

Supporting your return to school

...from the Early Help Team in POWYS



An information pack to support your family with the return to school.

Included in this pack

- Useful Information
- Managing anxieties
- Tips and Advice
- Activities and ideas to do with your child to help with the return to school

Continue to keep up to date with current government advice and be aware of any information regarding schools reopening.



Children will feel all different ways about returning to school, some might be excited to see friends others may be anxious and worry and will find it hard since they have spent so much time with family over recent months. Not only that older children may well be aware of Coronavirus and have concerns about that. There are ways you can support your child but be reassured that school staff will understand and be prepared to support your child with getting back into their routines.

What you can do support your child with the return to school...

- Talk about any worries, listen and empathise. Reassure your child and help them talk through their concerns. If they don't want to talk that's ok too. But where possible create safe environments for conversation perhaps while doing an activity together, colouring baking or when out for a walk 1 to 1. That way it will take the pressure off talking and allow conversation to come more easily.
- What steps can be made to help with the return to school? A call with a class mate?

Checklist for returning to school:



- My haven't you grown?
Do a uniform check, how much have your children grown, does their uniform fit ok.
Remember, where possible, Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Save!
- Other school supplies, do they need replacing or upsizing, wet kits, PE kits etc
- Have your contact details changed? If so email the school office with any amendments
- Do you need to check your ParentPay account has credit?

How to support an anxious child



I am here with you, you are safe.

What does it feel like in your body?

Let's take some slow breaths

Shall we stretch some of those worry feelings out

We can draw or write how it feels

Bedtime and Morning routines

Top Tips:

Allow enough time. Revisit your family routines, what tasks need to be done. How much time do you need? Teeth, bath, and especially books. Try to avoid cutting into storytime; instead start your bedtime routine earlier to allow that positive connecting time before sleep.

Try and get into these habits as soon as you can, it's natural that body clocks might need time to adjust if usual school routines have been changed.

Get as much ready the night before, bags packed, lunch prepared, uniform organised. This will allow you more time in the morning so help ease anxieties and support you supporting your child emotionally but also with help you when managing stresses that come with getting ready for school.

What anxiety can look like in children



PACE is a way of thinking, feeling, communicating and behaving that aims to make the child feel safe.

Be **PLAYFUL** with your tone, this is about creating an atmosphere of lightness and interest when you communicate. It means learning how to use a light tone with your voice, like you might use when story telling, rather than a questioning, irritated tone. It's about having fun, and expressing a sense of joy.

ACCEPT how your child might be feeling about the situation even if it's different from how you want them to feel. This isn't about accepting behaviour it's more about accepting your child's interpretation of what is happening.

Be **CURIIOUS** and have a desire to learn about how your child is feeling "I wonder if..." "That's interesting" "Maybe?" "Perhaps"

EMPATHISE with your child, feel the feelings with your child and recognise the emotions. Join your child where they are emotionally and help to remove that feeling of them being alone with their feelings.

If your child struggles with allowing emotional closeness try using PACE to support you to regain your connection.

Remember: They are not giving you a hard time, they are having a hard time.

Talk about things that might be different about school and their communities. It is likely there will still be some social distancing measures in place and that more people out in the community will be wearing PPE, masks, gloves etc.

It's possible that once some normality resumes that some children might struggle with the separation after being with their families for such an intense period of time. Think about how you can reassure you child about the separation, make the most of weekend

The golden rule in supporting your child with whatever emotion they are feeling is to be empathic. Always be patience and understanding to support your child with the feelings they are experiencing. Whether this is anger, worry, anticipation.

Hot chocolate breathing technique

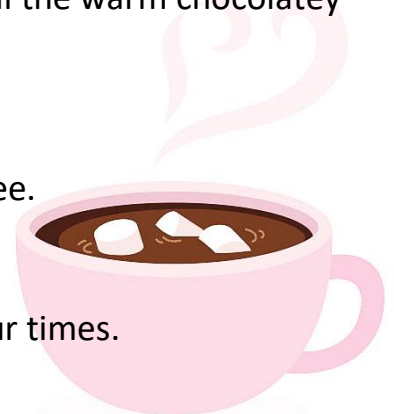
Pretend you have a mug of hot chocolate in your hands. Smell the warm chocolatey smell for three.

Hold it for one.

Blow it cool for three.

Hold it for one.

Repeat three or four times.



Things I am most looking forward to about returning to school:

One thing I have enjoyed about lockdown that I would like to continue once school returns:

Things to help me start conversations with friends I haven't seen in a while:

Support for *all* our parents

There is a variety of support available to parents from a number of services here in Powys. Whether it's support with...

- Connecting with your family
- getting the best out of your relationship with your child
- getting insights from parenting professionals
...or simply wanting an awareness of your child's development.



Contact the Early Help Team on parentinggroups@powys.gov.uk to find out what groups and support is available where you are.

Parenting. Give it time website has lots of useful information and advice for parents to help encourage positive behaviour and boost your child's confidence.

Families can get support and information via **Family Lives**. Visit their website to see the wealth of support you can access at any time.

Support from the **Early Help Team** is available via a range of Incredible Years Groups and other evidence based approaches. Tried and tested ways of supporting you and your child get the best out of your relationship.

The **School Nursing Service** offers support and advice to children, young people and their families or carers to help ensure that they reach their full potential during their school aged years and beyond. The age range covered is 4 up to 18.

Support for Parents is also available on the **Action for Children** website, including an online chat service.

When little people are overwhelmed by BIG Emotions it's our job to share our calm not join their chaos.

-LR KNoSt