support and making requests for assistance

- Universal approaches can be used for individuals and small groups.
- See the online advice and guidance from the EPS or CAMHS (self-help).
- There is some frontline support available through [NHS 24](#) or call 111 for individuals.
- Counselling or a listening service is available from most high schools – speak with the Depute HT.
- [School nursing](#) can also provide help. Phone them to discuss first.
- **If the issue persists or there is a higher level of concern call the link EP for advice – 01324 506600**

<https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/fa/epservice> and <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/fa/epspractitioners/> (covid-19, anxiety toolkit & nurture sections and links for referring to CAMHS in materials and guidance section. Falkirk EPS is leading a project to develop an [anxiety toolkit](#). Participating in this project may help the school or ELC staff.

## The pillars of nurture are:

CARE	&	CHALLENGE
attunement warmth connection empathy		structure well-judged expectations independence new achievements

## Nurturing principles

See our Nurture Pack:



*The Educational Psychology Service have produced an [introductory online session](#) to understanding and responding to anxiety experienced by children and young people. The content is also of use to adults in supporting their own mental health. The session is available and recommended for all staff working across early years, primary and secondary Falkirk Council Establishments (this is available via the links below).*