

# Transition back to school after lockdown: Managing children's







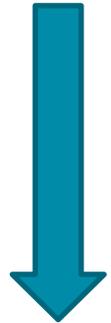
# What will their worries or anxieties be?

- 1. Loss of routine
- 2. Loss of structure
- 3. Loss of friendship
- 4. Loss of opportunity
- 5. Loss of freedom

**ANXIETY  
TRAUMA  
BEREAVEMENT**



**DECLINE IN  
MENTAL  
HEALTH IN  
CHILDREN  
AND YOUNG  
PEOPLE**



Respectful



Open



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Compassionate



Consistent

# Common worries for children returning to school after lockdown

I might catch coronavirus

No-one will speak to me

What if I bump into someone / touch something?

I won't remember the new rules

I might forget and do the wrong thing

I'll get into trouble if I do something wrong

What if my friends aren't in the same bubble?

What if I don't like it?

I will miss my mum



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# Anxiety

has three characteristics:

## Bodily Sensations

- ❖ Associated with adrenalin - preparing the body for action

E.g. sweating, heart beating faster, trembling

## Anxious thoughts

- ❖ Over-estimate "danger"
- ❖ Underestimate ability to cope



## Anxious behaviour

- ❖ Avoid worrying situations, so you don't get the chance to learn if it's as bad as you think it will be or cope
- ❖ Seeking reassurance

## Fight or flight response



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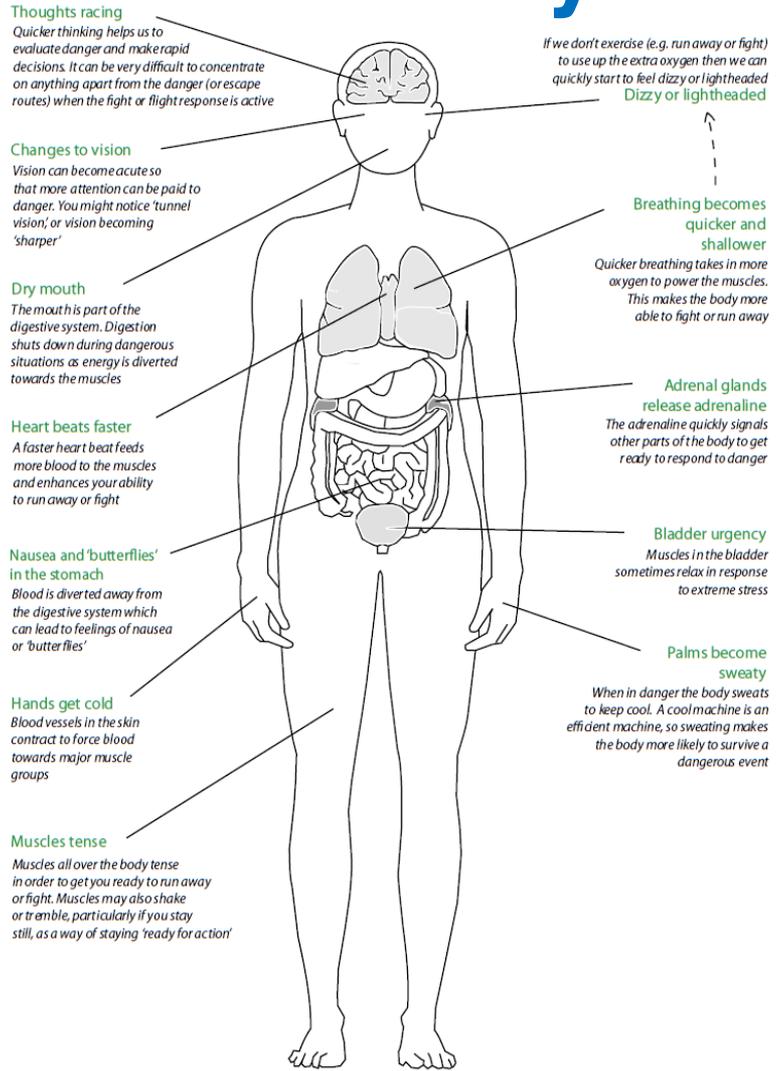


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# Bodily sensations



# Anxious thinking

The teacher will be cross with me

If someone bumps me I will get coronavirus

It will be awful

**Anxiety = Overestimate chance of danger**  
Underestimate ability to cope

I won't manage

I won't be able to talk to anyone

I can't do it



# Anxious Behaviour



Ask lots  
of  
question  
s

Outburst  
s

Clingy or  
withdrawn

Say  
difficult  
statement  
s

Avoidance

Hit others

Cry



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# How to find out what my child is worried about?

