

Whilst returning to school may be exciting for children, it is also likely to be anxiety-provoking for them and their parents. This is particularly true for children who need additional support to feel safe and emotionally secure in school. Every child will have had a different experience of `lockdown`, and careful thought and planning between school staff and family can help to make the transition back successful, enjoyable and safe. Here are a few areas to consider in supporting that transition:



1. **Pave the way for the return** – school is likely to look, feel and be very different! Children feel more secure when they are appropriately prepared and know what to expect. *What will their classroom look like? How will they drop off and pick-up work? What will lunch and break time be like? Where will their safe space in school be – how can they access this?* Close liaison with school staff will help you prepare your child (in whatever way is developmentally appropriate), perhaps a video or some pictures to talk through will be helpful.
2. **Staying connected** – children and families are understandably worried about the separation that returning to school brings (some of our children have, no doubt, enjoyed the close connection they have had over the past few weeks). Now would be a good time to plan how you will `stay connected` with your child when they start back at school. Again, finding the most developmentally appropriate method is best, perhaps sending some pictures of their day (via school's systems like Tapestry or Class Dojo for example); or making a post-card for mum/dad about their day with a key adult in school.
3. **Build the network** – *Who is the key adult/s that will be the source of nurture and the safe base in school for your child?* It can be really helpful for children to see the network of adults around them and how connected they are. Linking closely with the key adult in school will support this. Enhanced home-school communication can help your child know that you know what their day was like and can support helpful conversations at home.
4. **Finding those old routines** – in the days and weeks leading up to the return to school, it can be helpful to re-establish some of the routines and rituals around going to school e.g. setting an alarm to wake up in the morning; going for a walk in the morning to simulate the journey to school. *Has your child's sleep pattern shifted and will this need to be gently shifted back?*
5. **Explore and plan for specific worries** – it can be helpful to lead positive conversations about the return to school and this can allow for children to identify particular worries they may have. Whilst these will be individual and personal, it can be very helpful to be curious about these in advance so that your child knows their worries are heard, understood, contained and that reassurance (where possible) and/or a plan to manage these can be put in place with school. It can also be a great opportunity to think about the things your child might be looking forward to about school too.

These are a few useful ideas to consider, but for more information and guidance from our Educational Psychologists, please contact us:

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You can also find additional resources on our website;

**[www.psychologyassociates.org.uk](http://www.psychologyassociates.org.uk)**