

Parent's Newsletter

Back to school

We know some of our young people will be eager to get back to school to see their friends and teachers, however some children may be a little apprehensive or worried, which is perfectly normal given the circumstances.

For ideas on how you can work with school to support your young people, take a look at the worksheet from the Royal College of Occupational Therapists on the next page.



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Top tips
worksheet



If you are worried about your child or they would like some further support over the school holidays then you can chat with our team through our FREE eClinics app.

Discuss any mental health related issues using instant messaging on your mobile or tablet. Download our FREE app on Google and Apple app stores.



Scan our QR code for a
FREE direct download:



**WITH
ME
MIND**

Where to get further help and advice

CAMHS: <http://camhs.rdash.nhs.uk>

NHS: <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/>

With Me In Mind website: <http://www.withmeinmind.co.uk/>

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Preparing your child for returning to school

With plans being made to reopen schools, as a parent or teacher you may feel concerned about your child returning to school, especially if they find change difficult to handle.

Here are some things that you can do to help prepare your child and to gain a sense of control over the uncertainties.

- 1 Think about your child's individual needs:** each young person has their own personality, strengths and requirements so will need different preparation and support.
- 2 Find out your child's worries:** are they worried about catching the virus or family members getting sick? Once you know their concerns, you can provide them with information and reassurance to help them feel safe at school.
- 3 Share with teachers and support staff your family's lockdown experience,** as this will affect how your child will feel about returning to school. For some families, just getting through each day has been the priority, while others will have lost someone close to them. This will help school staff to provide the support your child needs.
- 4 Work together** with your child's teacher and other professionals to agree an individual 'return to school' plan. It will help to think about what time your child will start and finish school, who will meet them and where they'll spend breaktime. You can add more details as they become known.
- 5 Use your child's preferred communication method.** Your child could help write their own 'return to school' plan. Other children may find symbols, photos or videos more helpful. Social stories which use short descriptions of a situation or activity can help children understand and cope with changes.
- 6 Think about what will be the same** when your child returns to school, such as their teachers and uniform. Focusing on this first will be reassuring and help reduce their anxiety.
- 7 Find out how the school environment will be different,** such as the position of desks in classrooms. School staff may be able to provide photos or videos so your child can see what school will look like. Remember, certain changes may benefit your child, for example fewer children in the playground may reduce the risk of sensory overload.
- 8 Consider how changes to school routines and activities will affect your child:** for example, there could be new rules about entering and moving around school. Some activities that your child enjoys may not be allowed, such as swimming. Help your child to understand those changes to their school day and why they are happening.
- 9 Think about what you learned about your child during lockdown.** Did certain activities calm your child down? Did regular movement breaks improve their focus? Share this with their teacher. It could also help to continue some of the activities you started in lockdown once schools reopen.

Website links

Social stories: autism.org.uk/about/strategies/social-stories-comic-strips



There are lots of things that our young people can do to help themselves during this time. Why not show them these ideas and see if any would be helpful?

Return to school - how do I survive?

- Talk to your family unit about how you feel. Ask them what the plans are with school and why they have made the choices they have.
- Talk to your friends, share what you are excited about as well as what you are scared about.
- Talk to your teachers, email them and ask any questions.
- Focus on each day as it happens, look for what is normal about school.
- Think about what you can do now that you couldn't do before—laugh with a friend over a silly joke!
- Think about what you are feeling—if you are feeling sad, think about why—can you talk to someone about why? They might be able to help you.
- Try to get back into a normal bedtime routine—remember to turn your computer off an hour before bedtime!
- Try to eat healthily and get plenty of exercise outside.
- Try to find things that relax you - reading, drawing, running, gaming.
- Remember what you can control and what you can't. If you can't control it can you distract your brain from focusing on it?
- Don't be too hard on yourself! It will get better!

