



# PARENT GUIDE TO FULL OPENING

## MARCH 2021

***We are delighted to be able to welcome all year groups back on March 8th, following the government's announcement.***

***It is important that you read this document fully, in order to understand the changes in school and support your child as they return.***

### Classes

Lockdown has been lifted for primary age children in their classes from 8<sup>th</sup> March onwards and, therefore, we are no longer restricted to just key worker and vulnerable children attending. However, the aim is still to reduce the number of transmission points by minimising contact between groups.

Children will therefore remain in their classes, not gathering in larger groups, and we have taken care to continue to stagger entries, breaks, lunch times and leaving times to allow the classes to move around our school safely. This will minimise the number of other people they will come into contact with. Children will be taught in the same classroom with the same adults as far as possible, ensuring contact with other classes is minimised. Occasionally, a child will be in an additional small group for an intervention or other provision. These will be kept consistent.

Although guidance states that adults may move between groups of children, we will minimise this. Specialist teachers for Art, Music and French will not be working in person in multiple classes across one day. They will be required to maintain social distancing if they are in the classroom and, where possible, lessons will be delivered outdoors, through online provision, or with one class only.

### Uniform Policy

In March, we expect children to come to school in full school uniform each day.

- White school polo shirt (plain or with school logo)
- Purple school sweatshirt or cardigan (with school logo)
- Grey skirt, pinafore or smart grey trousers/shorts
- Lilac gingham dress for summer
- Plain white socks/grey socks/grey tights may be worn during the winter months
- Grey socks with long trousers or white sports socks may be worn in summer with shorts
- Black shoes – if laced, please ensure your child can fasten them independently
- Optional purple reversible fleece/jackets and purple reversible storm proof jacket (both with school logo) are available

Long hair must be tied back and children should not come in with coloured hair.

If children have pierced ears, they should only wear stud earrings, which they must be able to remove and put back in again **independently** on PE days. No other jewelry except a watch should be worn. No smartwatches, please.

## **Physical Education (PE)**

On P.E. days, your child can come to school wearing their P.E kit for the whole day. This will minimize the bags around school, prevent any infection risk from children shaking their clothing around others, and also save lesson time. Teachers will be delivering all PE lessons outside whenever possible. In the event of this not being possible, the Main Hall will be used, with a deep clean of the floor and any equipment used after each use. Each class will also have their own box of small equipment e.g. balls, beanbags, small cones.

PE kit consists of:

- Black or dark grey shorts, joggers or leggings (plain – no branding)
- White polo shirt or t-shirt (plain or with school logo)
- Purple school sweatshirt or cardigan (with school logo)
- Black or white trainers (no brightly colours) - if laced, please ensure your child can fasten them independently

## **What to bring to school**

- Children may bring in a school bag with their reading book as well as other personal items such as their own tissues and hand sanitiser.
- Children in Years 3-6 may bring in a pencil case, but larger cases that don't fit into trays will need to be kept in lockers or taken home at the end of each day.
- A water bottle – to be taken home and thoroughly washed in soapy water each day.
- Packed lunch, or buy a school packed lunch. Hot or cold school lunches will be available (a menu can be found in this guide). If a packed lunch is brought from home, this can be in a clean lunch box to be returned home or, alternatively, a plastic bag for complete disposal. Please ensure that your child can open items in their lunch by themselves.
- A coat, if needed.
- Please apply sun cream before coming to school and provide a hat, if the weather is sunny. Your child can bring in sun cream but will need to be able to apply it themselves.

## **Arrival Times**

Due to managing risk for all children returning to school, teachers and parents, a staggered entry into the building will still be necessary.

**Please make every effort to be punctual to avoid the risk of PODs crossing.**

Please note that your child may not start school at the usual time as the starting timeslots will run from 8:30am to 9:00am

The arrival times are:

	Start time	Arrive from
Reception	9:00am	8:55am
Year 1	8:50 am	8:45am
Year 2	8:50am	8:45am
Year 3	8:40am	8:35am
Year 4	8:40am	8:35am
Year 5	8:30am	8:25am
Year 6	8:30am	8:25am

## **Entering School**

Please **do not** bring your child to school if they, or anyone in the household is showing any symptoms of Covid19

- a new, continuous dry cough
- a high temperature
- loss of taste or smell.

