

Top tips for transitioning back to school after lockdown

A guide for teachers, parents and pupils



For teaching staff

1

Expect changes in behaviour and give support as needed

- Pupils have had a long time out of school, away from formal behaviour support strategies and their normal routines. They might not understand why they haven't seen familiar faces for so long. Establishing routines will help rebuild certainty and reduce anxiety.
- Behaviour fluctuates naturally, consistent personalised support will ensure success. Being consistent in your own approach is important, as well as having an agreed approach among the teaching team.
- If you have any specific concerns regarding behaviour, remember you can approach the child's multidisciplinary team, including the safeguarding lead.
- Speak to parents and carers to understand what life has been like at home. Understand any challenges they have faced, or new preferred activities.



2

Empower your pupil's communication

- Honour requests for information - repeated questioning could indicate uncertainty with the current situation. Be consistent with colleagues, carers and parents with what information is shared and how.
- Ensure that individual communication systems are up to date to communicate about the current situation.

3

Take time to re-establish positive relationships

- Have fun with the pupils and celebrate their return to school!
- Help them relate yourselves and the teaching environment to fun.
- Be aware that pupils may find it difficult being away from their caregivers after being with them full-time for so long.

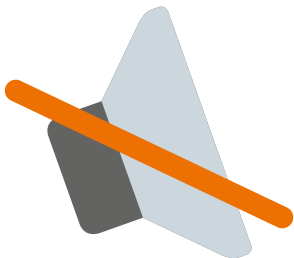


For teaching staff

4

Use visuals to clearly show what is happening and when

- This could be daily / weekly / monthly.
- Now and Next boards are a useful tool in encouraging choice and communicating what is expected next.
- Include what is happening and who is going to be involved (including staff and peers) - use images where possible to prompt opportunities for communication.
- Ensure the visuals used are personalised and not too complicated or too simple for the pupil.
- Always use their preferred communication tool and remember they should always have access to this.



5

Provide safe, calm spaces

- Sensory rooms or calm quiet spaces can help if a pupil is overwhelmed.
- Sometimes just a change in location can help if a pupil is unsettled.

6

Consider changes to the curriculum or individual targets to reflect current needs

- Does the pupil need to learn specific independent living skills, such as hand washing, or communicating how they feel?
- Consider the level of demands placed on a pupil in their return to school, including access to breaks.



For parents

These tips are simply suggestions about how you could help to get your child ready for transitioning back to school or college. You know your child best so continue to do whatever works best for your family.

1

Communicate to your child what is happening and when it is happening regarding the new timetable

- Visual schedules could help, with pictures showing where to go on each day, or who they will be going with.
- Use calendars or countdowns to check off days before going back to school.
- Prior warnings can help as it may take longer than usual to adjust to going back to school following such a long break.
- Now and Next boards are a useful tool in encouraging choice and communicating what is expected next.
- Honour requests for information, repeated questioning could indicate uncertainty with the current situation.



2

Communicate with the school or college that your child attends

- Ask the teachers / carers for as much information as possible regarding the new timetables / rules for social distancing etc.
- Tell them what things have been happening while not at school. That might be new skills learned, new interests developed, specific things that have been tricky. All this information will help the staff to plan.
- Try and respond to requests for information from your child's school, to make the transition as smooth as possible.



3

Manage expectations following the lockdown

- School / college staff will be adjusting their approach as required - if you are unsure or have questions, contact your child's class team directly.
- Children may be struggling with the changes and uncertainty - communicating what is happening is vital. Breaking tasks down into manageable pieces will result in more successful outcomes to celebrate
- Remember that we are all in this together!



There is help and support services out there if you need them. Take a look on page 7 for more information or contact your local authority SEND team.

For pupils

1

Ask questions about anything you are not sure of.

Lots of strange things are happening at the moment, and sometimes adults don't tell us why straight away.



Why are



some of my friends



not



at school?



Why don't



we



have to go



to school



every day?



