

Coronavirus (COVID-19)



Primary students' return to school: Advice for parents and carers

This fact sheet contains tips for parents and carers to support their child's wellbeing and mental health as they transition back and re-adjust to attending primary school in Term 2.



Pay extra attention to your child's emotions and needs

As your child returns to school, they may feel a range of emotions, including excitement, relief, or worry. You may notice changes in your child's behaviour, sleep, mood, interactions with others, or eating habits – these are all normal expressions of worry and by noticing and responding with care and support, you will help your child to feel better.

As parents, it is important to be able to:

- recognise signs of increased anxiety, stress or worry.
- know that it is a normal reaction.
- help children feel safe and supported.



Be aware of your own behaviour

It is important to understand the effect your own behaviour can have on your child. If you react in a way that suggests you are worried about your child going back to school, your child may worry too! Try to remain calm and positive when talking to your child about going back to school.



Reassure your child it is safe to go to school

During the learning at home period, your family, along with staff at your child's school, have helped your child understand that staying away from school was necessary to keep them healthy and safe. Your child may now feel worried about whether it is safe for them to go back to school.

To help your child feel safe and less worried about going back to school, have clear and calm conversations and tell them the facts, including that:

- The decision for students to return to school has been made based on health advice.
- Everyone at school is going to make sure they are keeping safe, and there is plenty of soap at school so that everyone can wash their hands many times a day.
- They will be allowed to sit next to their friends in the classroom and during group activities, as children like them usually do not get sick from COVID-19.
- The Government is keeping an eye on COVID-19 – if it starts to spread again, decisions about what we need to do to keep everyone safe will be made quickly.
- If anyone at their school feels sick, they will stay away from school until they feel better.



Prepare for changes to school processes

Changes to your school's normal processes may be necessary to ensure physical distancing requirements for adults can be met. So that you and your child can prepare, your child's school will communicate with you about changes to their processes.

Changes to your school's normal drop off procedures may mean that you are unable to walk with your child to their classroom. Schools understand that this may be unsettling for you and your child, particularly if your child is anxious about leaving you. Be assured that your child's school will have adequate staff on hand to ensure students are safe at all times, including getting from the school gate to their classroom.

If you have any questions or concerns about the new arrangements, you are encouraged to contact your principal.



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Establish a back-to-school routine

Preparing for school and getting into a routine with your child will help make the transition back to school a positive experience.

Prepare to return to school

- Get back into the routine of waking up, having breakfast and going to bed at regular times.
- Discuss any issues or fears your child might have about going back to school.
- Talk to your child about what they like about school and what they have been missing.
- Talk through the routine of what it's like being at school.
 - For example, “when I get to school I go and see {teacher’s name}; and then we hang our bags on our hooks; we say hi to our friends; we find our seat...etcetera”.
 - Discuss what may be different now (for example, getting to their classroom in the morning).

Before the school day

- Involve your child in:
 - laying out their uniform so it is ready for the morning.
 - packing their bag – you might make a game out of this with younger children. A visual checklist can help your child remember what they need to take.
 - planning and packing their lunches and snacks.
- Try to have calm evenings and allow extra time to settle before bedtime if your child is feeling nervous.
- Allow extra time to get ready for school in the morning so that you are not rushing.

After school

- Talk to your child about their day, including what they enjoyed, what may have worried them, and what they found difficult.
- Include some family time. Children may miss being at home with you during the day so it is important for them to feel close and connected with the family.

Available supports

If you feel that your child needs extra support as they transition back to school, get in touch with your school to find out how to contact your Guidance Officer or other support staff.

Support is also available for children through Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800 or by visiting the [Kids Helpline website](#).

If you or your family are facing hardship during the Coronavirus pandemic, the department has published information about how to [access support](#) on the learning@home webpage.