

What can I do to help prepare my child for the full reopening of school?

Whilst the announcement that schools can fully reopen has been long awaited, the news may be met with mixed emotion by both returning pupils and those who have been attending school. For those children returning, the challenges they may face are clear- worry about leaving home/family and a loss of confidence in their ability after having adult support with home learning, all mixed up with looking forward to seeing friends again and wanting things to feel more 'normal'. The wider reopening of schools may not be easy for those who are currently attending school either; some of those children may have enjoyed the benefits of smaller group sizes and had the opportunity to make new friendship groups.

In order to try and make reopening as positive as possible for everyone, we are suggesting that all children complete some activities the week before they come back that encourage connectedness to Dowson, to the staff and to all the other children in their year group. It is hoped that these, when used in conjunction with the other parent-led actions suggested below, will enable all children to enjoy a happy and purposeful start back at school.

Actions for Parents/Carers

The week before	The day before	The morning of return
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Follow the NHS guidance below about bedtime routines -Check uniform and shoes fit! -Continue with home schooling set by year group staff. -Complete some of the activities suggested to reconnect with Dowson- <u>this is important for all children regardless of whether they are currently attending or returning.</u> -Contact your child's class teacher if you think they are particularly anxious. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Establish a goodbye routine for the morning and remind them what time you will be coming back -Get all required items ready including packed lunches, uniform, exercise books and packs. -Use the same bedtime routine as any other school night. -Do something to mark the end of 'home learning'. This might be looking through the work your child has done, talking about what they have enjoyed and what you have both appreciated. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Get up in plenty of time and make sure they have breakfast. -Follow the staggered timings, the one-way route around school for drop off and don't forget their goodbye routine! Please remember to wear a mask on school grounds.

Top 10 bedtime tips (from MHST & Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS).

1. Try to go to bed at the same time every night; this helps your body get in to a routine.
2. Follow a bedtime routine that is calming, such as having a warm bath or reading.
3. Keep a 'worry list' by your bed. If you think of any worries, write them down and save them for tomorrow.
4. Relaxation exercises, such as yoga or stretching, help relax the muscles.
5. Use your bed just for sleeping- not doing homework or playing games.
6. Don't watch scary TV shows or movies close to bedtime because these can sometimes make it harder to fall asleep.
7. Avoid using smartphones, tablets or other electronic devices for an hour or so before bedtime.
8. Listen to relaxing music or sleep stories.
9. Make sure you are cosy but not too warm.
10. Remove clock from the room or turn them to face the wall.

Activities to Encourage Connectedness to Dowson

Choose the activities that are most suited to your child's age, natural interests, ability and circumstance.

Make a model/draw a picture of your classroom or school	Connect with a classmate you haven't seen in while- you could send them a text/email, draw them a picture or speak on the phone.	Make a card thanking an adult for supporting your learning- this could be teacher or parent.
Listen to a song that reminds you of your friends.	Go for a walk and take the route you usually take to school. Alternatively, look at Dowson on Google Earth.	https://static1.squarespace.com/static/551cfff9e4b0f74d74cb307e/t/601965b02169141427b951cc/1612277175972/Lenny+and+Lily Look at this wordless picture book about experiences during the pandemic and discuss the pictures with an adult.
Use the Anna Freud 'Reflection of Lockdown' materials	Create yourself a certificate with a list of all the things you have learnt during partial school closure.	Share a story with a friend about 'lockdown'. You could create a comic strip, film a video, write a story or perform a puppet show.
Draw a picture/create cartoon of yourself and your friends in your school uniform.	Set yourself a target or goal to achieve at school before the Easter holidays.	Read or listen to the stories about connectedness such as the The Invisible String, Ruby's Worry and Owl Babies. Alternatively, write one of your own!

If you are concerned about your child or think they are particularly anxious, please get in touch with their class teacher as soon as possible so that we can support.

A Summary for your Fridge!

The week before	The day before	The morning of return
<p>Go for a walk to school</p> <p>Start gradually adjusting your bedtime and getting up time back to 'school times'</p> <p>Get out school uniform</p> <p>Watch the videos of teachers reading stories about worries</p> <p>Reconnect with friends</p> <p>Practise the Dowson hug!</p>	<p>Establish a goodbye routine for the morning and remind them what time you will be coming back</p> <p>Encourage your child to get out uniform etc the night before.</p> <p>Go to bed early!</p>	<p>Get up in plenty of time and make sure they have breakfast.</p> <p>Follow the staggered timings, the one-way route around school for drop off and don't forget their goodbye routine!</p> <p>Have a brew and a quiet(er!) five minutes!</p>
<p><u>Any time</u></p> <p>Discuss any worries your child has using the guidance above.</p> <p>Contact school and ask any questions or discuss any concerns.</p>		