Why

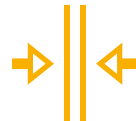


can't

I



stand



close to



other people?



Why are



some people



wearing



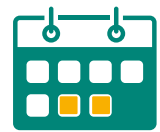
masks?

For pupils

2

Listen to adults when they explain the new rules.

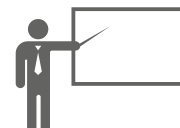
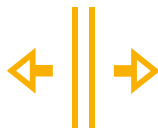
They might seem hard, everyone has to work together to stop people becoming ill.



You might need to only come to school on some days and stay home on other days



Some of your friends / classmates might not be at school when you are at school



You might need to stay 2 meters away from your friends/classmates/teachers

For pupils

3

If you find something hard or confusing and asking questions is not helping, try some other techniques.



Going to



a quiet space



by yourself,



is there a quiet room you can use?



Does it help



to put on



ear defenders

or



hide under



a blanket?



Can squeezes

or



deep pressure



help?

Useful resources

BeyondAutism

- About Autism [information and resources](#)
- Transition back to school resources. In the accompanying document there are a selection of visual supports that you can download, print off and use to support your child with their transition back to school and beyond!

Included is a selection of icons for different items and activities. Your child may be used to using pictures of the actual items/activities or 'widgit' icons, so feel free to continue using what works for you.

There is a template for a daily timetable which you could laminate and stick icons on daily using velcro. This can be displayed somewhere prominent in your house and used as a reference throughout the day.

For a more immediate schedule you could use either the 'first/then' board or the 'first/next/then' board; these visuals can help to show your child when they can access their rewards, e.g. first work, then TV.

Additionally there is a 'days of the week wheel' which you can make by cutting out both circles and affixing the days wheel on top of the other wheel. This can then be rotated daily to highlight what day it is.

Makaton

- [Signs for communicating](#) about Covid-19

Mencap

- [Easy Read information](#) for older children and adults

Beyond Words

- [Free picture books](#) relating to Covid-19

Newsround

- [Hand washing video](#)

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Visual resources

To assist with the transition back to school following lockdown

In this pack you will find a selection of visual supports that you can download, print off and use to support your child with their transition back to school and beyond!

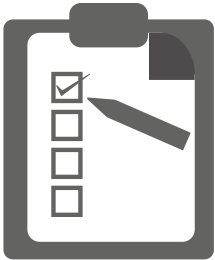
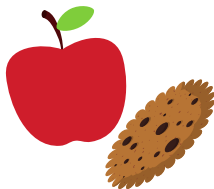

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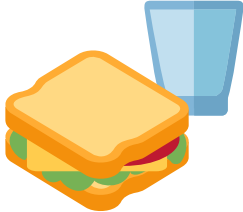
Additionally there is a 'days of the week wheel' which you can make by cutting out both circles and affixing the days wheel on top of the other wheel. This can then be rotated daily to highlight what day it is.

Visual resources: day timetable


9:15 - 9:30	9:30 - 9:45	9:45 - 10:00	10:00 - 10:15	10:15 - 10:30
 Registration				
10:30 - 11:00				
  Snack and play				

We've included some suggested times. Write your own over the top to match your timetable, or create your own version!

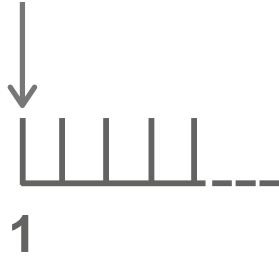
Visual resources: day timetable

11:00 - 11:15	11:15 - 11:30	11:30 - 11:45	11:45 - 12:00	12:00 - 12:15
12:15 - 12:30	12:30 - 13:30			
	<div></div> <p>Lunch and play</p>			

