



## Going back to school

### How to support your child going back to school after Coronavirus

*This leaflet is aimed at parents/carers of children going back to key stages 2 and 3*

There is a lot of uncertainty about when and how schools will reopen to children. At the time of writing this leaflet (May 2020) there is no clear plan from the government, but what we do know is that eventually schools will restart and children will need to start attending school. Your child might be very excited to go back to school, or they might be feeling a bit nervous about it, or both. Parents may also have complicated feelings about sending their child back to school.

This leaflet is intended to help parents think about how they can support their child when they go back to school (or if they have been attending school throughout the pandemic, how they can help them adjust to a more 'normal' school experience).

### Practical considerations

During their time at home, children may have got used to a more flexible routine. It will be important to gradually get your child used to

waking up and getting ready in time to leave for school. It will also help children to start having regular meal and snack times, just like at school. Have your child try on their uniform – they may have grown! If your child travels independently to school, it might be worth checking if their usual route is still working and if your child knows what to do if the bus/train doesn't come.



**Get your child used to the school day sleeping and eating routines**

### Feelings you might be having as a parent/carer

It is important to know that all your feelings are valid and that they might be complicated and might change frequently. Some feelings you might be having are:

You might be eager to send your child to school again, or you may be worried about how they will be kept safe and want to keep them at home.

After spending lots of time with your child, you may feel a sense of loss at the thought of spending much less time with them. You might be looking forward to having a break from full time care. Don't feel guilty about this.

You might feel worried about whether you 'did enough' to help your child with schoolwork and

whether your child will be behind others. All children will have had different experiences at home, and schools will be able to help your child feel confident about what they can do and the experiences they have had whilst not at school. Remember activities like cooking and making dens build skills your child can use in the classroom too, and so are valuable.



**You might have mixed feelings about your child going back to school and that is OK**

### Helping your child if they are worried about returning to school

It is important that children feel safe and happy at school. If they don't, then it is less likely your child will be able to fully focus on learning. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is a theory which shows what needs to be in place for children to learn to their full potential.

Basic needs: food, warmth, a place to live  
Safety: free from harm in school and at home  
Social: feeling loved, feeling a sense of belonging  
Esteem needs: feeling good about themselves  
Self-Actualisation: able to fulfil their potential





It is therefore really important to focus on helping your child feel safe, loved and cared for, and that their school is also helping them feel this way. It might help your child to be reminded that:

- Adults are always acting in the best interests of children
- Lots of children are a bit worried about going back to school, and that's OK
- Your child can talk to you if they feel worried. Remind them who else in school and at home they can talk to
- Remind them about the ways they can keep themselves safe (such as good hand washing and keeping distance from others)



**Focus on your child's wellbeing as this is more important than their schoolwork at this point**

### Looking after yourself



This is a stressful time for everybody as we live through unprecedented and uncertain times, without being able to see our families and friends. Parents also need some support – it is like on a plane when you are told to put on your own oxygen mask so that you can help others.



**Looking after your own wellbeing will enable you to support your child**

### Communicating with school

Keep in regular contact with your child's school, especially if you feel your child needs some extra help to settle back in. Schools should be focussing on giving children positive, fun experiences when they return to school, not having high expectations that children will 'catch up' on missed work. If your child is becoming stressed by any aspect of school, let the school know and then you can work together to find a solution.



**Create a way of checking in with the school if you are worried about how your child will settle back in**

### Parenting and mental health support

<https://www.familylives.org.uk/how-we-can-help/confidential-helpline/>

<https://mindedforfamilies.org.uk/#/>



<https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/parents-helpline/#parents-helpline>

<https://www.croydon.gov.uk/healthsocial/families/ewmh>

### Who can I talk to?

**Contact your child's school or Educational Psychologist for advice and support;**  
[edpsychology@octavopartnership.org](mailto:edpsychology@octavopartnership.org)

