

## Wellbeing update: Returning to school

Let's talk

As we edge closer to the possibility of our children returning to school, we are very aware of the reverse change that we and our children will need to face. The shift in direction from 'stay home' and the serious reasons why children couldn't come to school and

see their friends and teachers, to now - 'stay alert' and it's 'time to go back to school' - will no doubt be easier for some than others. As a parent or carer, you will probably already have some idea as to whether your child will feel uneasy or anxious about returning to school. They may have thrived in their home learning and enjoyed the security of spending all their time in the family home. Or they may have resisted going outside, with the fear of Coronavirus being around them. It is important to remember that all these feelings are natural and normal feelings to have, and as per last week's wellbeing update, we should validate and acknowledge these with the child, so that they can recognise the feelings and manage them in the future.

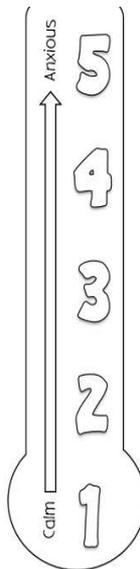


### What can you do to support your child beforehand?

Here are some ideas to help understand how your child may be feeling about returning to school. There will also be social stories provided on our school website to support your child in the coming weeks. Look out for updates under the *School Closure/Wellbeing* menu tab.

#### 1. Talk to your child, empathise and listen to their concerns

Ask how they're feeling about it. What is s/he worried about? Why does s/he expect that to happen? Let your child share his/her fears and talk about what's on his/her mind. Some find this easier when doing an activity together, like going for a walk or doing a jigsaw, not too direct, but side by side. You can use a rating scale to help you like the one here. Whatever they tell you, accept, validate and normalise their feelings. "You're right, it is a bit nerve-wracking - it's the same for me and work. I bet there are other children in your class feeling exactly the same."



Write a number from 1 to 5

How worried do you feel about coming to school?

How worried do you feel about leaving your parent/carer?

How worried do you feel about seeing your friends?

How worried do you feel about seeing your teachers?

Any other comments?

Anxiety scale for George



#### 2. Problem solve

Now you know what is worrying them most, you can help them find ways to cope and make a plan. Doing this together will help give them some control of the situation.

#### 3. Remind them of the positives and the things they miss about school

Redirect their worries and unhelpful thoughts to positive, helpful thoughts. Ask your child, "What are the two or three things that you are most excited about on your return to school?" e.g. Seeing friends, playing in the MUGA, getting a new book from the library?

#### 4. Be aware of your own feelings and behaviours

This is an anxiety-provoking time for parents and carers too. Make sure you look after your own mental health and wellbeing to help keep those feelings in-check through mindfulness and calming activities such as breathing techniques.

**Any questions or concerns?** As a Wellbeing team, we are planning ahead to ensure that we can best support our children's mental health and wellbeing needs when we return to school. If you would like to make us aware of your child's concerns about returning, then please email us at [wellbeing@emmanuel.camden.sch.uk](mailto:wellbeing@emmanuel.camden.sch.uk).