Explore their worries by asking questions such as:

- ❖ “You seem worried, would you like a hug while you tell me about it?”
- ❖ “Is there something in particular that is bothering you?”
- ❖ “What do you think might happen?”
- ❖ “What seems particularly tricky?”

If they find it hard, give your best guess and normalise:

- ❖ “Lots of children going back to school might be thinking about....., is that something that you’ve been wondering about too?”

Listen carefully:

- ❖ Show your child you care by listening without interrupting
- ❖ Don’t rush to jump in with solutions or advice, try to just listen until your child feels you’ve understood
- ❖ They may not know why they are worried, that’s also ok



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# Preparation

1.

## Worry checking

How realistic is the worry?

What is the evidence FOR this worry?

What is the evidence AGAINST the worry?

Then, ask what they would say to a friend who had this worry?



## 2. How would you cope?

If the thought is realistic, help them think about what they would do to manage?

## 3. Getting sleep back on track

After a long break from school, sleep routines and structure are important

## 4. Practising practical steps

Getting up and dressed in uniform

Practise the school walk / commute, see the school from the outside

Make links with the school if you feel you need more information about the new structure or the first days back

## 5. Stay calm and confident yourself

Children take their cues from adults

Don't let talk about school or the virus take over everything else







# Relaxation



## Hands and Arms: *Squeeze a Lemon*

Pretend you have a whole lemon in each hand. Now squeeze it hard. Try to squeeze all the juice out! Feel the tightness in your hand and arm as you squeeze. Squeeze hard! Don't leave a single drop. (Hold for 10 seconds). Now relax and let the lemon drop from your hand. See how much better your hand and arm feel when they are relaxed.



## Shoulders and Neck: *Hide in Your Shell*

Now pretend you are a turtle. Try to pull your head into your shell. Try to pull your shoulders up to your ears and push your head down into your shoulders. Hold it tight! (Hold for 10 seconds). Okay, you can come out now. Feel your shoulders relax.

# Breathing exercises





# Common parent responses to anxiety

## Being drawn into giving too much reassurance

- Children can become reliant on reassurance and depend on adults saying what's ok to feel safe
  - Ask questions instead: try to help your child work out whether their worry is realistic or not for themselves.

## Becoming over protective / colluding with avoidance

- Stepping in to protect children from all their fears means they never get the chance to learn they can cope and find out it's not as scary as they thought
  - Instead, notice and praise sensible or brave behaviour
  - Encourage them to face their fears in small, manageable steps



# Managing your own emotions

1. Children are sensitive to how parents feel and take their cues from you
2. Once you have decided your child is returning to school, try to project an air of confidence about it, even if you feel worried yourself
3. Try to remember that your worries are not necessarily your child's worries, they may not be feeling the same
4. Share with family / friends if you feel you need support with the transition back to school



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# Support over summer

## The Education Well-being Practitioners (EWP)

While schools are closed during the summer break, they are continuing to support young people virtually (over the phone or video call). They are offering the following interventions:

3 session intervention on sleep hygiene

3 session intervention on tackling the lack of energy and lack of motivation that many people are experiencing during social distancing

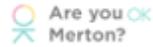
3 session intervention on managing worries

8 session intervention on understanding and managing anxiety

8 session intervention on understanding and managing low mood

*Note: the EWP service cannot work with young people who are already accessing support via CAMHS.*





## Merton Young People's Wellbeing Service

**Does your daughter struggle with low mood or a lack of motivation?**

**Are they fearful or anxious about returning to school?**

**Has their sleep routine been affected by lockdown?**

**Do they feel worried or anxious overall?**

*If you've answered yes, an Education Wellbeing Practitioner may be able to help you.*

### What we do...

- Initial meeting to get to know you and hear more about your concerns.
- **Weekly** sessions with your daughter, currently offered by video calls. We typically offer up to 8 sessions.

### How will it help?

- Learn to better understand worries / low mood
- Develop tools and coping strategies to address these challenges.
- Support to put new skills and strategies into practice. Help increase resilience for coping with future difficulties.

### Who we see...

Young People who are not already being seen in another service e.g. CAMHS who:

- ✓ Sometimes feel low (e.g. lower energy levels, loss of motivation, no longer enjoying the things they used to, change in sleep patterns, change in appetite, or feeling they want to be alone more than usual)
- ✓ Sometimes feel anxious (e.g. feeling anxious in social situations; feeling anxious about returning to school; feeling panicky; phobias of specific things e.g. lifts; excessive worrying e.g. about exams or friends and family).

