



New routines

Returning to school after such a period will be a big change for the children to adapt to, which needs acknowledging by all.

- *Support the children to become familiar with their updated timetables by printing these out and referring to them on a daily basis*
- *Remind the children that familiar faces will greet them each morning within the horseshoe and that their temperatures will be taken for safety, not as a cause for alarm*
- *Encourage regular bedtimes and structured routines for eating, snacks and refreshments, that align with the school timetable*
- *Frequently check school emails for any updates and alterations, to allow for the children to feel well-informed and prepared*



Communication

The more you can be open to discussions with your child, encouraging them to come to you and the trusted adults at school, the easier the transition will be.

- *Be open and informative about changes the children can expect to see within the school environment upon their return*
- *Use open-ended questions e.g. What was the best thing about school today? How was it to see your friends? What things did you notice that have changed in school?*
- *Encourage positive and gratitude-filled speech e.g. I am so thankful that... I love it when you... It is nice when I ... (By modelling such phrases, the children will become familiar and accustomed to them and will inherently mirror you)*
- *Ask the children who they trust in school and discuss ways in which they can reach out to them*
- *Keep encouraging children to connect with their friends, ideally before they return to the physical schooling, to overcome some of the distance that may have developed over this time*





Thoughts and feelings

Remind children that we have all experienced this big change and that everyone has their own feelings about it (there is no right or wrong). Take the time to talk about the experience, allowing children to ask questions and be as truthful as possible, according to their level of understanding and emotional needs.

- *Look for positive outcomes that this period has brought for you as a family and specifically for your child e.g. more time with parents, increased ICT skills etc*
- *Increase opportunities for children to discuss their emotions with you in the home, listen without judgement and be sure to tell children that all feelings are normal*
- *Make good use of resources that allow children to express themselves, such as drawings, dancing, playing music, exercise, meditation for kids, counting to 10, letting bad thoughts float away on the wind*
- *Offer physical comfort at home; children need touch e.g. hugs, and this can allow them to feel safe, secure and listened to*
- *Acknowledge your own feelings; the children are not the only ones who have had their lives disrupted. Find ways to make time for your own self-care and ask for support from school if needed*



Unexpected events

Children may change in their behaviour during the transition process. If so, keep talking with them, provide additional reassurance and get in touch with the class teacher to discuss your concerns

- *Don't be concerned if your child refuses to return to school; they have been away for a long time and many changes have taken place. It is likely to be due to separation anxiety, and a transition item in their lunch box can help with this*
- *Friendships may take some re-adjusting for the children. Acknowledge this and remind children that their class bubble will keep them safe and happy*
- *Consider the coping strategies that you know work for your child, including turning negative speech into a growth mindset (I can't...do it yet)*