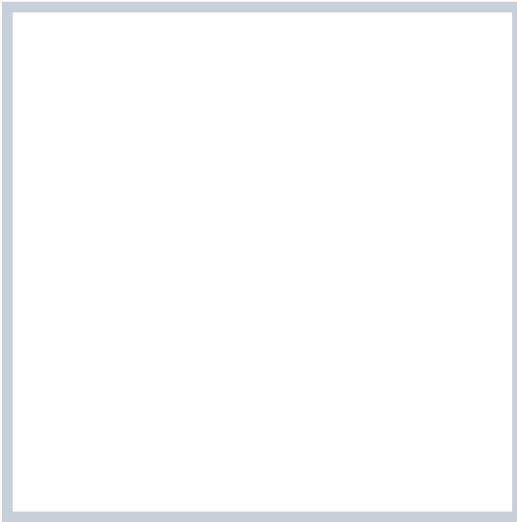
Visual resources: day timetable

13:30 - 13:45	13:45 - 14:00	14:00 - 14:15	14:15 - 14:30	14:30 - 14:45
14:45 - 15:00	15:00 - 15:15	15:15		
		 Home time		

Visual resources: First, then board



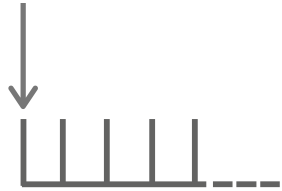
First



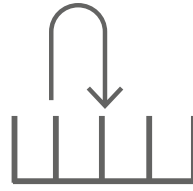
Then



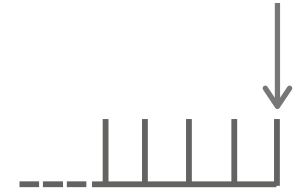
Visual resources: Now, next, then board



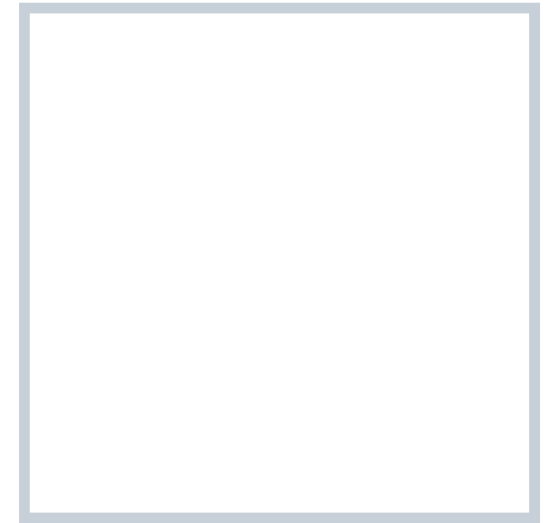
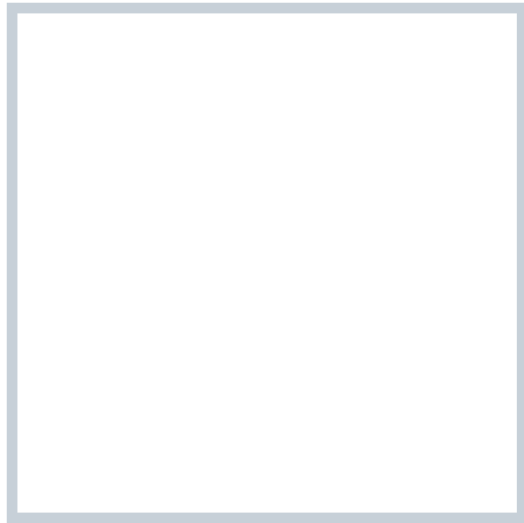
Now

