



Banana Moon Staff well-being

Re-opening your nursery

1 Preparing staff

This document has been prepared to support the re-opening of your nursery, or for those of you bringing more staff back to work. The aim is to provoke thinking around how you can ensure your staff come back to work prepared for what is ahead of them. The workplace they left at the end of March is very different to the one they will be walking back in to. It is important to acknowledge the feelings & thoughts staff may have.

Scheduling a Zoom/Teams call before staff return to work will provide an opportunity to update them on all of the changes that have or will be put in place, specifically relating to the on-going Coronavirus Pandemic. You should sign-post them to training you wish them to undertake before returning. Additionally, you could use this as an opportunity to listen to their concerns. Be aware that some staff may have suffered the loss of an immediate family member or may be traumatised by the significant number of deaths being reported daily in the media.

Think about making the workplace a nurturing environment for staff, as well as children. Being empathetic and showing some understanding of their concerns will go a long way to settling them back in to work. For further support and advice on how to bring staff back from furlough please refer to Citation. They have guidance documents and training readily available.

Once staff have returned it may be useful to schedule supervisions, providing the opportunity to share any anxieties and concerns after working with the new systems you have in place. Hopefully most staff will feel more relaxed and less anxious, however if they don't you will need to think about further support. Below are links to organisations and websites where staff can gain more help:

- www.anxietyuk.org.uk/coronanxiety-support-resources/
- www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/coronavirus-covid-19-anxiety-tips/
- www.mind.org.uk/information-support/coronavirus/coronavirus-and-your-wellbeing/
- www.mentalhealth-uk.org/help-and-information/covid-19-and-your-mental-health/
- www.thecalmzone.net
- www.menshealthforum.org.uk
- www.samaritans.org.uk
- www.cruse.org.uk



2 Supporting staff

Hold a Zoom staff meeting once you are back at work; it will provide more opportunities for you to gather feedback and find ways to improve your systems. Making the team feel part of the changes will help with their transition back to work. Think about spending some time doing a mindfulness activity before you start the meeting. Below is a link to some activities, and you can find lots more via Google:

www.positivepsychology.com/mindfulness-exercises-techniques-activities/

Be Prepared! There will potentially be times when staff become overwhelmed; if you have the space, make a little relaxation corner. Provide some treats, a box of tissues and allow them to step away from the children for a small break.

It is likely that COVID-19 will be with us for a while, therefore be ready to support staff who could face bereavements or have to deal with the illness themselves in the future.

Have a NO COVID-19 rule, identify one space where staff can discuss their concerns about the virus but make sure that conversation ends before they leave the space. Talking constantly and looking at social media can make anxiety worse, and keeping the majority of the nursery free from 'virus chat' will ensure those staff who want to avoid hearing about it are protected. We also need to be mindful of little ears; keeping the conversation away from the children will support their well-being too.

Think about how to manage your bubbles; if you have children with challenging behaviour, do you want one member of staff with that group for the whole week? You may need to have a buddy for each bubble to ensure staff are not put under any additional stress.

Think about the distribution of cleaning & routine tasks and make sure everyone is involved, maybe have a timetable. The smallest things can be triggers and if a member of staff feels that they are the only one cleaning it could result in an issue!

Don't assume that your staff members are 'coping' just because they don't say anything to you. Plan your day to ensure there are opportunities to check on them, smiling and acknowledging their efforts will go a long way.

As Dory says,

'just keep swimming!'