**If your child is feeling unwell at all with any illness, they must also stay at home.**

We request that only one parent brings your child/ren to school and, once through the gate, we ask that all children except Reception queue without an accompanying parent. Please be mindful of other families dropping off their children as the pavements outside school are narrow. All adults should wear face coverings at drop-off and pick-up unless medically exempt.

To comply with social distancing, parents are asked not to gather in groups at the entrance gates, or enter the building or the grounds beyond the queue lines (unless you have a pre-arranged appointment). We have 2 entrance points into school grounds: the main gates and the staff car park gate.

- **Year 2, Year 4 and Year 6 will enter the playground through the main gates.**

Y2 and Y4 will enter the building through the main entrance door (for the school office).

Y6 will enter at the top door facing the gate.

Parents may drop off children through the smaller gate; then the parent will follow a one-way system to leave via the double gate while the child queues at their entrance point. Please ensure that, if you arrive early, you and your child/ren stand on the lines that are marked by the gazebo 2m apart from other families (see picture) and through the gate onto the playground.



Queuing should be on these lines and the playground rather than the pavement, or we run the risk of PODs crossing. To avoid this risk, it would also be helpful if children were to arrive as close to the designated time as possible, rather than more than 5 minutes early.

- **Reception, Year 1, Year 3 and Year 5 will enter through the car park gate and doors to arrive on their side of school.** No parents except Reception parents will enter through the gate at drop-off time. There will be a one-way system demarcated with cones and rope through the staff car park for Reception parents, and lines for the children. The car park will be closed to ALL parents, staff and visitors from 8:15am to at least 9:10am. We regret that we cannot accommodate privilege parking for vehicles with disability badges in the staff car park at this time, as children's safety is of paramount importance.



We have a **childcare offer** to support parents with more than one child in school: If you have **two children in different time slots**, they should **both arrive in the eldest sibling's time slot**. This ensures that each child receives their full entitlement and avoids congestion on Green Lane from families waiting for multiple drop-offs. We hope that this also supports parents. We will provide up to 20 minutes' childcare cover in their bubble upon arrival, while they wait for their provision to start. Unfortunately, this cannot apply to the 30 minutes' cover needed between Y5/6 at 8:30am and Reception at 9am. We will contact you separately about this if you have more than two children in school.

There will be a member of staff at the gates to guide children in, and parents (other than Reception) will not be accompanying children to the door. Once drop off on the playground side of school is complete, parents will turn left and exit via the double gates on the playground back on to Green Lane.

The entrances into the school building for each year group are as follows:

Year R	Reception double doors to the car park
Year 1	Side door to the car park
Year 2	Main entrance door (school office)
Year 3	Side door to the car park
Year 4	Main entrance door (school office)
Year 5	Side door to the car park
Year 6	Top double door entrance (next to the site manager's room)

This minimises walking across other classes' zones within the building.

We can accommodate bikes and scooters whichever gate your child uses.

## Exiting School

At the end of the school day, the children will exit through the same doors with their class teacher and be brought to the same gates as arrival for collection by parents. These times are also staggered, but we ask that if you are waiting, be aware of other people on Green Lane and avoid gathering in groups.

If you are taking up the childcare offer:

For **siblings in two different year groups in Years 3-6**, they will leave school at the time of the youngest sibling.

For **siblings in two different year groups in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2**, they will leave school at the time of the youngest sibling.

**For siblings in different Key Stages**, the children in Reception/Year1/Year 2 will not be having an afternoon break so that any siblings in those classes can leave school at the time of an **older sibling in Years 3-6** without losing any of their education entitlement.

The car park will again be out of use to vehicles to allow children and parents to move out of school safely. This will apply from 14:35pm to 15:25pm.

