



## Special Educational Needs Newsletter

### Preparing your child for returning to school

Over the past 2 months our pupils have experienced a huge change in their lives for a second time. The familiar routine of going to school everyday changed so quickly into lockdown and now they are expected to change again! We all adapt to change in different ways.

Your child may have settled quickly and happily into being at home and enjoyed the new learning environment. Or, your child may have struggled with the lack of structure, feeling upset at not seeing their friends and teachers every day. All children and families have experienced these changes in different ways – there is no ‘normal’ way for us to have experienced lockdown.

We all get used to things staying the same and it is reassuring to know what is happening now and what it going to happen next. When we know what to expect we can begin to understand how we feel about things and how to adjust our behaviours which helps us to cope with life.

Change is a natural part of life. Sometimes changes are predictable and expected and at other times changes can be unexpected and unwelcome. Being able to cope with change is sometimes called resilience. It is natural for children of all ages to feel unsettled, anxious and even angry when things change and this can affect their behaviour. Practicing different ways of thinking and planning for changes to come can boost your child’s ability to cope and adapt to new things and events.

Here are some things you can do to help prepare your child and to gain a sense of control over the uncertainties.

- **Think about your child’s individual needs:** each child has their own personality, strengths and requirements so will need different preparation and support. You know your child best.
- **Find out your child’s worries:** are they worried about catching the virus; family members getting sick or being away from you? Once you know their concerns, you can provide them with information and reassurance to help them feel safe at school.
- **Share with teachers your family’s lockdown experience,** as this will affect how your child will feel about returning to school. For some families, just getting through each day has been the priority, while others may have lost someone close to them. This will help school staff to provide support, the support your child needs.
- **Work together** with your child’s teacher if you think your child needs a back to school plan. It will help to think about what time your child will start and finish school, who will meet them and where. You can add more details as they become known.
- **Use your child’s preferred communication method:** your child could help write their ‘return to school’ plan. Other children may find symbols or photos more helpful. Social stories which use short descriptions of a situation or activity can help children understand and cope with changes.

### Useful Acronyms & Vocabulary about SEND:

SEND: Special Educational Needs and Disability

SENDCo: Special Educational Needs and Disability Coordinator

ASD: Autism Spectrum Disorder

ADHD: Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder

EWO: Education Welfare Officer

SENDIASS: Special Educational Needs and Disability Information Advice and Support Service

SALT: Speech and Language Therapists

### Social stories:

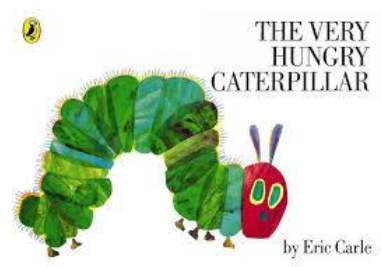
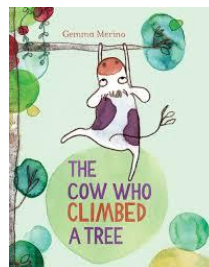
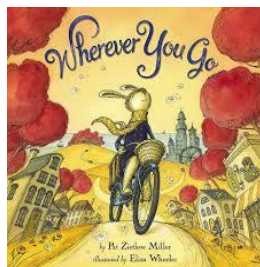
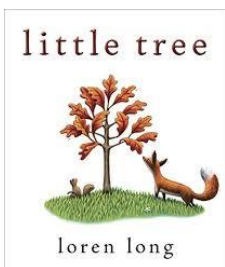
[Back to school](#)

[Washing hands](#)

[Saying goodbye to my adult](#)

- **Think about what will be the same** when your child returns to school, such as their teacher, their classroom, their class mates. Focusing on this will be reassuring and help to reduce their anxiety. All major changes happened for the return in September so there should not be any unexpected changes. If the leadership team do decide to make changes, they will communicate these with you in the usual way.
- **Think about what you have learned about your child during lockdown:** did certain activities calm your child down? Did regular movement breaks improve their focus? Share these with your child's teacher, it could help to continue some of the activities you started in lock down once they are back at school.

### Books that focus on change (click on the picture for link):



### Helpful websites:

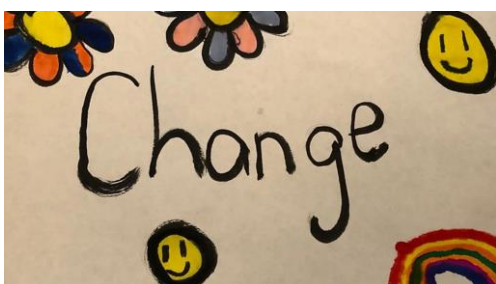
<https://www.brighthorizons.com/family-resources/helping-children-deal-with-change-and-stress>

<https://www.early-education.org.uk/sites/default/files/Helping%20children%20cope%20with%20change.pdf>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/cbeebies/grownups/helping-children-deal-with-change>

<https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/resources/10-ways-for-parents-to-help-their-children-cope-with-change/>

### Video and podcast (click on the picture for link):



Please be assured that all staff are aware that some children will be feeling anxious about returning to school and others may require support to settle into the classroom and school routine.

Teaching assistants will be out on the playground to greet the children and help them say goodbye to you. Once in school the adults will support pupils in a variety of ways. If your child struggles emotionally when they return we will work with you to create strategies and a plan to support them further.

A Parent Newsletter was sent out on 26<sup>th</sup> February explaining how we plan to support all pupils when we return on the 8<sup>th</sup> March.

**Please email me ([emma.campbell@britannia.suffolk.sch.uk](mailto:emma.campbell@britannia.suffolk.sch.uk)) if you would like to discuss your child's return to school in more detail.**