



The Queen Elizabeth Academy

**Returning to School
September 2020**



**The Queen Elizabeth
Academy**

“We Can and We Will”

Dear Parents and Carers,

March to July 2020 has been one of the most challenging periods in our academy's history.

We are conscious that for many reasons, Autumn term 2020 will not be a normal return to school, not least because of the school term that proceeded it. We understand that the experience will have been different for everyone. We have all missed having a full school and are really looking forward to having everyone back in September.

We know returning to school under normal circumstances for some students can be worrying and may cause a number of emotions, including anxiety. It is therefore only natural that a return to school this September after a long period of not attending school and under more unusual circumstances will be worrying a greater number of students and parents.

We have prepared this short guide in order to support our students and parents in the return to school this September.

We look forward to all our students returning to the academy and we are committed to supporting every family as we work together as a community through these challenging times.

Queries or concerns:

If you have any specific questions, please do not hesitate in contacting the school office on info@tgea.org.uk or the Pastoral email on pastoral@tgea.org.uk.

Please do also ensure that you have looked at the academy website for the most recent letter home from our Principal and our risk assessments. These are in line with the most recent government guidance and do include the new information with regards to face masks and coverings.

<https://tgea.attrust.org.uk/parents/letters-to-parents/>

For Students

Going back to school after COVID-19.

Three tips for getting ready to return to school



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1

Get into a good sleep routine

Not getting enough sleep affects your concentration and mood. Before going back to school try these things to get into a good sleep routine.

- Make sure you are getting enough sleep (between 8 to 11 hours per night)
- Go to bed and wake up at the same times each day.
- Practise getting up at the time you normally would on a school day.
- Avoid watching TV or using your phone an hour before bed (this helps you to sleep).
- More information about sleep can be found on the following websites:
 - <https://www.healthforkids.co.uk/grownups/health-issues/how-can-help-child-sleep/>
 - <https://sleepcouncil.org.uk/>
 - <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sleep-and-tiredness/how-much-sleep-do-kids-need/>



2

Talk about your feelings

Everybody will feel different about going back to school. Some young people will be excited, while some could be worried or scared. Making sense of how you feel can help you do things to make you feel better:

- Talk to an adult, a friend or somebody you trust about going back to school and how you feel about it.
- You can talk to an online counsellor for free on Kooth.com.
- You can write your feelings down in a diary or a [mood journal](#).
- Think: if I was helping somebody in this situation, what would I suggest?



3

Do some research

School will be different when you go back and there will be new things in place to keep you safe. It is helpful to find out what these things include so you are not surprised by them on your first day:

- Go on your school's website to find some more information: <https://tgea.attrust.org.uk/parents/letters-to-parents/>
- [News Round](#) have made some reports about the experiences of other young people who have gone back to school.
- Talk to friends who were in school during the lockdown.





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For Parents and Carers

Going back to school after COVID-19.

Useful tips to help young people return to school following COVID-19

Most young people have been off school for a number of months. Some may find managing the return to school difficult but there are some simple things that parents and carers can do to make this return easier.



Sleep and bedtimes- establish a good sleep routine

The bedtime routine may have changed while they have been off school and it is important that they are well rested before going back to school. A lack of sleep can affect a young person's mood and their ability to learn. The following points can help to make sure your child is well rested:

- ❖ Make sure that they get enough sleep, primary aged children need around 9 to 11 hours per day while secondary aged children need around 8 to 10 hours.
- ❖ Remove distractions from the bedroom if they disrupt sleep (such as games consoles or phones)
- ❖ Practise good sleep hygiene (see advice from [school nursing service](#) and [The Children's Sleep Charity](#))

Waking up- practise getting up for school

Some young people have got used to being able to get up when they want and are used to waking up naturally. Starting to wake up at the time that they normally would on a school day will be extremely helpful.

- ❖ Set an alarm so that your child is awake at a set time.
- ❖ Try to prevent your child from going back to sleep.



Morning routine- getting used to the school day



We have all found that our old routines, whether it be of the school day or our own working day, have become somewhat lost during lockdown. Before we go back to school, start to make the days more like the school day with set times for meals, snacks and activities.

- ❖ Some young people will benefit from the use of a timetable or a visual timetable
- ❖ Start to eat breakfast and get dressed at the times that you normally would on a school day.
- ❖ Have a snack/break/treat time around the same time as breaktime, which is 11.05 – 11.25am.

Access to technology- getting ready to leave technology at home.

Whilst off school, many of us have spent more time using technology. This has helped us to keep in touch with friends and provide us with entertainment. Some young people may find leaving the technology behind challenging when returning to school.



- ❖ Monitor screen time using the screen time or digital wellbeing features of your child's device. This will allow you to see how much time they are spending on each app.
- ❖ There are no set rules for screen time, but excessive screen time such as accessing social media or 'junk' content can be unhealthy (for example YouTube videos or TikTok).
- ❖ Maintain control over what your child accesses and when, have a plan for when screen time happens. For older children this can be negotiated and agreed with them.
- ❖ Try to limit the amount of junk screen time and only give your child access to devices for a specific purpose e.g. read about an area of interest or watch a specific video on I-player.



Expectations of school- what will school be like when I go back?

