

# Back to School: A rights-based road to recovery

Extracts from Children's Parliament's website of activities for teachers to use with children returning to school post-coronavirus.

## The Bramble Brae/ Feeling Inspectors Edit

This edit has been specially selected by Children's Parliament for Bramble Brae Primary School in response to the Feeling Inspectors' experiences of returning to school after lockdown.

The Feeling Inspectors are a group of P6, P7 and S1s from Bramble Brae Primary School, who worked with Children's Parliament in early 2020 to investigate mental health and what children need to be happy, healthy and safe at their school. When coronavirus hit, and school stopped, the Feeling Inspectors continued to work with Children's Parliament remotely and digitally, so they could have their say about life in lockdown, recovery and the 'new normal.'

The activities will support teachers to take a rights-based approach to supporting children's recovery. All activities have been taken from <https://backtoschool.scot> resource.

All quotes are from the Feeling Inspectors: Calum, Yvie, Katie, Jamie, Callum, Finn, Tia, Ruby, Theresa, Connor and Kiiana.

*'{Going back to school teachers should} Focus on what we have missed – relationships, being active and have fun together.'*

---

## Activity: Trash and Treasure

<https://backtoschoolscot.files.wordpress.com/2020/08/trash-and-treasure-1.pdf>

*The Feeling Inspectors felt there were some good things about lockdown like spending time at home with family, doing different things like cooking, working in pyjamas and building dens. During lockdown, there were also things happening in many children's lives that put their mental health at risk. The Feeling Inspectors said this could be stressing about school work, concerns about quarantine, not being able to play outside, feeling bored and lonely, not feeling energetic, missing friends and family and worrying about family getting coronavirus.*

In the transition back to school, it is essential children have the time to reflect on their experiences of lockdown. Trash and Treasure gives children an opportunity to have their say meaningfully and helps children to reflect, process and come to terms with their individual experiences. It also allows children to share their experiences with others, and to collectively mark their journey as a peer group.



## Activity: Surviving/Thriving Child

<https://backtoschoolscot.files.wordpress.com/2020/08/surviving-thriving-child-2.pdf>

*"Bullies bully because they are miserable and need to make other children feel miserable. They might not be having a good life and only bully because they have problems."*

We use the Surviving/Thriving Child to explore the connection between emotions and behaviours. It is a useful way for children to understand their own behaviours and reactions and those of others around them. It is also an activity that can easily be taken outside with sheets of paper or adapted.

## Activity: Teacher Pledge

<https://backtoschoolscot.files.wordpress.com/2020/08/teacher-pledge-1.pdf>

*"Support children who don't want to go back to school by talking to them and helping them out, so it doesn't feel like a big fuss going back."*

The teacher pledge can help adults fulfil their responsibility to listen to children and make changes to the environment and their behaviour in response to what they have heard.

## Activity: Belonging Cake

<https://backtoschoolscot.files.wordpress.com/2020/08/belonging-cake-1.pdf>

*'Give us time to get to know people in our new class and our new class teacher.'*

Children have spent a significant amount of time away from friends and children's rights to play, relax and meet with others has been compromised. It is important to prioritise re-establishing and nurturing children's friendships and sense of belonging within school. The Belonging Cake is designed to help children consider and share what they need to feel happy, welcome and included on their return to school.

## Activity: Friendship Bracelets

<https://backtoschoolscot.files.wordpress.com/2020/08/friendship-bracelets-1.pdf>

*"We need more free time to play together - being able to run about hyper because we'll get to see our friends again."*

Building or rebuilding connections is an essential part of recovery, particularly when relationships have been affected by physical distancing measures and the extended period away from school. Across our work, children describe the important role teachers can play in helping children learn how to make friends and to be a good friend. Friendship Bracelets is designed to help children reflect on the importance of friendship, caring, sharing, fairness and love.



## Activity: Big Hug

<https://backtoschoolscot.files.wordpress.com/2020/08/big-hug-1.pdf>

*'All children need to be loved. If we don't feel loved, then we can feel lonely.'*

This activity was inspired by Bramble Brae's *it's all about love* daily challenges. It is about encouraging children to recognise their individual strengths, skills and qualities as well as the things they like about themselves. It is an opportunity for children to support one another by encouraging them to highlight what makes their classmates unique and special.

## Activity: Creative Bursts

<https://backtoschoolscot.files.wordpress.com/2020/08/creative-bursts-1.pdf>

*'Let us play games and do art to take everyone's mind off of coronavirus and so they can take time to get back to their normal schedule.'*

In a safe, supportive environment, we encourage children to play, create, take risks and have fun. These short creative exercises enable children to use their imagination and develop critical thinking.

## Activity: The Worry Monster

<https://backtoschoolscot.files.wordpress.com/2020/08/the-worry-monster-1.pdf>

When a child feels sad, stressed and angry, the Feelings Inspectors shared that it is really important that they speak to someone they trust. This could be a friend, a parent or a teacher/ PSA. By not sharing a worry, this can lead to children getting more and more worried.

The Feeling Inspectors felt it is important that children have a trusted adult who makes time to really listen to a child. When a child tells you they have a worry, sit down with them and see what is wrong. The child might get really upset as they have built their worries up.

## Activity: Take a Moment

<https://backtoschoolscot.files.wordpress.com/2020/08/take-a-moment-1.pdf>

*'Take a breather, stop for a moment, close your eyes and take deep breaths – it keeps you calm and stops a mad temper.'*

The Feeling Inspectors asked that adults at their school equip children with the right skills and tools so they can care for themselves. These mindfulness exercises work best when they are done routinely, when children understand what is expected of them and when they have had time to practice being still and focusing on their breathing.

