

TACKLING THE SUMMER LEARNING SLIDE WHILST BOOSTING WELLBEING

STRATEGIES FOR TEACHERS AND PARENTS TO SUPPORT LEARNING OVER THE SUMMER WITHOUT BEING TIED TO A DESK



“Summer is a time to socialise, play, read, and engage with the environment through growing and planting, sitting and contemplating. Make the most of it, because these are also opportunities for you and your children to learn and grow.”

Why have we created the guide for Tackling Summer Learning Slide Whilst Boosting Wellbeing?

The long summer holidays are a cherished time for children and parents. It's a welcome break from the daily routine of school and school runs, a chance to spend most of the day playing outside, and a time to explore new interests. However, this extended break from the classroom often leads to what teachers call "summer learning slide or learning loss," where children forget some of what they learned during the school year. Many students will lose up to one month of learning during the summer. Understanding why this happens and finding ways to minimise the loss without turning the summer into a mini-school session is essential for maintaining a healthy balance between learning and relaxation.

For teachers, it is tricky as they want to try and have pupils complete some learning going over the long break, but they are also acutely aware that many children are already struggling with mental health, so asking parents to do learning at home isn't the way forward. But there is a better way - which is a win-win for all. As a teacher, mother and head of mental health and wellbeing at Lumii.me my goal is to share tools to help parents and teachers support childhood wellbeing. We've developed this. FREE download for teachers and parents to share a holistic approach to tackling the summer learning slide whilst also boosting wellbeing. We hope you find it helpful.

Laura Tristram

Mental health and wellbeing lead at [Lumii.me](https://lumii.me)



Introduction

Andrew Cowley, Former Deputy Headteacher, Author and Co-founder of Healthy Toolkit:

As a former deputy headteacher in London, I am deeply passionate about staff wellbeing in schools. I co-founded Healthy Toolkit, which is dedicated to encouraging and advancing wellbeing. This guide is great for giving practical ways to support parents, teachers, and pupils in promoting a holistic approach to learning over the summer break.

Learning doesn't require being restricted to a table. The opportunity to be outside allows for interaction, observation, independence, and reflection, all of which enhance and enrich the learning process. Healthy learners are happy learners, and the wellbeing boost from using the environment has long-term benefits. The period after tests isn't a wasted opportunity but a valued one.

But we need to get the balance right. Mental health is an issue, and learning should be designed to improve well-being over the summer break.

SUMMER LEARNING SLIDE

**2.6 months Maths
2 months reading**

Pupils may lose 2.6 months of maths skills and 2 months of reading skills over the summer ([Oxford Learning](https://www.oxfordlearning.com)).

Young people in the UK have higher mental health need than ever.

**10% of children and young people (aged 5 to 16 years) have a clinically diagnosable mental problem.
Balance in any learning is a must.**

"Without the distraction of screens and scheduled activities, boredom can be an excellent opportunity for growth, rather than being seen as the enemy. It can pave the way for children to learn how to entertain themselves and find meaningful ways to engage their minds."

Ben Hodgson

Leaders' thoughts ...

The great outdoors presents boundless opportunities for young children, serving as a sanctuary for relaxation, inspiration, and imaginative exploration. It is a realm where children can design, create, and discover with limitless possibilities.

Teaching in nature often proves more engaging than within the confines of a traditional classroom. Every moment spent barefoot, climbing trees, making mud pies, spotting clouds, splashing in puddles, calling to birds, foraging in the wild, gazing at stars, chasing fireflies, building dens, paddling in streams, and hunting for rocks is invaluable. For a child, the wonders of the world are countless—far more than just seven. As they observe, reflect on, document, and share the patterns and rhythms of nature, they engage in a process that enhances scientific and ecological understanding, fosters problem-solving skills, and nurtures creativity. They are learning.

