

Back to school



**A Guide for Schools and
Teachers**

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Acknowledgements

Planning for the return to school of autistic pupils in Manchester after Covid-19:

Advice and resources for schools, parents and young people

These resources have been put together as a collaboration between One Education Educational Psychology, Speech Therapy in Manchester, and Manchester CAMHS (Clinical Service for Children with Disabilities).

The pack comprises a combination of original materials and information collated from other sources which are acknowledged in the pack. Please distribute relevant sections of the pack to schools, parents and young people.

We recommend that if you are able, you read this document in association with watching the free series of short videos made by **schudiotv in association with Lynne McCann and Reachout ASC.**

<https://www.schudio.tv/courses/preparing-autistic-send-children-for-going-back-to-school>

Lynne has also produced a series of social stories to accompany the videos which you can find here

<https://reachoutasc.com/resources/transition-to-new-class>



Introduction

We are living through a time of extraordinary change. Schools all over the UK and many other parts of the world have closed to children and at the time of writing they have missed two months of school. Many may be out of school for 6 months or more. During their time away from school the children will have had a range of different experiences. They may have suffered bereavement or be feeling anxious about the virus. They, or a family member may have been 'shielding' and almost all children will have spent a great deal more time at home than is typical. Now that the time has come to begin planning for how our children will gradually return to school, we anticipate that this transition may be difficult for many of them.

However, we anticipate that our autistic children and young people may find the transition back to school even more difficult than most. The nature of autism is that change and uncertainty are often experienced as stressful, and we have never asked our children to cope with so much change before. When they return to school, they are likely to be in a different, smaller group, possibly in a different space, with different equipment. They may have a different adult working with them. Rules are likely to be different and may in some cases be experienced as frightening. Added to this is that they may have come from being very comfortable in a situation of limited demands upon them at home, or conversely from a situation of great stress at home if they or the family have struggled to manage lockdown or been working in key services, or if the family has experienced illness or even bereavement.

These unique circumstances, coupled with the inherent traits of autism, mean that we felt it would be useful to provide a set of resources that you as schools, or as parents, could use with your children and young people to help with the transition back to school. Please distribute them freely.

Educational Psychology, OneEducation,

Speech and Language Therapy Service

Clinical Service for Children with Disabilities (CAMHS)

May 2020



School Advice

We would recommend a planned period of transition & readjustment as essential:

Covid -19 is unlike anything that has happened before. Life hasn't simply been on pause; we can't just press play and expect things to pick up from where we left off. Too much has happened in the interim. Children and young people are returning to a changed reality that remains in flux. So, we need to allow for and plan a period in which we explore, together with parents/ carers and children, their experiences of lockdown.

With this in mind Carpenter (2020) has introduced the idea of a Recovery Curriculum, with aims broader than solely catching up on academic skills. We have attached a copy of the recovery curriculum at page 11 of this booklet.

Prepare by reconnecting with families prior to a child's return: Communication with parents/ carers has become doubly important. There is a need to share information in both directions, to strengthen the confidence of parents in returning their children to school, and so that teachers may learn what the parents have discovered about their children during this time. The challenge will be finding practical means to do so. We have provided:

- *A questionnaire to help you obtain parental views around their child returning to school (pg 15-16)*
- *A suggested proforma for an individual plan for transition (pg 17-19)*
- *The packs by speech therapy and CAMHS for parents and students (Appendix A, B, and C)*

Where to begin?

Grounding in the Familiar: Amidst all the change and uncertainty, it will help for parents/ carers and teachers, to ground themselves in *the familiar* and to share new learnings. To take time to jointly re-familiarise themselves with a child's profile, and update it, is time well spent.

- What *do* we know about the child?
- What has not changed?
- What has their experience been?
- What's worked? What's not worked?
- What have we discovered about *what* they can do, and *how* they best learn?

The usual supports for autism still apply: the information-processing demands of immense change can overwhelm any of us, but we know that this is especially challenging for someone with autism. Making the world a more predictable place is key to reducing stress and anxiety.

- Seek ways to introduce more structure and routine
- Increase the clarity of communication, events, social expectations, and choices.
- The structure and visual content of tools such as pictures, symbols, diagrams, Comic Strip conversations, and Social Stories remain crucial.

Stay person-centred: Each child's profile of skills, their lockdown circumstances, and their responses will differ.

- Some children will have struggled significantly at home.
- Other children may have thrived with lower stimulation, reduced social complexity, lower demands, and the chance to pace themselves.
- For others their social & communication skills may have waned through insufficient use.

There is no typical response, and we will need to be guided by our conversations with parents and individual assessments.

Create opportunities and supports for children to tell their stories. It's the way we make sense of things and adjust to life. The means by which children relate their experiences will vary hugely, and using what we know of their communication style and how best to support this, will be crucial.



Managing Anxiety

School-related anxiety is common in children with autism. Anecdotal evidence also suggests that some may have felt more comfortable learning at home, and adapted well to online learning.

Intolerance of uncertainty is considered to be a key contributing factor to anxiety in children with autism. So for many, the transition back to school will be stressful and present considerable challenges. In particular, pupils may, for example, struggle with:

- Uncertainty about how school will be / what will happen
- Changes in routines, for example, timetables, seating arrangements
- Some new or amended rules e.g. relating to walking around school and break times
- What to do / say if others are breaking the rules (some children find themselves wanting to be the 'rule police')
- High anxiety about the risks to which they feel subjected
- What to say and how to behave in sensitive situations e.g. if someone has been be-reaved
- The heightened sensory environment compared to the relative quiet of home

Pupils may show an increase in anxious behaviour in the days before schools come back. Speak to your parents or use our **questionnaire** (pg 15) or students' questions in their **pupil transition booklets** to try to capture this.

If you or a parent think a pupil may be particularly challenged by the return to school, it will be important to build up a clear picture of what elements are increasing their anxiety in order that best endeavours can be made to alleviate it.

Sensory Needs

The high anxiety levels related to a return to school can mean a pupil may be on high alert and feel overwhelmed by going back into the school building. You may observe an increase in 'stimming' behaviours such as flapping, rocking and fiddling. It is a way of self-regulating. It may have been easier at home where a pupil can wear headphones, have their own quiet space, bounce on a trampoline etc. So it may be helpful to create a 'sensory safe space' for pupils.

How can schools offer support?

Steps to support reducing the anxiety might include:

- Early attention and intervention given to preparing for the return
- Remind all staff of general autism 'good practice' strategies e.g. the engaging the child with a visual timetable, relevant visual supports; provision of a clam space
- Prior to the return, providing as much information to the pupil as possible about what school will be like and the changes what will have been made (making the first day back as predictable as possible)
- Plan and implement personalised strategies to the pupil's specific needs
- Prior to the return and with the pupil and parent, it may be helpful to 'map' the fear then try and plan some solutions. (See p6 of the 'Back to school pupil booklet' to help with this).

Formulation and Action Planning

- After information gathering and analysis you could make a 'return to school' support plan (see our suggested proforma on page 17)
- It could be co-produced with parents and the child
- It may help to make the return gradual and graded and recognise by all that a 'quick' re-habituating may not be possible
- For a short time, a part time timetable may be helpful
- Keep it as simple as you can.

Planning an intervention

Some key elements of intervention planning might include:

- Direct telephone contact between parent/carers and key workers in school.
- A personalised programme (e.g. flexible timetable, provision of a safe haven)
- An identified key adult for the pupil to 'check in' with through the day
- A safe place or base in school identified
- Early use of social stories to explain / reinforce new / changed situations and rules (see **SALT booklet** and the Lynne McCall hyperlink at the start of this pack)
- All staff to be informed about the young person's difficulties
- All parties agree to actions - keep to them until an agreed re-view

Changes to plan to prep youngsters for might include:

Travel arrangements	Homework demands
Timetabling	Some different teachers / TAs
Different organisational demands	Changes in friendships
Environmental changes, e.g. changes in seating	Arrangements for certain subjects e.g. PE
Break / lunchtime arrangement	No longer having siblings in school

How to prepare

- Start preparing visual timetables.
- Download a calendar so that the young person can count the days down to the return.
- Provide as much detail as possible about the first day back.
- Before the return, could pupils be provided with photos / videos of the new classroom layout?
- New rules, instructions etc.
- Explanations about one way systems and how to use them.
- Make the most of the school website.

Some considerations:

- What will be happening when? Who with? What time? – Avoid deviating from a given plan
- How will pupils line up?
- Will there be special assemblies?
- Seating
- ‘Touch base’ at the start of the day
- Ample reassurance and clarification
- Plans for unstructured times
- The need to trust adults – Don’t let them down – Key adult who understands
- Pre-teaching; provide advance lesson plans / advance lesson content
- Make allowances for the change in routine; e.g. what time has the pupil been getting up?
- Ask parents to provide information about their child’s lockdown experiences.
- Allow ample time for listening, talking and explaining
- Take a look at the **CAMHS booklets for pupils in this pack**. This uses the principles of CBT to support students by helping them change the way they think.
- This further hyperlink provides numerous worksheets about anxiety which may be helpful
- <http://tandfbis.s3.amazonaws.com/rt-media/pp/resources/CBTCHILD/worksheets.pdf>
- A ‘Return to school’ support plan (See our suggested format at page 17)



Think Piece

A Recovery Curriculum: Loss and Life for our children and schools post pandemic.

Barry Carpenter, CBE, Professor of Mental Health in Education, Oxford Brookes University.
Matthew Carpenter, Principal, Baxter College, Kidderminster, Worcestershire.

“When will they actually go back to school?” This is the cry from many parents, as we write and there is no answer. But that does not stop us thinking about what it will be like for each and every one of our children, at whatever age, stage or ability level on the day they walk through the classroom door.

It would be naive of any Headteacher/Principal to think that the child will pick up the Curriculum at exactly the same point at which they left it on the day their school closed. Too much has happened. Listen to what the children are saying. Look at what the children are experiencing. None of this follows the usual pattern of a school year with all of the annual cycle of events. It feels like a period of true social disorder. Compassionate Leadership is crucial at this time.

When the children return to school there needs to be a Recovery Curriculum in place. Suddenly daily routines have evaporated and with it, any known curriculum framework. No more rushing to get the school bag ready and running out of the door to begin the journey to school. For most children their daily goal in going to school is not just to learn but to see their friends and to feel a sense of self-worth that only a peer group can offer. You cannot underestimate the impact of the loss of that social interaction. It is as key to their holistic development as any lesson. Human beings are fundamentally social creatures, and the brain grows in the context meaningful human to human interaction. What will the children be making of this period of non-attendance? What worries will they have because grown-ups have now stopped them going to school indefinitely?

For many children the loss of structure will be devastating. This is why parents have been encouraged to establish clear routines in home schooling their children. Children need to know what they are doing now and what will come next. If they don't, the child will become anxious and concentration levels drop; they become frustrated with themselves, and their parents as makeshift educator.

For some, the loss of freedom is constraining. What teenager wants to be with their parents 24 hours a day? Frankly they are not cool! Their whole self-image, self-esteem, and self-concept, is located in the interaction and dynamics of a peer group. They cannot test their emerging self, against the rules and routines of family life and to be taught by a parent who clearly knows nothing, (what teen acknowledges parental skills?) is to them an insult!

The common thread that runs through the current lived experiences of our children, is loss. Publicly it has been the loss of national examinations which has been most obvious. As one student said, "I was preparing to run a marathon, but now they tell me there is no race!" Many would think that the removal of examinations would be a matter of joy for most young people facing a gruelling timetable of examinations. But these are rites of passage; they are integral to how that young person shapes their ambitions for their life. What impact will it have on students to give their all to examinations next time around?

From loss emanates three significant dynamics that will impact majorly on the mental health of our children. Anxiety, trauma and bereavement are powerful forces. For them all to appear at once in an untimely and unplanned fashion is significant for the developing child. Our children are vulnerable at this time, and their mental-health fragile. And on top of that, they are witnessing a sea of adult anxiety, which they unwittingly are absorbing. There will be many students who are young carers, and this loss of freedom will be combined with a weight of responsibility that will have made academic learning feel inconsequential.

The loss of friendship and social interaction could trigger a bereavement response in some of our children. They will grieve for that group of peers, who not only give them angst, but also affirm them as the person they want to be. The rules of the peer group have vanished without warning, and our young people in particular, were ill prepared for this. They will mourn for how their life was compared to how it is now. They have undergone a period where friends and family members have been avoided because they are a threat; how long will it take for children to feel not threatened by nearness of others?

The loss of routine and structure, will be traumatic for some. Already we are receiving reports of the increased incidents of self-harm, (Young Minds, 2020). Children can find it alarming that the infrastructure of their week has been abandoned however logical the reason. The suddenness of it all may induce panic attacks, a loss of self-control, as the child feels their own intellect no longer informs their personal judgements accurately.

Anxiety is a cruel companion. It eats away at the positive mental health of the child, and can cause a deterioration in their overall well-being. The anxious child is not a learning child. Mood swings may prevail; they can become irrational and illogical. There can be a loss of sleep; the cumulative tiredness can diminish the child's coping mechanisms.

Daily, children are listening to reports of the spread of the pandemic and to the reported death toll in their country and internationally. It is probable that most children may return to school knowing of someone who has died. Indeed, they may have first-hand experience of the death of a loved one. In this respect, we have much to learn from the experiences of those children affected by the earthquakes in Christchurch, New Zealand. Schools there, kept a register of the deaths within a family, or other significant traumatic events, to guide and inform staff as children returned. Subsequent evidence from research studies from NZ, (Liberty, 2018) have shown that there has been considerable impact on the learning and development of those children who were under 5 years old at the time of the earthquakes, (eg speech delays, emotional immaturity, etc). We ignore such related evidence at our peril.

