

FREE!

RETURN TO SCHOOL WITH **WIRED FOR WELL-BEING**

SECONDARY TEACHER RESOURCE PACK



By **Fiona Forman M. Sc.**

© Outside The Box Learning Resources

www.otb.ie/Return-to-School



RETURN TO SCHOOL WITH WIRED FOR WELL-BEING

About the Author

Fiona Forman is an author, speaker, facilitator and trainer in the area of well-being and Positive Psychology. Having spent many years as a primary school teacher, she is absolutely passionate about placing well-being at the heart of school life and she has seen first-hand the great benefits of empowering children, teachers and parents to understand, value and enhance their own mental health. Fiona holds an M. Sc. in Applied Positive Psychology, the science of well-being, from the University of East London. She is also the co-author of **Weaving Well-Being**, a positive mental health programme for primary school children that is now in use in the majority of Irish Primary Schools.

For further information on the **Wired for Well-Being** programme, please follow this link:

www.otb.ie/W4W

Useful Links:

www.fionaformanwellbeing.com

www.otb.ie/Return-to-School

Twitter: @FionaWellBeing

Facebook: @fionawellbeing

Instagram: @fionaformanwellbeing

Email: fiona.forman@gmail.com



'Return to School with Wired for Well-Being: Teacher Resource Pack

Written by: Fiona Forman M. Sc.

Design and Layout by: Andrea Heron

Illustrations by: Andrea Heron, et al.

Published in Ireland by: Outside the Box Learning Resources Ltd.

W6W Tougher's Business Park, Newhall, Naas, Co. Kildare, W91 YR82, Ireland.

Tel: 045 409322 (+353 45 409322). Fax: 045 409959 (+353 45 409959).

Email: info@otb.ie

www.otb.ie/W4W

www.fionaformanwellbeing.com

All rights reserved.



© 2020 Outside The Box Learning Resources Ltd.

Printed in Republic of Ireland.

ISBN: 978-1-913225-52-0

Introduction for Teachers

This practical teacher well-being resource pack from **Outside the Box Learning Resources** was created for second level teachers to help their students process and express their emotions and experiences as they return to school after the school closures caused by Covid-19. It can be used in the first weeks back to school and is suitable for First and Second Year students. The activities are based on the **Wired for Well-Being** programme, a new SPHE programme for Junior Cycle, and are written by its author, Fiona Forman. The activities are stand-alone and can be used whether or not **Wired for Well-Being** is in use in the school. For more information please visit www.otb.ie/Return-to-School

Many students will have had challenging experiences and may be dealing with strong emotions such as worry, anger, fear, sadness and grief. Prioritising well-being will be more important than ever and students will need to feel a sense of safety, connection and belonging before they will be in a position to learn. Helping students to feel calm, relaxed and supported, and providing opportunities to boost and amplify

positivity will help to nurture their well-being and build resilience. We all have a natural capacity for resilience, and most students will recover and adapt over time, with some needing more support in this process than others.

Most of the activities provide an opportunity for students to express themselves either in writing or through talk and discussion. This expression allows students the opportunity to be heard, and for their experiences to be validated and empathised with. This is part of the process of recovering and adapting to new challenges.

Although schools and teachers can't undo many of the negative effects and experiences that students may have experienced, they can provide support, empathy and hope to students, to help them to move forward with a sense of hope and positivity.

Students' sense of self-efficacy also needs to be nurtured, so that they feel strong and confident in their own ability to cope with problems and challenges.

The well-being activities are based on the following 5 messages:

1. **Your story matters.**
2. **Put your well-being first!**
3. **It's OK not to feel OK.**
4. **Don't just go through it, grow through it!**
5. **Look back, but move forward.**

Through these messages, students get the opportunity to express themselves, to be heard, to focus on the positives and to offer support to each other.

