



Talking to Your Child about Returning to School

For many of us, adults and children alike, the return to school will be greeted with a huge sigh of relief and we will want to pretend that the world is returning to how it was. But we have all been changed by covid-19 and it will take time for us to adjust to the “new” normal.

The thought of returning to school may result in some children becoming anxious about leaving parents and the home environment. Even children who are keen to get back to school will have lots of questions about what school will be like after the lockdown.

Above all, it is important that your child understands that school will be different. Children feel emotionally and physically safe if they know what to expect; they also feel safe when they feel in control of their situation. To achieve this, it is important to take time to talk through the new situation with your child. Remember that children will react to both what you say and how you say it. They will pick up cues from the conversations you have with them, so it is important to remain calm and be reassuring.

Here are a number of questions you may be asked.

Which room will I be in?

Due to social distancing children will be separated into different groups (bubbles) and may not be in a familiar room. This is a question that will be answered by the end of the first day. The classroom they are in on day 1, will hopefully not change.

Will I be with my friends?

Maybe. But, unfortunately, this is not guaranteed. Children will be taught in ‘bubbles’ of 10 children. At the moment we don’t know who the other children will be, but all the teachers will try their best to ensure your child is with children they know.

Who will be teaching me?

It will be an adult who works at Weeth School. It may not be your class teacher or even your class TA. Reassure your child that all the adults will be looking forward to seeing your child again. We will be unable to offer 1:1 provision for those pupils who usually receive this and may not be able to offer the same level of support as your child may usually have when at school.

What will I do all day?

Children will follow the same home learning lessons as they would do if they are at home. What is being taught at school will be exactly the same that goes on the home learning platforms (Google Classroom). There will be break times of course but these will be different. (see below)

What will break time look like?

Hopefully, if the weather is nice, we will spend our breaks outside. This however, will not guarantee social distancing for our young pupils. You will be outside with your 'bubbles' and the same adult(s) that teach you. Unfortunately, the 'bubbles' will not be permitted to interact or mix with others as this will cause cross contamination. This may need further explaining to some of the younger children.

What will I eat for lunch?

This is still being organised by the school and catering teams. It is highly likely at this point that children will be required to bring a packed lunch in from home. Explain to children that lunchtime will certainly look different. There will be no large gatherings of children in the school hall. Lunches will be eaten in the classroom or outside (weather depending).

Who will take me to school and pick me up?

Whenever possible, please try to make your drop offs and pickups consistent. Children will feel more emotionally safe if they know who is dropping them off and collecting them. Try to make sure you are on time, as lateness also causes unnecessary anxiety. From a safety point of view, please ensure that only 1 adult drops off and picks up. Please try and avoid bringing small children with you and please respect the social distancing guidelines. There will be measures in place to assist you with this.

When can I go home?

You will be told when to drop off and pick up. It is likely that times will be staggered with different groups leaving and arriving at different times. Your child may like to be reminded of this every morning, as the school day will be different to normal.

Will I get in trouble for not going to school?

Whether you attend school is up to your parents/guardians and you will there will be no repercussions for not attending school. Reassure your child/ren that attendance challenges won't count at this point. Our safety is most important.

Will I get coronavirus because I have returned to school?

Talk to your child in an honest and accurate way about the risks from coronavirus and how they can protect themselves.

These are the basic questions that most children will want answered, but there are bound to be lots more. Explain that there are some things you don't know, but these areas will become clearer after the first day back.

It is also a good idea to ask your child what they are worried about. Children often worry about things that adults would never even consider as being a problem. Discussing the situation with your child also lets them know that they are being listened to and can ask as many questions as they want.

Above all, explain to your child that it is ok to be worried and a bit anxious. We are all feeling like that at the moment...

Here are some additional links to help you talk to your child.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/daily-life-coping/talking-with-children.html>

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus/talking-to-children>

Remember...

If you have any questions or worries specific to your child, please don't hesitate to talk to your child's teacher, Mrs Hocking (SENCO) and/or Miss Kitchin and Ms Horner (Learning Mentors). It is very important that we are aware, as soon as possible, of any children who are struggling to return to school. It is essential that we intervene and support your child early on, rather than allowing thoughts and worries to build up.