Those 5 losses, of routine, structure, friendship, opportunity and freedom, can trigger the emergence emotionally of anxiety, trauma and bereavement in any child. The overall impact cannot be underestimated. It will cause a rapid erosion of the mental health state in our children.

How are schools to prepare? What curriculum adjustments are crucial? What pedagogical frameworks will facilitate teaching with compassion? How will staff manage their own recovery? We inevitably have a finite resource and we must consider the gradual implementation of any form of curriculum to recover from loss. All of our learners will need a holistic recovery, some may need a focused recovery intervention programme, personalised to their needs; others may need a deeper and longer lasting recovery period, enabling a fuller exploration of the severity of their trauma and emergent attachment issues .

Teaching is a relationship-based profession. That has been clearly demonstrated in the response of the teaching profession, supporting children through online teaching during the crisis, and also caring for the children of key workers by keeping schools open and offering an activities programme. This was not without its inherent risk.

In response to the weight of loss our young people will have experienced, what are our levers of recovery? Many of us will focus on the recovery of lost knowledge, but this does not recognise the scale of impact. If we consider the definition of a relevant curriculum as the 'daily lived experience' we must plan for experiences that provide the space for recovery. Already Headteachers are saying "The children will be so far behind academically when they return." Such statements are incompatible with the process of recovery from loss, trauma, anxiety and grief. It is more about the results culture so many Headteachers are steeped in. Now is the time to return to more humane approaches concerned with the fundamental wellbeing, and secure positive development of the child. Without this there will be no results that have true meaning and deep personal value to the child in terms of their preparation for adulthood.

Lever 1: Relationships - we can't expect our students to return joyfully, and many of the relationships that were thriving, may need to be invested in and restored. We need to plan for this to happen, not assume that it will. Reach out to greet them, use the relationships we build to cushion the discomfort of returning.

Lever 2: Community - we must recognise that curriculum will have been based in the community for a long period of time. We need to listen to what has happened in this time, understand the needs of our community and engage them in the transitioning of learning back into school.

Lever 3: Transparent Curriculum - all of our students will feel like they have lost time in learning and we must show them how we are addressing these gaps, consulting and co-constructing with our students to heal this sense of loss.

Lever 4: Metacognition - in different environments, students will have been learning in different ways. It is vital that we make the skills for learning in a school environment explicit to our students to reskill and rebuild their confidence as learners.

Lever 5: Space - to be, to rediscover self, and to find their voice on learning in this issue. It is only natural that we all work at an incredible pace to make sure this group of learners are not disadvantaged against their peers, providing opportunity and exploration alongside the intensity of our expectations.

We suggest the Recovery Curriculum is built on the 5 Levers, as a systematic, relationships-based approach to reigniting the flame of learning in each child. Many children will return to school disengaged. School may seem irrelevant after a long period of isolation, living with a background of silent fear, always wondering if the day will come when the silence speaks and your life is changed forever. Our quest, our mission as educators, should be to journey with that child through a process of re-engagement, which leads them back to their rightful status as a fully engaged, authentic learner.

What must be going through children's minds at this strange time? Is school to be always transitory, when for you as a child, it has always been a constant, love it or hate it? Can I trust

<http://www.recoverycurriculum.org>

you again, as my teacher, to not abandon me? We were walking a path together, and then this 'thing', this virus, sent us on different journeys. Can our lives reconnect? Can our relationship be re-established? School is no longer the safe, constant place we thought it was. We must be ready to understand, to reframe their perceptions, and show that we are trustworthy.

The Recovery Curriculum is an essential construct for our thinking and our planning. Each school must fill it with the content they believe is best for the children of their school community, informed by your inherent understanding of your children in your community. What were the aims and values of your school before this pandemic? Use them now to guide your judgements, to build a personalised response to the child who has experienced loss. No Government can give you the guidelines for that. It is down to you, as that skilled, intuitive teacher, who can lift the mask of fear and disenfranchisement from the child. You can engage that child as a learner once more, for engagement is the liberation of intrinsic motivation, (Carpenter et al, 2015).

The Loss the children experienced during this pandemic will have caused issues around attachment - in their relationships in school that they have forged over years; these will be some of the strongest relationships the young people have, but bereft of the investment of those daily interactions, will have become fragile. Our unwritten relationships curriculum must restore the damage of neglect; it must be a Curriculum of Recovery. Now is the time to address the damage of loss and trauma, so that it does not rob our children of their lifelong opportunities. Now is the time to ensure that we restore mental *wealth* in our children, so that their aspirations for their future, can be a vision that becomes, one day, a reality.

<http://www.recoverycurriculum.org>

References:

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www.youngminds.org.uk



© Barry Carpenter, CBE, Professor of Mental Health in Education, Oxford Brookes University.

Matthew Carpenter, Principal, Baxter College, Kidderminster, Worcestershire.

23rd April 2020

<http://www.recoverycurriculum.org>

Returning to School Post Covid 19 Crisis Parent/Carer Questionnaire

Parents may have some worries about their child's transition back to school post the Covid 19 Crisis. This is to be expected and perfectly normal. We are asking parents to tell us about how well equipped they feel their child is for some key aspects of school life. Please take a few minutes to complete this questionnaire with or for your child to support with their transitioning back to school or new school.

Child's name _____ Parent/carer name _____

School _____ Year Group Autumn 2020 _____



How confident are you about your child in the following areas at school as they return after COVID?	Please circle the number on the scale that best represents your feelings
Learning in the classroom	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 not confident very confident
Interacting with adults	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 not confident very confident
Getting on with children	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 not confident very confident
Approaching adults for help	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 not confident very confident
Managing personal hygiene	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 not confident very confident
Accessing snacks, school dinners/canteen	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 not confident very confident
Travelling to school	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 not confident very confident
Travelling from school	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 not confident very confident
Organisation & keeping track of their things, (school books, personal possessions, P.E kit etc.)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 not confident very confident

Moving round school	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 not confident very confident ←—————→
Homework	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 not confident very confident ←—————→
Coping with sensory sensitivities (e.g., noise, light, touch, textures & taste)	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 not confident very confident ←—————→
Managing change	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 not confident very confident ←—————→
Problem solving when things go wrong with school work	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 not confident very confident ←—————→
Managing peer problems that may arise during unstructured times e.g., lunch & play times.	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 not confident very confident ←—————→
Coping with stress & life's ups and downs	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 not confident very confident ←—————→
How confident are you that they will be ok after the first 3-4 weeks in school?	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 not confident very confident ←—————→

Please use the box below to tell us about any specific concerns you or your child have.

Are you happy for us to share this information with your child's school staff and/or new school? Please circle appropriately.

Yes

No

Thank you for telling us about your child.

OneEducation

Putting children first

(Template adapted from West Sussex's Educational Psychology Service's Emotionally Based School Avoidance Good Practice Good Practice Guidance for Schools and Support Agencies)

Support Plan	
Name:	
I want my key adults in school to know the following:	
I feel	about coming back to school because
My key adult(s) in school is/are:	
When can I speak with my key adult(s)?	
Where can I speak with my key adult(s)?	
The changes in my timetable are:	
<i>(include if applicable: changes in teacher(s)/ TA(s), staggered start time, breaks, lunch, home time and/or the extent to which the pupil's time in school is shortened if a gradual return was agreed)</i>	
The changes in the school rules are:	
<i>(include social distancing, toileting, walking on the corridors, hand washing, home work, classroom expectations)</i>	

OneEducation

Putting children first

(Template adapted from West Sussex's Educational Psychology Service's Emotionally Based School Avoidance Good Practice Good Practice Guidance for Schools and Support Agencies)

The changes in my school and classroom(s) are:

(include changes in displays, furniture arrangements, seating arrangements, markers/reminders about social distancing)

When I start to get upset, I notice these things about myself:

When I start to get upset, others notice these things about myself:

Things that I can do to make myself feel better when I am in school:

Things that teachers, TAs, and other adults in school can do to make me feel better when I am in school:

OneEducation

Putting children first

(Template adapted from West Sussex's Educational Psychology Service's Emotionally Based School Avoidance Good Practice Good Practice Guidance for Schools and Support Agencies)

Things that my friends and other pupils can do to make me feel better when I am in school:		
Things that my family can do to support me to attend school:		
Places that I can go to in school where I feel safe and supported		
Review date:		
My signature	Key adult's signature	Parent's signature

Appendix A

**Back to school pack for
younger children.**



Back to school



A pack for younger
children

Hello

Welcome to your back to school pack!

This booklet is to help you get ready for going back to school. Most children have been staying at home because of lockdown. When your school re-opens, some things will be the same as before, and some things might be different.

In this pack, you can think about all the things you are looking forward to, and anything that might be worrying you about going back to school.



All about me

My name:

My age:

The name of my school is:

I am in Year

Things I like doing.....



Who is important to me?

(Family, friends, pets)

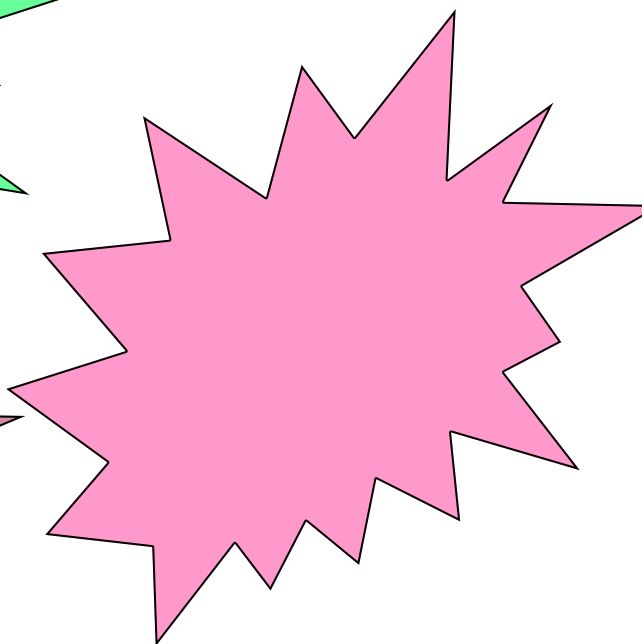
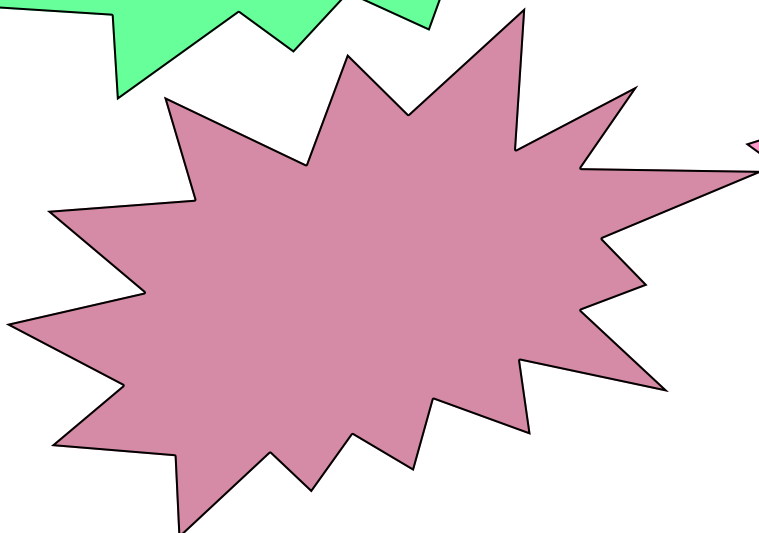
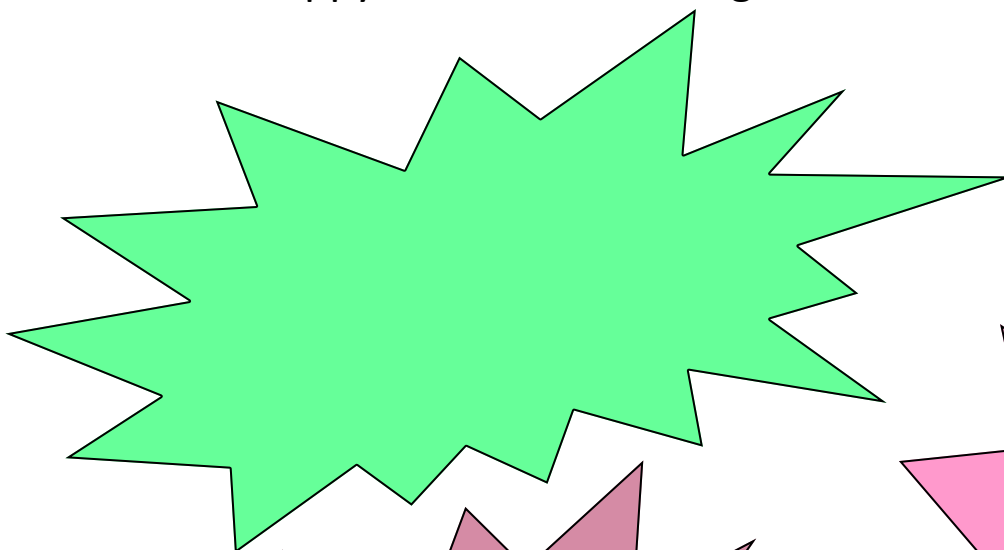


Happy memories



Draw a picture of being at home.....

Write three happy memories of being at home.....





Draw a picture of your school.....

A large, empty rectangular box with a dark red border, intended for drawing a picture of a school.Three large, empty thought bubbles with scalloped edges and small circles leading to them, arranged in a triangular pattern. The top-left bubble has three small circles leading to it from the bottom-left. The top-right bubble has three small circles leading to it from the bottom-right. The bottom-center bubble has three small circles leading to it from the bottom-right.

Three good things
I remember
about my school.....



