

Top tips for returning to school

Medway Educational Psychology Service

Be kind

...to yourself, to your child & to the school. Try not to put too much pressure on yourself or others or for things to be 'back to normal' straight away. This is a time of change & adaptation & we need to remember that many of us are having normal responses to an abnormal situation.

Routines

Spend the next week getting back into school week routines. Think about bedtimes & getting up times; think about reducing screen time; think about homework & leisure time routines. You might need to prepare your child for this change to routine.

Practice

Try going to bed a little earlier each night, & getting up & dressed a little earlier each morning. Older students might need to practice wearing a mask for longer. For younger pupils who have just started walking to school alone, practise the route & road safety.

Check equipment

Check uniform, shoes & sports kit still fits; if it doesn't, find out from the school what their policy is on this. Ask your child to start finding their stationery, school planner & timetable. Don't forget to check bus passes, school or college ID & lunch credit. Check the bus timetable for changes.

Communicate

Keep talking with your child about returning to school & keep talking in the weeks ahead. Try not to make assumptions about how your child is feeling. School websites will have information about the return to school & about how everyone will be kept safe. If you have concerns, speak to the school & ask for help if you need it.

Use visuals

If your child usually needs visuals to help them understand change or manage emotions, check the school website for visuals. You could introduce a visual timetable at home to show a school day. Your child's school might be able to provide photos of the classroom, or the door they will be using to come into the building, for example.

Be positive

Don't deny any difficult feelings you or your child might have, but support them to look forward to school. What have they enjoyed about being at home? What are they most looking forward to? What have they learnt? What are their hopes for the future? Who are they most looking forward to seeing? What *won't* they miss about being at home?