

# Roundabout's Coronavirus parents' guide to returning back to school...



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## How to ease your child back into the classroom.

For some children going back to school will be an exciting experience – but for some children the thought of going back to school may be making them feel anxious, worried, scared and perhaps fearful.

We at Roundabout have provided some ways to prepare your child for their transition back to school. To support you we have created different ways and ideas to help ease and introduce your child's return. There are also creative resources and activities which we hope will help you to build their self-confidence and support your child so that they can return and have a positive experience.

## The relationship with you and your child's school

It is important that we work together to prepare as much as we can for a successful transition.

We must be aware that the experience will be different for everyone, but there are a few key factors which will be helpful to consider for everyone in preparation.

## Your child and their friends...

Your child may be looking forward to seeing all their friends again. They may also be anxious, nervous and scared. Do try and get excited for your child and encourage them to get excited that they will be able to get back into a structured routine with their friends. Get in touch with other parents either via the school or you may already be in a WhatsApp or Facebook group. It may be helpful for your child if you encourage them when thinking about their return back to school, about the exciting opportunity they will have to see and spend more time with their friends again in person. You may want to get into contact with other parents to support your child's relationships with their friends. If you are not in contact with other school parents already the school may be able to help facilitate these communications.

## Visual Timetable

A visual timetable helps to explain the structure of a day using pictures, symbols and words. It can help develop an understanding of timetabled activities throughout the day. A clear understanding of the day's schedule and knowing what comes next can reduce children's anxieties and promote a sense of safety.

It can also help a person to understand feelings and emotions about how they felt in the past, present and future as a way to support emotional intelligence and well-being.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
 Morning							
 Afternoon							
 Evening							

On our website we have other example templates that you may find useful:-

Now, next, template – click [here](#)

Morning, afternoon, evening, visual – click [here](#)

Now, next, then, visual template – click [here](#)

You may also want to create your own version.

In the week before school starts you could encourage your child to use a visual timetable with a countdown calendar marking the days remaining until their return. This may support your child with the transition and may help to relax and calm the mind – click [here](#)

## Help Your Child to Feel Calm: Relaxation Techniques

The key priority will be the safety and well-being of your child. In preparation for returning back you may find some relaxation techniques that your child may find helpful. Mindfulness breathing and meditations are beautiful ways to relax a busy mind, calm nervous feelings and to recharge and rejuvenate.

A short '**Guided Meditation**' video for parents, carers and staff click [here](#)

A '**Star Breathing Chart**' to help your child to relax and focus click [here](#)



## Calming boxes

Find a box (a shoe box is an ideal size) and let your child decorate, paint or stick pictures, gems and feathers on it. With your help, your child can fill the box with things that will help to reduce anxiety and support them to feel calm. Calming boxes can be left in a place where your child can access it if they are feeling worried, anxious or unsettled.



Bubbles are great as children can focus on their breath as they blow bubbles. Lotions work particularly well as they focus on the two senses smell and touch (massage). Play dough, plasticine and soft balls are great stress reliever when a child feels frustrated or angry.

## Breathing exercises

Breathing exercises using bubbles and balloons are helpful relaxation techniques.

Put a bottle of bubbles and a balloon in your bag so that if your child's breathing does become rapid when approaching school, they have a good technique to stabilise and slow their breathing.

## Relaxation games

Games like the 'sleeping lion' is a great way to help your child learn to be still and calm. The aim of the game is to get your child or ideally children with or without other adults to lie down and pretend to be a sleeping lion. Whoever can stay quiet and still the longest, wins.

## Mindfulness hand massages

Massages on the hands, fingers and wrists allow your child to relax, calm and helps to slow their breathing. This is a great way for you to connect with your child and the massage will help them to decrease their stress and anxieties. Using lotions with massage enables your child to focus on two of their senses smell and touch massage. Lavender, Eucalyptus, Peppermint and or Geranium oils scents that will help to soothe, calm and relax.