The activities are underpinned by the DES Guidelines:

Supporting the Well-Being of School Communities as schools re-open: Guidance for Schools (2020)

www.otb.ie/DES-Schools-Reopening-Wellbeing-Guidance

and also the guidance document from the *Psychological Society of Ireland*:

The Relaunch: Back to School After Covid-19 Restrictions (2020)

www.otb.ie/PSI-Relaunch

The following specific principles (*Hobfoll et al., 2007*) that support psychological recovery after serious challenges are outlined in these documents:

1. **A sense of security**
2. **A sense of calm**
3. **A sense of self-efficacy**
4. **Social connectedness**
5. **Promoting hope**

SCRIPT FOR BODY AND MIND CHECK-IN

Teachers may wish to use this short body and mind check in before each lesson

Let's begin the lesson with a body and mind check-in to help us to become relaxed and focused.

Sit up straight in your chair, with your feet firmly on the ground and your hands resting on your lap. Gently close your eyes. Become aware now of your breathing. Don't try to change it, just keep your awareness on it for a moment. Notice the air going in and out of your nostrils and your tummy gently rising and falling (pause for a moment).

Now check in with your body. Are you holding tension anywhere in your body? Gently let your shoulders drop and become heavy and relaxed. See if you can spread this warm feeling of relaxation to your arms and hands..... now to your stomach.....now down to your legs....and finally down to your feet. Spend a moment connecting to your body and allowing it to relax and recover. We spend so much time rushing around, it's nice to give our bodies a chance to release any stress and just be as we are.

Now let's check in with our minds. Spend a moment just observing your thoughts. Is your mind very busy? How are you feeling? Give yourself a moment to let your mind settle now. Imagine all of your thoughts and feelings settling gently now, just like the snow settling at the bottom of a snow globe. Allow your mind to become clear and your body to become more relaxed (pause for a moment).

Now, gently open your eyes and stretch your arms above your head. We're ready to begin our lesson.



PART 1: TEACHER NOTES

Teacher Notes: Message 1: Your Story Matters

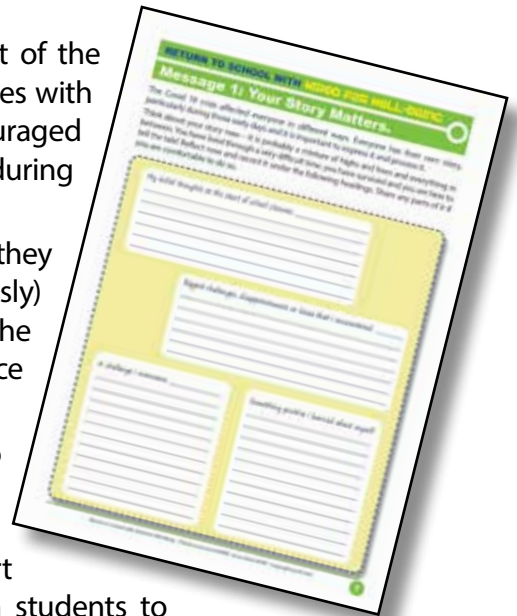
This activity gives students the opportunity to express their experiences since the beginning of school closures. Giving students this opportunity to reflect, process and express themselves is very important and allows them to feel heard and supported.

The writing prompts can be read out and discussed at the start of the lesson. Some students may wish to share some of their experiences with the class while others may choose not to. Students should be encouraged to share ideas about what helped them to feel positive and strong during this time so that others can try these suggestions.

As a follow up, students could write down any concerns and worries they have about coming back to school on a piece of paper (anonymously) and place them in a 'Class Advice' box. Teachers could read out the concerns over a number of lessons, and the class could offer advice or suggestions on how to deal with them.

Students could also be encouraged to write a confidential letter to the teacher expressing their experiences during school closures that they would like known. This could be called 'Sharing My Covid-19 Story' and teachers can then offer additional support as required. Even empathizing and having a private word with students to acknowledge their experiences and to offer support could be very beneficial.

Students could also choose some quotes that motivate and inspire them to keep going and create posters of them. **Refer to photocopyable pupil pages 7 and 8.**



Teacher Notes: Message 2: Put Your Well-being first!

