

PARENT GUIDE TO ACCOMPANY 'GOING BACK TO SCHOOL AFTER LOCKDOWN (P4-P7)'

North Lanarkshire Psychological Service

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Children and change

Change is inevitable in life. Change can be unsettling, or sometimes it can be exciting – but it always generates a reaction. This is the case for everyone, adults and children. Many people find change challenging because the human brain does not react well to uncertainty. Usually we like to know what will happen next. This knowledge brings feelings of safety and containment. Uncertainty can lead to stress and anxiety, and the thoughts, behaviours and feelings that accompany these emotions.

Going back to school after lockdown is a big change. Some children may feel predominantly happy and excited to be going back to school. For other children, feeling anxious, fearful or overwhelmed may dominate. We all need time to process and get used to change. The length of time that it takes to accept and adapt to change will vary from person to person, child to child.

Children do not always have the language, the understanding, or life experiences to help them anticipate what change will be like and how they will cope. Their feelings may be communicated through their behaviour, for example being resistant and oppositional, or communicated through their emotions, for example being easily upset or angry.

What can help?

Please look at the information leaflet Going Back to School After Lockdown (P4-P7) with your child.

1. Be calm.

Encourage your child to practise the relaxation strategies, as outlined in the leaflet. Maybe you can do them too! By staying calm, you are demonstrating that you can cope with things changing and that all will be well. This is an opportunity to develop your child's resilience.

2. Be available.

Support your child to understand and make sense of what they are feeling and why they are feeling a particular way. Give your child the space and time to ask questions and listen to any concerns. If your child is worrying constantly, it can help to contain worries using "Worry Time", as described in your child's information leaflet.

3. Make use of routines.

It is easier to manage significant change if other parts of life stay the same. Children respond well to predictability and consistency. Keeping to regular mealtimes, bedtimes and exercise routines will be helpful psychologically and emotionally. Being well rested, nourished and exercised will support your child physically and mentally.

4. Be realistic.

Expect that some behavioural responses or regression may happen. This is normal at times of change. Be patient with your child – and with yourself.

5. Be accepting of their emotions.

Experiencing shock, denial, frustration and low mood are all normal emotional responses as we adapt and process change. It is important that your child can express their emotions safely. Listen, acknowledge, reassure and comfort.

6. Be kind to yourself.

This has been a stressful and challenging time for everyone. In order to be available for your child, you need to have your own resources and inner strength: To look after others, you need to look after yourself!

Finally, if you are concerned about any aspect of your child's return to education – get in touch with their school and talk to the staff. They will want to know of your concerns and offer help and support.

Contact Us

Give us a call for more information about our services and products

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