



Helping your young person return to school successfully

Explain that there will be new routines and rules:

It's important young people don't go into school expecting everything to look like normal - only to get a huge shock when they walk through the door.

Explain things will look different - but tell your young person not to worry, because the teachers have been thinking about how to make the school safe and will help you get used to the new layouts and routines.

But many things will remain the same:

- They'll see the same staff around school (but on a rota basis)
- You'll be taking the same route to school

Talk about worries or fears

In the run-up to returning, make time for little conversations about how they're feeling about going back to school.

Be careful how you do this - the aim is to see if they do have concerns, not to plant new ones!

If your young person does have worries, acknowledge their concerns first before offering reassurance.

For example:

- It's normal to feel worried about the virus, but here's what you can do to stay safe in school
- I bet other young people will feel worried. That's why Wize Up has arranged "induction days" to spend lots of time explaining how everything will work.

And a good way of turning a negative into a positive is using the phrase, "At least..."

As in:

- I know we can't spend time together today, but at least we can have some time straight after school

And don't be surprised if your young person wants to talk about the same issue a number of times. We often need to (repeatedly!) revisit an idea to get reassurance nothing has changed.

Show them you are calm (even if you are not)

It's natural for all parents to have some level of anxiety about returning their young person to school, we are here to help you through it, please speak to us.

But however, you feel on the inside, it's important to show calm to your young person.

We know young people pick up on lots of little clues about how their parents/carers are feeling - and they use this information to inform how they should be feeling. If we look worried, they pick up on this and start worrying too!

To do this, we need to think about:

- What we say (and what they overhear)
- Our tone of voice
- Our body language

Routines for sleep

In most families, routines around young people's sleep have become more... flexible!

Bedtimes have drifted until later in the evening... and young people are getting up later in the morning as a result.

To move immediately from these routines to 'normal running' and getting into school for 9am could be difficult, hence us initially keeping to the current learning hours 11am - 2pm.

So our advice is to start moving your young person's bedtime back towards normality now. Do this gradually, before they get back to school. If we leave it to the last minute, it's likely our young people won't have time to adjust, and won't be able to get to sleep at the earlier time.

And then your young person won't only have to cope with going back to school on the first day back - they'll be managing exhaustion too.

Be kind to yourself

Everyone has been through an emotional rollercoaster over the last few months - that includes **you**, your young person, your household and wider support network.

And if you've felt overwhelmed or worried about sending your young person back to school, that's okay. It's entirely normal.

So be kind to yourself.

Make sure you:

- Build in time for activities you find de-stressing
- Get some exercise (even if that is just walking)
- Take some time alone if you need it

All of these activities will help make sure you're in an emotionally strong place - so you can support your young person with their emotions too. And remember, we are here to support not only our young people but their families too, do speak with us.