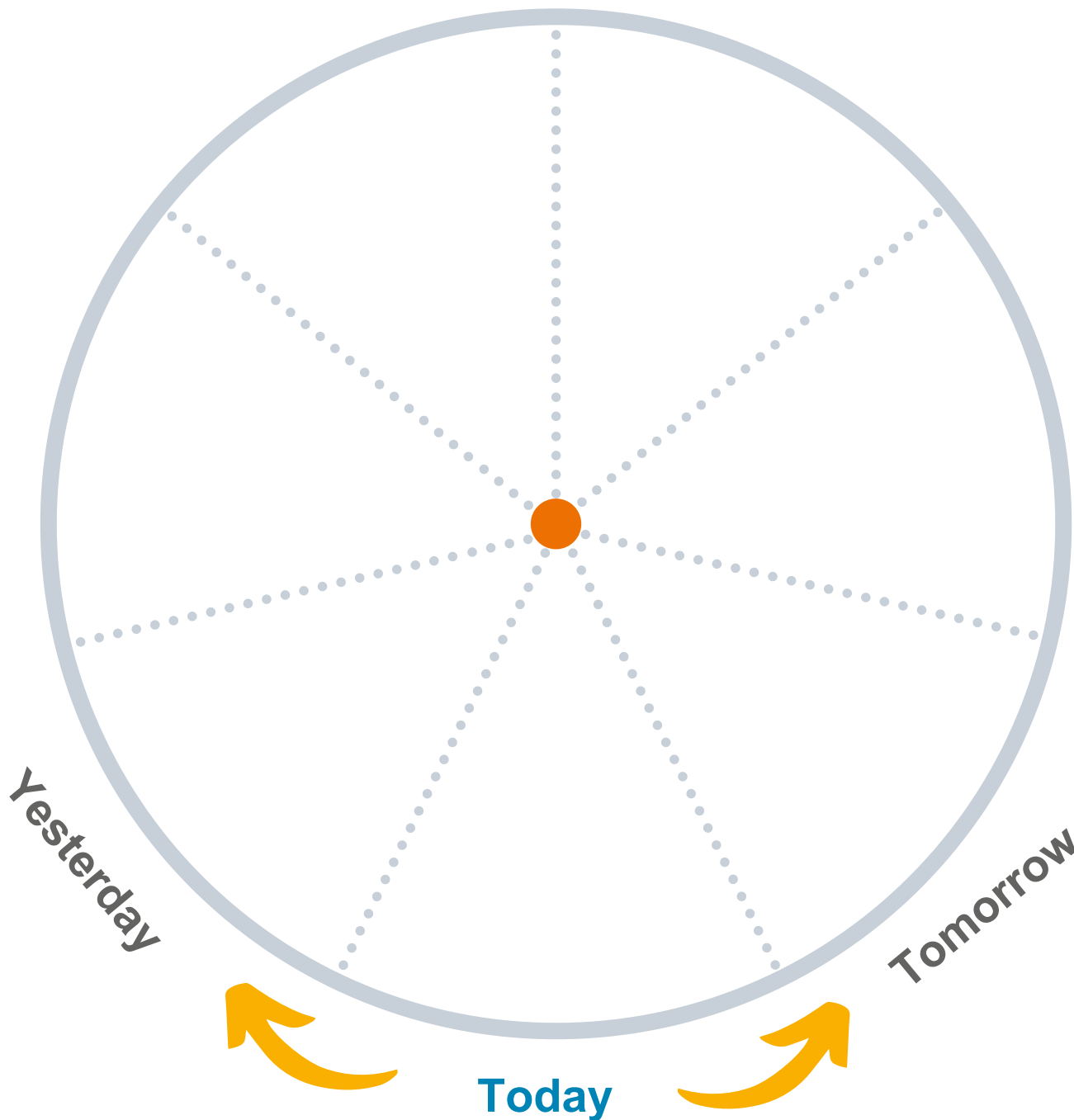


Next



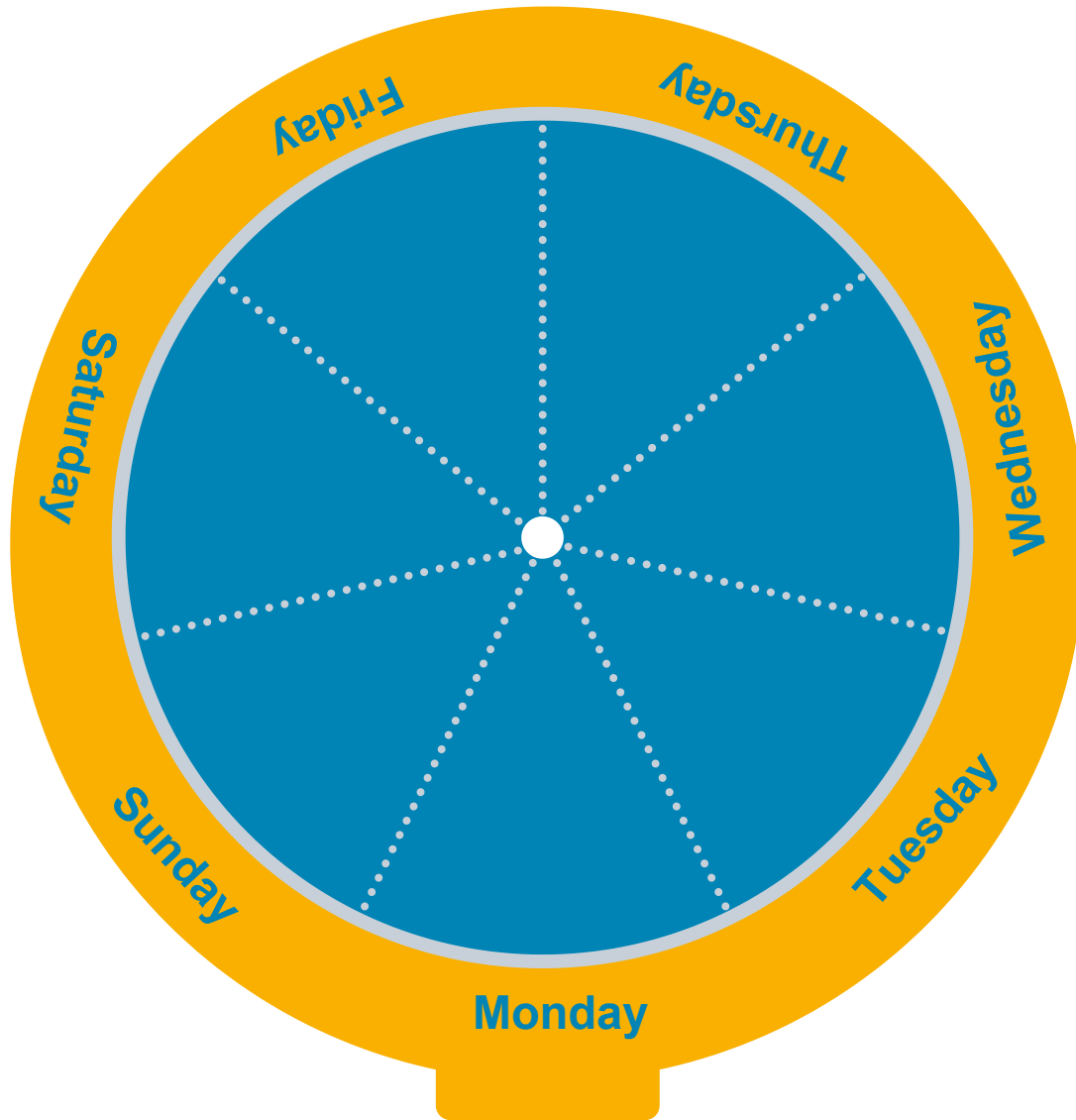
Then





Days of the week

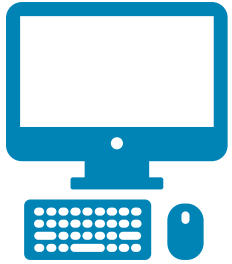
Visual resources: Days of the week spinning wheel



Instructions

1. Print both pages (use card and laminate to help it last)
2. Once printed cut out both wheels
3. Using something sharp, pierce a hole through the white and orange dots with the days wheel on top. (Use blue tack or something soft to protect your fingers and surfaces whilst making the hole)
4. Use a split pin to fasten the wheels together and your days of the week spinning wheel is ready to use!

