

Back to school routines

Useful tips to help children return to school following COVID-19

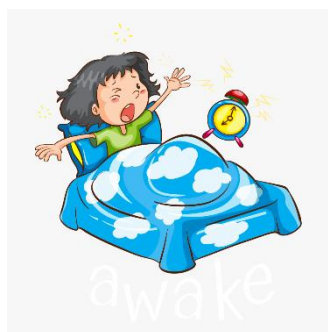
Most children have been off school since December. Some may find managing the return to school difficult but there are some simple things that parents and carers can do to make this return easier for their children.

Sleep and bedtimes- establish a good sleep routine

Bedtime routines may have changed while children have been off school and it is important that children are well rested before going back to school. A lack of sleep can effect a child's mood and their ability to learn. The following points can help to make sure your child is well rested.



- ❖ Make sure that they get enough sleep, primary aged children need around 9 to 11 hours per day while secondary aged children need around 8 to 10 hours.
- ❖ If your child has been waking up later in the morning, start waking them up 15 – 30 minutes earlier each day and going to bed 15-30 minutes earlier each day. This way the change is gradual and it allows time for your child to adjust.
- ❖ Remove distractions from the bedroom if they disrupt sleep (such as games consoles or phones)
- ❖ Practise good sleep routines
 - Start quiet time about one hour before your child goes to sleep, by tidying away toys and screens.
 - Run your child a bath and keep to a ten minute time limit.
 - Brush teeth
 - Try a low brightness bedside lamp
 - Share stories and talk with your child
 - Say goodnight



Waking up- practise getting up for school

Some children have got used to being able to get up when they want and are used to waking up naturally. Start helping your children to wake up at the time that they normally would on a school day.

- ❖ Set an alarm so that your child is awake at a set time.
- ❖ Try to prevent you child from going back to sleep.
- ❖ Plan an enjoyable morning activity that is 'worth getting up for'.

Morning routine- getting used to the school day

The old routines of the school day may have become lost while children have been off school. Before children start to go back start to make the days more like the school day with set times for meals, snacks and activities.



- ❖ Start to eat breakfast and get dressed at the times that you normally would on a school day.
- ❖ Have a snack/break time around the same time as your child's play time (10:30 – 11:00)
- ❖ Have a set lunch time that is the same as the school's lunch (12:00 – 12:30). It may be helpful to give your child the type of food they normally have for lunch in school- especially if they have a limited diet.
- ❖ Practise the school day. For younger children, this can be done by playing schools to help them familiarise themselves with the expectations of school. For older children this could be done by talking about the school day.
- ❖ Try on school uniforms, school shoes and PE kits to check they still fit your child. Use this time to check uniforms are clean and ready for school next week.



Access to technology- getting ready to leave technology at home.

Whilst off school, many of us have spent more time using technology. This has helped us to keep in touch with friends and provide us with entertainment. Some children may find leaving the technology behind challenging when returning to school.

- ❖ Monitor screen time using the screen time or digital wellbeing features of your child's device. This will allow you to see how much time your child is spending on each app.
- ❖ There are no set rules for screen time, but excessive screen time such as accessing social media or 'junk' content can be unhealthy (for example YouTube videos or TikTok).
- ❖ Maintain control over what your child accesses and when, have a plan for when screen time happens. For older children this can be negotiated and agreed with them.
- ❖ Try to limit the amount of junk screen time and only give your child access to devices for a specific purpose e.g. read about an area of interest or watch a specific video on i-player.