

RETURN TO EDUCATION

KEEPING YOUR CHILDREN SAFE FROM COVID

A Guide for Parents and Carers

MARCH 2021

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TO ALL PARENTS AND CARERS

The Covid-19 pandemic has proved to be extraordinarily challenging to adults and children globally. The impact on our children is perhaps the most challenging. **Over the past year, children and young people have seen their lives transformed in a way that has never been experienced before.** Usual routines have been disrupted, the process of learning has changed and social contact with peers and leisure activity has been halted. You (parents and carers) have had to make considerable changes to your family's daily routines, working from home for many, accommodating home schooling, and finding ways to keep your children occupied during lockdown.

The initial novelty of virtual learning has long worn off. The long periods of living under lockdown conditions, lack of physical freedom and anxiety about falling behind with education has taken a toll on everyone's mental, emotional and physical well-being. However, things are looking more positive. **There is now a roadmap to support your children and young people's return to classroom-based education.**

As your children and young people return to school and other places of learning, you will want to ensure the family's safety and well-being from the Covid-19 virus.

We need to make sure that we are doing everything to reduce the risks of infection from Covid-19 so that we can return to routines as quickly as possible and without continuing fear and anxiety. The government has issued guidance for all learning and after school activity places to enable a safe return. **You can complement these efforts by supporting your children and young people.**

This guide explains the actions that you as parents and caregivers can take to minimise the risk of Covid-19 virus transmission; protecting your children as they return to schools, colleges and other types of places of learning and supporting their emotional and mental well-being.

It's what we do now that will make the difference for our children's futures.

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILDREN AS THEY RETURN TO SCHOOL





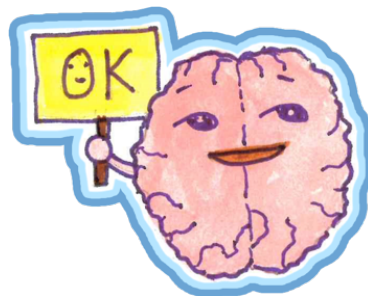
Schooling is important and mandatory

You must send your child to school for their well-being. This is required by law.

Reassure your child

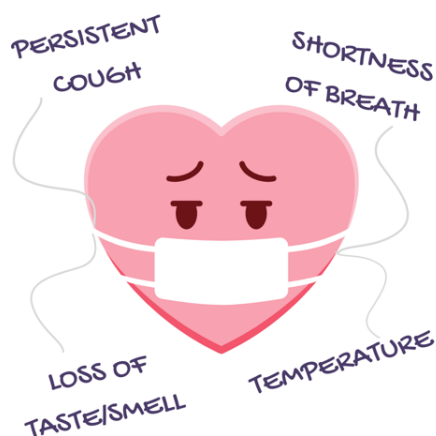
Listen to your child's worries and anxieties about returning to school. Check if they are OK. Let them know all the things that are being put in place at school to keep them safe.

Reduce worries by reassuring them that by following the arrangements in school the risk will be reduced.



Anyone who has these symptoms must self-isolate and get tested

If anyone in your home has tested positive or shown any of the common symptoms of Covid-19, you must inform the school and self-isolate with your child/ren for 10 days.





Keep up the learning at home

If you are isolating due to a positive Covid test or someone in the household has had symptoms, you must help your child/ren to continue with their remote learning, until they are ready to return.

Share your worries

If you have any worries about sending your child to school, speak to a member of the school staff and agree on a plan for your child's return to school.



Remember to wear a mask



The government recommends that older children (11 years and over) wear a face mask whilst travelling on public transport, and moving around in common areas in their school. Support your child/ren to do this, and wear a mask yourself if you need to go into school.

If you or your child/ren cannot wear a mask (are exempt for health reasons), let the school know before starting back at school. Help your child by telling them to keep to the social distancing rule if they cannot wear a mask.



Wash your hands frequently

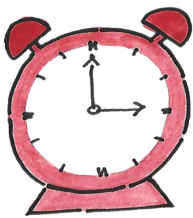
Remind your child/ren to wash hands as soon as they return from school.