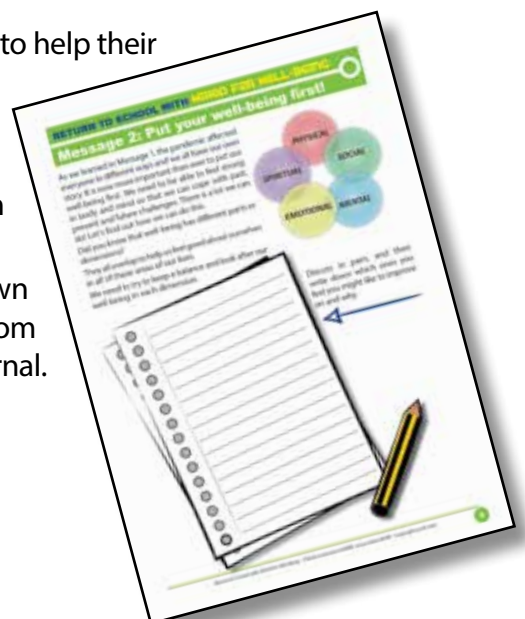
This activity introduces students to the 5 dimensions of well-being – **social, physical, mental, emotional** and **spiritual**. Prior to sharing the worksheet, discuss with students what their understanding of well-being is. They could brainstorm words in pairs.

Discuss why well-being is so important and things they already do to help their well-being.

As a follow up, ask students to create a poster display of the 5 dimensions. They can then use sticky notes around each one to show ideas for things they do to nurture their well-being in each one.

Encourage students to do at least one thing daily for their own well-being – preferably more, and to try to get a balance from each dimension. They might record these in a well-being journal.

Refer to photocopyable pupil pages 9 and 10.





PART 1: TEACHER NOTES

Teacher Notes: Message 3: It's OK not to feel OK.

This activity reminds students that all feelings are OK. They are encouraged to name the different feelings they felt, and still feel, during the current crisis.

They then discuss constructive ways to process and express their strong feelings and they are given 3 steps to help them deal with strong feelings as follows:

1. Name it to tame it!
2. Allow it.
3. Express it.

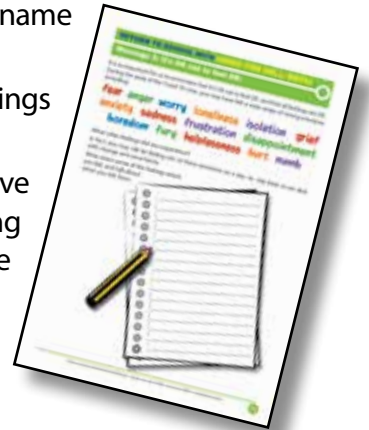
Suggestions are offered for constructive ways to express strong emotions, including talking to others, physical activity, creative activities, journaling, mindfulness etc.

Students could also create posters based on this message and include ways to

express emotions on them.

As a follow-up, consider setting up some type of daily 'check-in' system for students and provide a support system to help them to regulate strong emotions which may arise. This could involve a 'safe-space', a movement break, a confidential counselling session or any other available support.

Refer to photocopiable pupil pages 11 and 12.



Teacher Notes: Message 4: Don't just go through it, grow through it!

This activity encourages students to think of any ways in which they have grown throughout the crisis. With the right support, the opportunity for Post-Traumatic Growth is possible after challenging events and this often involves looking to find what can be learned from the experience and how it may offer a new sense of perspective in terms what is really important in life. People sometimes discover inner strengths and resources that they never realised they had.

The students discuss this idea and are offered vocabulary based on the Character Strengths of Positive Psychology, including perseverance, creativity, gratitude, leadership, teamwork, humour, bravery, kindness, self-control, optimism, perspective, curiosity, love and forgiveness (Seligman & Peterson, 2004).

As a follow up, students could do projects or short essays on individuals who inspired them during the crisis. They could also write a short piece on how the crisis changed them in positive ways.

Refer to photocopiable pupil pages 13 and 14.

Teacher Notes: Message 5: Look back, but move forward.

This activity encourages students to focus on moving forward with hope and optimism. They set 2 goals for themselves (using the SMART framework) and also devise a personalised well-being plan.

Refer to photocopiable pupil pages 15 and 16.



