Helping children get back to school

Your child may be feeling reluctant to leave the house. This is their safe place during Covid-19 Lockdown. It is natural to want to stay there. But we can’t stay locked down forever. Once it is safe to return to school, children need to return to normal in a supported way. The following advice might be helpful for you.

Step 1: May 2020

1. Practise walking to school as part of daily exercise. If your child can’t manage the whole journey, try to do a part of it.
2. Try to get to the school gate and, social distancing in place, tie a ribbon or note to the gate with your child and a message to their classmates. Read the other notes. Remember to wash hands afterwards.
3. Join in any local community “get your child moving” activities.
4. Talk to your child when you are doing something else like driving, walking, cycling cooking. Talk about
   - What are you looking forward to doing when you get back to school?
   - Who will you enjoy seeing again?
   - What do you think your classroom will look like?
   - What might have changed?
   - What might be the same?
5. Use the school movies to show your child the teachers. Talk about what you see.
6. Start to use the relaxed lockdown regulations to help your child see other friends. As the regulations are relaxed, we may be able to meet up outdoors for play dates in small numbers and whilst sticking to social distancing and hygiene advice.
7. If your child is not able to leave the house or leave you and is showing high levels of anxiety please request support from a known member of school staff. It is really important that you get support now to get your child ready to make the transition back to school. Let us know on admin@prestonstreet.edin.sch.uk. We have also put a detailed advice guide for parents on managing school anxiety at https://prestonstreetprimary.wordpress.com/emotional-and-mental-health-and-wellbeing/

Step 2: June 2020

1. Start reading, with your child My Hero is You: How kids can fight COVID-19!
   This helps children understand how we can beat corona virus to instil hope and confidence.
2. Follow the advice in the three posters below 1. One to One 2. Keep It Positive 3. Structure Up

Step 3: July 2020

1. Refresh handwashing technique. Use this video with younger children
   Practise at home and check on the technique. Ask your child to teach this to other family members.
2. Play 2-meter social distancing games to reinforce what this looks like in school. Examples below…
   (a) Measure out 2 meters on the floor/ground. Use chalk, objects, skipping rope etc. Can we jump 2 meters? Can we roll 2 meters? Can we stand at each end of the 2m line and talk to each other in a whisper?
(b) Choose a family word to use when you see someone not sticking to 2 meters. Eg shout “Crocodile!” Play at home to get children used to thinking about 2 meters.

3. Make sure your child carries tissues and you use these consistently for coughing and sneezing. Teach your child to have a tissue out of the packet in their pocket, ready to grab if they need to cough or sneeze quickly.

**Step 4: August 2020**

1. Practise getting ready for school during your evening routine. Laying out school clothes, choosing what to have for breakfast, packing the things we will need to take to school (school will give further advice on this).

2. Create a time each day, a “wobbles and wishes” time, when children can tell you what they wish to happen when they go to school and ask about any “wobbles” or worries they have about going back to school.

3. Plan with your child how you will get to school, how you will leave them there, what time you will collect them, exactly where you will meet them, who will collect them. Make it detailed and clear. Follow school advice on drop off points, pick up points etc. We will tell you this before you start school in August.

4. Plan treats to make school week less stressful. Favourite food, favourite places to walk to, favourite activities. Build these in for the first few weeks back at school.

5. Consider using a visual timetable the one below so your child can see the week ahead. This uses standard UK visual learning symbols used in schools.

**Step 5: School week**

1. Each evening talk through the next day’s plan. Use a visual timetable if you need to. Ask your teacher for this if you do not have one.

2. Pack what you need for school (follow school advice on what to bring)

3. Lay out clothes for school.

4. Decide what to have for breakfast.

5. Set aside extra time for the journey to school so that you can have a break to chat about worries.

6. If you are running late, stay calm, tell your child it is okay and school has said we can be late for the first few days/weeks.

7. Judge your child’s mood. If they need you to stay with your child in school for a while, we will try to have spaces set up for one parent and their child/children to play together. Parents will not be able to go to class because of infection control measures.

