

# Helping your child return to School

Tips to support primary school children return back to school after the  
Covid-19 lockdown

*Now that children will be returning to school, for some children and parents, this may be a worrying time. For others, it may be something to look forward to. In this document, there are some helpful tips and advice to support your child returning to school.*

## Dealing with Separation Anxiety

Going back to school after a prolonged period in lockdown, may require adapting to a new school environment. To help with the transition from home to school, studies suggest these recommendations to help parents make parting less painful and anxious for your child.

- Create a plan for dealing with separation, including new classroom routines and rules. Provide your child as much information about their new routine at school.
- In difficult situations, try to stay relaxed and model a calm behaviour.
- Children express verbal and non-verbal cues in relation to their anxiety level. Be prepared to discuss any worries, talk to them about returning from school, provide honesty and reassurance, or ask your child to draw their thoughts or concerns.
- You might want to explain to your child ahead of time, that you will be leaving them at school, and inform them when you plan to return.
- Have a consistent routine and keep a balance of school and home activities. Routine can provide a sense of safety during uncertain times.
- Ensure children eat healthy and take part in one form of exercise a day for 60 minutes. Visit [www.nhs.uk/change4life](http://www.nhs.uk/change4life) for a range of ideas for indoor games and activities.
- Seek professional help if required.

## Talking to your child

You child may have some worries or questions around the virus or returning to school.

- It may be good to discuss these and informing them that school will be different.
- Reassure your child that there will be measures in place at school to keep them safe.
- Talk about the positive aspects of lockdown and what they may look forward to when returning to school.
- You can use this link for more advice:  
[www.familylinks.org/resource-for-parents](http://www.familylinks.org/resource-for-parents)
- It is just as important for parents to look after their own mental health



## Sleep

The lockdown period may have altered sleep routines for some children. A good sleep routine is essential for children's physical and mental development; it is beneficial for the immune system and helps children focus better at school. Here are some tips:

- Ensure they get 9- 12 hours of sleep
- Make the child's bedroom conducive to sleep; cool, dark and quiet
- Keep TV and computers out of the bedroom
- Limit screen time before going to bed, and try a calm activity such as reading or drawing
- Have a relaxing bedtime routine
- Maintain a consistent sleep schedule
- Ensure your child has a good sleep the night before returning to school

## Hand-washing technique with soap and water



## Good hand hygiene

During a global pandemic like Covid-19, washing our hands is one of the easiest ways to prevent the spread of germs and viruses.

Continue to practice and teach good hand hygiene with your children.

- Give regular reminders for your child to wash their hands
- Lead by example by washing your hands
- Make it fun by making up your own song or game- There are also videos you can find on YouTube
- If soap and water is not available, use hand sanitizer

## Ensure your child:

-Washes their hands with soap and water for 20 seconds.

-If using a hand sanitizer, ensure it contains at least 60% alcohol and rub it in for at least 20 seconds.

-Has their nose or mouth covered with a disposable tissue when coughing or sneezing and disposed into a disposable rubbish bag- wash hands immediately after.

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[www.nhs.uk/live-well](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well)  
[youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/parents-helpline](http://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/for-parents/parents-helpline)  
[www.nhs.uk/ggc/uk/kids](http://www.nhs.uk/ggc/uk/kids)  
[www.mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus/returning-school-after-lockdown](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus/returning-school-after-lockdown)  
[www.sleepfoundation.org](http://www.sleepfoundation.org)  
Pelaez, G. and Novak, M. (2020) Returning to School: Separation problems and Anxiety in the age of Pandemics