

Returning Back to School

After being off school for so long, it is only natural to feel lots of different feeling about returning to school. You might feel:

- Excited to see friends
- Bored with online learning
- Happy to be back
- Nervous about changes at school
- Worried about feeling you need to catch up
- Calm about the change even though other people seem stressed
- Sad that you won't be at home anymore with family
- Guilty that you don't seem stressed like other friends
- Annoyed that you have to come back
- Angry that the government keep deciding new changes for all of us
- Lonely because you have seen or spoke to friends
- Stressed that teachers are going to tell you off for not completing enough work

No matter how you feel, it is completely normal to feel a mixture of emotions and remember that everyone will be in the same boat, even the staff. A few things that might help to know:

- We are all genuinely excited to see you, we have missed teaching in person and being able to support you in the classroom
- Most people have felt that they haven't been in contact with their friends as much as they should have. Lots of us have got bored with Zoom and just got our heads down and not spoken to those we like as much as we should.
- Teachers are planning lessons to recap what you have learnt over lockdown to make sure you feel confident before moving on.
- Teachers are not going to shout or embarrass you about your work from lockdown. If you need to catch up we have already made you aware and will be helping you after school so that you don't feel behind any longer.
- The lateral flow tests don't hurt and no one will be doing the test to you, you will be in control. We are doing the tests to help keep us all safe and will show you how to do it slowly and there will be time to ask questions. Staff have been taking these since January and have already helped the students in school to be comfortable to take theirs. Once we have done three you will be well practiced and ready to do them at home instead.
- We will be running enrichments from 15th so you can get involved in sports, the arts and other opportunities to reconnect with your friends.
- We will be building on the Five Ways to Wellbeing and focus tutor times on more opportunities to support wellbeing. This will include a whole school event for Comic Relief on Friday 19th March, you need to have a few jokes ready!

1. **Talk to someone about how you feel**, someone at home, a friend or your tutor.
2. **Feel prepared for our 'new normal'**;
 - **Think about what will be different. For example if you are in Year 8 or Year 10 there are some changes of locations**, including using the side entrance, playgrounds, canteens and classrooms. Remember you used these spaces last academic year. For Year 10 you will now be the oldest in your area and the Year 7s will look up to you.
 - **Wearing masks in classroom** and although this is going to be different you were so successful wearing them in corridors. You will be able to remove when outside or eating at breaks and lunches.
 - **Lateral flow tests** you can look at how to videos online and look at the photos of the hall.
3. **We are continuing to put in measures to keep you safe.** Remember there is lots you can do to stay safe, such as washing your hands before and after eating, maintaining social distancing and wearing a clean mask every day. This includes:
 - **Lateral flow tests** staff have been doing these since January and will continue to them twice a week
 - **Cleaning hands**, staff will remind everyone to sanitise their hands when arriving at school and before lunch and when entering classrooms.
 - **Wearing masks**, staff and students will be wearing masks when they cannot socially distance (unless exempt)
 - **Teacher areas in classroom**, teachers will have a marked area in classrooms away from students and will teach from these spots to ensure distance for when they are teaching the whole class.
 - **Social distancing** staff and students will try socially distance when possible
4. **Get into a routine to help ease into school life.** During lockdown it is understandable that your routine may have changed. Lots of you are likely to have been waking up later or going to bed later. To help you get ready for school, try to gradually get back into your usual morning and bedtime routines.
 - **Check uniform** as soon as possible and let your parents know if you've grown! Communicate any problems that cannot be solved by getting someone at home to write in your homework diaries
 - **Get prepared** review the updated timetable (sent last week) and check your pencil cases and pack your bag before Monday. We start on week 2.
5. **Think ahead.** As well as reflecting on what has happened during the past few weeks, it is important to have a sense of excitement for the future. Talk to your family about what you are all looking forward soon and those things that are further down the 'road map' out of lockdown.

6. **Reach out and make connections** talk to your friends over 'chat' or phone them. Don't worry if you haven't talked much over lockdown, they probably feel the same as you and will appreciate a message or call.
7. **Seek support if you need it.** Staff are here to support. Talk to us before you come back through TEAMS or once you are back

