

BACK TO SCHOOL TRANSITION AFTER LOCKDOWN

The return to school is imminent now, which may be triggering a mixture of emotions in your household, ranging from anxiety or worry to anger or sadness.

Maybe you are wondering how your child or young person is going to adapt and get back into the swing of things as they have been out of routine for so long.

We have put together some ideas to help your child to ease back more comfortably into the school setting.

Listen and acknowledge worries:

Leading up to the return to school, try to listen to your child and acknowledge their worries, letting them know you understand and are there for them. It is very powerful for children and young people to be heard, without us needing to 'fix' the problem or trying to change the way they feel. If they find talking hard, they might like to express their feelings in another way, for example through drawing, writing or play.

Bring back some routine:

As children have been out of school for so long, you may have found they are out of their usual routines, for example they may be going to bed later and getting up later than they used to. So perhaps start to bring some routine back by slowly adjusting bedtimes and getting up time in the morning. It might be useful to acknowledge with your child how this might feel frustrating but also explaining why you are doing it and how it will be helpful when they return to school, as it will help their body to adapt.

Re-connect with friends:

It will help to encourage your child to re-connect with their friends, perhaps via a video link or a socially distanced meeting at the park. This may help to ease the anxiety of returning to school and seeing their friends.

Also, perhaps try to include some fun activities leading up to the school return to help them focus on other things and not overthink their return to school, for example a walk in the woods or a play at the park or playing a game together.

Revisit school routines:

Provide your child with as much information about their new routine and school day as you can so they feel more prepared when they return. Go through any routines that the school has informed you of, for example hand washing or specific bubbles that might have been put in place. With younger children it may be helpful to visualise how the day will look, perhaps drawing some pictures together or with older children, creating a timetable together.

On the day:

On the morning of the return to school, make it as stress free as you can. Perhaps encourage your child to get their school things ready the night before and wake up with plenty of time to get ready. Maybe they could choose their favourite breakfast and they could walk in with you or with a friend. If your child is particularly anxious about leaving you, perhaps they could take something small of yours into school with them that might reassure them or alternatively you could put a little note in their lunchbox, so they know that you are thinking of them.

Find time for yourself:

Be aware of your own stress and anxiety regarding your child's return to school as your child will pick up on this. Make sure that you are looking after yourself too, and include time to help you to de-stress, for example finding time for a nice soak in a bubble bath or watching a favourite movie.

Resources:

You may like to use our **School Memories** resource so your child can talk about or draw their favourite memories of school life before lockdown.

Other concerns:

If you are concerned that your child is overly anxious about the return to school and you are unable to calm their worries, please talk to your child's school.