Finishing times are as follows:

Reception	15:15pm
Year 1	15:05pm
Year 2	15:05pm
Year 3	14:55pm
Year 4	14:55pm
Year 5	14:45pm
Year 6	14:45pm

## Hand Washing and Hygiene

- Children will be asked to wash their hands at the hand sanitiser station on entering and exiting the building.
- Children will be supervised washing their hands or hand sanitising: before and after break, before and after lunch and after every toilet visit.
- Children will also be expected to practice good respiratory hygiene – catching coughs and sneezes in tissues and disposing of them in a lined, lidded pedal bin, and then washing their hands.
- Children will be asked to avoid touching their mouth, nose and eyes with their hands or equipment. There will be verbal and visual prompts to remind them.
- Children must not share drinking bottles or food.
- Children are to tell an adult if they are experiencing symptoms of coronavirus.
- Equipment shared between bubbles will be cleaned or left for a period of 72 hours.
- Where toilets are shared between bubbles, a further enhanced cleaning regime will be established.
- There will be pump hand sanitisers and additional, wall-mounted, automatic hand sanitisers around school for staff and children to use. Children may bring their own hand wash and/or hand sanitiser (with name label) and keep it in class.
- It has been recommended that children do not wear a mask in the school building. Masks will only be worn by staff when they are in communal areas (corridors); in the event of administering First Aid, where close, personal contact is taking place; or if dealing with a symptomatic individual. If your child wears a mask to come in to

school, they will need to remove it safely once inside school, store it inside a plastic bag in their school bag, then wash their hands.

## **Social Distancing**

While social distancing restrictions between children have been lifted, it is still important to adhere to social distancing between adults and children. For this reason:

- The children will be in their classroom. Contact between year groups will not be permitted. Staff will also remain within their classroom and not be deployed elsewhere, unless this is unavoidable or in order to deliver targeted support or specialist lessons.
- Each class will be allocated its own room and a set of toilets, which will be cleaned more frequently. Some classes will share toilets with another class and these will have further enhanced cleaning.
- In order to protect the other members of the class and staff, we ask parents to please ensure that their family acts in accordance with current government guidance when socialising.
- In PE, they will be playing non-contact games. Equipment can be shared within a class but will be cleaned after use.
- Children to remain in their own classrooms throughout the day unless being supervised along a corridor by an adult.
- Access for groups to parts of school will be limited to their classroom, their designated toilets and designated entrances/exits for them. Other areas are out-of-bounds unless they are walking through with an adult supervising.
- Children will use cloakrooms no more than 2 at a time to avoid crowding.

## **In Class**

Each child will have their own seat space (carpet space and/or table), which will be assigned by the teacher according to the needs of the class and children will be forward facing as much as possible.

The classrooms will still look quite different to usual as we will need to seat children in rows as far as possible (Years 2-6) and reduce furniture in the rooms, to allow for social distancing between adults and children. We have also been obliged to remove soft toys and fabrics, which government guidance states should not be shared.

Guidance states that equipment can still be shared between children in a class. Children will be provided with their own equipment such as pencils, pens and books to avoid sharing equipment unnecessarily. Laptops and iPads will be cleaned after use. Reading books, games and other resources will be shared within the class but will be wiped/washed more regularly, or will remain untouched for 72 hours.

Reception outdoor equipment will be sprayed regularly.

If equipment must be shared with other classes, it will be thoroughly washed in soapy water between uses. If this is not possible, it will be sprayed with a disinfectant spray or thoroughly wiped with a disinfectant wipe. Foundation subject resources will be allocated to classes as needed. These can then remain untouched for 72 hours (5 days for plastics) or thoroughly cleaned before being used by another bubble.

Weather permitting, we will be spending more time learning outdoors, especially for PE.

We will be following an enhanced cleaning regime with tables, chairs, rails, door handles, light switches, toilet flushes, sinks, taps, toilet door locks all cleaned twice daily, to make the school as safe as possible for children and staff.

We have lidded bins available in each classroom for used tissues, hand towels and antibacterial wipes.

## **Face Coverings**

Staff in school will now wear a face covering when in communal areas such as corridors and shared spaces. Face coverings will also be worn by any staff working in more than one class, or if they are visiting the class for monitoring purposes. These masks will be stored in a sealed plastic bag when not in use and replaced when damp.

