

Going Back to School in September: How can I prepare my child with ASD?

Educational settings throughout Gloucestershire continue to work hard to ensure that they are providing safe environments for children to return to school in September 2020. The government has issued guidance for settings; however staff will also be using their own professional experience and knowledge to make appropriate changes for their children, families and staff.

If your child finds change difficult, it is important that you help them to understand which parts of going to school will still be the same and what will be different - predictability and understanding will help your child to re-access school successfully in September. It is important for you to know you can, at anytime, contact your child's school or educational setting, to talk to someone about your thoughts or concerns and plan with them a child-centred approach before your child returns to school.

Your child's school will be able to help you and your child understand the changes – some ideas of how they might do this include: -

- ✓ Short videos and photos of your child's new...
 - Teacher, support team, new staff
 - Classroom, where they will sit, their peg/locker
 - Where their resources will be stored (i.e. their drawer)
- ✓ Responding to specific questions you/your child may have through email
- ✓ Postcards, letters, a copy of their timetable, etc
- ✓ Updating their website or posting messages on the school's communication app (e.g. Dojo or Tapestry)

Social stories can also be really helpful in these situations but they must be designed specifically for your child and their situation to be most effective. For more information about social stories, visit: <https://carolgraysocialstories.com/social-stories/what-is-it/>

The ATS Cognition and Learning & Social Emotional and Mental Health team have links on the GCC website signposting parents/carers and schools and giving advice on how to support children with the return to school as lockdown eases.

[Children with Cognition & Learning/Social, Emotional & Mental Health Difficulties](#)

This page includes the following and much more...

- ✓ [Returning to School \(PDF, 784.7 KB\)](#)
- ✓ [Social Distancing \(PDF, 611.6 KB\)](#)
- ✓ [Washing Hands \(PDF, 729.7 KB\)](#)

Top Tips

How can I help prepare and support my child to return to school successfully in September if they are showing or telling me that they are anxious about it?

Speak to school about your concerns. Ask to speak to the SENDCO specifically about the things you and your child are worried about.

Check on the school's website to see what changes there will be and show or talk to your child about these changes AND what will be the same.

Gather any professional reports or medical evidence that supports your concerns about your child's needs which may be unmet in the new environment, and discuss with school how barriers to a return to school may be removed or addressed.

Ask if you can bring your child in to school the day before term starts so that they can see for themselves what the new environment looks like.

Keep a diary of what you or your child are worried about so you can give your child's school a good picture of where the priorities are.

Try not to let your own worries transfer to your child if they appear to be coping - they could surprise you!

Measure your child's mood before and after school and respond to any negative changes quickly.

Don't ignore your own worries or those of your child and simply hope for the best - be positive but proactive.

Ask for a meeting at school to discuss your concerns and how they can be addressed.

Check how your child's absence will be coded if they do not attend and what the consequences will be for you.

What else is out there to help me?

The Advisory Teaching Service (ATS) and Educational Psychology Service (EPS) have researched, written and collated a range of resources that may help you in preparing your child to return to school successfully:

Corona Virus Returning to School	1. Supporting Autistic Pupils to Return to School Part One (8 min. video presentation)	Supporting Autistic Pupils return to school videos
	2. Supporting Autistic Pupils to Return to School Part Two (8 min. video presentation)	
	3. Supporting Autistic Pupils to Return to School Part Three (10 min. video presentation)	
	Supporting Autistic Pupils to Return to Educational Settings - long version (14 min. video presentation)	Supporting Autistic Children Return to school - Long version
	Supporting Autistic Pupils to Return to Educational Settings - short version (7 min. video presentation)	
	A series of free, short video presentations by ReachOut ASC – Lynn McCann (80 mins approx.	Preparing Autistic Children
Some ideas that parents can do to support their autistic children during the Coronavirus crisis. This resource was created by Dr Carla Stavrou.	Advice From Education Psychologists	
	Managing anxiety – tips for families	Managing Anxieties
	A short article about recognising anxiety in children and young people with autism, and how to support them during this unprecedented time. Written by Alison Reevey, Assistant Principal of Fosse Way Specialist School	Recognising and Supporting Anxiety
GCC Children with Additional Needs YouTube Channel	Here you will find a variety of videos which you may wish to take a look at. It includes topics such as, managing worry, mindfulness, de-escalation tips and much more.	GCC CWaN YouTube Channel