



# Family Mental Health Bulletin



February 2021

The focus for this bulletin is:

## Anxiety and Returning to School

The return to school may cause anxiety for your son/daughter as they look back on the last couple of months, having been at home and out of the school environment, but also the last year since Covid arrived.

### What is anxiety?

Anxiety is the most common emotion we experience and the most common form of disorder in adolescence and in adult years. At some stage in life, we all feel anxious, most often when faced with difficult or new situations. Everyone can relate to signs of anxiety or fear and experience symptoms such as sweating, heart beating faster, butterflies in the stomach and dry mouth.

### What you can do to ease their anxiety?

The key thing is to talk about how your son/daughter is feeling about returning to school and how it may look once they return, getting back into the classroom learning environment [after online learning] and their year bubbles.

- Leave ample time to discuss the issues as being rushed makes anxiety worse
- Rather than asking them why they are anxious, find out what might trigger their anxiety. Be prepared for them not to know
- Anxious young people require lots of reassurance and it is a balance, so provide them with the right amount
- Anxiety can make us fear the worst, so patience and tolerance is very helpful. If your son/daughter thinks you might be cross, they will become more anxious. Reassuring them that anxiety can be resolved and getting them involved in seeking help with you is a helpful way forward

## Returning to School

1. **Reassure your child.** During the lockdown we have been told to stay at home, remain socially distant from others and wash our hands regularly. This means returning to school may be difficult for young people because it may cause them to feel anxious. Talk about ways they can stay safe at school, such as washing their hands before and after eating, using hand gel, wearing masks when asked to, and reassure them that the school are putting measures in place to keep them safe.
2. **Re-establish a routine to help ease into school life.** During lockdown it is understandable that family routines may have changed. Young people may have been waking up later or going to bed later. To help them get ready for coming back into school, try to gradually get them back into their usual morning and bedtime routines as they get closer to their return date.

### Support Links:

A range of advice is available for parents that you can go look at if you have concerns about your son/daughter:

- **Young Minds Parents Helpline** – 0808-802-5544 (Monday to Friday 9.30am – 4pm, free for mobiles and landlines)
- **Anxiety UK** is a national charity with local services all over the UK. The website includes resources for parents concerned about their child's anxiety  
<https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/get-help/support-for-children-young-people/>

### Please Remember:

**The small things you do make all the difference:** [Young Minds]