Below are different types of massages for the fingers and hands that you can use with your child. They will help your child to manage their worries and anxieties, enabling them to find ways to soothe and calm themselves.

**Anxiety massage** – massage your thumb to help you manage anxiety

**Courage massage** – Massage your first finger to help you feel more courageous and manage fears

**Calm massage** – Massage your middle finger to help manage your anger and to feel cool

**Self-esteem Massage** – Massage your little finger to help you improve your confidence and self-esteem.

**Comfort Massage** – Massage your wrists. There are points on your wrists that help you manage anxiety and worry.

**Worry massage** – Rub your fingernails against each other briskly back and forth. This can stimulate certain areas of your brain, which can help with anxiety or worry.

### **Roundabout Advice and Support:**

It is important to be kind to ourselves and others: prioritising emotional well-being is essential for successful adaptation to the 'new normal'.

### **Coping with loss**

For children who have experienced loss, it will be important that they are supported to understand what has happened and have opportunities to talk and express their feelings around the bereavement. Silo's Sadness is a story about bereavement from dramatherapist Talya Bruck, which may help when discussing loss with your child click [here](#)

### **Separation anxiety**

Although many children will be eager to regain their freedom and see their friends, it may also be a potential source of anxiety for them.

School staff will be aware of these anxieties and will support pupils sensitively to manage their concerns.

You might find that your child may be clinging onto you, wanting to be closer in physical proximity to you. They could also be more emotional and tearful; do give them lots of reassurance and cuddles to support them. In time with yourself and the school's support they will begin to feel more settled.

## How to access Roundabout's services

Do get in touch with Roundabout by contacting the office via our **contact** page, email or telephone. Roundabout will talk to you and see if they feel they can help. The next step would be for a meeting to be arranged, to discuss aims and expectations, and what dramatherapy may be able to offer. Following this, if everything is in place, including funding, then plans can be made to start the project.

To see our standard fees, click **here**. To see our school fees, click **here**.

## Keeping everyone safe – the same but different...

Discuss with your child together things that will be the same about school as before Christmas and things that will be different.

Below are some suggestions/topics of conversation:

- A different Timetable – most children may not be going back to a full-time timetable. Make a visual Timetable of the days that they will be in. Include the teacher who will be in their bubble. Now, next, then, visual template – click [here](#)
- Bubbles or Pods – Find out as much information about your child's 'bubble' or 'pod'. Will they be with their friends? How many children will be in their bubble or pod. Which member of staff will they be with them? Will they be with the same children and the same staff? If you are on a group WhatsApp with other parents in your child's class, you could find out who will be in your child's bubble.
- There could be a different teacher than usual, and your child may stay in the same classroom for the whole duration of the day.
- One way walking traffic system in the corridors for children and staff to maintain safe distances when moving around the school.
- Staggered breaks and start and end times
- No whole school assemblies
- Outside classes
- cough and sneeze etiquette
- How people treat your child's behaviour towards others and how others treat your child
- More frequent washing of hands. To ease your child's anxieties, they may find it helpful to know that hand washing does help you to feel in control of what's going on.

Do reassure your child that all these measures make it much safer for children to return to school.

### **Worry Jar**

Going back to school may bring up all sorts of feelings. Dinnertime is a really good time to sit around with the family to discuss any worries, concerns, fears or anxieties. Each worry can be placed into a jar. Go through the day asking open questions, how did you feel about your bubble group? What did you find most difficult at school today. Look back on your child's day. Invite them to think, if they had a magic wand what would they change.

### **Favourite part of the day –**

At bath-time or bedtime focus on your child's favourite part of the day. You could join in and share your favourite part of the day and include your favourite part of your child's e.g. I was so proud of you today because...

### **Remember to take care of yourself –**

At Roundabout we cannot imagine how life has been for you. One of the most important things is to look after you and to take each day as it comes. Looking after your own well-being and self-care is so important. Do find time to switch off as much as you can.

**We hope that you have found this information helpful in supporting you in what we know are difficult decisions at this challenging time. We are here to support you.**