

HELPFUL TIPS FOR RETURNING TO HIGH SCHOOL

COVID 19 has required everyone to make changes: how we live, how we socialise, how we learn.

Everyone has a story about learning from home and while there are similarities, your story is unique.

Whatever your experience, it's normal to feel a wide range of emotions that may change from week to week. In returning to school, it's important to think about what will help you prepare for your return, manage any worries you might have and re-focus your thinking.

Your feelings are important. If you need to, there are lots of people you can talk to.



BE KIND TO YOURSELF

- Go easy on yourself – give yourself the same supportive advice that you'd give to a good friend.
- Life has been different and it may take time to adjust. Be realistic in your thinking about how long it might take.
- Talk with your teachers about your work and call out your current strengths and any challenges. They are there to help you.
- Contact a friend before the first day back and arrange a time and place to meet.
- Try and focus on the things you can control like trying your best with your school work and see change as an opportunity to learn and grow. Some things are out of our control and worrying can be tiring.
- Talk with your family and friends to help prepare yourself for returning to school.



GETTING READY

- Get organised before the day. You may have had a growth spurt while away – so check your uniform and shoes still fit.
- Check your timetable to know what lessons you'll be having - if in doubt ask your teacher or classmate
- Pack your bag the day before with everything you need.
- Be sure to have a mask and hand sanitiser. Your school will also have some supplies if needed.



SAFETY

- Know the rules around wearing masks at school and while travelling. If you need more information, look at your school's website and Facebook page, or contact a teacher or year adviser.
- Remember COVID safe practices are for the safety of everyone in the school community so follow all instructions on physical distancing and hand washing.
- If you feel unsafe, or are worried about safety, talk to a trusted adult in the school.

KEEP CONNECTED

- Challenging times can be easier to get through together, so stay connected and be there for each other.
- Go easy on each other and be patient. By being calm those around you will also relax.
- Look out for your friends and classmates. If you think someone is having a tough time, it's a good idea to reach out and offer support. [ReachOut](#) has some helpful tips on how to start the conversation.



FEELINGS

- You may experience a range of emotions about returning to school: worried, excited, nervous, angry, happy or any emotion in between. Take your time to reconnect with teachers and other students and settle back into the school routine.
- Think of a time when a challenge made you feel nervous or worried. Remember the strategies you used to manage those emotions and reflect on how you moved through that situation.
- It can be tough, but try to focus on the good things no matter how small they may seem. It's important to seek out the positives to help build your confidence, and focus on your strengths.



MORE HANDY TIPS

If you do feel overwhelmed there are lots of things you can do:

- Take some deep breaths, walk away to another area or talk about it with your mates.
- Use an app like [Smiling Mind](#) to practise mindful meditations to help you relax. [Reachout.com](#) has heaps of other apps you can check out!
- Speak with your support network: family, teachers, Year Adviser, school counsellor or student support officer.
- Contact a helpline by phone or online. Kids HelpLine ([Kidshelpline.com.au](#) or 1800 55 1800) or [headspace](#) (1800650 890) are two places you can contact. They are free of charge.
- Your local doctor is also someone you can talk to.

You will find more ideas on how to look after yourself and your friends on the Department of Education's [student mental health and wellbeing pages](#).

DON'T FORGET YOUR PHYSICAL HEALTH

- Food is fuel for your brain and body. Eating a healthy balance of food throughout the day and drinking water helps improve your mood and concentration, and boosts your energy levels and supports general health. And it all starts with breakfast!
- Stay active. Returning to school may make you physically and mentally tired for a while. Spend some time doing something physical at the end of the day to boost your mood.
- Sleep is essential. Give your brain a rest so it can recharge. Get into the routine of sleeping 8-10 hours so you can wake up in the morning refreshed and ready to learn. Uninterrupted sleep is best, so put your phone on silent or even better, in another room.