“When I think of boredom in children, I think of Dan Siegel's concept of 'Name it to tame it.' An idea that pulls on children's ability to identify and articulate their emotions. So, with boredom, by identifying it, it can allow them space to think independently and search for their own creative solutions.” Ben Hodgson

With many thanks to our brilliant contributors:

- Rachel Jones, Headteacher
- Laura Tristram, Teacher, mother and cofounder of Lumii.me
- Andrew Cowley - Wellbeing in Education, writer, speaker and author
- Ben Hodgson - Author of PagesOfTheMind

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What is the summer learning slide?

The long summer holidays are a cherished time for children and parents. It's a welcome break from the daily routine of school and school runs, a chance to spend most of the day playing outside, and a time to explore new interests. However, this extended break from the classroom often leads to what teachers call "summer learning slide or loss," where children forget some of what they learned during the school year.

Many students will lose up to one month of learning during the summer. Understanding why this happens and finding ways to minimise the loss without turning the summer into a mini-school session is essential for maintaining a healthy balance between learning and relaxation.

Why Does Summer Learning Slide Happen?

Summer learning loss occurs when children take an extended break from structured educational activities. During the school year, children are engaged in continuous learning, but the long summer break disrupts this pattern. Here are a few reasons why learning loss happens:

Lack of Practice: Just like any other skill, academic skills improve with practice. When children don't engage in reading, writing, or math over the summer, they can lose some of the progress they made during the school year.

Memory: Over time, the brain forgets information that isn't regularly used or reinforced. This natural process means that without regular engagement in educational activities, children can forget what they learned.

Resource Disparity: Not all children have access to summer clubs, camps, libraries, or other educational resources during the summer. This gap can lead to more significant learning loss for some children compared to others.

Summer Learning Slide or Loss

Addressing summer learning loss is crucial for several reasons. Children who engage in learning activities over the summer will start the new academic term ahead of their peers. Here's why minimizing learning loss is important:

Academic Performance

Children who experience significant learning loss may start the new school year behind their peers, making it harder for them to catch up and potentially impacting their long-term academic performance.

Self-Esteem and Motivation

Struggling to keep up with classmates can negatively affect a child's self-esteem and motivation. Consistent reinforcement of skills can help maintain confidence and enthusiasm for learning.

Education

Minimising summer learning loss is crucial to helping level the playing field and providing all children with a fair chance to succeed, regardless of their background or access to resources.



Here are some creative ways to learn maths and English without being desk-bound over the holidays:

Meal Planning and Grocery Shopping

Maths: Involve children in creating a meal plan and making a shopping list. They can practice budgeting, calculating costs, and comparing prices. Ask them to estimate the total cost before you check out.

English: Have them write out the meal plan and shopping list, which practices spelling and organization. They can also read recipes and food labels.

Baking and Cooking

Maths: Cooking is a great way to practice fractions, measurements, and conversions. Doubling a recipe or cutting it in half provides practical experience with math concepts.

English: Following a recipe involves reading comprehension and following step-by-step instructions. Encourage them to write their own simple recipes or modify existing ones.

Gardening

Maths: Measuring the space for planting, counting seeds, and tracking plant growth involves math skills. They can also calculate the area of the garden plot.

English: Keeping a gardening journal helps with writing and observation skills. They can document plant growth, weather conditions, and their observations.

Household Budgeting

Maths: Involve children in managing the household budget. They can track expenses, calculate savings, and help plan for future purchases.

English: Have them create and present a monthly financial report. This helps with writing, summarising, and presenting information.

DIY Projects

Maths: Measuring for furniture placement, calculating the amount of paint needed, or even building simple projects can involve geometry and arithmetic.

English: Reading instructions and writing a report on what they did helps with comprehension and communication skills.

Games Night

Maths: Many board games and card games involve counting, strategy, and probability. Games like Monopoly or Yahtzee are excellent for practising math skills in a fun way.

English: Games that require reading instructions, storytelling, or wordplay, like Scrabble or Pictionary, help with language skills.

Cinema Night

Maths: Create a cinema night. Get children to calculate the film time and when the interval should be. Then calculate the cost of the film per person, create tickets and even snack menus and prices.

English: Create posters and tickets for the film night. After the film, have them write a film review to help with language skills.

