



Support for returning to school

Coming back to school from a long absence can be difficult but there are ways we can help ourselves (or get help from others).

Ideas for conversation:

- Give emotions names.
*These can be names such as "sad", "angry" or "worried" or "shaky", "fuzzy", "spiny".
Example: "I was so excited to go to the shops, but then when I got there, I felt surprised and disappointed because it wasn't the same. I felt a bit fuzzy the whole time, a bit wibbly wobbly. I was happy to come home but it was also fun to drive somewhere new and see the trees. That bit felt warm and nice"*
- Ask them what your children are looking forward to, what might be different and what they are expecting.
- Use your own feelings to help your child understand theirs:
*Parent: "How do you feel about going to school?"
Son: "I might feel a bit nervous"
Parent: "I'm going back to work again soon and I'm feeling a bit nervous about seeing people again"
Son: "Like you're a bit nervous that they might have the cold, and you don't know, and then you'll get it"
Parent: "Yep, exactly like that. But I've been thinking...I've thought of some stuff I can do that'll make me safe"*

Services available to families:

<https://www.kooth.com/> Free, safe and anonymous online support for young people
MyMind website also has a fantastic range of information on positive mental health and where to find support. <https://www.mymind.org.uk/>

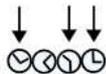
Mental Health and Wellbeing = CAMHS have put together a set of resources which are designed for students and parents if they are experiencing stress, anxiety or other mental health challenges. These resources can be found here: <https://www.camhs-resources.co.uk/>

PIAS -01752 258933 / 0800 953 1131 pias@plymouth.gov.uk

See past newsletters for other services.

Frequently Asked Questions

FAQ	Ideas to support this concern
What if I have no friends?	Consider that many people will have fallen out with friends and/or family during the lockdown but we can move on from this. Speak to your child's teacher. Arrange a phone call/ video call between your child and some friends.
Why do I have to leave the house?	Before the day of your return, take short trips out – walk for 10 minutes, 20 minutes, then 30 minutes etc, take trips out in the car, then to the park, a shop/café/restaurant (whichever you are allowed to go to).
Why do I have to leave my family?	Your family want you to have a fulfilling life which includes doing things without them – you'll have more to talk about when you get back. We have to take positive risks in life to make us grow – think of the consequences of taking a positive risk, e.g. independence, making friends etc.
Can I have my haircut before school?	All of the children and adults are in the same situation.
Why is everything changing?	A lot of people feel this way and change can be very difficult. However, you can adapt to it by controlling the small things – I 'have' to go to school but I can control when I pack my bag, if I have a bath or a shower, which people I speak to, who I will help on the first day back etc. Write yourself a list of events for the first day – 1) get up at _am 2) get washed and dressed, 3) eat breakfast etc then tick them off as you do them.
Why do I have to go to school?	Some people will have hated home learning but others will have loved it. Either way there will be things you have missed out on – practical experiments, team sports, performing, asking questions, making other people laugh, teachers' praise. So, make a list of the things that you have missed and focus on them.
Will I get ill?	This is a tough one, people do get ill but they also get ill when we aren't in school too. We reduce this risk by following government guidelines on hygiene and social distancing (see picture below) – make sure you know what these are before returning to school.
What if I am feeling sad?	These feelings can be overwhelming too but luckily there are a lot of ways to cope with them. There are several websites listed below but talking to someone about your feelings (even if they don't have any 'answers') often is the place to start (see above –ideas for conversation) The INCO also has lots of resources that might be able to help you and you can speak to the HUT staff or any adults in school.
What if I am behind in my work?	You are certainly not alone on this one. Teachers know this and will understand – they will want to welcome you back into school life. Share with school staff how your child is feeling.
What if I get ill?	Tell an adult straight away.



Wash your hands lots of times during the day.



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Use soap and water and wash for 20 seconds.



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You can also use hand sanitiser.



Do not touch your eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands.



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Cough and sneeze into a tissue, throw it away and wash your hands.