



FIVE WAYS FOR FIVE DAYS FOR WELLBEING

Issue 9: September 2020



In the rush to return back to normal, use this time to consider which parts of normal are worth rushing back to...

To consider...

Experiences of the lockdown have varied greatly. For most staff, parents and students it would have been stable and happy with the appreciation of a slower pace of life and more quality family time. For others it may have been traumatic and testing. Some of us will have had to deal with fear, redundancy, illness and even death. Schools are used to supporting students through their everyday challenges, but the current situation will amplify the need for support and need us all to take a greater role in looking after each other as we return to school and work with a slightly altered hue.

Whilst it is important to recognize the challenges and sacrifices that we have all had to endure during lockdown and the effect it could have on staff, parents and students, it is equally important to be positive. We have an opportunity here as a community to refocus; to ensure that our 'new normal' is more considerate, kind, supportive and aware. We can make sure that staff feel supported, students feel safe and parents feel reassured as education resumes and classrooms reopen.





Staff

Supporting your pupils through the transition of returning to school will draw on many skills you use day to day to provide academic guidance and emotional support. There are some additional things to keep in mind as both staff and students are adapting to life back at school...

- **Try to remember that different pupils will have had very different experiences of the lockdown.**

Whilst some may have thrived, others may

have struggled. Your students will also have varying abilities to cope with those experiences. Having an open mind about what pupils may have been going through and how they may be trying to cope will be important.

- **Be self-aware.** Whilst it is important to be mindful of the struggles of students during and after lockdown it is equally important to be aware of your own needs. Returning to work after lockdown has its own challenges! Try to remember that all staff are going to be feeling the same and that you will not be the only one adapting to a new schedule or expectations of a resumed career. Draw on other teachers and school leaders for support and guidance. Share with each other. Do your best to support others and to accept support.

- **Don't dismiss concerning behaviour.**

We will all be aware that students may struggle on their return to school. Many have been socially isolated from parents or grandparents, devoid of routine and have been surrounded by adults who are constantly reaffirming that these times are 'unprecedented' and expressing the idea that no one knows what may happen next. This is likely to be at the least disconcerting and, at the most terrifying. It can, therefore, be tempting to see everything in that context. However, whilst the return to school is likely to see some challenging behaviour from some students, we shouldn't ignore signs that something more serious may be going on. It is important that you keep safeguarding policies and practices in mind in order to support students through a potentially traumatic time upon return to school or to notice a potentially traumatic lockdown.

- **Be patient.**

It is extremely unlikely that students will jump immediately back into productive learning. Finding time to allow them to work through the transition may be helpful. Whilst it is anticipated that lesson time may be challenging for some students, we must also be aware that unstructured time in school such as break times may also be difficult as they adjust to proximity with other students again. Be prepared to offer support and to reassure students both inside and outside the classroom.



Some practical advice...

- ✓ **Acknowledge what has happened.**

Students are well aware that we are in uncharted territory here although some may be tragically uninformed. Try to acknowledge what has happened in a clear and calm manner whilst making sure students feel safe and reassured.

- ✓ **Let students talk.**

The return to school may be the first contact that students have had with each other for months! They also may have lots of questions and thoughts about their time away from school.

- ✓ **Offer individual opportunities to talk.**

It is important to make sure that pupils who need it have a chance to talk to you individually. There may have been things happen at home or at school that you don't know about. Be open and approachable. Also try to revise any child protection training you gave received so that you are mindful of any emerging signs that a student may need particular support.

- ✓ **Be positive.**

A positive approach to the future may be something students have not focused on for a long time. Be positive about the year ahead and even find time to discuss the positives that have come out of the lockdown.

- ✓ **Build connections.**

Students may have lost a sense of belonging and community. It is important that students engage in activities that help them to feel part of the school, class and community again.

- ✓ **Highlight routes of support.**

Make sure that students know how and where they can access support at school should they need to.

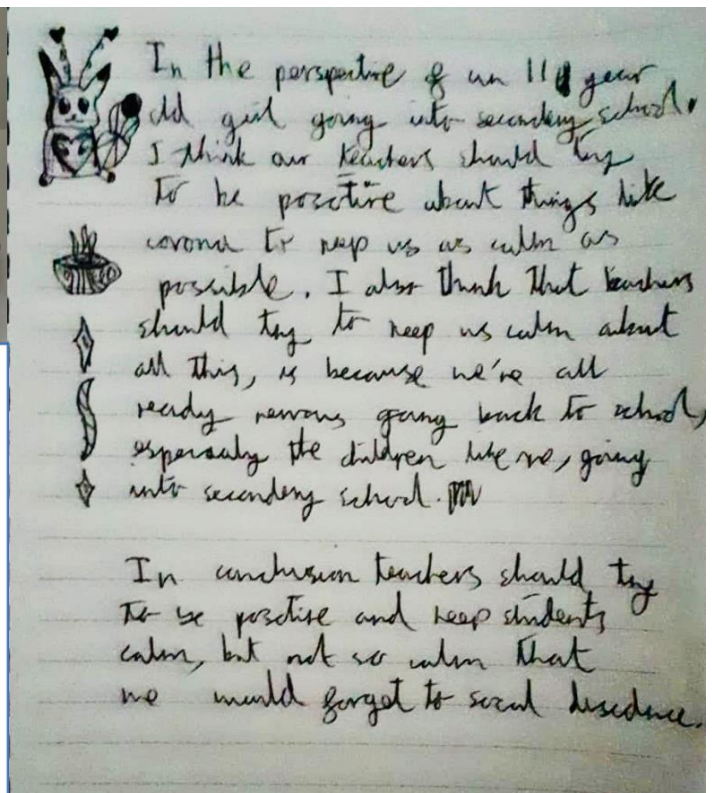
- ✓ **Encourage students to be active and be healthy.**

Many students may have fallen out of positive routines. The power of sleep, exercise and a healthy diet will equip them to manage anxiety and stress.



