

Supporting your child back to school

Central CAMHS



Pride in our children's, young people's and families' services

How to support your child getting back to school

Some children and young people will be looking forward to going back to school and seeing their friends. However, for others being at home may have been an enjoyable experience for them and going back to school may be a cause of anxiety. The following is a guide to help parents and carers to support their children back to school:

What can you do before they go back to school?

- **Talk to your child**

Remind your child that lots of young people will also be worried about going back to school and its normal to be a little apprehensive. Allow your child to talk to you about what they are worried about. For some children it may be easier to ask them to write down or draw what they are worried about. Try and problem solve some of their worries with them; is there a teacher they get on well with that your child could talk to whilst at school if needed?

- **Talk to school**

If your child is particularly worried about going to school have a conversation with school about this. If you have thought about particular things that your child is worried about, ask your child if you can share this with school. The school may be able to support them with some of these worries such as identifying a safe space or person they can go to.

- **Mindfulness activities**

Mindfulness is a great way of being in the present moment rather than focusing on the past or what could happen. There are a number of mindfulness activities that you can do as a family. Its always good to practice mindfulness techniques when the young person is not anxious so that its easier to use when they are feeling anxious. There are lots of apps around mindfulness:

<https://healthyyoungmindspennine.nhs.uk/resource-centre/apps/>

- **Positive things about school**

Remind your child about the things they like about school such as seeing their friends, a particular lesson or break time.

The day before school

- The day before they go back to school, support your child to make sure they are ready; have they got everything they need and packed their bags? For some children it may be helpful to use pictures or a check list to support them with this. Talk about how they will get to school the next day, could you walk with them or have they got a friend they could meet?
- Ensure they have an opportunity to talk to you before they go to bed about any worries they have. Ensure they have a relaxed evening routine so that they can get a good night's sleep.

How to support your child on the morning of going back to school.

- On the morning of school, support your child with getting ready and making breakfast and remind them what they can do to ease their anxiety. Suggest they practice doing part of their morning routine mindfully such as brushing their teeth or making their breakfast
- Agree on something nice that they can do in the evening when they return, such as a nice dinner, spending some time together as a family or watching a movie.

After their first day of school

- When they have returned from school give them time and space to talk about how their day has gone. Some children may be happy to do this as soon as they get home from school whereas others may need some quiet time to process the day before they can do so. Think together about how the school day has been; have there been any issues that school could offer further support with? How did their plan to manage their anxiety work? Continue to have regular discussions as they settle back into school.

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Patient Advice and Liaison Service

For information about CPFT services or to raise an issue, contact the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) on Freephone 0800 376 0775, or e-mail pals@cpft.nhs.uk

Out-of-hours service for CPFT mental health service users

Please call **NHS 111** for health advice and support.

If you require this information in another format such as braille, large print or another language, please let us know.

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