RETURN TO SCHOOL WITH **WIRED FOR WELL-BEING**

PART 2: **Student Booklet**



Name: _____



Introduction

Welcome back to school – we have all had a very challenging time over the last few months due to Covid-19. It is really important now to focus on your well-being as you have probably had a lot of ups and downs and mixed emotions.


These well-being activities are designed to help you to understand and strengthen your well-being so that you feel good about yourself in mind and body and strong enough to deal with past, present and future challenges. They are based on the **Wired for Well-Being** programme, however they are stand-alone, so you can use them whether or not you are completing the programme in your school.

There are 5 well-being messages in it for you to explore:

1. **Your story matters.**
2. **Put your well-being first!**
3. **It's OK not to feel OK.**
4. **Don't just go through it, grow through it!**
5. **Look back, but move forward.**

Reflect:

What does well-being mean to you? Is it something you think about much? How has it been affected by Covid-19?



Well-being
is really all
about feeling
good about ourselves
and as **strong** as possible
in our **minds and bodies.**

It's about
connecting to others
and understanding
that we have a
lot to offer to
the **wider world!**



Message 1: Your Story Matters.

The Covid-19 crisis affected everyone in different ways. Everyone has their own story, particularly during those early days and it is important to express it and process it.

Think about your story now – it is probably a mixture of highs and lows and everything in between. You are living through a very difficult time, you have survived and you are here to tell the tale! Reflect now and record it under the following headings. Share any parts of it if you are comfortable to do so.

My initial thoughts at the start of school closures: _____

Biggest challenges, disappointments or losses that I encountered: _____

A challenge I overcame: _____

Something positive I learned about myself:



Message 1: Your Story Matters.

Any other positives that came from the crisis: _____

What I find hardest to deal with in the 'new normal'? _____

Worries or concerns I have about coming back to school: _____

What helped me to feel strong and positive during this time? _____

Any other important parts of your story? _____

So far you've survived 100 percent of your worst days. You're doing great.

-Unknown



Message 2: Put your well-being first!

As we learned in Message 1, the pandemic affected everyone in different ways and we all have our own story. It is now more important than ever to put our well-being first. We need to be able to feel strong in body and mind so that we can cope with past, present and future challenges. There is a lot we can do! Let's find out how we can do this.