Sky Wells

Thoughts about going into Year 7





Parents & Carers

The school that your children are returning to may look very different to the school that they left. Our children can expect social distancing, different daily routines, one-way systems, areas out of bounds and possibly being taught by a different teacher. This will also be very stressful for the new students going into year 7 who are also having to cope with a new school.

How can you help your child's return to school successful?

- **Be kind to yourself.**

Lockdown has been a stressful time and everyone has been through an emotional rollercoaster... this includes you and your family. You may be feeling overwhelmed about returning to work and your child returning to school and that's ok... many parents will be feeling exactly the same way. Make sure that you build in time for activities that bring you calm, get some exercise and take some time to be alone if you need it. You are in the best place to support your children if you feel emotionally strong, rested and calm.



- **Talk about worries or fears.**

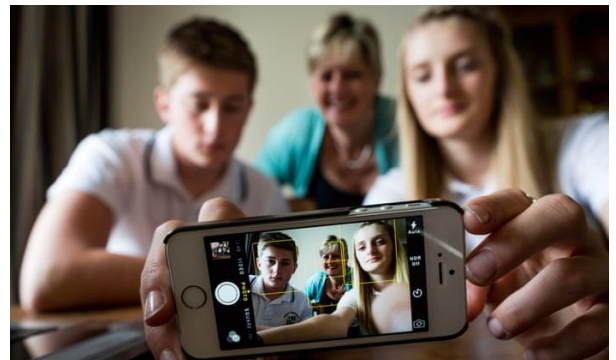
Try to make time for little conversations about how your child feels about the return to school. Remember to celebrate the positives as well as to address the concerns. For many children, returning to school will be exciting and an opportunity to make new friends and have fun! Sometimes the things that adults worry about never even cross a child's mind!

- **Be calm**

Although you may be a little anxious about your child returning to school it is important to convey calm. Young people pick up on lots of clues about how you are feeling and they sometimes use this information to inform how they should be feeling.

- **Encourage exercise and a positive sleep routine**

As parents we all understand the effect of a good diet, regular exercise and a good sleep routine to a child's wellbeing. As a parent you are in control of these things! These routines may have drifted over the lockdown period. Encourage children to unplug, limit screen time and set and enforce reasonable bedtimes. A daily walk or bike ride will also help your child have a restful sleep and be fully prepared for each new day.





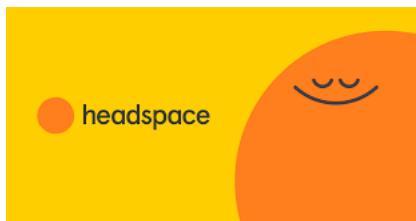
Students

Schools have now been closed for a long time. You may be happy about returning to school, or you might not. However, you are feeling it is natural to be worried about what school will be like when you get back, catching up with missed work and preparing for exams, seeing friends again, leaving your family and keeping safe.

Remember during this time that everyone, including your teachers and parents, will be feeling the same way! You have lots and lots of support. If you feel anxious there are lots of things you can do to make things easier...



If you are finding things really difficult with learning, or anything else, please talk to a trusted adult. If that is difficult, click on the links below to access help or advice.



Supporting learning and wellbeing together



Connect

Connect with others to support special needs...

<https://chatterpack.net/pages/send-information-a-z-directory>

Connect with STEM support for primary and secondary students...

<https://www.stem.org.uk/home-learning>

Connect with the world of educational practice informed by research...

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/covid-19-resources/support-resources-to-share-with-parents/>



Take notice

Consider how to notice a genius in the home...

<https://www.potentialplusuk.org/index.php/introducing-potential-plus-uk/>

Consider how to notice anxiety in learners...

<https://www.anxiety.org/causes-and-symptoms-of-anxiety-in-children>

Consider how to notice anxiety and depression in teenagers...

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/worried-about-your-teenager/>



Keep learning

Learn about how to keep your child safe on line...

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

Learn how to support teenagers to develop positive study skills...

<https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/learning-at-home/homework-study-skills/how-to-help-your-teen-develop-good-study-habits>

Learn the math's methods often used today...

<https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/learning-at-home/homework-study-skills/9-new-math-problems-and-methods>



Be active

Put your energy into organising the learning environment...

<https://www.theschoolrun.com/home-education-step-by-step>

Be active in using outdoor spaces for learning...

<https://www.ltl.org.uk/parents/>

Fitness for learners who don't like sports...

<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/hate-sports.html>



Give

Giving rhythms and routines for young children...

<https://www.edsurge.com/news/2020-03-17-how-to-keep-school-rhythm-and-routines-for-young-children-at-home>

Give yourself a study break...

<https://www.topuniversities.com/blog/how-have-productive-study-break>

Give yourself, and your child, the opportunity to be still...

<https://positivepsychology.com/mindfulness-for-children-kids-activities/>