

## For parents/carers

### Checklist: Supporting your autistic child's return to school

After weeks of restrictions due to coronavirus (COVID-19), students are returning to school. Here's a short checklist to help you as you support your autistic child's return to school.

#### Talk to your school

- Review information about the return to school provided by your child's school.
- Talk to the school if they haven't provided information, or if you have any questions.
- Ask for a parent-teacher meeting or Student Support Group meeting to talk about the supports your child might need to return to school.
- Review your child's previous supports and consider any new ones that may be needed due to new routines.

#### Communicate with your child

- Prepare your child for changes at school.
- Describe and explain those changes. Examples may include:
  - School drop off and pick up times and places may be different.
  - Different year levels or groups of students may have their own times.
  - The bell times, classrooms and teachers may be different.
  - There may be extra cleaning being done, or areas that students can't go.
  - There may be regular hand washing and more space between desks.
- A social script, written schedule, or visual schedule may be helpful to introduce changes.
- Find out more about social scripts in the resource ["Using a social script to explain a new situation"](#).

- Reassure your child that the changes at school are because their teachers want to keep them safe.
- Be mindful of your child's emotions. This is another big change. Invite your child to share their thoughts or feelings about going back to school by talking, writing or drawing with you.

## Get ready

- Involve your child in getting ready to return to school. For example, your child could help you get their school uniform, lunch and school bag ready.
- If bedtimes and wake up times need to change for school you can start practising. You may like to set an earlier bedtime and wake up time for your child a few days before their return day.
- You could drive or walk past the school and/or arrange to visit the school with your child before school returns. You will need to contact the school to see if this is possible.
- Remind your child of any strategies they've used in the past to manage change.

**Read the Amaze resource "8 ways to prepare your autistic child for going back to school" for more information.**

## Need help with the transition back to school?

Go to <http://www.amaze.org.au/returntoschool>

## Autism Connect - National autism helpline

Contact Autism Connect for more information about autism, or to discuss your individual situation:

Phone: **1300 308 699**

Email: [info@autismconnect.org.au](mailto:info@autismconnect.org.au)

Website and webchat: [www.amaze.org.au/autismconnect](http://www.amaze.org.au/autismconnect)

This service is available from 8am to 7pm, Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays).

### Victorian Department of Education learning from home advice line for parents

If you have questions about learning from home, call the advice phone line for parents on **1800 338 663**.



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and Training