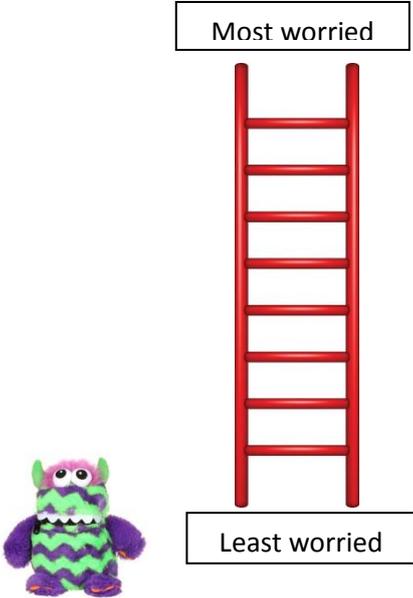




Supporting children to return to School: Information for parents and carers

Whilst we have had some children in school throughout the duration of the 'Lockdown' period, we are now working towards welcoming back all pupils in September. For all families and children this has been a period of significant change and uncertainty. We recognise that children's day to day lives and experiences have altered considerably. On returning to school our priority is to support the emotional and social well-being of children- developing and reaffirming relationships with staff and peers and taking time to adjust to being back in the physical environment of school. Meeting these needs is at the forefront of our planning and preparation.

Children will feel differently about returning to school and it is important to recognise and validate whatever feelings they may have. Below there are a range of ideas/ strategies that can be used, in order to help prepare and support children at home, before their return to school. Not all strategies will be relevant or appropriate for all children, utilise the ideas which you feel will benefit your child the most.

<p>Positive chats about school, friends and teachers</p>	<p>Who are they looking forward to seeing? What are they looking forward to doing when back at school? What news can they share with those people? Ask your child what they miss about school.</p>
<p>Know what school will look like</p>	<p>Guidance is continually changing and school will adapt plans and make provisions accordingly. Share the 'social story' about what school looks like, which has been prepared for children and can be found on the school website.</p>
<p>Validate and explore any worries</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<p>Children may have worries about returning to school, explore those ideas. Sometimes just talking things through is enough to relieve a concern, for some children writing down or displaying worries can be helpful.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worry Monsters allow children to send the worry away once it has been explored. If you don't have a Worry Monster the written worry can be left somewhere ready to be 'taken' away. • Worry Ladders for children that have several worries. The worries can be ordered from least to most worrying and then they can be explored one at a time and broken down so the child does not feel overwhelmed. Children could scale their worries, 1-10. • Make a plan- if this happens what will we do/what will happen? Deciding on steps to take should something they worry about happen empowers children to feel in control. • Provide a routine that reassures children and allows them time and a feeling of safety. For example: if a child is worried about missing a parent while they are at school, acknowledge that worry. ' We have spent lots of time together which has been lovely...we will still have

	<p>time together even though you are going to be at school again.' Plan for some time together after school, like playing a game together or going for a walk and make sure the child knows that this will happen.</p>
<p>Recall and prepare for the practicalities of school.</p>	<p>Children's routines may have shifted as their daily experiences have changed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talk with your child about what a school day looks like. What has to be done in the morning to be ready for school? Involve them in re-establishing a new routine if required. • It may have been a long time since your child even saw the school. Take a drive to the school, maybe have a look over the fence. Has anything changed? • Try on uniform before the first day back (September) • Try to have things ready so there is no need to rush around or find things in the morning. • A calm, predictable bedtime. The night before something happens can often be a highpoint for worry. A feeling of security and routine will help reduce these feelings.

By working together, we can support a smooth and happy return to school. Should you have any questions or concerns please speak to your child's class teacher in the first instance.