

HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR CHILD RETURNING TO SCHOOL AFTER COVID-19 LOCKDOWN



It is predicted that young people's futures will be significantly impacted by COVID-19 (The Children's Society, March 2020). As schools begin to return to face-to-face teaching, and as we work together to protect and champion the interests of young people in the recovery, listening to their voices is more important than ever.

Between 30th April and 22nd May, The Diana Award surveyed 505 students from our trained Anti-Bullying Ambassador Programme schools. We asked young people to tell us about their experiences of lockdown and their feelings about returning to school. The survey identified a range of feelings about the return to school amongst young people.

48%

Nearly half (48%) of the surveyed young people didn't feel worried about returning to school and most are looking forward to school reopening (65%). The most common emotions described were happiness and excitement. Others felt good and relieved, and many felt "fine" or "OK".

33%

However, 33% of young people surveyed agreed that the thought of going back to school makes them feel worried and 14% are not looking forward to schools reopening.

1 in 5

It is important that we consider that not all young people are feeling positive about the return to school. 21% of young people (1 in 5) surveyed also told us that they did not feel close to their friends now and many said they felt lonely or isolated from others during this time, as they withdrew or found it difficult to socialise. For many young people, heading back to school for the new academic year will be particularly challenging this year and extra support for their wellbeing is essential.

TOP TIPS

For parents and carers, the summer holidays can be an opportunity to help your child to ease their worries and feel prepared for the return to school. Below are our top tips for helping your child manage their worries about returning to school following COVID-19 and the school closures.

TIP #1

Talk to them about their worries. Ask how they feel about returning to school and lend a listening ear if they are feeling worried or anxious. Let them know that you understand how they're feeling and lots of other young people share their worries at the moment. Make it clear that you will be supporting them with the return to school and you will help them to come up with a plan to feel better about returning.

TIP #4

Get prepared. For many young people, this has been an extremely long break from going into school. Make sure they feel prepared, whether that means getting new sizes of their school uniform, spending some time reading to prepare for their classes or arranging to walk to school with a friend. The more they can prepare for the first day back, the fewer worries they will bring with them.

TIP #2

Take it slowly. If your child has been spending a lot of time alone during the school closures, it could be overwhelming returning to a busy school. Encourage them to meet up with friends outdoors (whilst following government guidelines) or bring them along when you are running errands. Build up their social contact gradually so they begin to feel more comfortable with it.

TIP #5

Continue the dialogue. Once your child is back at school for the new academic year, keep the conversation going. Check in with them regularly about how they are finding the return to school and the changes to the school day that are now in place to keep them safe. Encourage them to be honest and open with you when they are struggling.

TIP #3

Discuss their support network. Talk to your child about who they will turn to if they are struggling whilst in school and need support. Will they turn to a specific friend? Is there a teacher they feel particularly comfortable talking to? Remind them that, in a crisis, they can always get support from The Diana Award Crisis Messenger by texting DA to 85258. A trained volunteer will listen to how they are feeling.

Further Support

The Diana Award Crisis Messenger

The Diana Award Crisis Messenger provides free, 24/7 crisis support across the UK. If you are a young person in crisis, you can text **DA** to **85258**. Trained volunteers will listen to how you're feeling and help you think the next step towards feeling better.

GP/CYPMHS

If you think your child needs some further support for their mental health, you can take them to visit the GP. The GP might then refer them to the children and young people's mental health services for more specialised help.

Resources

Check out our [Resource Centre](#) for more resources on supporting your child with their wellbeing as well as our parent's guide to bullying behaviour.

Read our full report on COVID-19 and mental health [here](#).

We're proud to be the only charity set up in memory of Diana, Princess of Wales, and her belief that young people have the power to change the world. It's a big mission but there are two things within it that we focus our charity's efforts on – young people and change.

Throughout all of our programmes and initiatives, 'change' for and by young people is central, including our anti-bullying work which encourages change in attitudes and behaviours.

We hope you found this resource useful and wish you all the best in your anti-bullying journey. If you would like to help us create more resources and train even more Anti-Bullying Ambassadors, you can make a £5 donation by texting CHANGE 5 to 70470 or visit diana-award.org.uk/donate

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