Ask an adult to help you think about what might be the same when you go back to school, and what might be different.

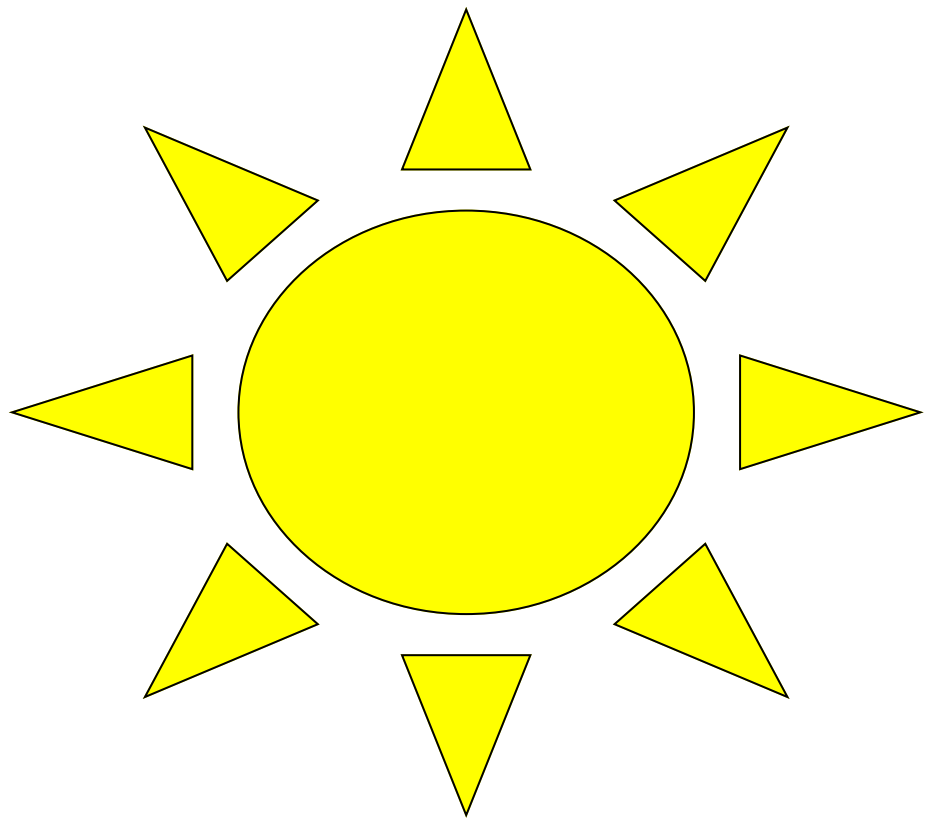
Things that might be the same at school.....

Things that might be different at school.....

Sunshine moments

Every single day, there are positive moments for us to see. Sometimes we do not notice the positive things, because we are too busy looking out for the things which worry us.

Sunshine moments are positive, happy things that happen during the day. These things might be tiny, so we have to watch out for them.

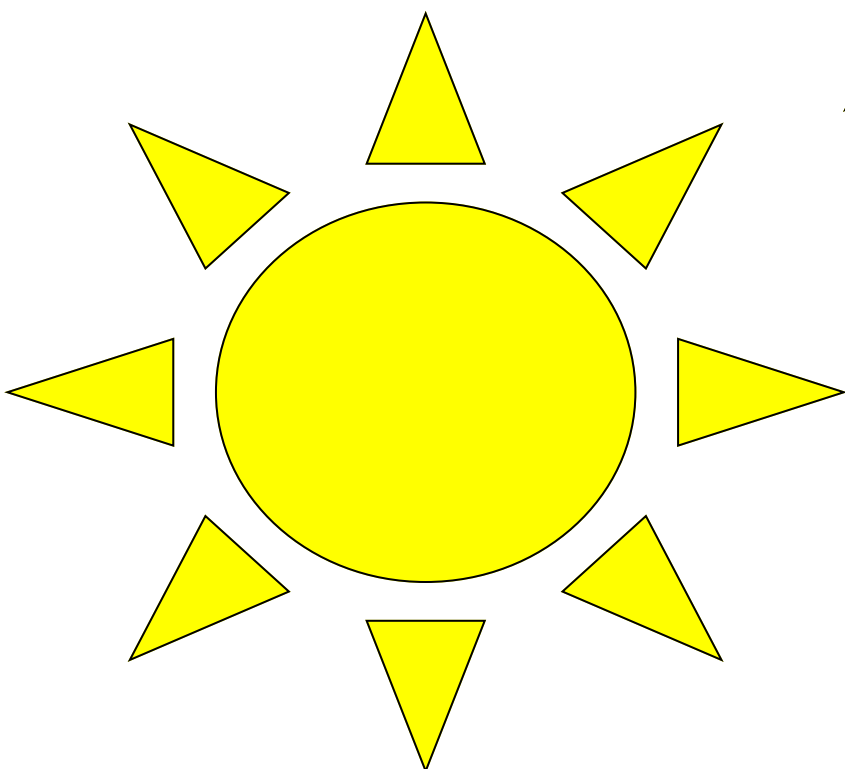
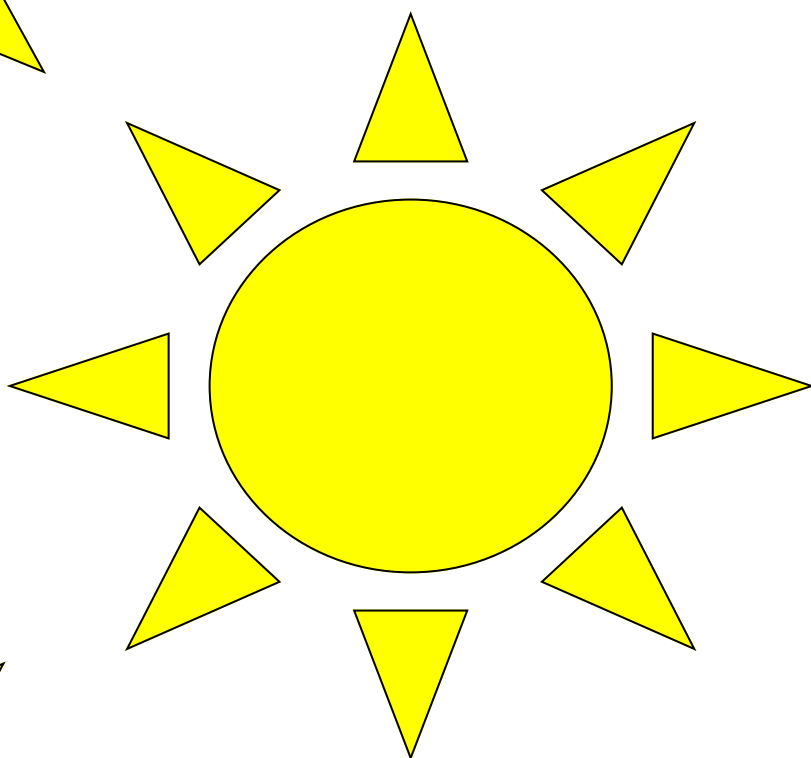
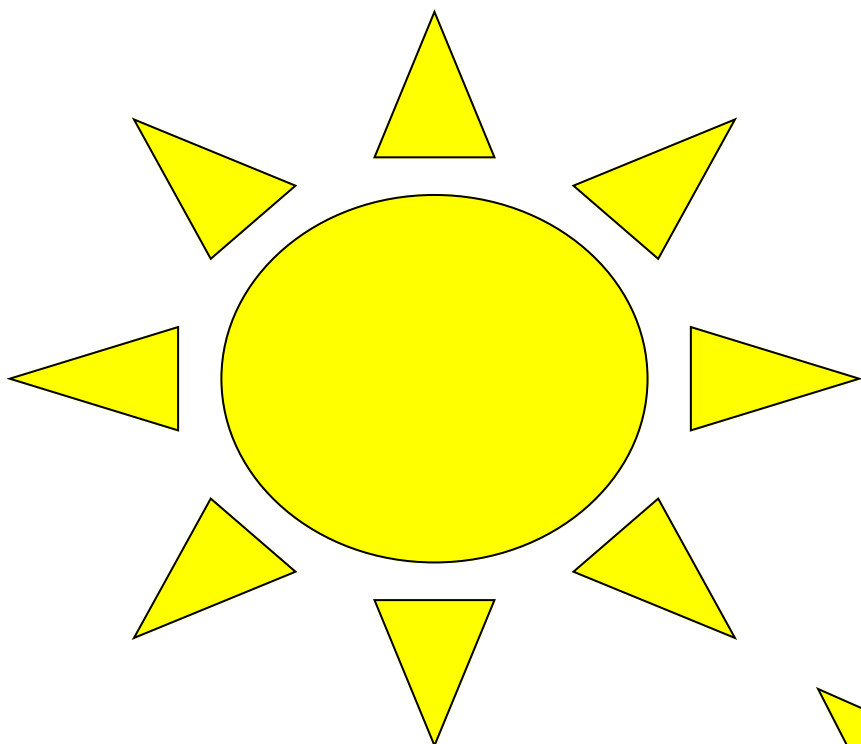


We need to look carefully for these sunshine moments every single day. It can help if we write them down, draw them, or talk about the positive things that have happened during the day.



Can you think of 3 sunshine moments from your day?

These might be big things, or very tiny moments that made you feel happy.



Try writing down three things every-day, which made you feel calm or happy.

Worrying

Change can be a worrying time. Going back to school after all these weeks at home might make you feel worried or nervous.

It is good to talk about your worries.

Talking about your worries can make you feel better.

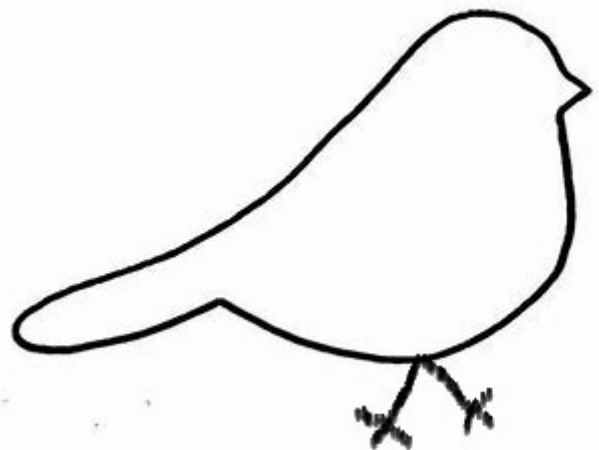
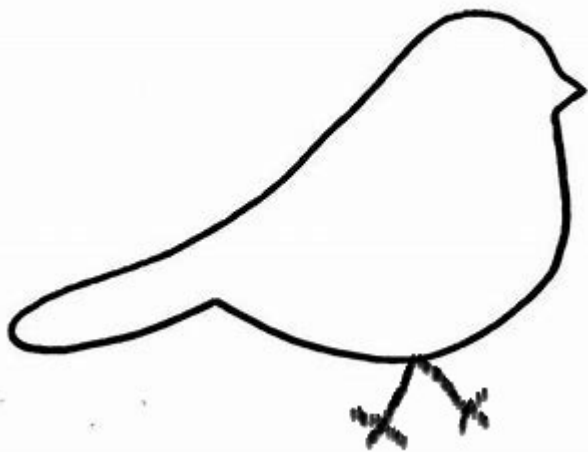
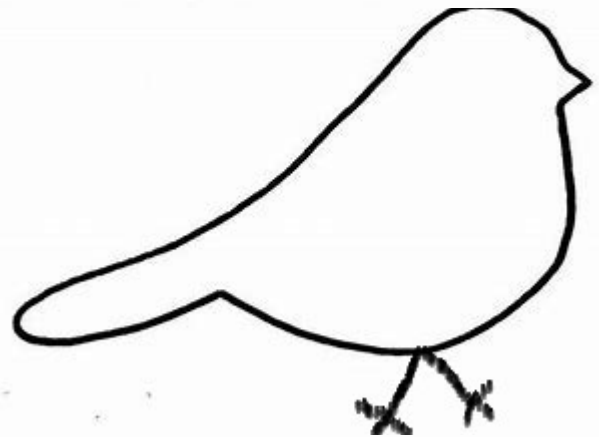
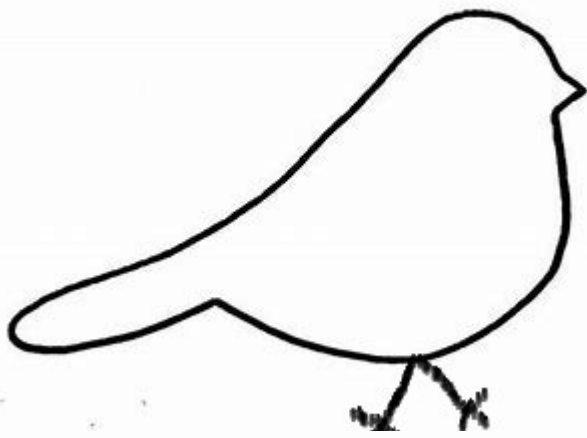
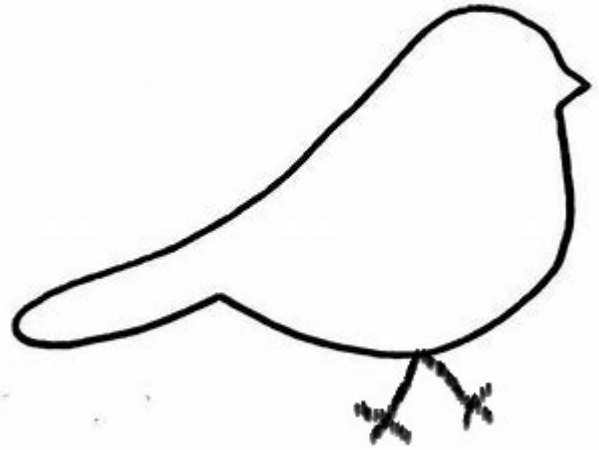
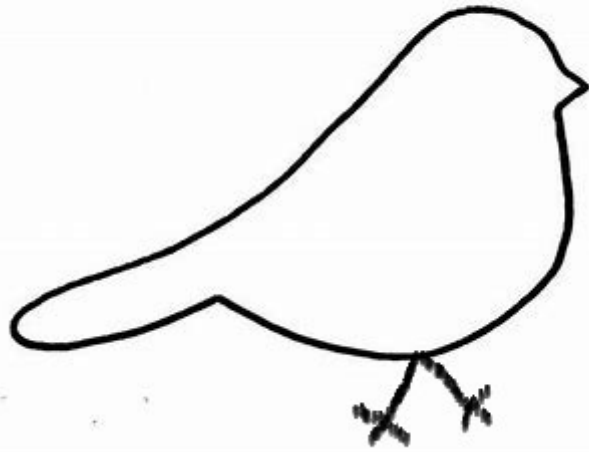
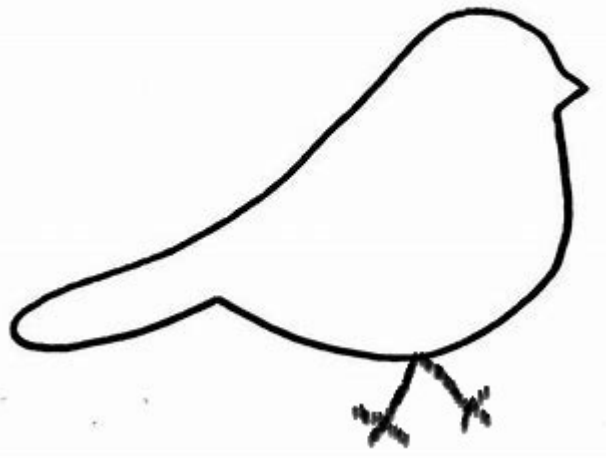
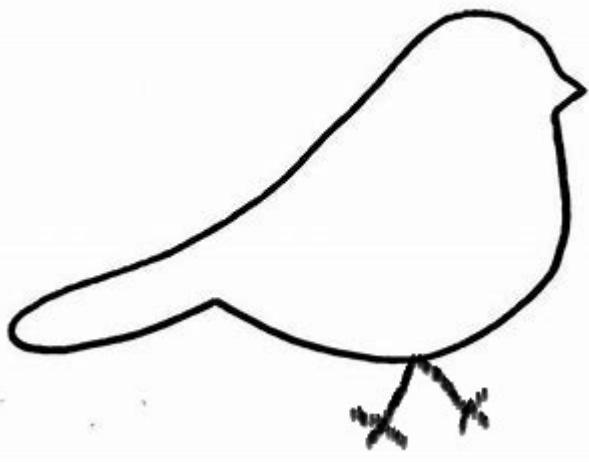
Some people find it hard to talk about what is worrying them.