By integrating learning into everyday activities, children can maintain and even enhance their academic skills during the summer while still enjoying a much-needed break. This balanced approach not only prevents summer learning loss but also nurtures a love for learning in various real-world contexts.



Takeaway Tips for Teachers and Parents for non-desk based holiday learning:

- Meal Planning and Grocery Shopping
- Baking and cooking
- Gardening
- Household budgeting
- DIY Projects
- Games night
- Cinema night

Holidays should be fun so any learning should always prioritise the wellbeing and holistic development of each child.



Sources:

www.mind.org.uk
www.mentalhealth.org
www.lumii.me
Oxford Learning
www.lumii.me

Learning Without Textbooks

While it's essential to keep children's minds active during the summer, it's equally important to ensure they don't feel like they're stuck in school mode. Overloading children with traditional academic work can lead to burnout and negatively impact their mental health. Instead, incorporating learning into everyday activities can provide a more balanced approach.

Conclusion

We must work towards a balanced Approach to Summer Learning. As we embark on the summer months, it's essential to ensure that our children have the opportunity to both recharge and engage in enriching learning experiences. By promoting a balanced approach to summer learning, we can help children retain knowledge, develop essential skills, and cultivate a lifelong love of learning without negatively impacting their mental health.

Laura Tristram, a teacher, mum, and wellbeing and mental health lead at Lumii.me, emphasises the importance of maintaining a healthy balance between learning and relaxation. Understanding the reasons behind summer learning loss and implementing creative, non-desk-based activities can make a significant difference in children's academic progress and overall well-being.

By following these strategies and incorporating learning into everyday activities, parents and teachers can help children stay intellectually stimulated and ready for the new school year, all while enjoying the freedom and fun of the summer holidays.

"Lumii.Me gives closure to children's worries and anxieties so that they can explore them, accept them and then get on with the living day."

Rachel Jones, Headteacher

To find out more about Lumii.me please see the following case study or visit www.lumii.me or email hello@lumii.me

Creating calmer classrooms: Supporting pupil's well-being

Kingsley St John School is a smaller-than-average-sized primary school of 77 pupils ages 5-11 based in Frodsham, Cheshire. The school's motto, 'Love, Learn, Aspire, Achieve', is reflected through the leadership team who work together to ensure that every pupil receives a personalised education and reaches their full potential.

Mental health and well-being in schools

It's well known that pupils throughout the world have seen increased anxiety and mental health challenges in children post-pandemic. Kingsley St John School used conventional methods like counselling and pastoral care to support pupils' mental health needs but recognised the importance of additional support to address any mental health and well-being challenges with some pupils.

As a forward-thinking school, Rachel Jones, Headteacher, explains how they are using AI to help: "As a headteacher, I've seen the increase of mental health issues in schools post-pandemic. With over 25 years of experience in education, I know that early intervention is critical, and after seeing the AI well-being tool Lumii, we embraced this forward-thinking approach and signed up for a pilot of Lumii."

Improving Early Intervention

Lumii is more than just an app; it's a holistic approach to mental health and well-being in schools. Powered by the Large Mental Health Model (LMHM) AI, Lumii Jnr empowers pupils by listening, conversing, providing coping strategies and enabling early intervention to prevent crises. It encourages open dialogue, destigmatises mental health, and offers educators valuable insights, underscoring a commitment to pupil well-being.

Lumii also allows teachers and senior leadership teams to easily track and monitor their pupils' mental well-being and highlights when intervention is needed. Lumii is an innovative digital platform designed to enhance pupil well-being through mindfulness, meditation, and emotional intelligence exercises. Lumii's AI capability has been described as 'game-changing' by the teaching community.

By integrating Lumii into their curriculum and extracurricular activities, schools can empower pupils with their own tools to manage stress, build resilience, and improve overall mental health.



"Lumii has significantly impacted the pupils of Kingsley St John School. For one pupil, the transition from home to school has completely transformed quite quickly."