Schools will be different when we go back and helping them to understand these changes can reduce any anxiety or uncertainty.

- ❖ Videos and pictures are the best way of helping a child to understand new things
- ❖ Ask if there is anything they want to know. It is okay not to have the answers, you can try to find out together.
- ❖ We will have new routines when we return to school (for example washing hands after break and before lunch). Try to bring these routines into the home so you can get used to them.
- ❖ If your child has specific needs, try contacting the school SENCo
- ❖ Help your child to understand why things will be different when they go back.
- ❖ Please see the school website to support with this:
<https://tqea.atrust.org.uk/parents/letters-to-parents/>

Notice the signs that your child may be worried- behaviour communicates a young person's emotions

As the return to school becomes closer, children may start to feel excited, nervous or worried. These big emotions may cause their behaviour to change. **Behaviour is often how a young person communicates their emotions.** Exactly how behaviour links to emotion can sometimes be difficult to understand. If you do have any significant concerns, please contact the school using the email address pastoral@tqea.org.uk.





Managing any worries

It is natural for young people to be worried about returning to school after having so much time off, having conversations about how they feel can be really helpful.

Here are some useful steps for talking about feelings:

- ❖ Conversations about feelings can help a young person to recognise their emotions.
- ❖ All feelings are normal- there are no bad feelings
- ❖ Sometimes young people need to be told how they are feeling for example, *"I can see that you are scared because you're worried about getting ill"*.
- ❖ Validate their feelings and name them – no emotion is a bad emotion. "I can see that you are frustrated", "I think that you are frustrated because...", "it's okay to feel frustrated, I get frustrated sometimes too for example, I was frustrated when..."
- ❖ While all feelings are okay, not all behaviours are acceptable, and it is okay to set limits on behaviour whilst recognising emotions e.g. *"I understand that you feel angry, but it is not okay to throw things at people."*
- ❖ Young people need help to manage their big emotions and you can make suggestions to help them to make these emotions more manageable e.g. "deep breaths", "taking a time out", "going outside for a walk", "think of a happy memory".

It will also be reassuring to talk about the things that have not changed

E.g.

- ❖ They will see many of the same adults around school
- ❖ Everyone will be wearing the same uniform
- ❖ They will have the same friends and peers around them
- ❖ They will be taking the same route to school

Convey Calmness

- ❖ It is understandable and natural for parents to have some levels of anxiety about their child returning to school.
- ❖ However we feel on the inside, it is important to convey calm to our child
- ❖ Young people pick up on lots of little clues about how their parents are feeling – and they use this information to inform how they should be feeling.
- ❖ If we look worried, they pick up on this and start worrying too!
- ❖ To avoid this we need to try and pay even greater attention than normal to:
 - What we say (and what they overhear)
 - Our tone of voice
 - Our body language





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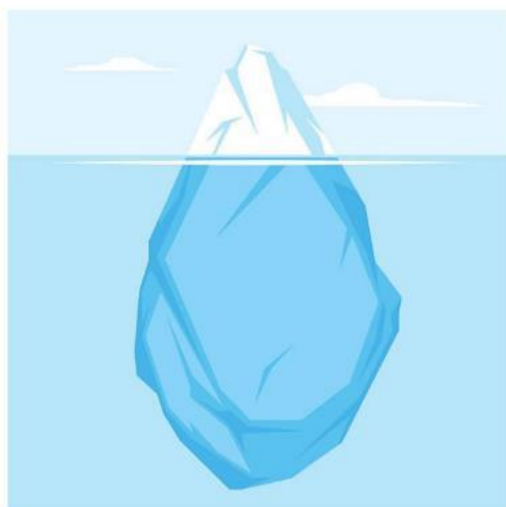
Further support

Understanding and responding to your child's behaviour

A young person's behaviour is a way of communicating their needs and emotions.

At times, it can be difficult to spot triggers to the behaviours we see and know how to respond to these behaviours.

Using an 'iceberg' analogy can help us to consider what might be going on 'underneath the surface' for young people and what their behaviours may be communicating.



Up here on 'the surface' are **the behaviours we see**. For example, this might be kicking, screaming, biting, hitting and/or shouting.

Below the surface are the underlying factors that **we do not see**. For example, tiredness, hunger, sensory needs, different emotions (anger, sadness, and fear), a need for connection...

Let us look at some examples of the behaviours we may see at home and what these behaviours may be communicating...

What might we see?	What might this mean?	What might we do?
Refusal to follow instructions	I'm feeling worried as I feel that I have no control	Provide a choice of two options, e.g. "Do you want to walk to the bathroom or skip?" "Would you like bath first or dinner?"
Clingy behaviours	I feel as though I'm not getting enough attention	Plan in some quality time together; go for a walk, to the park, read a book.
Not wanting to go to school (This may look like refusal, crying, saying "I don't want to go.")	I don't want to leave you I'm worried/scared about this change	Reassure your child and talk through any worries they may have – even if you don't have the answer. Prepare them for their new routine, use visuals to help.
Emotional outbursts (This may include kicking, screaming, crying, throwing)	I am feeling angry/sad/worried and I don't know how to communicate this	Reassure your child, all of these are normal feelings. 'Wonder aloud' with your child "I'm wondering if you might be feeling..." Use calming activities and/or provide a 'safe space.'