Face coverings will be required for any external agency staff visiting school e.g. school nurses, speech therapists, external supply teachers.

In line with Government guidance, children in primary education are not required to wear face coverings of any description, and will not be doing so in school. However, we ask that parents and carers wear a face covering when they are at the school gates and / or entering the school site.

Staff will also wear face coverings if any face-to-face discussions with parents should be necessary. The majority of issues should be able to be resolved by electronic message, phone call or video call. If a face-to-face meeting does need to take place, we will ask parents to wear a face covering.

## **Infection control**

**Children must not attend the school if they display any coronavirus symptoms.** In this situation, the school will only allow the child to return if they either have a negative test or have self-isolated for 10 days.

**Children must not attend the school if a member of their household displays any coronavirus symptoms.** In this situation, the school will only allow the child to return if the member of the household has a negative test or the child has self-isolated for 10 days. If during this self-isolation period the child shows symptoms, parents must arrange for them to take a test. If this is positive, they cannot be in school for the following 10 days. In both cases, it is the duty of the parent or carer to inform the school about the symptoms and test results.

### **What happens if there is a confirmed case of coronavirus in the school?**

If an adult or child develops symptoms compatible with coronavirus while they are in school, they will be sent home and advised to self-isolate, along with members of their household, and access a test as soon as possible. In the event of the test being positive, the individual and the members of their household must self-isolate for 10 days.

If we are notified that an individual develops symptoms outside of school, we will advise that the individual must not attend school and should follow the same self-isolation rules.

The rest of the class remains in school. Hard surfaces possibly touched by the individual will be disinfected and their belongings double-bagged and removed. Their classroom will be 'fogged' with disinfectant mist as soon as possible; this quick, thorough and safe process only requires the children to be out of their classroom for a maximum of 30 minutes.

Should a symptomatic individual test negative, they can then return to school and their fellow household members can end their self-isolation, unless someone else in the household has developed symptoms.

Should an individual test positive, school will undertake an urgent risk assessment with NHS Business Service (or Public Health England). If the individual attended school in the 48 hours prior to symptoms starting or an asymptomatic positive test result, the rest of their class and any other close contacts will be sent home and advised to self-isolate for 10 days from their last contact with the individual. The household members of children in that class do not need to self-isolate unless the person they live with subsequently develops symptoms. All other parents in school will be alerted of a confirmed case within school but do not need to take any action other than to monitor their child for any symptoms. The school may take the temperature of a child if they have concerns about their health.

Additional information is available at [https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection?utm\\_source=26%20February%202021%20C19&utm\\_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm\\_campaign=DfE%20C19](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection?utm_source=26%20February%202021%20C19&utm_medium=Daily%20Email%20C19&utm_campaign=DfE%20C19)

### **It is important that all children understand the following:**

- They must not touch or hug anyone – staff or pupils. There is to be no physical contact between anyone in school, unless strictly necessary (e.g. First Aid)
- Younger children are not expected to socially distance; older children are still encouraged to maintain physical distance from each other when possible.
- They will be expected to sit and stay at their own work station when in class unless directed to move by the teacher.
- They should not share their snacks or lunches.
- Each child will be given their own personal resources to use. These must not be shared with other children.
- They may use shared resources when directed to by the teacher. These will be cleaned between uses.
- Children cannot play contact games such as football, catch and tag at break times.
- They will not be able to mix at all with children in other classes, even at playtime.
- They have to wash their hands properly, for 20 seconds, using the advised technique throughout the day as guided by staff, after toileting, or if they have coughed or sneezed into their hands (whether or not they have used a tissue).
- They will be encouraged to cough/sneeze into their elbow crease if they do not have a tissue to hand.

If your child starts to feel unwell, with or without symptoms of COVID19, they will be sent home. This is in accordance with government and Public Health England guidance.

## The Curriculum

To allay anxiety and address wellbeing, as well as to provide a welcome break from digital learning, we will initially focus on ensuring that the children have opportunity to voice their thoughts and feelings through a range of transition activities. Once we are confident that the children are settled we will be looking to assess in a variety of ways and address gaps in their learning.

