

Now we are Back Physically...

This is a simple guide to leading through the recovery phase over the next few months. It contains links (underlined) to other resources and a simple process to follow with those you are leading with at this time.

Disaster relief agencies tell us that crisis response falls into three sections:

1. Response (what needs doing to support people in the immediate aftermath).
2. Recovery (once the situation is stable, helping people come to terms with what they have been through).
3. Reconstruction (how we want things to look going forwards).

A common mistake is to move through the recovery phase too quickly. Doing so, leads to burnout amongst leaders 12-24mths later and high levels of anxiety and other mental ill-health amongst survivors. The resources linked in this handout are designed to help you lead your school community well through the recovery phase and prevent these negative outcomes. More information is available in this [video](#) (the first 20 minutes) which was delivered for church leaders.

It will be important for you to consider how you undertake this at all four levels of:

1. Leading yourself and your own recovery well
2. Leading staff.
3. Leading pupils.
4. Leading families.

What We Are Aiming For

Recovery is important after an illness, a traumatic event or an unexpected challenge in life. It takes time, often longer than expected, and involves a process of engaging with our emotions, integrating our losses, and embracing our new reality. Healthy recovery includes:

- Remembering.
- Reflecting.
- Recuperating.



When exactly it will be best to offer this is unknown. It will depend on a number of factors, and may well vary from community to community, but as lockdown eases, schools reopen and the vaccination programme spreads, as spring turns to summer and new life explodes around us, and as we journey through Easter and encounter the risen Christ afresh, it is likely to be over the next few months.

We have a great opportunity to help people within our schools and their families and communities to recover well. We can bring our Church School identity to this as we lay hold of the incredible resources available to us within the Christian tradition.

REMEMBERING

There is a need for support and opportunity for people to articulate their pandemic experiences and to be able to identify the emotions they have journeyed through. This includes both thanksgiving and lament. We reflect with thanks upon those who have served and cared for us (frontline staff, teachers, family), the daily blessings we have experienced, the signs of God's grace and presence. For many young people and their families, there will have been some good things to arise from lockdown, alongside huge challenges. We also remember our losses, both of people and things (for many pupils this may include lost opportunities), and lament over the way the world is not as God would want it to be.

REFLECTING

Having reflected on what we have experienced (the positive and negative), we can pause to think what we have learned from these experiences and whether there are things we want to do differently moving forwards.

RECUPERATING

This includes what are we looking forward to (for example reconnecting with family and friends), and what will restore us (for example, travelling to some of our favourite places, serving others, playing sport, returning to the routine of physical school, visiting the hairdressers, enjoying coffee shops, going to the cinema, hanging out at the park).

Deciding What to Do

Schools will want to think through how they engage in recovery at the four levels of:

- Leading yourself and your own recovery.
- Leading SLT and staff.
- Leading pupils.
- Leading families.

The school will be able to offer recovery support both in school (via Collective Worship, form time, PHSE sessions, chapel, prayer spaces, staff meetings) and also extend this home with the 'My Pandemic Journey' sheets and by inviting parents to access outdoor reflective spaces that you may set up.

Given that school contexts vary so widely, rather than be prescriptive, we have put together a bank of resources from which you can draw.

School-Church Partnership

This resource has arisen because it was first delivered to [church leaders](#). We then realised that it was as pertinent for school leaders and so have redrafted it, tailoring it to a school leader's needs. It may, therefore, be very fruitful for you to involve your local church in delivering it. The church may well be undertaking a similar journey and might be running complementary community events or have experience and resources to help you put together some of the prayer spaces or Collective Worship session. Pastoral support will be an important component of recovery, and the church contains many members well-equipped and trained to support with this.



Resources and Materials

FOR LEADERS

- **Leading Through the Recovery Phase** [Video](#) introducing the 'response, recovery, reconstruction' thinking – as previously mentioned.
- **PowerPoint** [Slides](#) to use with those you lead with to explain the recovery phase.
- **Staff Meeting** [Outline](#) for how to introduce this material to staff and help them work through recovery for themselves. Could be delivered via Teams or in person.

ASSEMBLIES/REFLECTIVE SPACES/PHSE INPUT

- **PHSE ideas** [Ideas for activities](#) to support the three recovery stages of 'Remember, Reflect and Recuperate'.
- **Collective Worship Outline** A suggested outline for a special [Recovery' Collective Worship](#). Use it as a springboard for your own ideas.
- **Recovery Space** Suggestions for creating internal or external [prayer spaces/chapel space](#) as a place for people to come and process their experience of the pandemic. It includes creative ideas for a variety of stations following the 'remember, reflect, recuperate' structure.

GIVEAWAYS

- **Our Family Pandemic Experience** Handout for [families](#) to use as a family together in their homes to reflect on their experience of the pandemic.
- **My Pandemic Experience** For [youth](#) to use for private reflection.

FOLLOW UP RESOURCES

- **Young minds:** youngminds.org.uk.
- **Kooth** Recommended for secondary pupils. www.kooth.com.
- **The Well Being Course** A new Christian well-being course released January 2021. There is an [introductory video](#) and a [website](#) with more information. There is also a [youth version](#).
- **Grief** If people have experienced the death of a loved one you may want to recommend this informative online booklet from the Church Army on [Death, Grief and Hope](#), or for older pupils/adults these resources from [MIND](#) on bereavement. Winston's Wish offers a range of [excellent support](#) for children and young people, plus training for schools.

'THE KEY TO GOOD RECOVERY IS PEOPLE TAKING TIME TO PROCESS EMOTIONS AND THINK THROUGH NEW PRIORITIES.'