Encourage your child/ren to wash their hands frequently wherever they spend time away from home and to always follow the practice set up by their school.

Always keep your distance!

Many of you will have missed seeing other parents but it is important that you do not gather at school gates to catch up.

When you are waiting for or dropping off your child/ren, keep to social distancing rules and wear a mask.



Stick to your allocated school times

The school will let you know the start and end time for your child/ren. Keep to these times to reduce the risk of groups gathering together.

Always telephone first

If you need to speak to someone at school, ring to make an appointment.



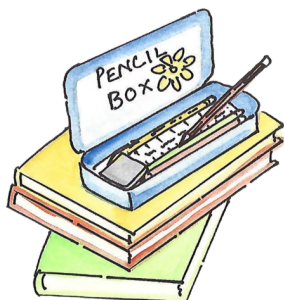


Disinfect any equipment

If your child/ren use any aids, disinfect these when they return home.

Stay in your safety bubble

Your child/ren will have been in their own safety bubble until they start school. In school, their own classroom will become their new safety bubble. Children from each safety bubble will only do activities with each other. Different bubbles in the school will not be allowed to mix. Explain why you would want your child/ren to do this.



Limit the sharing of pens/books etc.

Encourage your child/ren to use their own pens, pencils and books and only exchange these in their own classroom bubble if they need to.

Pack a healthy lunch

Pack a healthy lunch and snacks in an easy-to-wipe lunchbox. Where needed, staff at the school will wipe your child's lunchbox with disinfectant upon entry or make sure it is securely stored in their locker.

Make sure fruit is washed and ready to eat. Give your child a clean bottle of water each day. Staff will make sure all bottles are wiped down upon entry to the classroom.





Remember the uniform rule

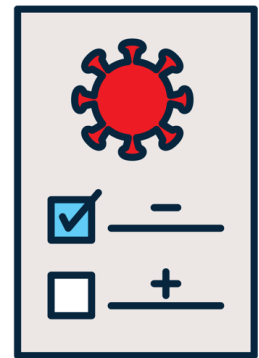
If a school uniform must be worn, ask your child to change when they get home.

Please make sure uniforms are washed regularly.

Testing is there to protect

If you have child/ren at secondary school they may be offered a Covid-19 test, even if they don't have symptoms. This test is given because one-in-three of us has the Covid-19 virus but don't show any symptoms.

Tests are voluntary and will be offered starting from 8th March 2021. Your consent is needed if you want your child to be tested. These tests can help reduce the risk of the Covid-19 infection spreading.



Ensuring your child's safe return home

If your child tests positive, they will need to return home but **not on public transport**.

You should make arrangements for your children to return home safely from school if this is the case.

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD MENTALLY AND EMOTIONALLY





Your child is a Covid star, tell them so!

Ask your child how they managed their day in preventing Covid-19 from spreading. Give lots of praise to your child for following all the guidelines, like washing hands, staying in their classroom bubble and following social distance rules.

Breathe in fresh air!

Make sure your child has opportunity to breathe fresh air. Where it's possible and safe, keep the house ventilated.



Do a 'wellbeing check-in' everyday

Everyday, check-in with your child to see how they are feeling and continue to point out the positives.

Encourage children to do their best



As children return to classroom teaching, they may feel pressure to catch up on their learning.

Help your child by reassuring them that they will catch up in time.

Ease the pressure to catch up by supporting their return so that they can settle without feeling fearful and anxious. This will help them to learn.

Parents, well done! Hang in there.

We recognise the enormous pressure that many parents have been under. Well done for everything you have done to support your children.

This too will pass and things **will** get better. Hang in there. Stay safe.





PROMOTING WELL-BEING

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The guide is based on the DfE publication, *Schools Coronavirus, (COVID-19) Operational Guidance*, February 2021; the professional experience of the authors and messages from children and young people.

Copies of the full DfE guide is available here:

[Schools coronavirus guidance.pdf](#)

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