- Reception will have their EYFS curriculum delivered as fully as possible.

### Core Subjects

- For Years 1 and 2, additional Phonics and Reading sessions will be included each day to close the gap in learning.
- All year groups will be receiving a full curriculum offer but with timetabling to reflect an emphasis on essential core skills and knowledge, particularly those only taught remotely in either lockdown.
- After an initial assessment of Maths, Reading and Writing, teachers will refine their planning and resources to meet the needs of the class and to close any gaps in prior learning.

### Foundation Subjects

- Foundation subjects, apart from PE, will be blocked on timetables so that resources are not going between classes during the week. This means, for example, that your child may cover their Science learning for the half term in multiple lessons over two weeks, then do a week of multiple History lessons.
- Year 3 will have weekly keyboard lessons delivered by a specialist teacher, socially distant.
- Year 5 and Year 6 will not receive voice or Gospel lessons at this point due to the increased infection risk from aerosolised droplets when singing. However, this will be reviewed for after Easter.
- Mr Corcoran will be delivering Art in blocked full days to Years 1-6. This avoids him having contact with multiple classes on the same day. It means that each year group will come off timetable for an Art day every 6-7 weeks of term time.
- Children will be working in exercise books and these will be marked in accordance with the agreed mark scheme.

### Homework

This will mainly be electronic, with resources provided and marked automatically by the application (TTRockstars, Reading Plus, Mathletics, Reading Eggs, EdShed and spag.com) or through SeeSaw by the class teacher. **Please contact us if you do not have access to the internet or a device to access homework other than a mobile phone.** We will endeavour to arrange help.

## **Break Time and Lunch Time**

Break times and lunch times will be staggered.

	Morning Break Time	Lunch Time Hall / Class (Y5)	Lunch Time Playground	Lunch time in class
Reception	10:00-10:15am	11:30-11:50am	11:50 - 12:15pm	12:15-12:30pm
Year 1	10:25-10:40am	12:00-12:20pm	12:20 -12:45pm	12:45-1:00pm
Year 2	10:50-11:05am	12:30-12:50pm	12:50-1:15pm	1:15-1:30pm
Year 3	10:25-10:40am	12:00-12:20pm	12:20 -12:45pm	12:45-1:00pm
Year 4	10:50-11:05am	12:30-12:50pm	12:50-1:15pm	1:15-1:30pm
Year 5	10:25-10:40am	12:00-12:20pm	12:20 -12:45pm	12:45-1:00pm
Year 6	10:00-10:15am	11:30-11:50am	11:50 - 12:15pm	12:15-12:30pm

- The main playground (and field) will be divided into 3 spaces. We have allowed changeover gaps for playground time mid-morning and lunch time so that, for example, Years 1, 3 and 5 can be brought inside while Years 2 and 4 are still in their classroom or the hall. Timings and zones will be strictly adhered to.
- At lunchtimes, all children will get 20 minutes to eat, 25 minutes outdoor play and 15 minutes of indoor games and activities.
- Outdoor play equipment will be used on a rota basis.
- Children can share equipment outside, but only non-contact games will be allowed. We are providing a sports coach in each playground space over lunch times so that all classes will have active, socially-distanced games organised for them.
- Reception, Year 1, Year 2, Year 3, Year 4 and Year 6 pupils will eat lunch in the Dinner Hall at designated tables and in staggered time slots. There will be increased cleaning practices adhered to and social distancing between classes.
- Year 5 children will continue to eat their lunch in the classroom and this will be wiped down before and after their lunch.
- For Year 5, dinners from the same menu will be delivered to the classroom by their midday assistant.
- For other year groups, up to two classes will use the hall simultaneously with control measures in place. There will be two sets of 10 tables and 10 benches with a minimum 2m space between the sets. Windows and doors will be open to allow for full ventilation. All the children in the room will be facing in the same direction. Time has been allowed between sittings for the tables and benches to be cleaned thoroughly by several members of staff.