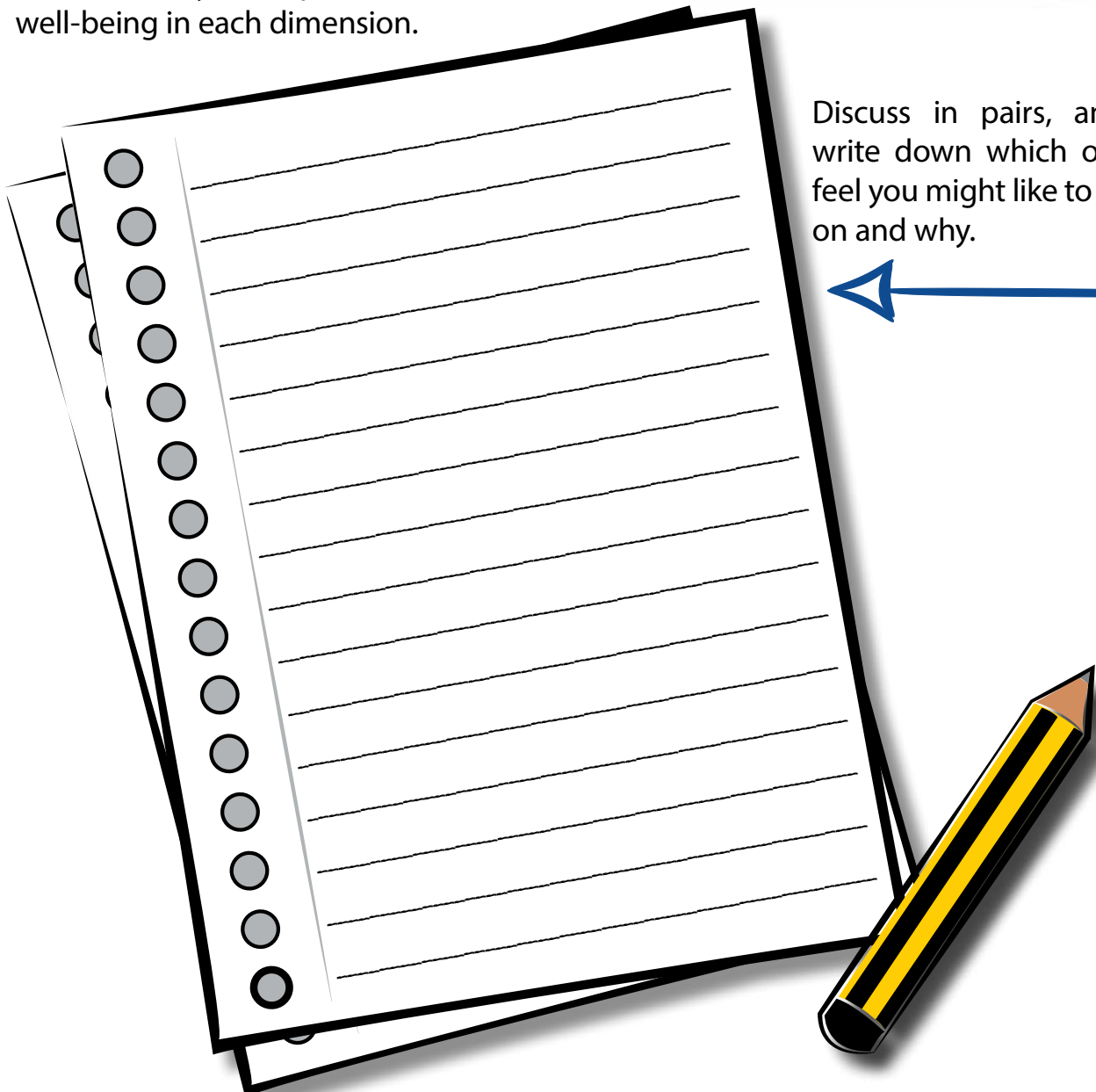
Did you know that well-being has different parts or dimensions?

They all overlap to help us feel good about ourselves in all of these areas of our lives.

We need to try to keep a balance and look after our well-being in each dimension.



Discuss in pairs, and then write down which ones you feel you might like to improve on and why.





RETURN TO SCHOOL WITH WIRED FOR WELL-BEING

Message 2: Put your well-being first!

Think now about each part and write about the different things you already do to help your well-being. Pick some new ideas too and do at least one a day from now on!

For each dimension, write down some of the things you're already doing to help your well-being. Many of them overlap across different dimensions too!

PHYSICAL	MENTAL	EMOTIONAL	SOCIAL	SPIRITUAL

Then, share some ideas (in pairs or with the class) and choose some new activities to try from your classmates' ideas!

PHYSICAL	MENTAL	EMOTIONAL	SOCIAL	SPIRITUAL

PHYSICAL	MENTAL	EMOTIONAL	SOCIAL	SPIRITUAL
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 minutes of exercise daily (at least) • Healthy food • Stay hydrated • 9 hours of sleep 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meditate • Challenge inaccurate thoughts • Ask for help when I need it • Helpful Self-Talk • Coping skills • Be creative • Set goals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meditate • Accept my emotions • Listen to music • Keep a journal • Relaxation techniques • Have fun! • Spend time on my hobbies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make time for friends • Make time for family • Be a good listener • Support friends and family 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Spend time in nature • Volunteer • Spread kindness • Respect myself, others and the planet • Use my talents to help others



Message 3: It's OK not to feel OK.

It is so important for us to remember that it's OK not to feel OK, and that all feelings are OK. During the peak of the Covid-19 crisis, you may have felt a wide range of strong emotions including:

fear **anger** **worry** **loneliness** **isolation** **grief**
anxiety **sadness** **frustration** **disappointment**
boredom **fury** **helplessness** **hurt** **numb**

What other feelings did you experience?

In fact, you may still be feeling lots of these emotions on a day-to-day basis as we deal with change and uncertainty.

Write down some of the feelings which you felt and talk about when you felt them.





