

Paediatric Inflammatory Multisystem Disease: information for school staff supporting their Pupils

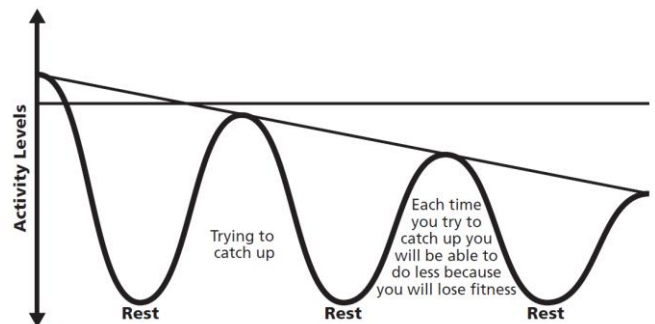
Paediatric Inflammatory Multisystem Syndrome (PIMS) is a new condition that happens weeks after someone has had the virus that causes coronavirus (COVID-19). It causes inflammation (swelling) throughout the body. This often requires hospitalisation and sometime medicines to ‘re-set’ the immune system. Although most children and young people who develop COVID-19 have no symptoms or very mild ones, we now know that a small number develop PIMS. These are mostly young people in adolescence, but children can get PIMS too. As PIMS is a new condition, we are learning about it all the time. This information sheet from Great Ormond Street Hospital (GOSH) explains how everyone at school can support pupils who have PIMS.

Going back to school after PIMS

Pupils returning to school after PIMS may continue to experience symptoms such as muscle weakness, general fatigue or cognitive fatigue (‘brain fog’). As a result their energy supply is lessened, and the demands of daily life such as school work, exercise, or family time may exceed their energy supply. We typically see one of two energy patterns emerging:

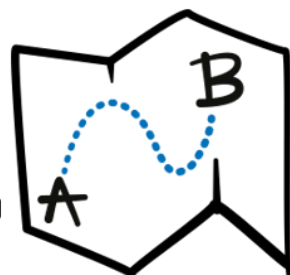
Boom and bust: This pattern involves fluctuating cycles of over activity and under activity. It can happen within a day or within a week.

Stuck in the mud: In this pattern the pupil reduces their activity to accommodate their reduced energy levels.



Supporting your pupil with pacing

- Consider a phased return to school, incrementally increasing activity to match energy levels.
- Prioritise a return to core educational subjects.
- Pacing is a strategy to manage energy levels and avoid a boom/bust cycle. It involves alternating periods of activity with rest breaks before the onset of significant fatigue.



- For primary school pupils, a 10-15-minute rest break can be incorporated in the classroom, for example, a movement break, time out in a cosy library corner.
- Secondary school pupils may require access to a quiet room which they can use for a break between classes.
- Activities have different physical, cognitive, emotional and social demands. Alternate cognitive activities such as school work with a social/physical activity such as art or a movement break.
- Physiotherapy Exercise Programme: Your pupil has been provided with a programme which is essential to increase their muscle strength. If possible this programme could be incorporated at school.
- A gradual return to physical activity such as PE is important but your pupil will need to pace their return to PE. They should feel safe to speak up if they need a rest or a modification of the activity.
- Good sitting posture is important. It is helpful to assess studying options in order to minimise pain and fatigue, especially in pupils' neck and back
- Schedule weekly reviews of your pupil's progress, aiming to increase activity levels and timetable.

Pupils often have anxiety about the amount of work that they have missed and worry about how they will catch up and keep up. In order to ensure pupil is not overwhelmed with the amount of work, a flexible teaching programme may be required with appropriate adaptations assessed by teachers.

Ensure your school SEdNCo has a record of the pupil's medical needs and the agreed support plan.

Further information and support

Further information on PIMS, how it is treated, and frequently asked questions can be found on the GOSH website at www.gosh.nhs.uk/conditions-and-treatments/conditions-we-treat/paediatric-inflammatory-multisystem-syndrome-pims/