## **Lunches**

Free school hot and cold packed lunches on a two-week rota will be available to all Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 children (under the Universal Free School Meals scheme) and to any children eligible for free school meals.

School hot and cold packed lunches will also be available to buy via ParentPay.

Please see below for our menu:

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Week 1	*Sausage, mash and gravy, seasonal vegetables	*Roast turkey, roast and creamed potatoes, stuffing, carrots, broccoli and gravy	*Lasagne/ Spaghetti Bolognese, garlic bread Fresh Broccoli	Cooks choice *chicken curry and rice Peas	*Battered fish, chipped potatoes peas or beans
	Filled jacket potato  Vanilla ice cream	Filled jacket potato  Fresh fruit	Filled jacket potato  Fruit crumble (YR,1,2,3,4) Blueberry muffin (Y5&6)	Filled jacket potato  Homemade cake	Filled jacket potato  Homemade biscuit
Week 2	Homemade pizza, Jacket wedged potatoes Sweetcorn and salad	*Roast chicken, roast and creamed potatoes, stuffing, carrots, broccoli and gravy	*Pork meatballs and tomato sauce pasta bake	*Seasoned chicken, potato waffle and baked beans	*Battered fish/salmon, chipped potatoes, peas or beans
	Filled jacket potato  Vanilla ice cream	Filled jacket potato  Fresh fruit	Filled jacket potato  Fruit crumble (YR,1,2,3,4) Blueberry muffin (Y5&6)	Filled jacket potato  Homemade cake	Filled jacket potato  Homemade biscuit
Week 3	*Cooks choice pasta bake Fresh broccoli	*Roast gammon, roast and creamed potatoes, stuffing, carrots, broccoli and gravy	*Homemade chicken goujons/chicken poppers Herby diced potatoes Seasonal vegetables or baked beans	Cooks choice *Homemade chicken curry/beef chilli and rice	*Fish finger, chipped potatoes peas or beans
	Filled jacket potato  Vanilla ice cream	Filled jacket potato  Fresh fruit	Filled jacket potato  Fruit crumble (YR,1,2,3,4) Blueberry muffin (Y5&6)	Filled jacket potato  Homemade cake	Filled jacket potato  Homemade biscuit

As usual, we can be flexible and allow for children to choose options for school packed lunches each day.

### Attendance requirements

**All children are expected to attend school full time from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> March. We will be recording attendance in line with government policy and our own Attendance Policy.**

- Absences will be recorded and we will ask for a reason for your child's absence.
- If your child is unwell, you must call the school as soon as possible to inform us of their absence and if they have any symptoms of COVID19.
- Where a pupil is unable to attend school because they have been assessed by a medical professional as too clinically vulnerable, or are following Public Health advice to self-isolate, remote education will be offered through online programs and the application 'SeeSaw'.

- A child/young person who lives with someone who is clinically vulnerable, including those who are pregnant, can and should attend school.
- As normally applies, persistent absence will be reported to Warrington Borough Council Attendance Service. Further measures may be taken.

## **Behaviour**

We understand that there will need to be an adjustment period when children return to school, for them to understand why we have some new rules about keeping themselves and others safe. We will support them with this and provide visual and verbal prompts.

Accidental transgressions will not generally be subject to sanctions, particularly with very young children. However, deliberate transgressions putting others at increased risk will be taken seriously, particularly deliberate coughing or spitting at someone. These will be subject to a scale of sanctions up to and including exclusion.

## **Contacting School**

The majority of contact with the school, including with teachers, should be by Seesaw, phone or e-mail to the school office. Face-to-face contact inside the school building should only be used in an emergency or if unavoidable. If a class teacher needs to speak to you, you may be contacted by phone to avoid private discussions taking place on the playground at the end of the day.

Due to office staff needing to maintain strict social distancing, parents and carers will only be permitted to come to the school office by prior arrangement and if strictly necessary. Only one adult will be allowed into the school foyer at any one time and must wear a mask when speaking to staff.

