**PRINCIPLE 6**

**The teacher role should be to facilitate learning and development, rather than just to transmit specified knowledge.**

Much of what children learn at school (particularly at primary) is developmental. Psychologist Alison Gopnik says that social learning can be richer and more meaningful than academic learning (cited Fisher 2020). Children learn through socialising, play and curiosity so re-establishing social connections and the social environment will be an important early task for school staff when they reopen. There is evidence that children can catch up with formal learning (Fisher, 2020) as long as they are given supportive tools to facilitate this.  There is also evidence that teachers instinctively want to increase academic time after periods of school closure to help children catch up but this does not work, perhaps because the pupils may be stressed and not regulated to access learning for a while (Liberty, 2017). Whilst at home children will not have been subject to the same need to comply as when at school and it may take time for them to adjust and focus on their motivation and nurturing new found freedom for a while. It may be helpful to strengthen children’s willingness to research into their interests via the internet and appropriate websites. Fisher (2020) advises that “*we should create the circumstances to encourage autonomy, a sense of competence and relatedness”* by giving children meaningful choices and telling when they choose well*.* They have experienced a time of limited choice and schools may need to be prepared for them to react by demanding more now they have more freedom. Some may be hyper-vigilant to perceived threat and hyper-aroused, which they may show through anger and resistance. It is important to avoid reacting to this and stay compassionate. ***Relationships will be remembered for longer than worksheets***: the priority is to help them feel safe and enjoy school again, provide space for them to talk about their feelings and negotiate tools that will help them relax.

**References**

Fisher, N. (2020) School’s Really Out. The Psychologist <https://thepsychologist.bps.or.uk/schools-really-out>

Liberty, K. (2017) Reducing Stress in Schools Information for Principals, Teachers and Parents About Stressed Children in Disaster-Struck Communities and How to Help Them in Difficult Times <https://ia800600.us.archive.org/20/items/ReducingStressInSchools2017/Reducing%20Stress%20In%20Schools2017.pdf>