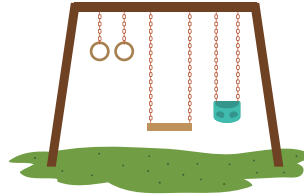
Visual resources: reinforcer icons



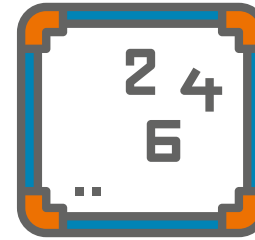
Computer



iPad



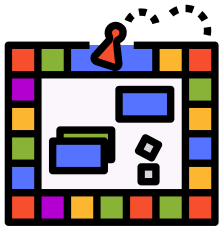
Playground



Whiteboard



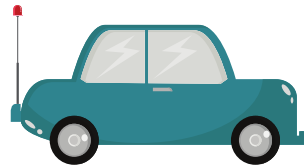
Water play



Board game



Spinny chair



Cars



Painting



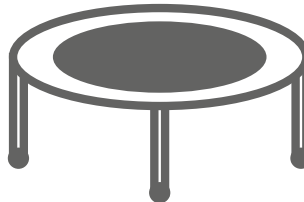
Music



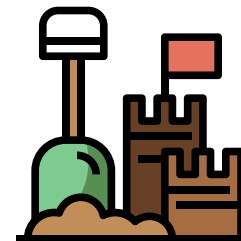
Blocks



Train



Trampoline



Sand play



Sensory room

Visual resources: Classroom icons



Table work



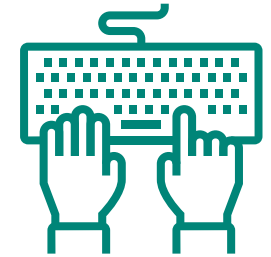
Group



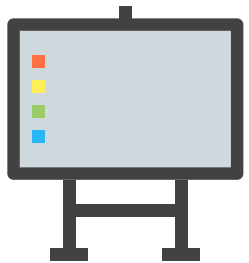
SaLT



OT



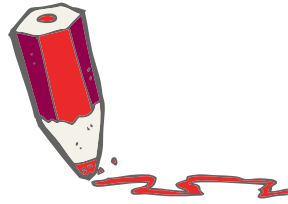
Typing



Big screen



Writing



Colouring



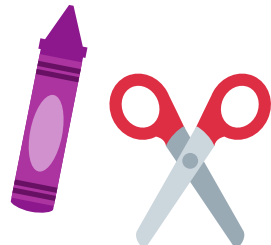
Reading



School trip



Music



Art



Maths



Lego



Puzzle

Visual resources: Classroom icons



Shops



Ball



Shower



Library



Yoga



School club



Cooking



Song time



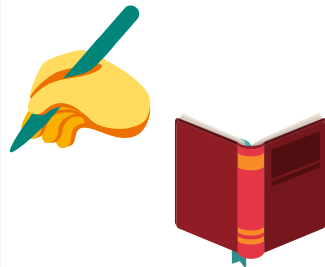
Swimming



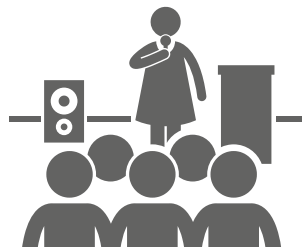
PSHE



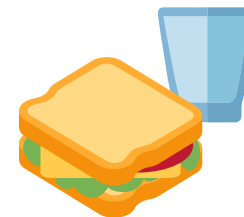
Science



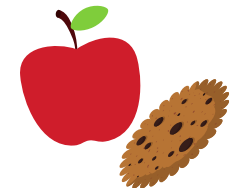
English



Assembly



Lunch



Snack