

SCHOOLS ARE 'OPEN' SOCIAL STORIES

We are very aware that the return to school – when it comes- will be really challenging for many pupils. Not only will they have had a long absence, they will have been exposed to repeated messages that going out/to school was not safe. Additionally, it seems likely that school will look different to what they were familiar with before the crisis.

Please find below some EXAMPLES - the most effective social stories are those written for a specific pupil based on personal knowledge of the child. We have tried to put together some useful phrases and some points to consider when writing social stories for individual pupils. Obviously, these will need to be 'tweaked' depending on Government advice and your individual school situation, as well as your knowledge of the child concerned. You may wish to include photos/ symbols.

The stories below have been written to cater roughly for 3 different developmental stages. Please don't hesitate to get in contact if you need further assistance with this.

I am going back to school – Version 1

My school has been closed to me because of coronavirus

It is now safe to go back to school *in small groups* (to be adapted dependent on restrictions put on schools returning – may need to add information about siblings returning/not returning)

The grown ups will help me keep safe when I leave my house to go to school.

I must remember to wash my hands, stay in my own classroom, only play on our playground, sit at my own table...etc (to be adapted dependent on social distancing measures in different schools)

The first day I will go back to school will be....

The plan is to go to school (with my mum/on my bus...etc) in the morning

The plan is I will stay in school (all day/until lunchtime) and follow the school timetable

The plan is I will come home (with my mum/on my bus...etc) at the end of the school day

The adults will tell me if the plan needs to change

Going to school is important

Going to school helps me learn new things

When we go back to school, I will be able to see my friends and teachers (be cautious in cases where someone might be ill and not be able to return just yet/died)

School will be open for me on...(to be adapted dependent on restrictions put on schools returning – may need to add information about class groupings/timetable changes)

The teachers in school will be able to keep me safe (think about adding specific information about key people if necessary e.g. if specific key people are not able to work, who will be supporting the child)

It is ok to feel happy about going back to school

It is ok to feel sad or worried about going back to school

If I am sad or worried about going back to school, I can talk to an adult that looks after me

I am going back to school – Version 2

My school has been closed to me because of coronavirus

It has been very different whilst my school has been closed

Coronavirus is not spreading as fast as it was

It is now safe to go back to school *in small groups* (to be adapted dependent on restrictions put on schools returning – may need to add information about siblings returning/not returning)

It is safe to leave my house to go to school. I must remember to stay about 2 metres from people who do not live in my house.

I must remember to wash my hands, stay in my own classroom, only play on our playground, sit at my own table...etc (to be adapted dependent on social distancing measures in different schools)

When I go back to school, I will be able to see my friends and teachers (be cautious in cases where someone might be ill and not be able to return just yet/died)

The first day I will go back to school will be....

The plan is to go to school (with my mum/on my bus...etc) in the morning

The plan is I will stay in school (all day/until lunchtime) and follow the school timetable

The plan is I will come home (with my mum/on my bus...etc) at the end of the school day

My family and/or my teachers will tell me if the plan needs to change

Going to school is important

Going to school helps me learn new things

When we go back to school, I will be able to see my friends and teachers (be cautious in cases where someone might be ill and not be able to return just yet/died)

School will be open for me on...(to be adapted dependent on restrictions put on schools returning – may need to add information about class groupings/timetable changes)

The teachers in school will be able to keep me safe (think about adding specific information about key people if necessary e.g. if specific key people are not able to work, who will be supporting the child)

It is ok to feel happy about going back to school

It is ok to feel sad or worried about going back to school

If I am sad or worried about going back to school, I can talk to an adult

I am going back to school – Version 3

My school has been closed to me because of coronavirus

The Government is in charge of keeping us safe. They decided that it was important to close schools for a while to keep everyone safe, now they have decided that it is safe to go back to school. The Government has all the best scientists and doctors to help them to know what is safe

It has been very different whilst my school has been closed

Coronavirus is not spreading as fast as it was

It is now safe to go back to school *in small groups* (to be adapted dependent on restrictions put on schools returning – may need to add information about siblings returning/not returning)

It is safe to leave my house to go to school. I must remember to stay about 2 metres from people who do not live in my house.

I must remember to wash my hands, stay in my own classroom, only play on our playground, sit at my own table...etc (to be adapted dependent on social distancing measures in different schools)

When I go back to school, I will be able to see my friends and teachers (be cautious in cases where someone might be ill and not be able to return just yet/died)

The first day I will go back to school will be....

