

Dear Parents and Carers,

Coming back to school after such a long time at home is going to be challenging for many children and families in many different ways. The school that the children will be coming back to is not only going to look different, but there will be new routines for them to adjust to. During this transition, children will be seeking comfort and reassurance from you: helping children understand what change will look like and talking about how things might feel can help them overcome some feelings of anxiety and worry. Although some things may still be unknown, it will be useful to start to plan the things you and your child can control to feel safe and secure, such as your journey to school or washing routines when they get home from school. Here are some ideas for activities you could do together as a starting off point to encourage discussion. In our experience, children often feel more at ease with talking about feelings and can process ideas when they are engaged in an activity, but please feel free to adapt to whatever works for you and your child.

The Reception Team

It will be nice to encourage your child to draw a picture of their friends, classmates or teachers at school. As they are doing this, ask open ended questions like "What are you looking forward to doing with your friends?" or "Why is that person your friend?" or "How do you think your friends are feeling about going back to school/ not going back to school?" It is really important to help children to name feelings and also for them to realise that adults share these feelings - giving them examples of how you would feel, or have felt, about situations will be hugely beneficial.

The language of 'keeping safe' and 'taking care' is all around children at the moment. It's important to explore what 'safe' means to them and to you as a family. Start with questions like "What does it mean to feel safe? What in your house makes you feel safe?" (my bed, my teddy, my nightlight). Explain that at school we are going to have to do things that make everyone feel safe, like washing our hands, waiting outside, before we come to school and not eating lunch in the hall. They could make a poster with their ideas to help other children at school know what to do.

When you know which days your child is coming to school, you could make a visual timetable together. They could put a star or smiley face on days that they are at school. It will be helpful for them to know who will bring them to school and pick them up on each day as well. This could be a good time to discuss how grown ups aren't allowed inside the classrooms now, so saying goodbye will be different from usual. You could work out strategies together on how and when they can say goodbye in a way that makes them feel happy and secure, and then put this on the timetable too.



Coleridge Primary School

Learners for life

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