You can write it down, or draw a picture to show what you are thinking about.

It is good to ask an adult at home or at school to help you with the things that make you feel worried.



On the next page there are some birds. Work with an adult to write your worries on the birds, and stick them on the worry tree on page 13.

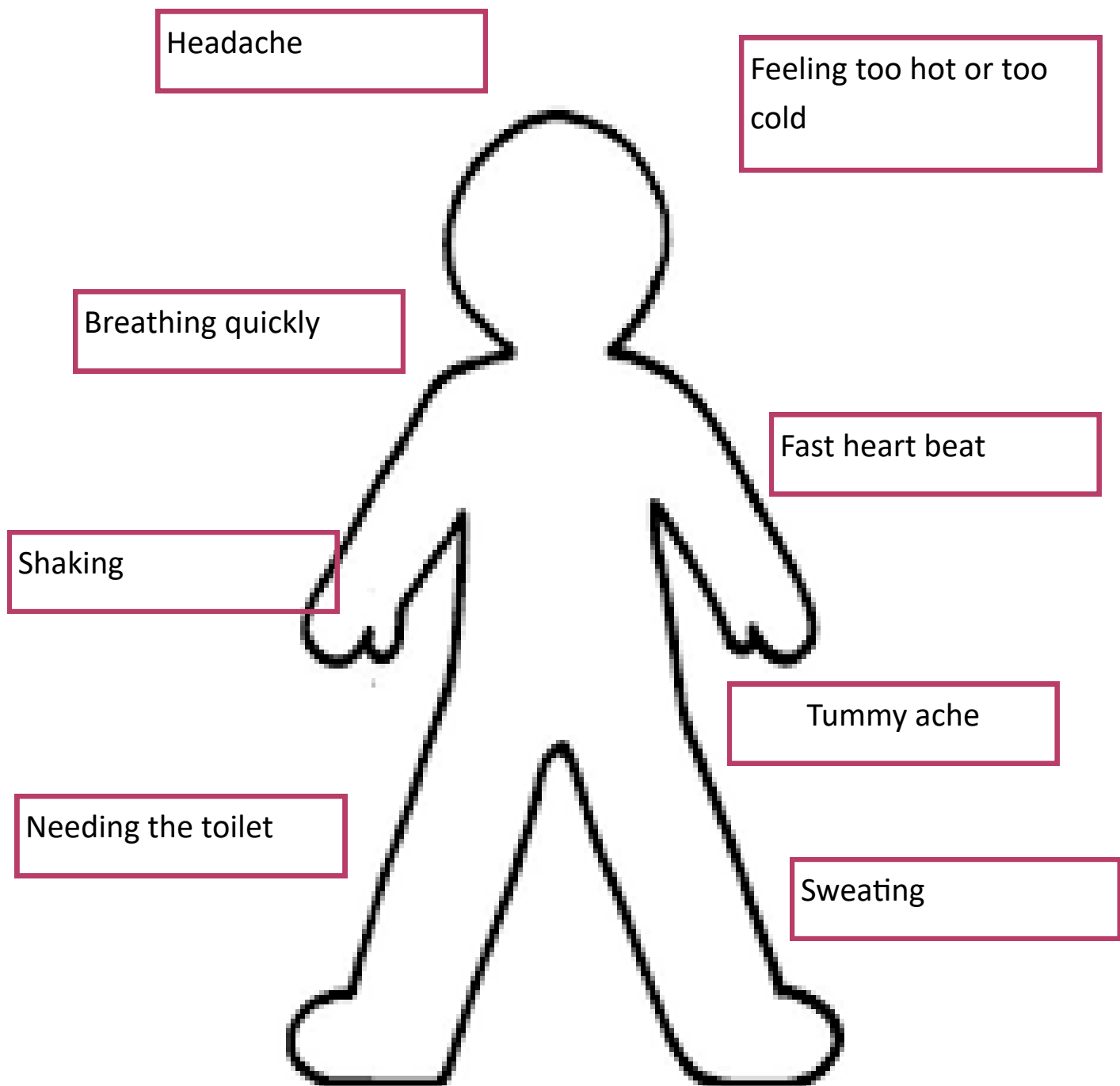


Worry Tree



Stick your worry birds onto this tree, and talk about them with an adult.

When you are worried, stressed or upset, you can sometimes feel it in your body. You might notice some of these things.....



Tick all the ones that you notice when you are feeling worried. Are there any other things that you can write onto the picture?

Relaxation

When we do activities to relax our body, it helps our mind to feel calm and happy.

Here are some ideas about what you could try to relax.

Listen to music	Go outside	Use a mindfulness app or do meditation
Play a sport or jump on a trampoline	Play with your family pet	Read a book or magazine
Watch something funny on TV	Do some baking	Hug someone in your family
Play with some sensory toys	Draw, paint or be creative	Look at photographs which make you happy
Play with my toys	Do some colouring in	Have a bubble bath

Activities that make me feel happy!



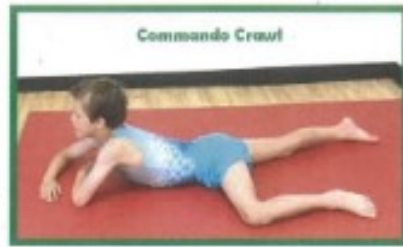
Activities that make me feel calm
and relaxed.



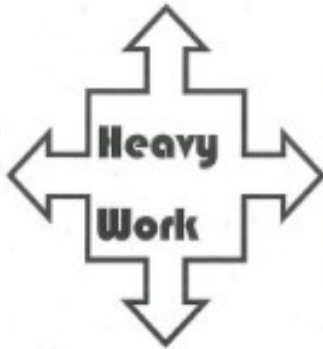
What do I need if I feel sad or
worried?



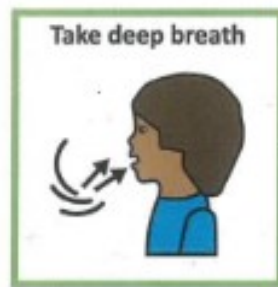
Calming strategies for Home



- Crawling under & over blankets
- Obstacle Course
- Star jumps
- Rolling across the room wrapping up in blanket Burrito
- Trampoline



- Squeezing bath toys
- Wall push-ups
- Carry something heavy
- Wheelbarrow walks
- Playdough
- Digging in the garden
- Theraband
- Making bread / kneading dough



- Chewy snacks ie jam on toast
- Crunchy snacks ie raw carrot or bread sticks
- Blowing games / bubbles
- Warm drink



- Wrap up tightly in a blanket
- Sandwich between cushions
- Give yourself a hug
- Wrap in warm towel
- Tactile box



- Use natural light when possible



Use soft tone of voice



- Calming sounds ie Rain Rain App
- Soft voices
- Reduce noise

My Plan

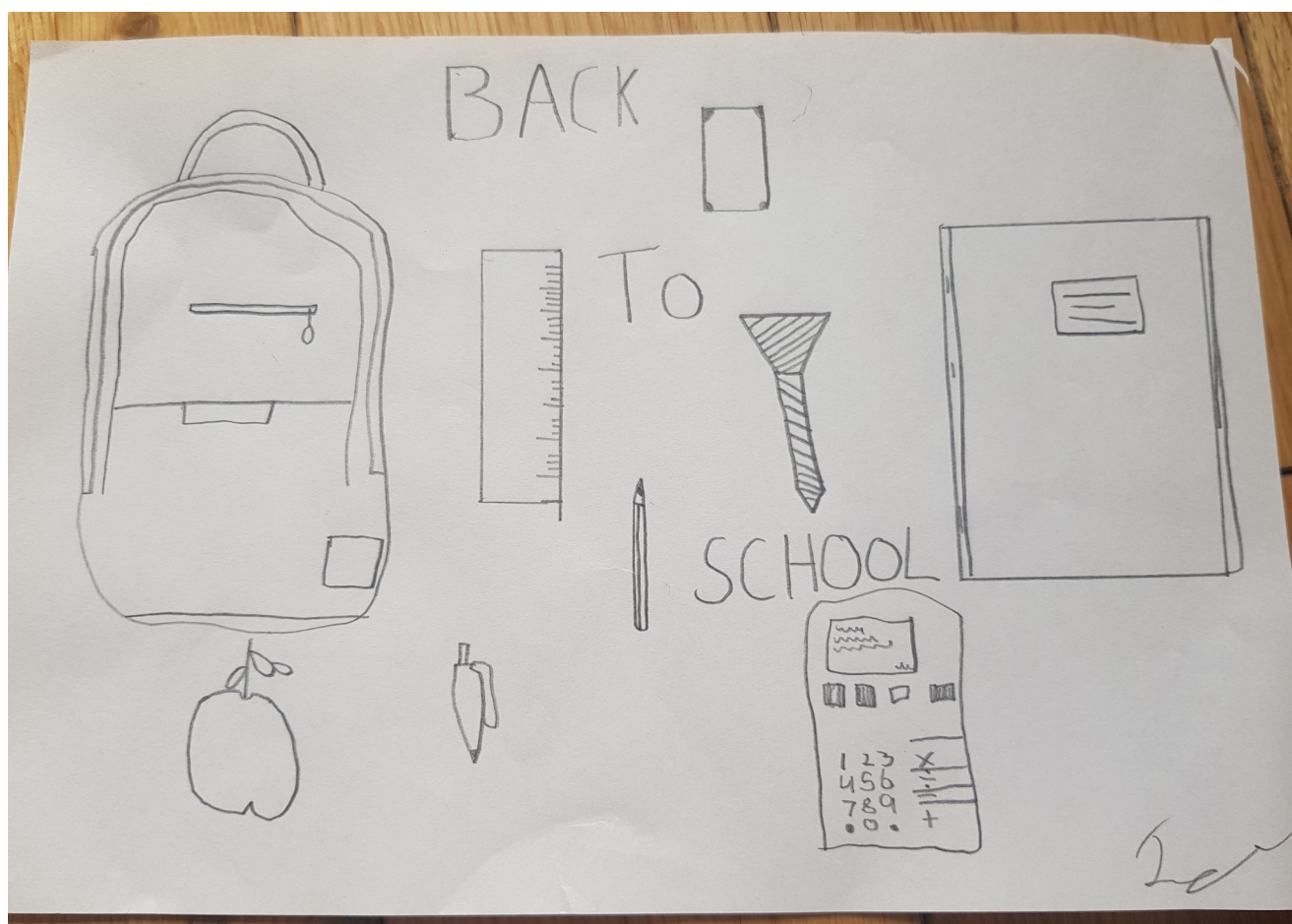
What works well for me at school?

Who can I ask for help at school?

What can I do for myself if I feel worried?



Ask an adult to help you fill this in. This is your plan for going back to school.



