



Coronavirus (COVID-19)

For students

Tips for returning to school for autistic primary students

When you go back to school, many things will be the same, but there will be some changes.

The changes are to keep everyone safe.

The school will tell you and your parent or carer about the changes and what they are.

Your teachers have missed seeing all their students at school and are looking forward to seeing you again.

Your classmates missed you too!

School will be different in some ways

There will be some changes.

You might:

- Wash your hands more often.
- Clean your desk more often.
- Notice that the school bell might ring at a different time than usual.
- Have to enter and leave school in a different way.
- See some people at school wearing masks.
- Need to bring your drink bottle instead of using drink taps.
- Find that some activities like sport or music may be different.
- See that spaces at school have changed or look different.



Your school will send information about the changes to your parent or carer. Talk to your parent or carer if you have any questions about changes at school.

If you feel worried about going back to school

Talk to your parent, carer, a trusted friend, or a counsellor about your worries and what you can do to manage them. You could make a list together of questions. You could list or draw your worries, and then brainstorm ideas to help manage them.

5 ways to keep calm

You may like to try these five ways to keep calm

1. Think about what you can do to be safe

To help keep you and your friends safe you can:

- Wash your hands or use hand sanitiser.
- Cough or sneeze into your elbow.
- Try not to touch your face.

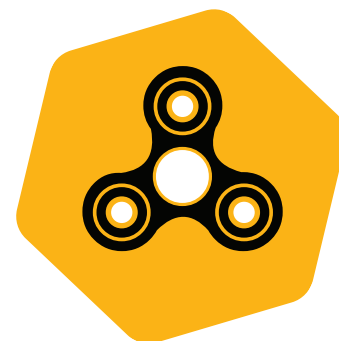
2. Tell someone if you feel worried

- If you feel worried, you can talk to someone.
- Think of people that you feel safe talking to at school.
- It could be your classroom teacher, a teacher from another class, your education support person, or your parent or carer.

3. Do things that make you feel calm

Your usual calming strategies may help you settle back into school. This may be:

- Using a fidget item.
- A comfort toy.
- An emotions chart.
- A visual schedule.
- Special signal for your teacher (like a signal to ask for a break).



4. Do something kind

- Doing something nice for someone else can make you feel good.
- This may be helping your teacher or a friend.
- If you have a friend learning from home, you could call them to help them feel included.

5. Remember to breathe

- If you feel worried, take a couple of deep breaths.
- This might help you feel better.

Rules

Different schools might have different rules, so if you're not sure, check with your teacher.

There may be some rules about touching your friends. If you can't touch your friends, try to think of other fun ways to say hello, such as bumping elbows, waving or smiling.

Practise getting ready for school

You can practise getting ready to go to school a day or two before you are able to go back.

That way you can be sure you remember how to be ready for a school day. You could:

- Wake up early.
- Put on your school uniform.
- Pack your school bag.



Tell your classmates what you have been up to

You haven't had many opportunities to catch up with friends and classmates for a long time.

Think of ways that you could share what you have been doing while at home. You could:

- Make a card for a friend.
- Share a photo of something you have been doing.
- Recommend an online game or a TV show.

Get moving

Move in a way that makes you feel good.

You could:

- Run, kick a footy, dance, go for a walk, or any other activity that you find fun and enjoy the fresh air.

If you have learnt any new moves or skills, you could show them to your friends and classmates when you return to school.

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

Website and webchat: 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**.



Education
and Training