8. Emotional check-ins. Ask your child to show you a “fist of five” (1 = not feeling great. 5 = feeling great) Use positive language eg “Let’s see if we can get that 1 to a 3. We will do your favourite thing after school.” Or “Your teacher will help you get from 1 to 3 because she has lots of fun things n class today” Or “You’ll probably feel like a 3 when you see your friends!”
1 COVID-19 PARENTING
One-on-One Time

Can’t go to work? Schools closed? Worried about money? It is normal to feel stressed and overwhelmed. School shutdown is also a chance to make better relationships with our children and teenagers. One-on-One time is free and fun. It makes children feel loved and secure, and shows them that they are important.

Set aside time to spend with each child

It can be for just 20 minutes, or longer — it’s up to us. It can be at the same time each day so children or teenagers can look forward to it.

Ask your child what they would like to do

Choosing builds their self-confidence. If they want to do something that isn’t OK with physical distancing then this is a chance to talk with them about this. (see next leaflet)

Ideas with your baby/toddler

- Copy their facial expression and sounds
- Sing songs, make music with pots and spoons
- Stack cups or blocks
- Tell a story, read a book, or share pictures

Ideas with your teenager

- Talk about something they like: sports, music, celebrities, friends
- Cook a favorite meal together
- Exercise together to their favorite music

Ideas with your young child

- Read a book or look at pictures
- Make drawings with crayons or pencils
- Dance to music or sing songs
- Do a chore together — make cleaning and cooking a game
- Help with school work

Switch off the TV and phone. This is virus-free time

Listen to them, look at them. Give them your full attention. Have fun!

For more information click below links:
Parenting tips from WHO
Parenting tips from UNICEF
Its worldwide languages
EVIDENCE-BASE
COVID-19 PARENTING
Keeping It Positive

It's hard to feel positive when our kids or teenagers are driving us crazy. We often end up saying "Stop doing that!" But children are much more likely to do what we ask if we give them positive instructions and lots of praise for what they do right.

Say the behaviour you want to see

1. Use positive words when telling your child what to do, like 'Please put your clothes away' (instead of 'Don't make a mess')

2. Shouting at your child will just make you and them more stressed and angrier. Get your child's attention by using their name. Speak in a calm voice.

Praise your child when they are behaving well

3. Try praising your child or teenager for something they have done well. They may not show it, but you'll see them doing that good thing again. It will also reassure them that you notice and care.

Get real

1. Can your child actually do what you are asking them? It is very hard for a child to keep quiet inside for a whole day but maybe they can keep quiet for 15 minutes while you are on a call.

Help your teen stay connected

Teens especially need to be able to communicate with their friends. Help your teen connect through social media and other safe distancing ways. This is something you can do together, too!

For more information click below links:
3 COVID-19 PARENTING Structure Up

COVID-19 has taken away our daily work, home and school routines. This is hard for children, teenagers and for you. Making new routines can help.

Create a flexible but consistent daily routine

1. Make a schedule for you and your children that has time for structured activities as well as free time. This can help children feel more secure and better behaved.

2. Children or teenagers can help plan the routine for the day – like making a school timetable. Children will follow this better if they help to make it.

3. Include exercise in each day – this helps with stress and kids with lots of energy at home.

Teach your child about keeping safe distances

4. If it is OK in your country, get children outside.

5. You can also write letters and draw pictures to share with people. Put them up outside your home for others to see!

6. You can reassure your child by talking about how you are keeping safe. Listen to their suggestions and take them seriously.

Make handwashing and hygiene fun


8. Make a game to see how few times we can touch our faces with a reward for the least number of touches (you can count for each other).

You are a model for your child’s behavior

9. If you practice keeping safe distances and hygiene yourself, and treat others with compassion, especially those who are sick or vulnerable – your children and teenagers will learn from you.

At the end of each day, take a minute to think about the day. Tell your child about one positive or fun thing they did.

Praise yourself for what you did well today. You are a star!

For more information click below links:

- Parenting tips from WHO
- Parenting tips from UNICEF
- In worldwide languages
- EVIDENCE-BASE