Picture by Jake (age 11)

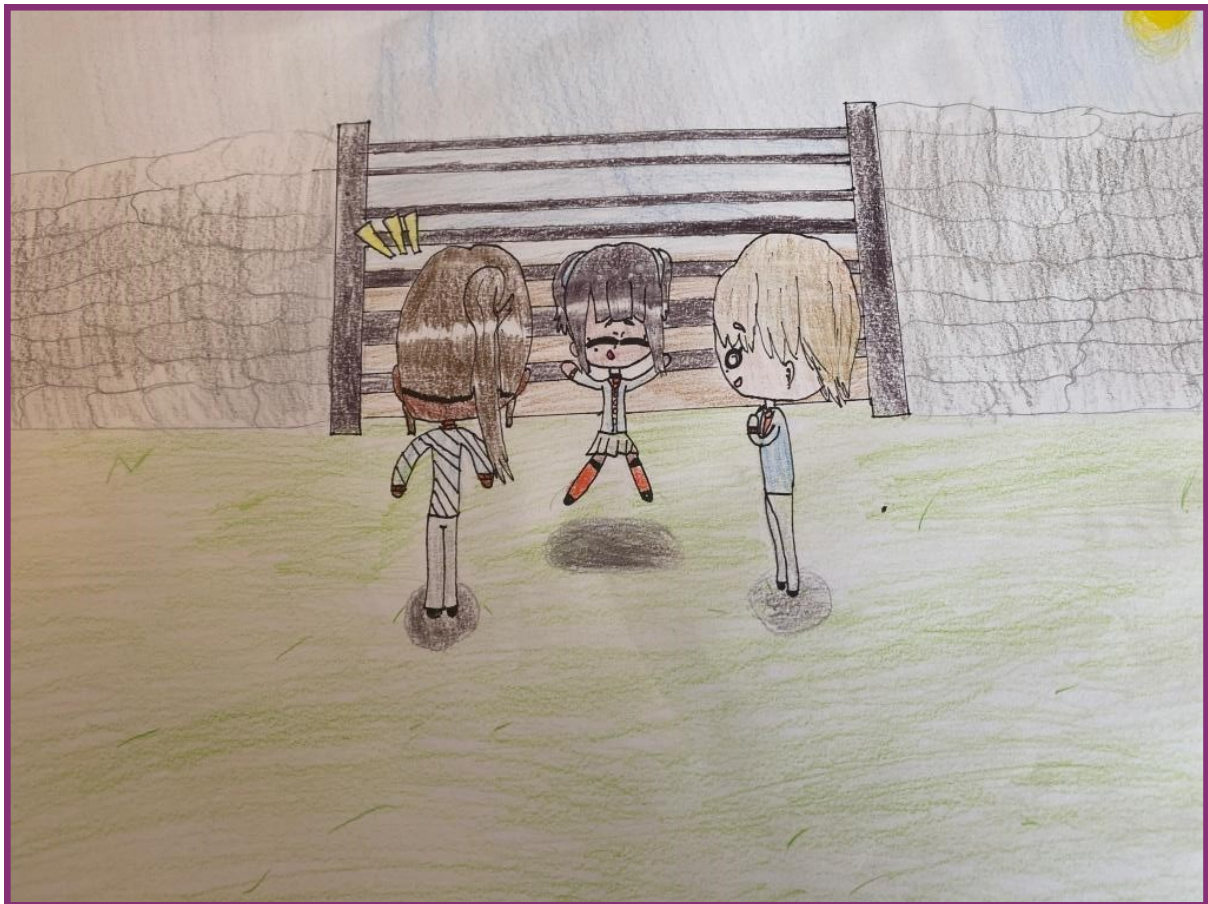
This resource represents a multi agency collaboration within Manchester. Contributors include Specialist Speech and Language Therapists; Educational Psychologists; Clinical Psychologists; Specialist Learning Disability Nurses; Occupational Therapists; and parents across the city.

Appendix B

**Back to school/ college
pack for young people.**



Back to school or college



A pack for young people

Contents

Introduction.....	3
Identifying emotions.....	4
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Managing worries.....	8
Fight or flight.....	11
Relaxation.....	13
Wellbeing.....	14
Friendships.....	16
Sensory.....	18
Getting going.....	19
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Remember, you can choose which parts of this booklet are useful for you, and ignore the pages which are not useful.



Introduction

Lockdown in the UK started on Monday 23rd March 2020. This meant that schools were closed for most pupils, and many of the activities that you enjoyed doing may also have stopped.

You probably have not been able to see your friends, and some of your family for a long time, and time outside your house was limited.

As the lockdown finishes, schools will start to re-open and you will have to go back to school, or perhaps even start at a new school. Some young people may already be attending school, but things may still change as more pupils return to your school or class.

This pack has been made to help you think about returning to school, and to give strategies and tips to help you to cope with change.

We hope this will make you feel more confident about returning to school, and to reduce any feelings of anxiety.

Some of the contents of this booklet may be helpful for you, and other bits may not feel helpful. You can use the sections that are helpful, and ignore the bits which are not.



Identifying Emotions

You might have lots of different feelings about returning to school, perhaps you are excited to see your friends, or maybe you feel anxious or worried about going back, some people might be feeling frightened, or stressed about the work they have missed.

Whatever you are feeling, it is a completely normal reaction to change and uncertainty. Everybody will be feeling a mixture of emotions.

Relaxed

Nervous

Angry

Embarrassed

Stressed

Excited

Happy

Sad

Worried

Confused

Shame

Frustrated


Joyful

Annoyed



Circle or colour in the ones that match how you are feeling about going back to school.

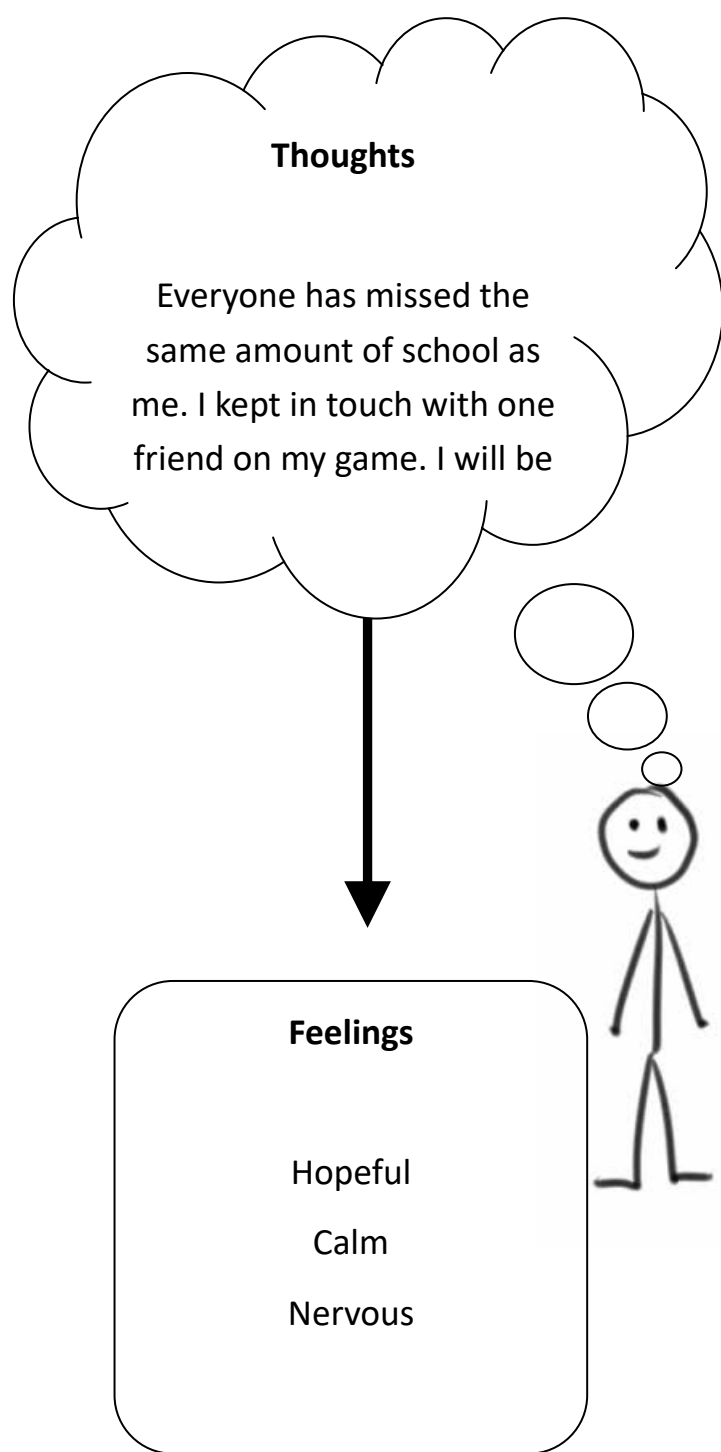
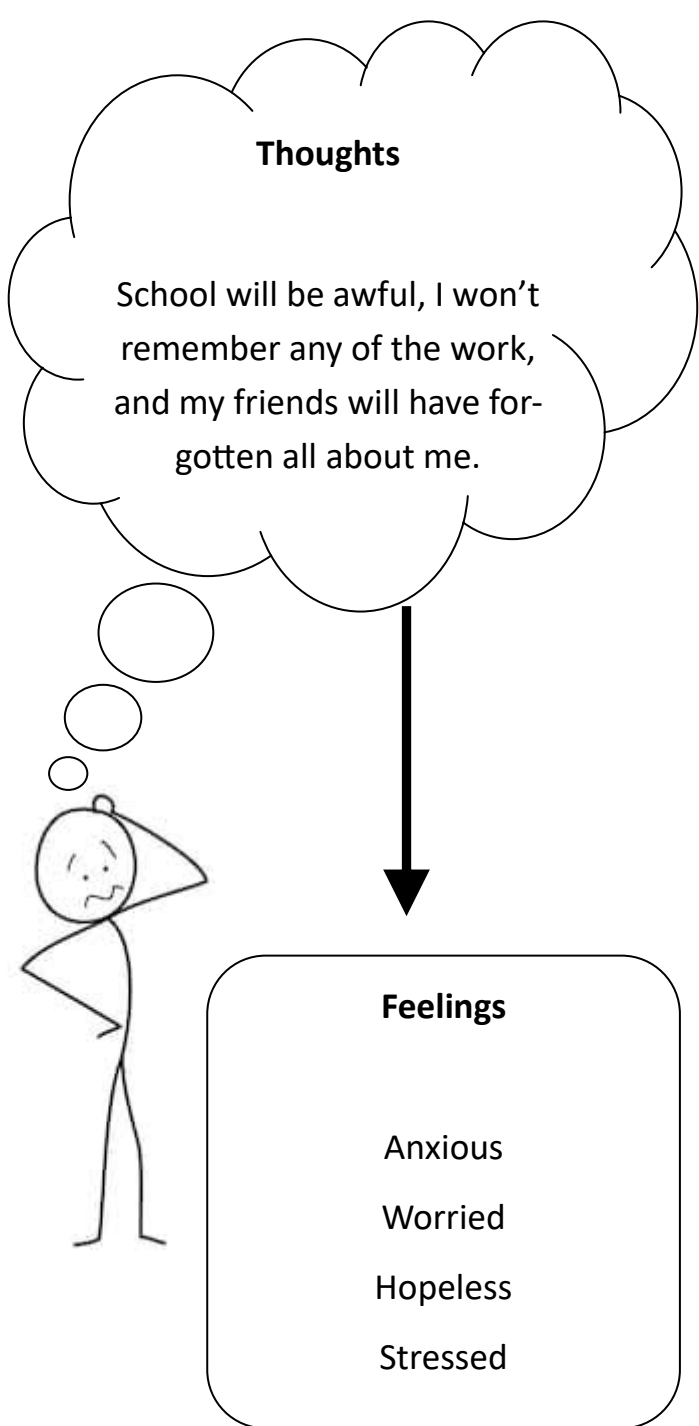
Are there any other words or pictures that describe how you are feeling?

 Try talking your family, or someone who you trust about how you are feeling.

Thoughts and Feelings

Our emotions, or feelings, are connected to the thoughts that we have in our head about ourselves and others. If your thoughts about returning to school are all negative, then you are more likely to feel anxious, worried or afraid.

Below are two examples of how thoughts can change the way you feel:



What are your thoughts about going back to school?



Write them down, or talk about your thoughts with a family member, or someone who you trust.

My thoughts.....



How do these thoughts make you feel?

Managing Worries

Worries, or negative thoughts, can get stuck in our head and go round and round. There are two main strategies for managing these thoughts:

1. Switching attention to something else.
2. Challenging negative thoughts.

We will look at both these options over the next two pages.

1 Switching attention.

Distraction. This means doing something to try to keep my mind off my up-setting thoughts. It is difficult for anyone to really focus on thinking about two things at once. Concentrating on something else, e.g. a computer game, or watching a funny film, can block out my worries. If I am not listening to my negative thoughts there is nothing to keep my negative feelings going.

Being 'mindful'/staying in the present

Focussing my attention on something that is real and is happening right now, rather than focusing on my thoughts. This could be focussing on the noises I can hear, or concentrating on an object in my hand. I could try making a list of:

- 5 things I can see right now
- 4 things I can hear right now
- 3 things I can touch, and reach out and touch them, right now
- 2 things I can smell
- 1 slow, deep breath.

Then focus on your breathing, before shifting your focus of attention onto something different.....

2 Challenging negative thoughts.



JUDGE*

Statement / Belief: what's on trial?



