

Policy on supporting children's mental health



Little Scallywags are aware that children who have stayed at home for a prolonged period of time and had a change of routine could result in difficulties such as changes in behaviour or mood.

How a child can react can vary according to their age, how they understand and communicate, their previous experiences and how they typically cope with stress.

Staff will show sensitivity to all children returning to nursery after their absence, working closely with parents to ensure children are supported appropriately.

Staff will : -

- Be present, acknowledging children's voices and concerns – children may show signs of distress emotionally, physically or through their behaviour. Children may feel less anxious about communicating their anxiety if they are able to express their feelings in a safe and supportive environment. Staff will provide children opportunities to discuss and talk about their feelings and emotions.
- Provide clear and child-friendly information about the current situation – Staff will talk openly about what is happening, using child friendly tools and resources.
- Be aware of their own reactions – staff will manage their own emotions by remaining calm being available to answer any questions children may have.
- Keep connected – staff will keep regular contact with children who aren't currently attending nursery through phone/video calls.
- Support safe ways for children and families to connect with family and peers- provide parents and families with tips and ideas about how they can meet up safely with peers – for example, walks and picnics.
- Offer advice on a new routine – support families staying at home with home learning and activities to keep children occupied. Providing children with a home routine will help them settle back into nursery life.
- Limit exposure to media where possible – reassure parents where possible that nursery is taking protective measures and following adequate guidance guided by the government.
- Offer settling in sessions to children starting back at nursery when required to encourage a slow transition.
- Promote children's positive self-esteem and well-being by praise and reward.

Managers and DSLs will continue to closely monitor all vulnerable children and families. If a problem is identified, managers will contact the local authority to ensure the best support is provided and signpost where necessary.

Staff must report any concerns or changes in a child's behaviour to their DSL without delay.

