



Supporting your child's return to school

Children and Families

Back to school in September

Schools are set to open in September and all children and young people are expected to return to school. Getting back to school is very important for children and young people's learning, social skills and emotional wellbeing.

It's understandable that some people will be worried about COVID-19. However, schools are putting in place a number of safety measures aimed at protecting children, staff and families and reducing the spread of the virus as more children return to school.

It is also important to remember that most people who do catch COVID-19 will experience mild symptoms and are unlikely to become severely unwell. The risk to children of becoming severely ill from COVID-19 is very low.

For the vast majority of children, the benefits of being back in school far outweigh the very low risk from COVID-19. If you have a concern about your child returning to school due to specific health conditions, you can talk to your family GP or your child's school.



As September is approaching, we have put together this guidance for parents and carers to help prepare their child or young person for returning to school.

Communicating with your child

When your child starts talking about the virus, school, friends and getting out and about - you can use this opportunity to offer reassurance and encouragement.



- Openly discuss returning to school and that the school day will look and feel a bit different.
- Talk about what your child is looking forward to on their return such as seeing their friends and being able to interact with their teachers.

Getting ready for school

Check your school website as this is where all the up-to-date information will be. If you are not sure, find out when your child is expected to return and what the expectations are for arrival.

Do what you would usually do during the summer break to get ready for school, involving your child in the process wherever possible; such as:

- Getting together any equipment they need, such as a school bag and stationery.
- Trying on their school uniform, and replacing any items that no longer fit.

Schools may have made changes to picking up and dropping off times and it's important that your child arrives on time. If your child's journey or route to school will be different, such as cycling for the first time, go for a practice so you know how long it will take and to give your child some advice on safety.

If you and your family have gone on any holidays during the summer, make sure you are back in good time to start the new term in September. If you need to take leave of absence for an exceptional circumstance, you must apply to your school in the usual way.



Returning to daily routines

If times for sleeping, watching TV, using a phone, tablet or computer have slipped; begin to put into place some limits and boundaries gradually.

And ensure daily hygiene routines are maintained, such as:

- brushing teeth twice a day
- regular hand washing
- having regular baths or showers



Eating for wellbeing

If you have relaxed your good eating habits during lockdown, now is the time to try to introduce a more healthy and balanced diet for the whole family.

- Limit food and drink high in sugar. These can lead to poor concentration, changes in mood and restless sleep.
- Encourage your child to drink plenty of water to prevent headaches and feeling tired.



Socialising and leisure time

If your child has not been outside as much during lockdown, gradually start:

- Going out for walks and to the park
- Trying out the walk to school
- Meeting up with friends and family (within the **social distancing rules**)
- Returning to any sports or activities your child enjoys.

Mental health and wellbeing

Helping your child establish routines and good sleep times will have a very positive effect on their wellbeing. Encourage them to read books for a bit of quiet time and relaxation. Or if your child is too young, you can read more to them and discuss the stories. Regular exercise helps too.

If your child is worried or anxious about schoolwork, reassure your child that their teachers are going to be very happy to see them again and are ready to support everyone.

Children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) will also be expected to return to school in September. Schools will continue to provide an inclusive education for children and young people with SEND making use of resources available in Ealing as well as making any reasonable adjustments to ensure access to learning is supported. Your child's school will work with you to ensure your child has a smooth as possible transition into school.



Feeling and keeping safe

Safety precautions at school

Your child's school will tell you what protective measures will be in place for September, such as:

- Frequent handwashing
- Regular cleaning of surfaces and equipment
- Desks and chairs may be arranged differently in class
- Children may be offered different arrival times at the school gate to avoid crowding.

Seek further guidance from your child's school if you need to.

Travelling to school

Your child should try to walk, cycle or use a scooter to get to and from school and avoid using public transport if possible. This is a healthy option and a contribution to protecting our environment.

If your child is over the age of 11 and needs to use public transport they will be required to wear a cloth face covering / mask. They should dispose or store this safely when they arrive at school. You can read the [government guidance](#) on wearing a cloth face covering / mask if you are unsure of whether or not you or your child should wear one, as there are some exemptions.



If you are dropping off or picking up your child, you should ensure that you keep a distance from others outside of school and avoid gathering with other parents / carers.

COVID-19

There are a number of things you can do to help reduce the spread of COVID-19:

- If your child, or anyone in your household, develops symptoms of COVID-19 (a fever, a new consistent cough or a loss or change in taste or smell), or is identified as a contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19, do not send your child to school. Stay at home and arrange for anyone who has symptoms of COVID-19 to get a test by visiting www.nhs.uk/coronavirus or by calling **119**. For more details on what to do, follow the guidance on the **Return to School** page at www.ealingfamiliesdirectory.org.uk
- Wash your hands frequently and thoroughly for at least 20 seconds using soap and water.
- Keep your distance from people who are outside your household or support bubble, limit social gatherings and avoid crowded places.
- Wear a cloth face covering / mask on public transport, in shops and in indoor settings where you come across people you don't usually meet.



General information and advice

You can visit our Ealing Families Directory for general information and advice. This guide as well as other useful resources to support your child's return to school can be found on the **Return to School** page at www.ealingfamiliesdirectory.org.uk

For information on services and support available to children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) visit www.ealinglocaloffer.org.uk

Alternatively get in touch with

Ealing's Family Information Service
020 8825 5588, (Mon-Fri 9am to 5pm)
children@ealing.gov.uk