Rate your belief that this is true (0 - 100%)



Look at the evidence for:

The Defence*	The Prosecution*
What tells you this statement/belief is true? What <u>hard factual</u> evidence is there?	What tells you this statement/belief isn't totally true, all of the time? What is opinion and what factual evidence is there? Consider what others (witnesses) would say.
.....
Summarise the defence's comments	Summarise the prosecution's comments
Rate your belief in this summary (0-100%)	Rate your belief in this summary (0-100%)

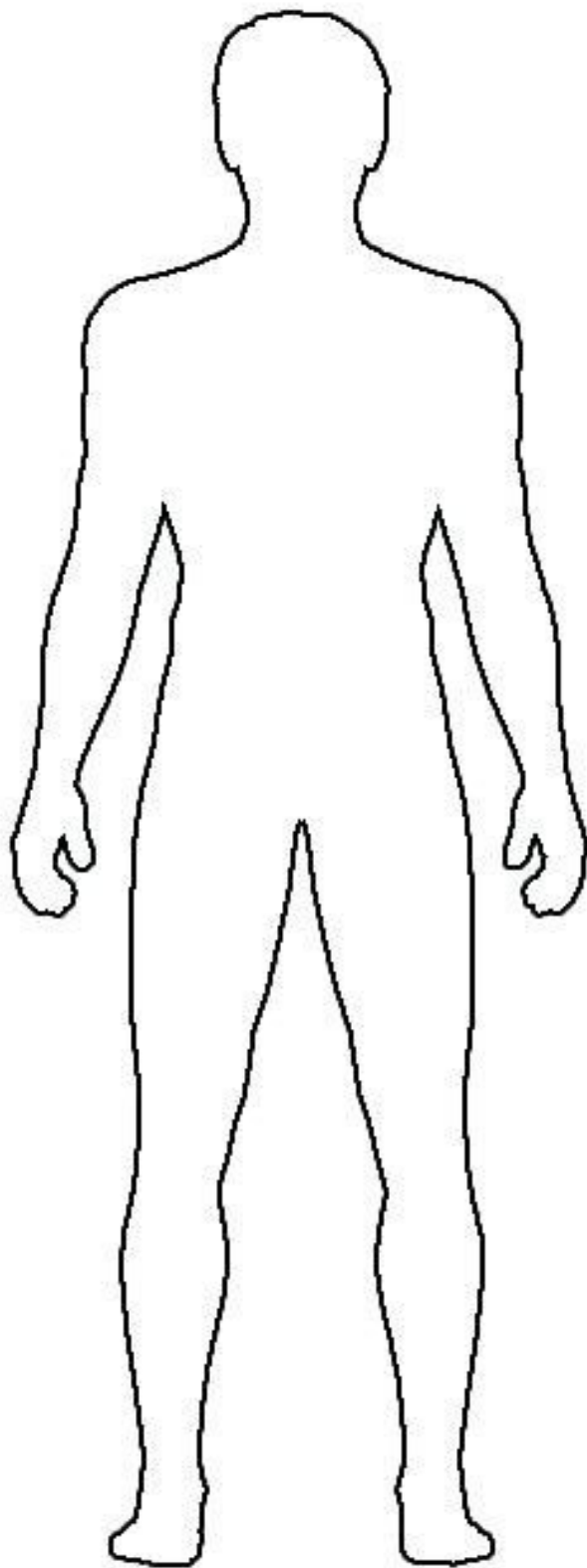
Review the Evidence & Judge's Summing Up*
 Find a closing statement that is based on the evidence, realistic, rational and balanced.



How much do you believe that this statement is true? (0 - 100%)

**Insert client's name*

Your emotions, or feelings, can affect how you feel inside your body.⁵⁰ For example, when you are anxious, you may get a headache, feel sick, your heart might beat faster, or you may sweat more.



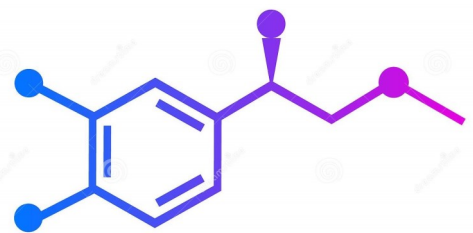
What happens to your body when you feel anxious, worried or afraid? Draw or write it on the picture.

Fight or flight?

Our thoughts tell us that we are in danger!



Our brain processes the 'danger' signals.



The hormone Adrenaline is released to prepare our body for danger.

adrenaline

Adrenaline tells our body to get ready to **Fight**, or to run away **Flight**. This makes our heart beat faster to deliver more oxygen to our muscles.



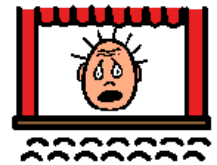
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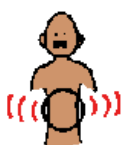
This biological mechanism in our bodies has developed to try to help us survive in dangerous situations. This would have been particularly important for early humans who faced real danger most of the time (e.g. from sabre-toothed tigers).



We can still get the same adrenaline response even if we experience a situation as threatening (i.e. stressful), but are not in any actual danger, e.g. doing an exam, entering a room of new people. Sometimes when might experience a number of different stressful situations in a day and our feelings of stress and tension can really build up.



The effects of adrenaline on our bodies can feel unpleasant (e.g. feeling sick, breathing fast) but are not dangerous. We are not ill. These unpleasant physical feelings we get when we are anxious or angry can keep the anxious and angry emotions going.



One way to try to control anxious and angry emotions is to try to reduce the physical feelings that go with them. We can use relaxation ideas to try to calm our bodies reactions.

Relaxation

Using relaxation strategies to calm your body will send a message to your brain that you are safe. This will help to calm anxious thoughts and feelings.

Listen to music	Go outside	Use a mindfulness app or do meditation
Play a sport or jump on a trampoline	Play with your family pet	Read a book or magazine
Watch something funny on TV	Do some baking	Hug someone in your family
Play with some sensory toys	Draw, paint or be creative	Look at photographs which make you happy
Practice a deep breathing exercise	Do some colouring in	Have a bubble bath

Wellbeing

Positive Emotion

What are the things which make you feel good, and give pleasure and enjoyment?

Engagement

What are your hobbies and interests? What keeps your brain distracted from worries?

Relationships

Who is important in your life? How can you keep in touch with them?

Meaning

What is important in your life? How can your interests help others or the world around you?

Accomplishments

What are you good at? What are your strengths? Feel proud of what you have achieved.



Add your own ideas on the next page.....



Ask someone to help you to complete the boxes below and add ideas of things which are important in your life to increase your positive wellbeing.

Positive Emotion

Engagement

Relationships

Meaning

Accomplishments

Friendships

You may feel nervous about seeing your friends again. Perhaps you kept in touch with them on social media, or on the phone. Maybe you haven't had any contact with people from school for a couple of months. On the next page is a social story which talks about friendships.

Below is some ideas that you might find helpful to get you started when you do see friends at school.

Seeing friends again - helpful ideas

Here are some things that will help me when I see my friends again

- Smile
- Ask them to join in with something they're doing
- (Sometimes I might want to wait to see what my friends are doing first. Then I can find out what game they are playing and can ask to join in)
- See whether they tell me anything. I can then say something back.
- Find out what they have been doing at home
- Find out what they liked doing at home
- Talk about any interests / things we both like doing
- Ask if they want to do something at breaktime or lunchtime
- Be friendly and helpful
- If I am stuck, I can tell an adult and they might be able to help me to

Seeing my friends again

Being at home has meant I have not been able to see my friends much

When I go back to school I will see my friends again

I may have different feelings about seeing my friends



I may have missed my friends and be happy and/or excited to see them

I may feel a bit shy; nervous or worried seeing my friends again



I may feel I have forgotten how to be with my friends

All of these feelings are okay

It is natural for it to feel a bit strange when I see my friends again

It is okay for me to get used being with my friends

When I see my friends I can ask them how they are. If I have missed them, I can tell them that

I can practice some different things I might say when I see them again in the classroom; at lunch time or at break time

My parents can help me practice what I might say

Things I might say:-

Hi! I missed you!

Hi! How are you?

What are you doing? Can I join you?

Can we sit together at lunch time?

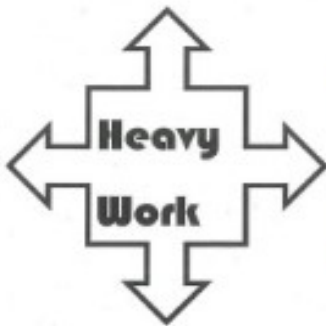
Hi, how are you?
What did you do during
lockdown?

Sensory ideas

Calming strategies for Home



- Crawling under & over blankets
- Obstacle Course
- Star jumps
- Rolling across the room wrapping up in blanket Burrito
- Trampoline



- Squeezing bath toys
- Wall push-ups
- Carry something heavy
- Wheelbarrow walks
- Playdough
- Digging in the garden
- Theraband
- Making bread / kneading dough



- Chewy snacks ie jam on toast
- Crunchy snacks ie raw carrot or bread sticks
- Blowing games / bubbles
- Warm drink



- Wrap up tightly in a blanket
- Sandwich between cushions
- Give yourself a hug
- Wrap in warm towel
- Tactile box



- Use natural light when possible



Use soft tone of voice



- Calming sounds ie Rain Rain App
- Soft voices
- Reduce noise

Getting going

It can be hard getting back into a routine when you have been at home for so long. It might be helpful to plan out your school routine before you go back.

- I can think about what I need for school before I go back!
- I can think about what time I need to get to school.
- I can then work out with my parents what I need to do get ready beforehand.

On the night before, set alarm for:



Get up at:



Get ready: draw or list what I have to do



Leave home at:



Travelling to school: draw or write about how you'll travel to school and who



Arrive at school at:



Having a plan, and getting organised can help you to feel calmer, and more in control of the situation.

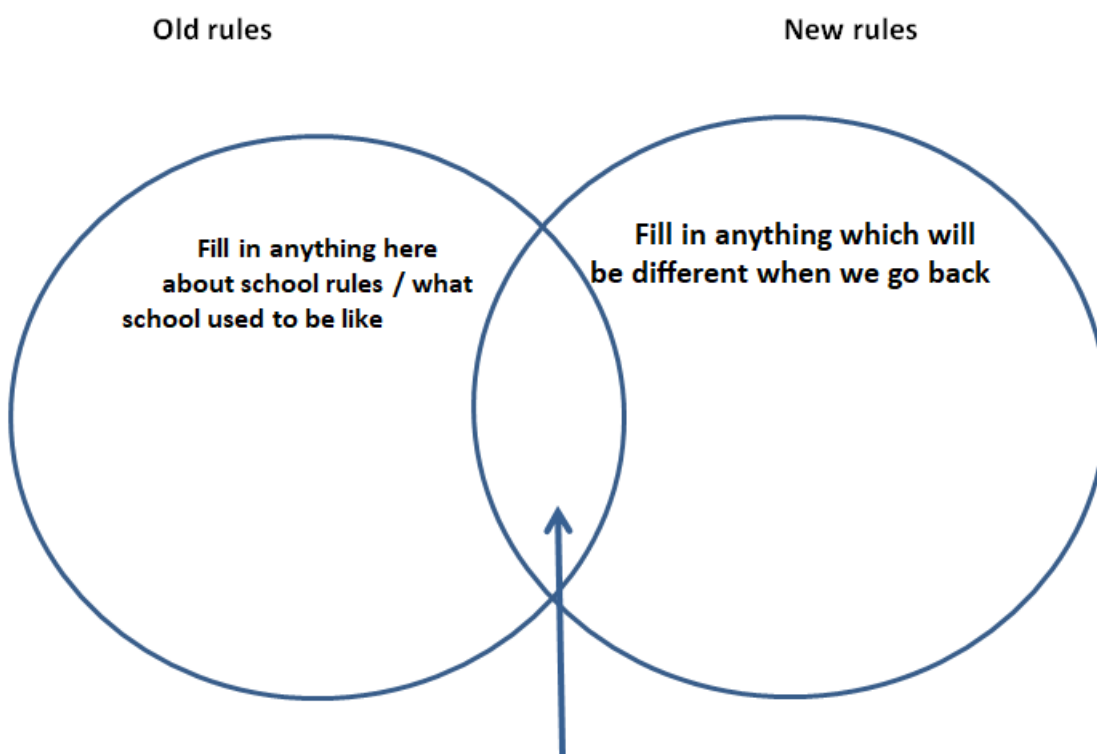
Same or different?

Some things will be the same and some will be different when I go back to school.

It is likely that my teachers, the other children and me will have to spread out and not stand so closely together when we go back. We might need to do this for some time. This is because being close to people can help the flu (Corona virus) spread / pass from one person to another more quickly.

My parents and teachers will help me to understand what is staying the same and what may have changed. They will help me understand and talk to me about:

- The timetable (Structure of the day)
- Wearing uniform



Where the two circles overlap put in anything / where the schools rule remains the same

My Plan



Ask your family or a trusted adult to help you to fill in this page with a plan for going back to school.

What works well for me at school?

Who can I ask for help at school?

What can I do for myself if I feel anxious or worried?

Questions

Are there any questions that you would like to ask your teachers before you go back to school? Some other young people have asked these sorts of questions.....

Will I be in the same classrooms as before?

Will I have to stay 2 metres away from everyone?

Who will my teachers be?

I have important exams next year, how will my teachers help us catch up?

What if someone in my year group gets sick?



There is space on the next page for YOU to write down any questions that you have. You or your parent can then share these with your school, and they will probably be able to answer.

All schools have had to make special plans to make sure that everyone is as safe as possible when they come back to school. Nobody wants anyone to get sick, and everyone is working as best as they can to make schools safe, healthy places to learn.

Don't forget that we know that children are very, very, VERY unlikely to be seriously ill, even if they do catch COVID-19.

If you have any questions for your school, write them here, and either you or your parent can share them with your teachers.....