The plan is to go to school (with my mum/on my bus...etc) in the morning

The plan is I will stay in school (all day/until lunchtime) and follow the school timetable

The plan is I will come home (with my mum/on my bus...etc) at the end of the school day

My family and/or my teachers will tell me if the plan needs to change

Whilst my school was shut, I have had more free time

It can be fun to have more free time

Going to school is important

Going to school helps me learn new things

I can still have free time when I am at home in the evenings and at the weekends

When we go back to school, I will be able to see my friends and teachers (be cautious in cases where someone might be ill and not be able to return just yet/died)

School will be open for me on...(to be adapted dependent on restrictions put on schools returning – may need to add information about class groupings/timetable changes)

The teachers in school will be able to keep me safe (think about adding specific information about key people if necessary e.g. if specific key people are not able to work, who will be supporting the child)

It is ok to feel happy about going back to school

It is ok to feel sad, angry or worried about going back to school

If I am sad, angry or worried about going back to school, I can talk to an adult

Not only have we got some children who will have been off for extended periods of time, we also have some children who will have remained in schools for a variety of reasons. They may find the prospect of other children returning challenging – they may have been used to more free time, demands being met almost instantly (due to higher pupil staff ratios) and relaxed expectations. School is likely to look different to what they were familiar with before and during the crisis.

As with the previous stories, please find below some EXAMPLES. We have tried to put together some useful phrases and some points to consider when writing social stories for individual pupils. Obviously, these will need to be ‘tweaked’ depending on Government advice and your individual school situation, as well as your knowledge of the child concerned. You may wish to include photos/ symbols.

The stories below have been written to cater roughly for 2 different developmental stages. Please do not hesitate to get in contact if you need further assistance with this.

I am going back to school – Version 1

My school has been closed for some people because of coronavirus

I have been going to school because...*(add in reason why it is safer for this young person to have been in school)*

The grown ups helped to keep me safe in school

It is now safe to go back to school *in small groups (to be adapted dependent on restrictions put on schools returning – may need to add information about siblings returning/not returning)*

I must remember to wash my hands, stay in my own classroom, only play on our playground, sit at my own table...etc *(to be adapted dependent on social distancing measures in different schools)*

The first day other people will be back in school will be....

The plan is I will stay in school (all day/until lunchtime) and follow the school timetable

I must remember to follow the school rules *(may need to be customised to remind children about specific expectations - lining up, putting my hand up to ask a question/gain staff attention, sitting on the carpet/at desks etc)*

Going to school is important

Going to school helps me learn new things

When we go back to school, I will be able to see my friends and teachers *(be cautious in cases where someone might be ill and not be able to return just yet/died)*

The grown ups might be pleased to see the other children. This is ok *(consider how the children who have remained in school may feel when staff are more pleased to see the children who haven't been in school)*

The teachers in school will be able to keep me safe *(think about adding specific information about key people if necessary e.g. if specific key people are not able to work, who will be supporting the child)*

It is ok to feel happy about other people coming back to school

It is ok to feel sad or worried about other people coming back to school

If I am sad or worried about other people coming back to school, I can talk to an adult that looks after me

Everyone else is coming back to school – Version 2

My school has been closed for some people because of coronavirus

I have been going to school because...(add in reason why it is safer for this young person to have been in school)

My school has kept me safe by...(to be adapted dependent on social distancing measures in different schools)

It has been very different whilst my school has been closed to most people (consider adding in specific information about what school has looked like for this young person – lots of 1:1 time with an adult, not having to wait for attention or needs to be met, change in expectations)

Coronavirus is not spreading as fast as it was

It is now safe for other people to come back to school *in small groups* (to be adapted dependent on restrictions put on schools returning – may need to add information about siblings returning/not returning)

I must remember to wash my hands, stay in my own classroom, only play on our playground, sit at my own table...etc (to be adapted dependent on social distancing measures in different schools)

When other people come back to school, I will be able to see some more of my friends and teachers (be cautious in cases where someone might be ill and not be able to return just yet/died)

The teachers might be pleased to see the other children that they haven't seen in a while. This is ok (consider how the children who have remained in school may feel when staff are more pleased to see the children who haven't been in school)

The first day other people will come back to school will be....

The plan is I will stay in school (all day/until lunchtime) and follow the school timetable

I must remember to follow the school rules (may need to be customised to remind children about specific expectations - lining up, putting my hand up to ask a question/gain staff attention, sitting on the carpet/at desks etc)

Whilst my school was shut for everyone else, I have had more free time in school

It can be fun to have more free time

I can still have free time when I am at home in the evenings and at the weekends (and during golden time at school?)

Learning new things is important

Going to school helps me learn new things

The teachers in school will be able to keep me safe (think about adding specific information about key people if necessary e.g. if specific key people are not able to work, who will be supporting the child)

It is ok to feel happy about other people coming back to school

It is ok to feel sad or worried about other people coming back to school

If I am sad or worried about other people coming back to school, I can talk to an adult

We are aware there are quite likely to be additional issues such as children not wanting to come because they are aware that another child's family are concerned and not sending their children back to school or members of extended families have concerns about them returning to school. These children may need a secondary story. If you need any further support with this please get in touch.

Good luck!

Maidstone Specialist Teaching and Learning Service