

# RETURN TO SCHOOL: A CHILD RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH TO PLANNING AND DELIVERY

**The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) is a powerful tool to support school improvement. Given the impact of the coronavirus on children and young people, we want to help your school place children's rights at the heart of its response.**

The following six articles relate to safeguarding, pupil voice, health, wellbeing, safety, play, learning and education. Focusing on a small number of key articles will help to inform your thinking and shape your priorities over the coming weeks and months. Children's rights are indivisible but we hope that by highlighting these six you will be empowered to use the Convention in your wider recovery planning. This guidance aims to complement and underpin, rather than replace, that of the Government, your local authority or any other professional body.

## ARTICLE 12: respect for the views of the child

Unicef knows that the voices of children and young people are not being heard by decision makers in this crisis. How are you enabling their voice to influence your planning for a safe return? What are their worries and priorities, fears and hopes?

Download our pupil survey guidance and template:

[unicef.uk/article12\\_guidance](https://www.unicef.uk/article12_guidance)

## ARTICLE 24: health and health services

This article is the stimulus for all your work around social distancing, hand washing and cleaning. It also underpins your focus on wellbeing and, particularly mental health and other emotional support.

## ARTICLE 19: protection from violence, abuse and neglect

Your planning for detailed support while children are away from school and as they return is underpinned by Article 19. You will be providing additional resource and systems to follow up on many experiences that should not have happened.

## SIX ARTICLES TO INFORM YOUR PLANNING

## Articles 31: leisure, play and culture

This will be more urgent for some children than others. Re-learning what play is and adjusting to play in a socially distant context will be among your priorities.

## Articles 28 & 29: the right to education and the goals of education

These two will be high on your list. Attendance, access, engagement, the dignity of the child and fulfilment of their potential are at the heart of these rights.

## CHECKLIST

1. Be explicit about rights. It will reassure children, their families and carers and your colleagues to know that your response is founded on the Convention.
2. Be clear how coronavirus has impacted upon children's rights and that it is your duty (as a team) to address this.
3. Be reassuring and optimistic. Keep everything in perspective and draw out positives wherever possible.
4. Be bold in quoting the CRC and asserting children's rights when advocating for your children with local and national authorities.
5. Be child-centred in your thinking, planning and communication. Seek out and listen to their voices.