



COVID-19

Supporting Wellbeing on the Return to School

This has been written to guide you as parents and carers to prepare and support your children and young people on their return to school. While you and your child may be excited at the prospect of return, some level of concern is completely normal after such a long period out of school. However, don't worry if you have no worries. That will be the case for many families too. If so, please use as much or as little of this guidance as you feel would be best for your child.

Perth & Kinross Council has been following Scottish Government advice and are looking forward to welcoming children and young people back to school to re-connect with their friends and teachers/adults in school and resume their education.

We would like to acknowledge and thank the way parents have worked to support their children for this period of time at home during lockdown. We are aware of the range of experiences that families have had and we appreciate the way in which parents, children and young people have engaged with their schools.

For some children and young people this will be a point of transition, into an Early Learning and Childcare setting, P1 or S1. Transition activities took place in different and sometimes virtual ways. All children moving to new settings will have their needs prioritised and planned for to ensure they move into the new stage as smoothly and well supported as possible.

Please be reassured that we are ready to support all children and young people and to work with them from where they are. Our first priority is wellbeing and we want to work with you to ensure that all children and young people are welcomed back into school and given opportunities to reconnect socially with their friends and adults in school.

The teachers in your school are well prepared for this and opportunities will be given for pupils to talk about their experiences over the months when school has been closed. Where private conversations are needed, schools can make arrangements for these to take place. Letting school staff know of any particular difficulty your family may have faced over this time and how this has impacted on your child will be important. You may have already had a conversation about this, but if not please make contact with your school by email or phone to let them know. Working together will make a big difference to supporting your child back to school.

Children and young people develop resilience when supported by the adults around them. Teachers and school staff are well prepared for positive reconnections, but this needs your support. You know your child best and have an important role to play.

The following points will help you to talk to your child or young person and prepare them positively for coming back to school:

Practical and Physical Arrangements

- Adults will be socially distancing from children, young people and each other. This may mean that a small number of teachers may require to wear a mask at times.
- Please reassure children (especially younger children) that their teacher still cares about them and they are distancing to keep everyone safe.
- There may be some changes to how things used to be - entry and exit points, moving round the school etc. These are to keep children safe.
- Measures are in place to ensure good hygiene and schools have been provided with what they need, this will include increased facilities and expectations for hand washing.
- If you have any specific health concerns related to your child, your health professional will advise, and your school will work with you and your child to ensure education continues to be delivered to them.

Emotional Support

- Wellbeing guides for you and your child were produced when schools first closed (and can be accessed here - www.pkc.gov.uk/coronavirus/schools). They will be really helpful if your child is feeling worried and will help you to support them in taking positive steps to feeling better.
- How you are feeling and the things you are saying will be really important. Modelling calmness will help to prepare your child. Even if you are feeling anxious, try to focus on the positives of return - what did your child enjoy about school before? What have they missed?
- Take care about the language you use - emphasising the opportunity for growth and recovery, for instance seeing friends, having time to play and learn and getting back to normal.
- Your child may still feel worried or anxious. Listening to them and acknowledging their feelings and any worries is really important.
- Don't feel that you need to fix things, make it better, or have all the answers, listening is the most important response. Resilience develops through working through difficult situations and this is an important part of learning coping skills.
- You can remind them that difficult feelings and worries are normal and sometimes being excited can feel a little uncomfortable. You can remind them that everyone will be feeling a bit nervous - even their teachers! This will help to reassure them.
- Reassuring them that any problems can be solved, that the first step is always the hardest and you are there to listen, will best encourage a calm approach.

If you have any further questions, please raise these with the school, if necessary you can seek further support on asn@pkc.gov.uk.

Additional sources of information

The Educational Psychology Service has a phonenumber that you can also call and leave a message, someone will then call you back, on 01738-476242.

Parent Club - <https://www.parentclub.scot/>

National Autism Implementation Team - <https://www.thirdspace.scot/nait/covid-19-return-to-school/>

If you or someone you know would like a copy of this document in another language or format, (on occasion, only a summary of the document will be provided in translation), this can be arranged by contacting the Customer Service Centre on 01738 475000.

You can also send us a text message on 07824 498145.

All Council Services can offer a telephone translation facility.

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