PEER REVIEW HISTORY

BMJ Paediatrics Open publishes all reviews undertaken for accepted manuscripts. Reviewers are asked to complete a checklist review form and are provided with free text boxes to elaborate on their assessment. These free text comments are reproduced below.

ARTICLE DETAILS

TITLE (PROVISIONAL)	A scoping exercise to develop a storybook to support children's education during the COVID-19 pandemic
AUTHORS	Syeda, Rowshonara Hann, Magda Allison, Rosalie Demirjian, Alicia

VERSION 1 – REVIEW

REVIEWER	Reviewer name: Dr. Louise Dalton Institution and Country: Not applicable Competing interests: None
REVIEW RETURNED	12-Nov-2020

GENERAL COMMENTS	The study aimed to identify practical ways to support younger children returning to school, but also includes girlguiding/scout groups in the suggestions of who might be interested in the results. The latter are for older children and there is a general lack of clarity about the age of children being targeted by the results of this work. The manuscript could be strengthened by specific consideration of the evolution of children's understanding of illness and disease transmission. Furthermore, at different ages there may be specific developmental challenges (e.g. in adolescence, where identification with peer is particularly powerful) which need be acknowledged and addressed in age-appropriate resources. The manuscript does not cite the study within the wider context of psychological literature about talking with children about life changing events such as the pandemic. Consideration of the wider psychological context would strengthen this paper. Discussion: I would agree that phrasing rules as Dos rather than Don'ts is helpful, but I am unclear about evidence for the statement suggesting 'avoiding negative reinforcement and penalties if rules are forgotten may adversely affect accepting changes to rules' (line 37-39). Negative reinforcement is conceptually different to a punishment (penalty). Furthermore, rules can be successfully enforced through punishment (although alternative approaches may be more desirable, e.g. to minimise children's anxiety about breaking rules by accident). The section on Implications for policymakers (P11, line 42- P12, line 8) emphasises the importance of clear, consistent messaging using simple language. It is difficult to interpret this 'implication' given the lack of information about who provided the data for the study (i.e. who the participants were; e.g. if the participants were SENCOs, it is rather circular to feedback their themes as implications for SENCOs). Furthermore, I do not think that this would be seen as novel information to any of the groups for whom this implication is signposted. The paper concludes with reference to the e-bug resource booklet that was produced for schools. Given that this has now been distributed, I suggest that the authors consider re-submitting the paper with evaluation data from parents, teachers and children regarding the e-bug resource.

REVIEWER	Reviewer name: Dr. Luis Rajmil
	Institution and Country: Homer 22 1rst 1,Barcelona, 08023, Spain
	Competing interests: None
REVIEW RETURNED	18-Nov-2020

GENERAL COMMENTS	The study presents a very important aspect, such as safety when returning to schools. The authors can take into account the following aspects to improve the work:
	1) Individual measures are important but must be contextualized: group social measures, investment in improvements in the habitability of schools, movement of individuals, classroom ventilation, entry and exit measures, Facilitate attendance to schools in disadvantaged families, etc.
	2) Characteristics of the participants may have influenced the results. At least in my opinion it sholud be mentioned that the risk in almost all places show a gradient according to the socioeconomic level
	3) In short, another important thing is to try not to stigmatize and blame individuals and especially minors

VERSION 1 – AUTHOR RESPONSE

Dear Editor,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to submit a revised draft of my manuscript Developing a resource to support children returning to school during the COVID-19 pandemic, now titled A scoping exercise to develop a resource and support children's education during the COVID-19 pandemic to BMJ Paediatrics Open.

We appreciate the time and effort that you and the reviewers have dedicated to providing your valuable feedback on my manuscript. We are grateful to the reviewers for their insightful comments on my paper. We have been able to incorporate changes to reflect most of the suggestions provided by the reviewers. We have highlighted the changes within the manuscript. Here is a point-by-point response to the reviewers' comments and concerns.
Reviewer 1:
Comment 1: The study aimed to identify practical ways to support younger children returning to school, but also includes girlguiding/scout groups in the suggestions of who might be interested in the results. The latter are for older children and there is a general lack of clarity about the age of children being targeted by the results of this work. The manuscript could be strengthened by specific consideration of the evolution of children's understanding of illness and disease transmission. Furthermore, at different ages there may be specific developmental challenges (e.g. in adolescence, where identification with peer is particularly powerful) which need be acknowledged and addressed in age-appropriate resources.