Key benefits of Lumii

- Immediate intervention and coping strategies
- Reduces the workload for teachers
- Helps to create calmer classrooms
- Instant de-escalation of challenging behaviours
- Improves pupil well-being through pupil empowerment
- In-depth view of well-being highlighting any pupil issues
- The bigger picture of well-being for the class and school

Start the day settled

For the classroom teacher, well-being and mental health challenges can be complex to manage, particularly with increased challenges with home-to-school transition post covid. These can impact the start of the school day, often delaying the start of teaching in some cases. Using Lumii for a few minutes each morning has transformed the start of school into a wholly positive experience through Lumii.

How Lumii helps:

Rachel explains: "Lumii has significantly impacted the pupils of Kingsley St John School. For one pupil, the transition from home to school has completely transformed quite quickly. Lumii's impact has been incredibly positive in a very short timeframe."

"For another pupil, venting during their Lumii sessions meant that the pupil was calmer and more focused during lesson time. Using Lumii means less disruption for the teacher, their class and affords more learning time.

"Lumii is really effective in promoting good models for pupil well-being. Lumii has been a transformative addition to our school community. It provides our pupils with an outlet and immediate intervention that delivers practical strategies to manage their mental health and provide a positive learning environment at their fingertips."

Creating calmer classrooms

Implementing Lumii has resulted in calmer classrooms and improved Kingsley St John School pupil well-being. Teachers have observed a decrease in disruption to the school day as pupils settle more quickly, and there has also been an increase in pupil engagement. Moreover, pupils report feeling more resilient and better equipped to face challenges.

Rachel says, "Pupils settle quickly and are more focused and engaged with their learning since using Lumii, which will only positively impact attainment."

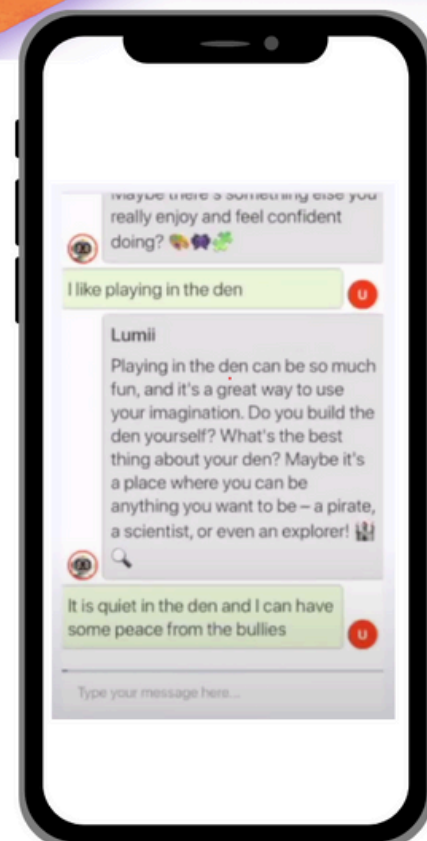
Looking ahead

Kingsley St John School plans to extend the integration of Lumii into their regular curriculum for those pupils who need it. They aim to ensure that all pupils have access to Lumii resources if they want them and will continue to seek feedback to enhance the platform's effectiveness in supporting pupil well-being.

Rachel added, "We plan to run whole-school Lumii sessions a few times a year, as it's great to check in and monitor the mental health and well-being of all our pupils.

"Lumii has been instrumental in our efforts to prioritise pupil well-being at Kingsley St John School. It's heartening to see its positive impact on our pupils, and we're excited about its potential to support their well-being and all-round development further."

"For one pupil, the transition from home to school has completely transformed quite quickly. We went from school refusal and a teacher having to spend 45 minutes trying to settle a very anxious child to, within a few days of using Lumii, a child being excited to come into school and talk to Lumii."



Why Lumii works

- Lumii does not provide counselling; it is an AI app that listens to a child's concerns and offers immediate low-level intervention.
- Lumii then works with the child to deliver a plan where the child will organise to go and see the school, meet with some of the teachers and ask their parents for support.
- Lumii will alert the school Lumii coordinator if there is a safeguarding concern.