## **Supply**

The school will aim to minimise using external agency supply teachers at this time to cover any short-term staff absence. This is to reduce the risk of cross-infection from other education settings and households and may mean that a teaching assistant will temporarily deliver the lessons planned by the teacher. Teachers' planning time (PPA) will be covered by our regular supply teachers, or in-house, where possible.

## **Mental Health**

We have found that children coming into school during the lockdown quite quickly adjust to the new, temporary 'normal'. Staff will do their utmost to nurture the children during this adjustment period and beyond and we expect that most children will cope well and enjoy being back in school. However, it is possible that some children may find this period more of a challenge. Therefore, we will be following a trauma-informed approach.

During our first partial closure, all staff received training from an experienced play therapist provider on supporting children's mental health. We will encourage children to use some strategies to cope if they are experiencing difficult emotions on their return. We are

conscious that some children may have suffered a bereavement or other very challenging circumstance during lockdown and we would ask that you alert us to this confidentially so that we can be mindful of the additional support they may need. Also, we have access to support from mental health care professionals, who can advise staff and parents if anxieties continue or if other mental health issues need addressing.

We have included some tips and resources which you may find helpful to allay anxiety.

### **Tips for parents to ease child anxiety at returning to school**

- A few days before school, start preparing children for the upcoming transition by getting back to school routines such as a realistic bedtime and selecting tomorrow's clothes, getting them up early in the mornings etc.
- Arrange online calls (i.e. on zoom) with one or more familiar peers before school starts. Research shows that the presence of a familiar peer during school transitions can improve children's academic and emotional adjustment. If online calls are not possible show them class photos or talk to them about who they will meet again when back in school.
- Talk children through the morning routine and school drop-off; children are less fearful if they know what to expect. Talk to children about what to expect when they go in to school. Highlight the fun as well as what they might find challenging.

This video would be useful to support you with this (note that we will not be taking temperatures)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RGNi0mEmwpl&feature=youtu.be>

- Come up with a prize or a rewarding activity that the child could earn for separating from parents to attend school.
- Validate the child's worry by acknowledging that, like any new activity, re-starting school can be hard but soon becomes easy and fun.
- Reassure children that school is a safe place and explain what they can do to keep themselves safe (i.e. when sneezing 'catch it, bin it and kill it' by washing their hands). Explain what you as a parent will do to keep yourself safe while you are at home or in work.
- Parents should try and manage their own anxieties in front of their children, model a sense of calm and confidence.

**For anxious older children who do not want to attend school**, explain to them:

How avoiding school maintains their anxiety. Facing our fears may increase our anxiety at first but eventually the anxiety reduces.

The body symptoms that we experience when we're anxious (i.e. fast beating heart, sweaty palms, fast breathing etc.) can be alarming but they are our body's natural response to a perceived danger.

### **Videos for children that explain anxiety**

♣ Fight Flight Freeze – A guide to Anxiety for Key Stage 2 primary school children:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FfSbWc3O\\_5M](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FfSbWc3O_5M)

♣ Fight Flight Freeze – A guide to Anxiety for secondary school children:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rp0lpKTWrp4>

♣ The owl and guard dog brain – For Key Stage 2 primary school children:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=so8QN9an3t8>

The best way to reduce anxiety is by calming our body symptoms. We can do this by practicing techniques such as muscle relaxation, breathing, grounding exercises. Below are some ideas on how children can relax their bodies.

♣ Kids muscle relaxation: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cDKyRpW-Yuc>

♣ Relax like a cat: <http://www.moodcafe.co.uk/media/26930/Relaxleaflet.pdf>

♣ Calming anxiety: <https://copingskillsforkids.com/calming-anxiety>

### **Resources on school transitions**

• <https://www.annafreud.org/media/5103/all-change-parents-back-to-school-guide.pdf>

• <https://childhood101.com/starting-school-12-tips-for-easing-separation-anxiety/>

### **Information on school refusal**

• [https://mindedforfamilies.org.uk/Content/refusal\\_to\\_go\\_to\\_school/#/id/59faef4f768f5e9649724d03](https://mindedforfamilies.org.uk/Content/refusal_to_go_to_school/#/id/59faef4f768f5e9649724d03)