Response: Thank you for identifying possible lack of clarity, we agree with this comment. We have now specified that the focus of this scoping exercise is on primary aged children throughout; while reference is still made to community groups such as Girlguiding / Scouts groups we have indicated this specifically related to primary-aged children.

Comment 2: The manuscript does not cite the study within the wider context of psychological literature about talking with children about life changing events such as the pandemic. Consideration of the wider psychological context would strengthen this paper.

Response: We have acknowledged this and have cited wider literature on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on children's mental health.

Comment 3: Discussion: I would agree that phrasing rules as Dos rather than Don'ts is helpful, but I am unclear about evidence for the statement suggesting 'avoiding negative reinforcement and penalties if

rules are forgotten may adversely affect accepting changes to rules' (line 37-39). Negative reinforcement is conceptually different to a punishment (penalty). Furthermore, rules can be successfully enforced through punishment (although alternative approaches may be more desirable, e.g. to minimise children's anxiety about breaking rules by accident).

Response: We have clarified and elaborated on this point, anxiety among children is cited as a reason to avoid negative reinforcement or penalty.

Comment 4: The section on Implications for policymakers (P11, line 42- P12, line 8) emphasises the importance of clear, consistent messaging using simple language. It is difficult to interpret this 'implication' given the lack of information about who provided the data for the study (i.e. who the participants were; e.g. if the participants were SENCOs, it is rather circular to feedback their themes as implications for SENCOs). Furthermore, I do not think that this would be seen as novel information to any of the groups for whom this implication is signposted.

Response: We have included participant breakdown to provide clarity on the data source. We feel that the importance of clear, consistent messaging using simple language is a key outcome from the scoping exercise and worthy of inclusion.

Comment 5: The paper concludes with reference to the e-bug resource booklet that was produced for schools. Given that this has now been distributed, I suggest that the authors consider re-submitting the paper with evaluation data from parents, teachers and children regarding the e-bug resource.

Response: Agreed. This data has now been included.

Reviewer 2:
The study presents a very important aspect, such as safety when returning to schools. The authors can take into account the following aspects to improve the work:
Comment 1: Individual measures are important but must be contextualized: group social measures, investment in improvements in the habitability of schools, movement of individuals, classroom ventilation, entry and exit measures, Facilitate attendance to schools in disadvantaged families, etc.

Response: Reference to classroom ventilation, movement of students and entry and exist measures have been elaborated within 'Implication for parents / carers and teachers: Changes to school environment'. However, reference to investment in improvements in the habitability of schools and attendance to school in disadvantaged families seems to be outside of the scope of this paper.

Comment 2: Characteristics of the participants may have influenced the results. At least in my opinion it should be mentioned that the risk in almost all places show a gradient according to the socioeconomic level

Response: We have included participant breakdown to provide clarity on the data source, although unfortunately in-depth data on socioeconomic background or locality of participants could not be accessed. The reasons for this are primarily due to the rapid nature of the scoping exercise; future projects could certainly look to improve data collection with the purpose of making data more representative.

Comment 3: In short, another important thing is to try not to stigmatize and blame individuals and especially minors.
Response: This has been included alongside avoiding negative reinforcement or penalties for mistakes in behaviour.

Associate Editor
Comments to the Author: Reviewer 1 has made some important suggestions that need reflecting and responding to. There are sufficient concerns about description of the methods- including the number of children who participated in the study, how representative they are and their ages . Given that the research targeted mainly professionals within known networks - ie adults, working with children, perhaps authors could state that. In the interests of providing a quick resource convenience sampling is

justifiable, in my opinion.

Response: The methods have been clarified and now include participant breakdown; limitations of rapid convenience sampling has been elaborated on.

Editor in Chief
The reviewers had divergent opinions about the merit of your paper. We are prepared to consider a major revision, if you can address some of the concerns raised.
Comment 1: Title add "a scoping exercise"
Response: Actioned
Comment 2: Abstract separate Results from Recommendations.
Response: Actioned
Comment 3: Background. The 1st paragraph would benefit from references.
Response: Actioned
Comment 4: Methods you need to add numbers about the composition of the 50 people invited to participate.
Response: Actioned
Comment 5: Results you need to add numbers about the composition of the 31 people who responded. One table could cover both sets of numbers.
Response: Actioned
Comment 6: Discussion add the limitations of your study in terms of the number and composition of the responders
Response: Actioned

In addition to the above comments, we have made minor corrections to the wording and grammar of the paper throughout. We look forward to hearing from you in due time regarding our submission and to respond to any further questions and comments you may have.
Sincerely,
Magdalena Hann