Picture by Tian Patel, age 6

This resource represents a multi agency collaboration within Manchester. Contributors include Specialist Speech and Language Therapists; Educational Psychologists; Clinical Psychologists; Specialist Learning Disability Nurses; Occupational Therapists; and parents across the city.

Appendix C

**Back to school pack for
parents.**



Back to school



A Guide for Parents

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Welcome.....	3
Communication.....	4
Routines.....	6
Using visual supports.....	7
Using emotion scales.....	9
Golden rules to support your child’s understanding.....	10
Helping your child communicate about going back to school.....	11
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Friendship.....	15
Social distancing.....	16
Going back to school.....	17
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Starting high school/ secondary school.....	19
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Sensory strategies.....	24
Wellbeing and self-care.....	25
Top tips.....	26
Further information and support.....	27

Welcome

As we create this booklet, we realise that many of you will have been on an emotional rollercoaster over the last few months. Covid-19 and the UK lockdown, which started on 23rd March 2020, has completely changed our everyday lives. Many parents have had to adjust to home-schooling, working from home and limiting their children's time outdoors. For parents of children with additional needs, the difficulties may have been even greater. Some children may have adjusted well to learning at home, and may even have thrived without the additional stress of school and constant social interactions, other young people may have found this time incredibly difficult.

You are likely to have lots of different thoughts and emotions about your child returning to school, perhaps you will welcome the routine, or maybe you are anxious and worried that your child will struggle to cope.



This pack has been produced to help you manage your child's emotions, provide strategies and tips to support their transition back into school life, and to explore how to maintain your own wellbeing.

There are also separate booklets available for primary school children, and young people age 11-18.

Communication

Your child may struggle to communicate their thoughts and feelings, and you may notice an increase in difficult behaviours when your young person becomes anxious or worried about returning to school. As parents, it is important to prepare your child for what will happen, and to help them find a way to explore their emotions.

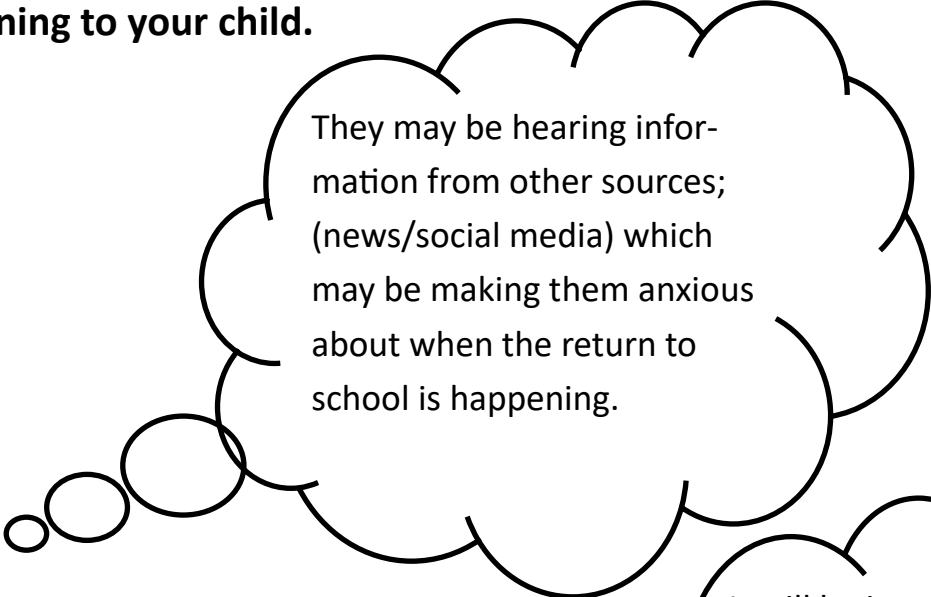
We have included some information in this pack to support you in communicating effectively with your child at this time.

There are different pages for each topic.

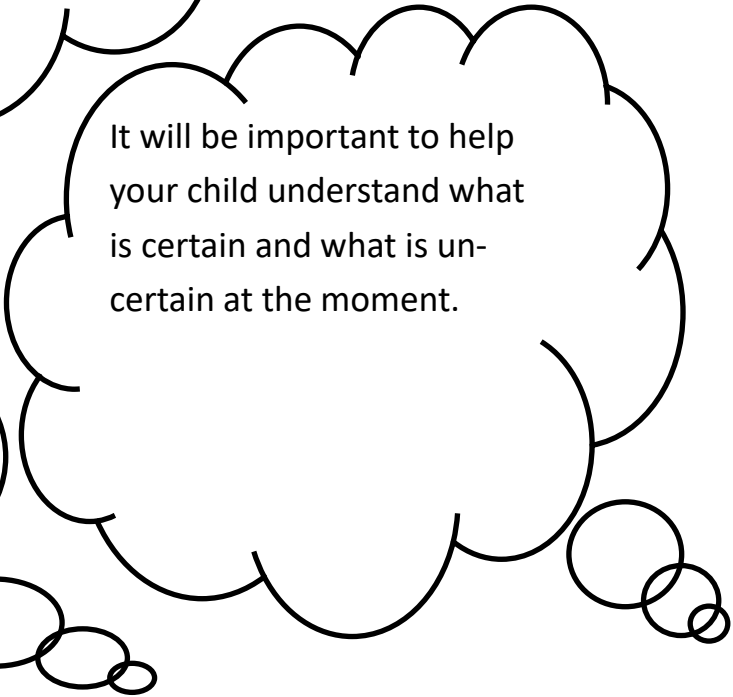
1. Supporting your child's understanding about the return to school
2. Supporting your child to communicate about feelings, emotions and worries with their child
3. Supporting your child to reconnect with friends
4. Supporting your child to communicate with you about school and home
5. Developing a Communication Passport



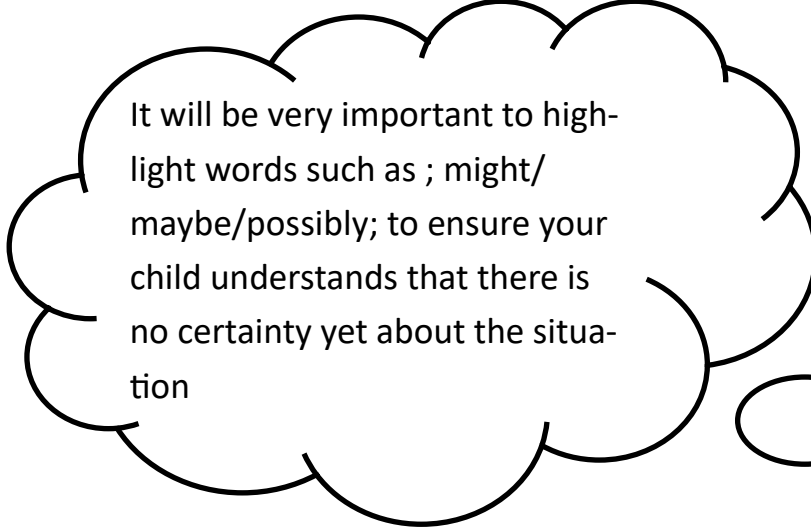
In order to support your child's understanding of the transition back to school; it will be very important for you to find ways to communicate what is happening to your child.



They may be hearing information from other sources; (news/social media) which may be making them anxious about when the return to school is happening.



It will be important to help your child understand what is certain and what is uncertain at the moment.



It will be very important to highlight words such as ; might/ maybe/possibly; to ensure your child understands that there is no certainty yet about the situation

We have included a “social Story” which you can read to your child. We know it is very helpful for children to hear the same words repeated many times and also for them to be able to read and see the same information as well.

This is a very helpful way of communicating to your child; especially if they are asking the same question repeatedly.

It will be most helpful for your child if you use the same words on the social story every-time they ask you about going back to school. It will be helpful if everyone in the family is also using the same words to talk to them about going back to school.

Routines

Most people will have changed their routines considerably since lockdown.

Your child may be going to bed later and getting up later as well.

Your child may be spending much more time than usual on a phone or playing computer games.

It will be really helpful for them to start to get back into more of a school routine a few weeks before the schools go back.

Some children find it really helpful to have pictures of different parts of their routine. We call this a **visual timetable**. We have included some information in this pack about how to set up a visual timetable.

You may already have been using a visual timetable during lockdown; it might help to use different colour borders round the symbols if you are starting to help your child to understand about going back to school.

Your child may well be anxious about the return to school. For some children it will be helpful for them to start using calendars so they can see when the return to school is happening

An example is shown below of how you might help your child see when the return to school is happening.

It will be important to show them that they can still do the activities they enjoy even after they go back to school.

	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Morning	Computer games	Computer games	School work at home	School work at home	School work at home	School work at home	School work at home
Afternoon	Go to the park	Watch a film	Computer games	Computer games	Computer games	Computer games	Computer games
Morning	Computer games	Computer games	SCHOOL 9-12	SCHOOL 9-12	SCHOOL 9-12	SCHOOL 9-12	SCHOOL 9-12
Afternoon	Park	Garden	Computer games	Computer games	Computer games	Computer games	Computer games

Using visual supports

Your child may find it difficult to understand and prepare for changes to routine. You may have already worked hard to help him/her understand that there is no school and that activities outside your home are cancelled.

Going back to school after a long break is another important transition point.

Being prepared for change can help children to understand what is expected and to manage anxiety.

Using a Visual Calendar

A visual calendar might be made using photographs, symbols, pictures or written words. This will depend on your child's understanding.

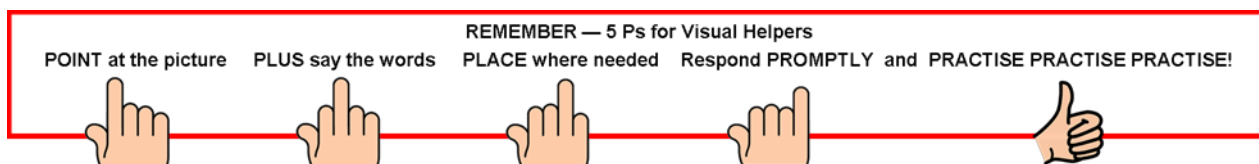


	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Morning	Computer games	Computer games	School work at home	School work at home	School work at home	School work at home	School work at home
Afternoon	Go to the park	Watch a film	Computer games	Computer games	Computer games	Computer games	Computer games
Morning	Computer games	Computer games	SCHOOL 9-12	SCHOOL 9-12	SCHOOL 9-12	SCHOOL 9-12	SCHOOL 9-12
Afternoon	Park	Garden	Computer games	Computer games	Computer games	Computer games	Computer games

Using a calendar **now** will help your child get used to seeing what is happening in the week. You could try one with pictures of home and some activities you will do everyday. That means when you do start introducing 'school' in advance, your child will already understand what the calendar means.

You may already have been using a visual timetable during lockdown; it might help to use different colour borders/backgrounds round the symbols if you are starting to help your child to understand about going back to school.

It will be important to show children that we can still do activities we enjoy after we go back to school.



How to use Visuals—The 5 Ps for Visual Helpers

POINT: Make a clear POINTing gesture to direct your child’s attention to the Timetable.

PLUS: PLUS say the word to match, have special words for when you check the Timetable, for example, “let’s check,” then use simple language to name the activity, “park.”

PLACE: Have the Visual Timetable in the PLACE you need it for instance on the wall of the living room at your child’s height.

PROMPTLY: Show the Timetable picture then act PROMPTLY = point + say + do straightaway.

PRACTISE: Give your child plenty of PRACTICE with the Visual Timetable.

Other ideas:

- Some children might need to remove pictures to help them understand when an activity has finished. You could use a finished box or bag.



- Some children find lots of information hard to process and may find a calendar hard to understand. Try reducing the number of pictures. You could try a week-view calendar with only 'home' and 'school' on. You could use a visual timetable with a few pictures, or just show a single picture of home/school at the start of each day.







Using emotion scales

Sharing emotions and describing feelings can be challenging and frustrating for you and your child. Some children find it hard to understand their own emotions and therefore talk about them, some may find it difficult to use the right words or know how to communicate these in a way that others can understand. Using Emotions Scales can be helpful to help young people to identify and share their feelings, and can also be helpful to guide others to know how to help.

The 5 Point Scales™ can be used to help the young person and other people recognise and share how they feel, as well as give strategies to try to manage these reactions.

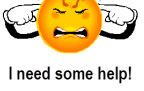


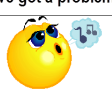

Developing a scale:

- Use one scale for a specific emotion (e.g. worried OR excited).
- Try to develop this with your young person (if they are able), to ensure shared understanding, ownership, accuracy and useful strategies. The more specific and personal the scale is to your child, the more effective it will be. B
- Break this emotion down into 5 steps, 1 is neutral (or relaxed), 5 is the most extreme (e.g. meltdown). It may be easiest to start with the outer numbers first (e.g. 1 and 5) as these are usually the easiest to identify. Think about and discuss specific situations or examples where your child experiences each step of the emotion.
- Add visuals for each step. These could be emojis or related to their favourite characters, or drawings. This will support understanding and interest.
- Add to the “what can I/others do” column together. Add simple, quick and practical ideas that your young person or others can do that may help them to regulate their emotional response or arousal. Consider your child’s ‘thinking’ ability at each step (e.g. as you move up the scale, thinking gets harder, so more practical, distraction or sensory strategies may be more useful).
- Less is more: Keep it simple for your young person and others to understand.

Worry/Anxiety		
5		freaking out panic
4		really worried
3		worried nervous anxious
2		a little worried
1		okay

Using the scale:

- Share with others: (at least) a copy at home, at school (with a teacher) and in your child’s bag.
- Model and practice using the scale with your child. Other family members can get involved too.
- Check in with them at various times of the day. Introduce it when they are fairly calm/positive). You can establish this whilst at home.
- Follow their lead: They may use to communicate using the numbers, colours, visual, character names, or descriptions. Go with whatever they find easiest and share this information with others.
- When the return to school, it might be useful to identify specific times of the day where a member of staff can check in with your child, using the scale (e.g. first thing, before/after break, lunchtime, etc.)

