

Return to school in September

ISEND Services and East Sussex Parent Carer Forum have coproduced this flyer to provide families of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities with support and reassurance for the return to school.

“We know that families will be experiencing a wide range of emotions about the prospect of returning to school in September. The transition back to education after lockdown might feel daunting, and many of you have questions and concerns. We've been working hard to get answers, and we hope that the information in this flyer provides a starting point for where you can find support and advice. We'll continue to keep you updated with any further information as it becomes available.”

You may see it on a bus or hear it on the radio: "We are Ready." Schools and teachers are ready to welcome students back, but we understand that this school year looks different from all others. We want to assure families that our communities are in this together and can offer different kinds of support so that you and your family can feel ready, too.



How safe is it for my child to return to school?

Data shows that schools are a safe place for your child or young person. Dr Rachel Atkinson, the designated medical officer for Special Educational Needs and Disability for the East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust, says:

“As a paediatrician I have been reassured and pleased to see the results of the research into how COVID affects children.

The research up till now shows that children are not only

- very much less affected by COVID-19, they are
- very unlikely indeed to become seriously unwell if they do carry the virus, and even those with very complex health needs have NOT appeared to have been affected to a significantly greater extent than is usual with other viruses.

Why is it important for my child to return to school?

Getting back to school is important to prevent further gaps in learning for children and young people. Also, with the right support in place, getting back to school can have a positive impact on the social, emotional and mental health of children and young people. However, if you're worried about how your child's social, emotional and mental health has been affected during lockdown, call the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) Helpline. You can contact the helpline at any time and leave a message and an Educational Psychologist will call you back. You can call the EPS helpline at:

 01273 481967

Will my child with SEND be given the additional support they need in their transition back into school?

Yes. Your school SENCo is your go-to person for any queries about how the support may look different and how it will be delivered for your child or young person. You should be able to contact your child's SENCo from early September. If you're not able to make contact with your child's school before the start of term, you can call and leave a message with the Family Information Service and someone will get in touch with you:

 0345 60 80 192

The NHS is working hard to support children and young people with either virtual or face-to-face appointments and is meeting the needs of children and young people in school settings where appropriate. For questions about therapy provision, please contact Therapy One Point:

 0300 123 2650

Should I have been contacted about my child with SEND returning to school?

Schools have been working hard to get in touch with families of vulnerable children, including children with EHCPs. If your child receives SEN support, your SENCo is the best person to contact in the first instance. If you're not able to make contact with your child's school before the start of term, or if you still have concerns, you can call the Family Information Service:

 0345 60 80 192

What do I do if my child or young person is refusing to return to school?

We understand that for some children and young people, returning to school may be difficult. The Educational Psychology Service can really help with this. You can call the EPS helpline, leave a message and an Educational Psychologist will get back to you:

 01273 481967

Schools and ISEND Services are prepared to help and support families with attendance, but if you have any questions, please contact the Education, Support, Behaviour and Attendance Service (ESBAS) helpline:

 01273 481967

Amaze has put together answers for a whole range of questions on the return to school:

<https://amazesussex.org.uk/back-to-school-in-september-advice-from-sendiaass/>

You can also contact the Amaze SENDIASS support line

 01273 772289