

Supporting children return to face-to-face learning

Helpful tips for parents and carers

Every family has a different learning-from-home story. Here are some ways you can support your child return to school and reconnect with their school community.

Be positive about returning to school

- Ask your child how they are feeling about returning to school. Your child may be feeling a mix of emotions about their return, so it is important to listen to any concerns and respond in a calm, supportive and reassuring way.
- Promote positive conversations by asking what they like about school and what they are looking forward to when they return. Let them know that school staff are looking forward to seeing them. Your child might like to make a list or drawing about things they have missed about school.
- If they feel nervous or worried, help them understand this is a normal reaction, and that you and their teachers are there to support them.
- If your child has questions about COVID-19 provide factual and age appropriate information. Let them know everyone at school is working hard so that everyone is safe.
- Consider limiting media content your child is viewing if it is contributing to worry or distress.
- Remind your child that everyone at school is working hard to make sure that everyone is safe and that anyone who is unwell will stay home.

Prepare yourself and your child for changes and new school procedures

- Look at the school website, Facebook page and newsletters to learn about new procedures that may have been introduced such as changes to parents' access to the school grounds, drop off and pick up points as well as new rules such as wearing face masks or hygiene rules.
- Discuss new procedures with your child and plan together how these changes will be managed. The more your child understands the changes, the more comfortable they are likely to feel. If you are unsure about anything, contact the school or your child's teacher.

Re-establish your routines

- Routines help provide certainty and increase feelings of security, so it will help to re-establish routines and plan for the return.
- In the week before return, bring back the usual wake up, bed and breakfast routines. Set aside time to find school equipment and check uniforms and shoes still fit – your child may have grown. Give yourself enough time to organise replacements or a uniform alternative if needed.
- The day before returning, encourage your child to check their school timetable if needed, pack their school bag, and get their lunch box, drink bottle and uniform ready.

- Allow more time than usual on the first morning back to calmly get ready. Take your child to school if that will help build a greater sense of security. Alternatively, encourage your child to meet up with a friend before school and travel in together.

Update the school

- Let the school know of any concerns relating to your child that may impact their transition back to school. This will assist the school to work with you to plan and put in place appropriate support strategies.

At the end of the school day

- Talk to your child about their day and what they are looking forward to tomorrow. If your child prefers, get them to write down or draw their feelings.
- Provide opportunities for your child to play and relax at the end of the day. Returning to school may contribute to tired and emotional reactions at the end of the day.
- Help re-establish after-school routines to review the day's learning and complete homework tasks
- Consider having extra family time together as your child may have missed being at home with you.

Supporting your child

- Returning to school routines may take some time. Reassure your child that this is normal. Encourage them to ask for help if they need it
- Take care of your own wellbeing while supporting your child's return to learning at school. You may have some children returning to school while others are continuing to learn from home. You can help your child by explaining that all children will be returning to school soon.
- If they are finding things difficult, remind your child of times in the past when they were able to do things that were difficult and face situations that made them nervous or scared.
- If you are concerned about your child, seek support by contacting the school.

How you can help your school community

- If you are picking your child up from school, please be sure to follow the guidelines for your school.
- Please practice physical distancing at pick up time.

If you need help and support

- If you have specific questions about the return you can contact your school.
- For more ideas to support you and help you support your child, please visit the department's [Mental health and wellbeing pages](#).

Telephone Interpreter Service

If you need further information please call your school principal. If you need an interpreter to assist you with your enquiry please call the Telephone Interpreter Service on 131 450 and ask for an interpreter in your language. You will not be charged for this service.