Feelings Chart		
	How I feel	What I can do
5	 I need some help!	<input type="checkbox"/> Ask to go visit Mrs. Holland <input type="checkbox"/> Ask to take a break/use therapy <input type="checkbox"/> Hold on to Luke Skywalker (if he is here) <input type="checkbox"/> Take 4 or 5 deep breaths
4	 I'm really upset.	<input type="checkbox"/> Ask to go visit Mrs. Holland <input type="checkbox"/> Ask to take a break/use therapy <input type="checkbox"/> Hold on to Luke Skywalker (if he is here) <input type="checkbox"/> Take 4 or 5 deep breaths
3	 I've got a problem.	<input type="checkbox"/> Let a teacher know that you have a problem and need some help <input type="checkbox"/> Play with your squishy thing <input type="checkbox"/> Hold on to Luke Skywalker (if he is here) <input type="checkbox"/> Take 4 or 5 deep breaths
2	 Things are pretty good.	<input type="checkbox"/> Play with my squishy thing <input type="checkbox"/> Think of my favorite things <input type="checkbox"/> Say "I'm going to be O.K." to yourself <input type="checkbox"/> Take 3 or 4 deep breaths
1	 Feeling Great!	<input type="checkbox"/> Enjoy the feeling! <input type="checkbox"/> Have fun

Golden Rules to support your child's understanding

- 1. Use pictures and written words to help your child to understand what is going to happen**
- 2. Use calendars and timetables to show when things are going to happen**
- 3. Use consistent language and emphasise the words that help your child understand there is uncertainty.**
- 4. Ensure that before the return to school they have lots of time to participate in the activities they enjoy.**
- 5. Be prepared to repeat the information lots of times**

Helping your child to communicate with you about going back to school

Use some emoticons for happy/sad and neutral.



Use the pictures we have provided on the next sheet to get your child to sort how they are feeling about different aspects of home/school

Introduce the discussion by saying: “I thought it would be good be nice for us to talk a bit about what has been going well at home; and what you have found more difficult about being at home.”

Tell your child that if something is going well; they put it on the **smiley icon**. Sometimes well/sometimes not well on the **neutral icon** and if it is going badly put it on the **sad icon**.

Give your child the picture and say “how are things going at home with seeing your friends?” or “how are things going with doing your school work?”

- Try not to ask any other questions or make any judgement about where your child puts the different items.
- Once they have finished you can ask them if there is anything else that they want to add or anything they want to move.
- Comment in a neutral tone about where your child has put things; “I see things aren’t going well with your friends” “I see that things are going well with playing on the computer”
- You can then repeat this and ask them about what goes well at school.
- This is an opportunity for your child to let you know their worries about school.

Pictures for sorting activity for school/home



Need pictures of:

Home/school/friends/dinners/computer games/reading/work/teachers/
garden/park/tv

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin purple border, intended for drawing or pasting pictures related to the sorting activity.

Friendships

Your child may be feeling a bit anxious about seeing their friends again.

They may have been keeping in touch via social media; or it may have been difficult for them to do this.

It will help their transition back to school if they start to make contact with their peers again

We have included a social story about friendships which might be helpful to read through with your child

It might be helpful for them to have a socially distanced meet with a friend in the park before they go back to school

It may be important for them to understand that they might not be able to do have the same kind of physical contact as they did previously.

(see social story on page 15)



Social Stories

Social stories were developed by Carol Gray. <https://carolgraysocialstories.com/>

They are a helpful way of supporting children to understand new situations.

We enclose a number of template stories that you can use; it is really important that the stories are accurate; so please change them so that they are right for your child.

If you need any help with personalising the Social Stories; please contact the Speech and Language Therapy Team



Seeing my friends again

Being at home has meant I have not been able to see my friends much

When I go back to school I will probably see most of my friends again

I may have different feelings about seeing my friends

I may have missed my friends and be happy and/or excited to see them

I may feel a bit shy; nervous or worried seeing my friends again

I may feel I have forgotten how to be with my friends

All of these feelings are okay

It is natural for it to feel a bit strange when I see my friends again

It is okay for me to get used being with my friends

When I see my friends I can ask them how they are. If I have missed them, I can tell them that

I can practice some different things I might say when I see them again in the classroom; at lunch time or at break time

My parents can help me practice what I might say

I will be really pleased if I say something nice or show I am interested

Social Distancing

There is a virus which is making some people very unwell.

Important scientists have given everyone new rules which they think keeps everyone as safe and well as possible from the virus.

The scientists say we should try and stay 2 metres away from each other.

This will be really hard in school; but our teachers are working hard to work out the best way to do this.

My friends and I will have to find new ways to greet each other; we will need to greet each other from 2 metres apart.

This means we will be OK to do a wave or a thumbs up.

There will be probably lots of new ways that we will be able to let our friends know we are happy to see them

Going back to school

We are going to be going back to school in

We have been at home since the middle of March

School might look and feel very different when we go back

We will probably be in smaller class groups

We might be in a different form from our friends.

We might start and end the day at a different time

We might be learning in different ways

Our teachers will tell us as much as they can about what will be different

Most of the children will be worried about what is different.

I will try and talk to my teacher or Mum if I am feeling worried

Changes to plans *social* *story*

At the moment, the Coronavirus is about. The virus can spread between people, so the government are giving people rules to help stop it spreading and keep people safe.

As the number of people with the virus changes, the rules may change. So if only a few people have the virus, it may be OK to go out more. If lots of people have the virus there may be more rules about not going out.

The government is trying to plan who can go back to school and when they can go back. Schools are thinking about how to organise things, so children can learn, and everybody can stay safe. The government and schools are making plans but their plans may have to change if they get new information about how the virus is spreading.

I may feel worried if I don't know for certain what will happen and when. I can talk to my mum or dad about it.

If plans change, this will be for a good reason.

I will be starting high school soon.

Some things will be the same as primary school and some will be different.

Some of my friends may go to the same high school as me and some may go to a different high school.

I may travel to school a different way. I can talk to my parent or carer about how I will get to school. I may need to think about what time to get up, to make sure I have enough time to get to school. It is a good idea to practice getting to school before school starts back.



I may need to take different things to school, like a PE kit, exercise books or a calculator. I may need different things on different days. My parent or carer can help me think about what things I will need each day.



I will have a form teacher, who I will usually see at form time, at the beginning of the school day. I will probably have different teachers for the other subjects. At high school, there are usually specialist teachers who are the experts in their subjects. I will still be doing Maths, English and Science. I may do some new subjects which I haven't done before.



At high school, you usually go to different rooms for each subject. I will have a timetable which says which subject I have when, and which room I need to go to.

High schools are often big. It may take me some time to find my way around. I can ask for a map of the school to help me. I can also ask teachers if I don't know how to get somewhere. The corridors can get quite busy. If I find this difficult, I can talk to a teacher about it.

At high school, teachers will give homework and will tell me when it needs to be done. If I do not understand what I need to do, I can ask them. I may have a planner to write down what I need to do, and when.

Because of Corona Virus, some things in high school may be different at the moment. We may sit further apart in class or at lunchtimes. We may have our breaks at different times. There may be other differences too. I can ask my teachers what would *usually* happen in a high school, and what is happening *just for a while* because of Corona Virus.



If there is something I am worried about, or do not understand, I can ask a teacher. Or I can talk to my parent or carer about it.

Changes at school

These are some areas of school life which might be different

1. Playtimes
2. Lunchtimes
3. Start and End of school
4. Use of lockers
5. Lunchtime activities
6. Access to outdoor play equipment
7. Wearing of masks

Your child's school will also have received a pack of information and ideas—they will be able to provide you with some social stories that will support your child's understanding of how things might be different when they go back to school.

Please contact the SENDCO at your child's school for further specific information about the above areas.



Communication passport

A Communication Passport is a way of helping other people understand your child's communication. You can include information about topics or interests your child has.

Your child may already have a Communication Passport; but their communication may have changed during lockdown; so it might be a good opportunity for this Communication Passport to be updated.

You can contact the Speech and Language Therapy Team if your Communication Passport needs updating; and they will be able to help you to make the alterations needed.

If you haven't had a Communication Passport before you can find a template for a Passport on this website <https://www.communicationpassports.org.uk/Home/> or you can contact the Speech and Language Therapy Team for supporting in developing a passport.

This is my
Communication Passport

Please place
your photo
here

Hello.
My name is:

I like to be
called:

Please read!

My communication passport will tell you
the best way to communicate with me.

To be reviewed on:	
Date reviewed:	

Things about Me

- I am VERY NOSY and I listen to everything - you've been warned!
- I am generally very cheerful, so there's usually a good reason if I'm upset - up to you to find out what is wrong. I can sometimes answer Yes/No questions.
- I am not very good at waiting - I just don't understand 'later'. If you tell me something is going to happen, I will expect it NOW!

How I Communicate

- I use my eyes and my face (& body) to show how I'm feeling.
- I can use my eyes to 'point' to things, or people. Ask me 'Can you show me with your eyes?'
- For 'NO' (or 'I don't like that') my face crumples up and I hang my head down. (Or: I get very cross...)
- For 'YES' (or 'I like that'), I throw my head & eyes up and flash you a winning smile

Things I'm good at

- I have a fabulous smile, and I'm good at using it to make friends and for 'flirting'
- Swimming - I'm a water baby with no fear
- Eating and drinking - bring it on!
- Playing - at the moment, it's going (on my bottom) on the trampoline (with someone)

Things that help me

- Get down to look me in the eye
- Say my name to make get me to look and listen
- Speak slowly
- Don't say too much - one 'chunk' of information at a time is just enough for me
- Then give me quiet time to take it in and think
- Show me things or point to things to help show what you mean. Some simple gestures and signs can help too.

My favourite things

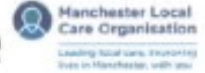
- Food! I love it all (except bananas).
- I like videos (not TV), Bob the Builder especially (the song), & In the Night Garden
- I love all music - especially singing Nursery rhymes I know and anything fast, loud and bouncy.
- My favourite game is 'rough and tumble' & tickling with my Dad

Tricky Things

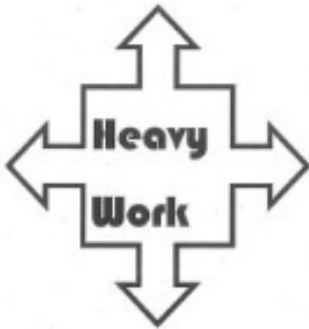
- I don't like touching sticky stuff.
- People keep wanting to give me symbols to look at, but I can't make much sense of them - yet. Best to stick to real objects and clear photos of things I know well. (I like being in charge of taking photos)
- People are not sure how well I see (that may be why I'm better at listening and choosing from spoken choices)

Sensory strategies

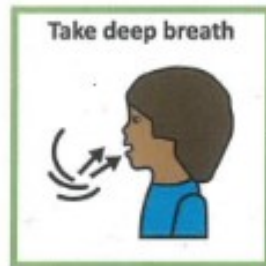
Calming strategies for Home



- Crawling under & over blankets
- Obstacle Course
- Star jumps
- Rolling across the room wrapping up in blanket Burrito
- Trampoline



- Squeezing bath toys
- Wall push-ups
- Carry something heavy
- Wheelbarrow walks
- Playdough
- Digging in the garden
- Theraband
- Making bread / kneading dough



- Chewy snacks ie jam on toast
- Crunchy snacks ie raw carrot or bread sticks
- Blowing games / bubbles
- Warm drink



- Wrap up tightly in a blanket
- Sandwich between cushions
- Give yourself a hug
- Wrap in warm towel
- Tactile box



- Use natural light when possible



Use soft tone of voice



- Calming sounds ie Rain Rain App
- Soft voices
- Reduce noise

Wellbeing and self-care

The period of transition back to school might be stressful for you and for your young person. At times of stress, it is even more important than usual to look after yourself, and to support your child in developing their own self-care.

There are lots of ideas and strategies in the child/ young person booklet to help you support your child to understand their emotions and create opportunities to develop their wellbeing.

Try to take at least five minutes per day for self-care, and encourage your child to do the same.

Listen to music	Go outside	Use a mindfulness app or do meditation
Do some exercise	Sit down with a cup of tea/ coffee	Read a book or magazine
Watch something funny on TV	Do some baking	Hug someone
Call one of your friends for a catch up	Draw, paint or be creative	Look at photographs which make you happy
Practice a deep breathing exercise	Do some colouring in	Have a bubble bath

Top Tips

1. Use pictures and words to help your child's understanding of their new routine
2. Be prepared to repeat the information about what is happening lots of times
3. Ensure your child has plenty of opportunities to continue to do the activities they love
4. Give your child the opportunity to share their worries and fears with you
5. Support your child to connect with their friends; virtually or a socially-distanced meet in the park
6. Use the social stories to help your child understand what might be different about school.



Further help and support

1. Visuals

- <https://do2learn.com/>
- <https://blogs.glowscotland.org.uk/glowblogs/communicationfriendlyenvironments/>

(useful visuals about social distancing)

2. Incredible five point scale

<https://www.5pointscale.com/>

3. Social Stories

<https://carolgraysocialstories.com/>

4. Communication Passports

<https://www.communicationpassports.org.uk/creating-passports/>

5. information about well-being and other useful information

<https://www.camhs-resources.co.uk/>



Picture by Tian Patel, age 6

This resource represents a multi agency collaboration within Manchester. Contributors include Specialist Speech and Language Therapists; Educational Psychologists; Clinical Psychologists; Specialist Learning Disability Nurses; Occupational Therapists; and parents across the city.