

It is very important to set boundaries and limits for your child but maintain your connection and trust with them.

- Be comforting in body language, facial expression and tone of voice.
- Get down to your child's level and offer cuddles and affection.
- Think about how your child is feeling and their point of view, for example 'It's hard to get up early in the morning when you have had so long sleeping in.'
- Try to divert or distract and use humour when you can.
- Reason and set limits. Help your child to see the bigger picture and problem solve.
- Acknowledge that wishes and feelings are acceptable, but some behaviours are not. For example, 'I can see you are upset, but it is not ok to yell or hit.'
- Stay calm, clear and assertive. For example, 'It's hard to go back to school after such a long break, but we have to go to school. Let's talk about how we do this.'

At times of change, it is important to use positive coping strategies to manage emotions. As every person is different, so too are our coping strategies. It is important to practise positive strategies to calm down or modify our thinking, to improve our outlook and overall well-being. Coping strategies can include: positive self-talk, singing, dancing, reading, drawing, music, Netflix/movies, creating a gratitude list, meditation, yoga, colouring, exercise, cooking/baking, talking to a friend or family member, or doing other activities that are fun or give you joy and make you feel good

Useful contacts:

- Talk to the teachers at your child's school about particular concerns.
- Talk to your GP if you are worried about your child's behaviour over a few weeks

Resources to help you can be found at:

www.camhs-resources.co.uk



Supporting your child's return to school during COVID-19

Children have experienced a great deal of pain and loss over the last few months and may feel anxious about returning back to normality.

This **Parent Guide** provides information to support your child with their return to school.



These are uncertain times which can be stressful for adults and children.

Staffordshire Educational Psychology
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Make sure you think about how you are feeling as well as trying to support your child. Take time to relax and think about how you are coping.

Before your child comes back to school, consider some of the following ideas:

- Find school clothes / uniform / shoes and make sure they still fit and are clean.
- Find other equipment such as school bag and lunchbox.
- Start getting up at the normal school wake up time and having breakfast.
- Pack the school bag.
- Drive or walk past school or look together at photos or take a virtual tour of the school on the website.
- Talk about the usual routine for drop off and pick up.
- Talk about what your child is looking forward to.
- Consider contacting school friends directly or using social media.
- Ask your child how they are feeling.
- Give praise when they talk about a worry.
- Validate their feelings, let them know it is ok to have worries.
- Use comforting language and tone of voice to reinforce that school is a safe and happy place.
- Find out about any changes and talk to your child about what to expect.
- Talk about social distancing, masks and PPE to keep us safe.
- Smile and be positive about school.

Your child may be feeling:

- Excited or happy about seeing their friends
- Nervous or anxious about change
- Angry or frustrated as they have enjoyed being at home

All these feelings are normal, and your child may experience all of them at different times.

Your child may not be able to recognise or say how they are feeling. They might show their feelings through their behaviour, for example

- Changing their usual sleeping or eating routines
- Becoming quiet or withdrawn
- Becoming angry or tearful
- Becoming clingy or restless and irritable
- Complaining of aches and pains
- Asking lots of questions
- Acting out or refusing to go back to school

All of these behaviours are normal reactions to stress.

How to talk about going back to school to help children to regulate, problem solve and overcome difficulties:

- Give time and space to talk about feelings.
- Accept, name and share feelings. Don't judge.
- Try not to show that you are nervous or anxious about returning to school as your child may pick up on this.
- Listen and be curious. For example, 'I wonder if you are feeling nervous?'
- Encourage hope by problem solving or giving a different perspective, 'Perhaps you will make new friends in your new class.'
- When your child is back at school, talk about their day. What did you do, who did you see, what did you learn, is anything worrying you?
- When discussing COVID-19, stick to facts and fact-check anything that appears on social media before sharing it with your child.