### What will it involve?

- Attending sessions, either virtually via video or in school.
- Learning new strategies and trying them out in their own time. *(They may need some support from a parent at times).*
- Sometimes it can be helpful for parents to join the sessions.
- If your daughter is 15 or under and self refers, we will typically inform you that they are taking part in this programme.

### Next steps...

If you are interested in our service please speak to your daughter's Head of Year or the Mental Health Lead, Mrs Rachael Gilmore. Your daughter can refer themselves via the HOY or Mrs Rachael Gilmore.

[InfoMertonWP@swlstg.nhs.uk](mailto:InfoMertonWP@swlstg.nhs.uk)



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## Supporting your Teenager with Lockdown Challenges & Returning to School Online Parent Workshop

Is your teenager struggling with **motivation & sleep**?  
Are they **worried** about **re-joining school** or **social situations**?  
Would you like some **tips and strategies** to help you support your teenager?  
If **YES**, please join us at one of the following times!

### Dates & Times:

- Monday 17<sup>th</sup> August at 6:00PM
- Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> August at 10:00AM
- Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> August at 6:00PM
- Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> August at 6:00PM
- Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> August at 10:00AM
- Thursday 27<sup>th</sup> August at 6:00PM

The workshop will be approximately **45 minutes** followed by a **Q&A**.

Please email [InfoMertonWP@swlstg.nhs.uk](mailto:InfoMertonWP@swlstg.nhs.uk) to request a space.

Please state which secondary school your child attends & your preferred time slot from the above options. Shortly before the workshop you will be emailed the link.



[www.swlstg.nhs.uk](http://www.swlstg.nhs.uk)



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## Becoming a Worry Ninja Workshop: Starting Secondary School

This is a **1 hour online workshop** designed for parents and their child focusing on the transition to secondary school. We aim to:

- Develop children and parent's understanding of anxiety
- Share strategies for managing anxious thoughts and feelings, especially relating to moving to secondary school

The workshop is offered by the SWLSTG Children and Young People's Education Wellbeing Practitioners and will be offered on-line.

### Dates & Times:

- Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> July 10-11AM and 5-6PM
- Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> July 4-5PM
- Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> August 11AM-12PM & 4-5PM
- Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> August 10AM-11AM
- Monday 17<sup>th</sup> August 10AM-11AM
- Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> August 6pm
- Wednesday 19<sup>th</sup> August 10AM-11AM



If you would like to attend the workshop with your child, please let us know by email and state your preference for date and time and which secondary school your child will be attending.

Email: [InfoMertonWP@swlstg.nhs.uk](mailto:InfoMertonWP@swlstg.nhs.uk)



[www.swlstg.nhs.uk](http://www.swlstg.nhs.uk)



issTime  
together



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## Off the Record Merton

Off the Record - [www.talkofftherecord.org/merton/](http://www.talkofftherecord.org/merton/) offers online and telephone counselling support to any student at a Merton school.

## Kooth

Kooth is an online counselling and emotional well-being service for children and young people aged 11-18.

[www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)



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# Support in school for September?



**Ms Michelle Alexander**  
Assistant  
Headteacher

Designated  
Safeguarding  
Lead



**Mrs Rachael Gilmore**  
Mental Health  
Lead & 6th Form

Designated  
Safeguarding  
Lead



**Ms Dena Donaldson**  
Safeguarding  
Officer  
Health and  
Wellbeing  
Coordinator



**Mrs Anna Osarose Harrison**  
Safeguarding  
Officer and  
Safeguarding  
Support  
Assistant



**Mrs Sarah McCourt**  
Safeguarding  
Officer  
Year 7 & 8  
Pastoral  
Assistant



TALK & LISTEN,  
BE THERE



DO WHAT YOU CAN,  
IN ANY WAY YOU CAN



REMEMBER  
THE SIMPLE



EMBRACE NEW  
EXPERIENCES



Your time,  
your voice



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# Support on offer

Can help with strategies for sleep, anxiety, low mood



School Nurse  
Elaine



Educational Welfare  
Practitioners



Dominique Zakkour  
Specialist  
Practitioner in Mental  
Health



Ms Dena  
Donaldson  
Well-being Co-  
ordinator



Mrs Erica Nunann  
School Counsellor

Contact your daughter's Head of Year



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If you have any particular concerns you wish to discuss please contact

Michelle Alexander

Designated Safeguarding Lead

[michelle.alexander@ursulinehigh.merton.sch.uk](mailto:michelle.alexander@ursulinehigh.merton.sch.uk)

Rachael Gilmore

Mental Health Lead

[rachael.gilmore@ursulinehigh.merton.sch.uk](mailto:rachael.gilmore@ursulinehigh.merton.sch.uk)



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# QUESTIONS