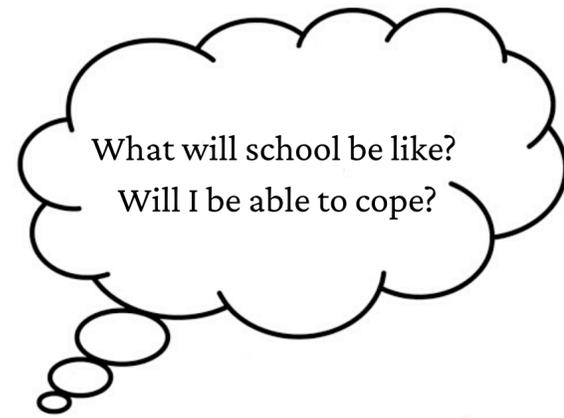
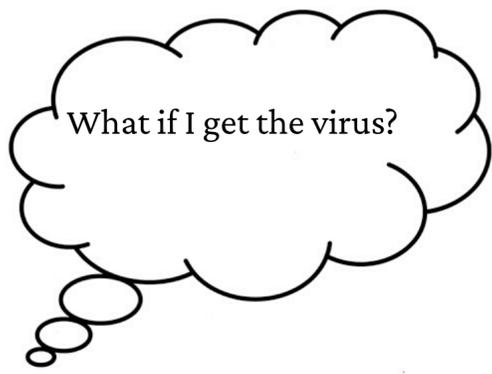


MANAGING ANXIETY ABOUT RETURNING TO SCHOOL



You find yourself in a new and strange situation. You've seen the country and your school shut down to reduce the spread of a virus. Understandably this may have led to a lot of anxiety and worry, which is completely normal and expected at these uncertain times.

And now, you are about to experience some more change because you will be going back to school soon, although school will be different to how it was before. You might have more worries about going back to school and what this will be like.

What might help?



Look after yourself

Health sleep routine, diet, exercise and water intake can be good for your mental and physical health and boost your immune system. Staying in touch with loved ones and doing things you enjoy are also an important part of being well.

Focus on what you can control

You will not be able to control what others or the government do in response to the virus, but you can do your best to keep yourself and others safe by washing your hands, keeping your distance and staying home if you show symptoms of COVID-19.

Put things into perspective



Remember, shocking and bad news leads to more viewers, so what we see in the news is not the whole picture! There is likely to be far more people who have recovered. Of course, the virus is still affecting some people, but often our worries are much bigger than the reality.

Accept the feelings

Remind yourself that it is normal to feel anxious or worried, and accept that you may feel this way at times. We are all human and these are human responses to difficult situations.

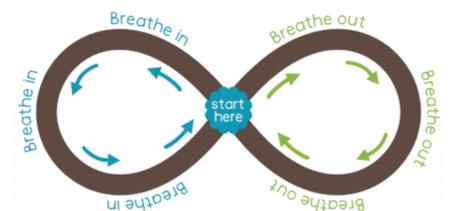


Talk to someone you trust

It can be tempting to avoid thinking or talking about upsetting feelings, because you might think that doing so will make you feel worse. Actually, this can help you if you can let some of these feelings out as then you can begin to make sense of them

Deep breathing can help

Take a break from the chaos and focus on your breathing. Notice the movement in your tummy as you breathe in and out.



Remember school will be different

Staff are working really hard to make the school as safe as possible, and some things will be different like starting school, lessons, break and lunch time at different times, smaller classes, social distancing and teachers wearing Personal and Protective Equipment. This might feel strange at first.

Think about what might stay the same

It can be daunting to go back to school when things are very different, and this can lead to more worry. It can be really helpful and reassuring to think about the parts of school that are likely to stay the same.



Remember times you managed change

No matter how difficult, we have all experienced and have been able to manage changes in our lives before, such as starting at a new school. Remind yourself of these times and what strengths you have shown at these times.

Don't be afraid to ask questions

This is a new situation for all of us and not knowing what things will be like can be unsettling and scary, especially as you may have worries about your and other people's safety. School staff are there to help you through this experience, so please do ask questions, so that you're not left feeling confused or unsure.



Use wellbeing apps

There are apps designed to help you learn new skills to help you manage your anxiety, including:



Self-Help for Anxiety Management (SAM)



Smiling Mind



MyLife Meditation

When to get specialist help

Remember it is normal to be anxious right now, and you will not be alone in feeling this way. However, if your anxiety is at a level that is making it hard to cope and live your life, speak to someone about getting specialist help. You can speak to your Head of year or form tutor at school, or speak to the GP, to see what options are available to you.