All feelings are OK, but it's very important to deal with them in a constructive way that helps our well-being, rather than a destructive way that might make things even more difficult for us.

Here are 3 steps to deal with strong feelings in a constructive way:



Name it to tame it.

By recognizing and naming our emotions, we can actually turn down the intensity of it straight away. So, it is useful to tune in and say 'I'm feeling *worried / angry / sad / disappointed / overwhelmed / stressed* right now.'



Allow it.

When we fight, suppress, avoid or bottle up our emotions, it can actually make them more intense. After you have named your emotion, see if you can allow yourself to feel it – say to yourself '*It's OK to feel worried. I can cope with feeling worried.*'

Take some deep breaths or try **444 breathing** – breathe in for 4, hold for 4 and breathe out for 4. Try not to overthink why you feel this way or get sucked into negative spirals of thought about why something has happened. Focus on your body and breathe until you feel yourself getting calmer.



Express it

As soon as you feel a little calmer, choose a constructive way to express the emotion – this helps it to be released so you don't get stuck in it. Helpful ways to express our emotions include:

- talking to someone*
- doing some physical exercise*
- doing a creative activity*
- deep breathing*
- mindfulness*
- meditation*
- journaling*
- listening to music*
- crying*

Write down some constructive ways to express your strong emotions here. Remember to use them from now on.



Message 4: Don't just go through it, grow through it!

At challenging times in our lives, we sometimes get the opportunity to grow. What does this mean? It is a chance to dig deep, to find strengths and positive qualities in ourselves that we didn't know existed. Sometimes we get a better sense of perspective, which means we start to realise what is really important in life – our families, our friends, our health. So instead of just going through the challenge, we can grow into the best version of ourselves!

Reflect now on how you have grown as a person throughout the pandemic.

Strengths I discovered in myself:

Consider the following strengths:

perseverance,
creativity, gratitude,
leadership, teamwork,
humour, bravery,
kindness, optimism,
self-control,
perspective,
curiosity, love,
forgiveness

An example of when I showed one of these strengths:

Something that I thought was important, but no longer think of as important:



Message 4: Don't just go through it, grow through it!

Something I now realise is really important:

Horizontal lines for writing

A person (famous or not) who inspired me during the pandemic:

Horizontal lines for writing

Other ways I feel I have grown as a person:

Horizontal lines for writing

Positive changes in the world / society as a result:

Horizontal lines for writing



What do you think this quote means?





Message 5: Look back, but move forward

So much has happened over the last few months and it takes time to process it all and get used to the new normal. We have to give ourselves time. Make sure that you are still doing your well-being activities every day to help yourself to feel strong and confident.

It might be helpful to make a memory box of those first few months Covid-19 – after all, we are living through history!

We can look back at this time whenever we need to, but of course we also have to move forward with our lives too. Setting some goals for how you might like to move forward is a good way to start this process!

Set 2 goals for yourself now – one to do with school and one to do with another aspect of your life. Make sure they are SMART goals!



Brainstorm ways to help you to achieve your goals. Think of any obstacles that might get in your way and how you will deal with these obstacles. Remember how you will feel when you have achieved these goals!

USEFUL LINKS:

[*www.otb.ie/Return-to-School*](http://www.otb.ie/Return-to-School)

[*www.otb.ie/DES-Schools-Reopening-Wellbeing-Guidance*](http://www.otb.ie/DES-Schools-Reopening-Wellbeing-Guidance)

[*www.otb.ie/PSI-Relaunch*](http://www.otb.ie/PSI-Relaunch)

[*www.otb.ie/Irish-Times-School-Return*](http://www.otb.ie/Irish-Times-School-Return)

[*www.otb.ie/INTO-Coronavirus-Support-Hub*](http://www.otb.ie/INTO-Coronavirus-Support-Hub)

[*www.otb.ie/ASTI-School-Reopening*](http://www.otb.ie/ASTI-School-Reopening)

[*www.otb.ie/IPPN-School-Reopening*](http://www.otb.ie/IPPN-School-Reopening)





www.otb.ie/W4W

www.otb.ie/Return-to-School

©2020 Outside The Box Learning Resources Ltd.

