



## THE BEDIFFERENT FEDERATION Back to school routines September 2020



Monday 24<sup>th</sup> August 2020

Dear Families,

I do hope that you are all well.

We are now getting nearer to the time of thinking more carefully about every child's return to our school. Every child's feelings about returning to school will be different, as some children have been absent for as long as six months. I thought it might be useful to share with you some practical tips that will help make this transition a little smoother for you and your child.

## School will be DIFFERENT

Here's what our children can expect:

- Social distancing
- Regular hand washing and sanitising
- Different start and finish times
- Desks facing forward (Year 1-6)
- Eating lunch in the classroom (Years 1-6)
- Coming to school in PE kit for one day each week
- More time spent in the classroom
- Areas out of bounds
- Families being requested to not enter the school grounds.

These 'changes' can all be causes of anxiety and worry for children of any age so please do talk to your child/ren about these differences.

Here are some ideas and suggestions that may help your child/ren feel more than ready to go back to school.

## New routines and expectations

It's important that our children do not go into school expecting everything to look like it was before, to then get a huge shock when they walk through the door.

Explain things will look different but tell your child not to worry, because we have been thinking about how to make the school safe and how we will help you get used to the new layouts and routines.

It can also be reassuring to talk about the things that are not different, for instance:

- They will see many familiar staff around the school
- They will be wearing the same uniform
- You will be taking the same route to school



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- It will be mostly the same children in their class

Please remember to tell them who will drop them off and who will pick them up. Even if this seems obvious to us as adults, it helps give children the reassurance and a sense of security that they need. As I said in my previous letter to you, take your child on that journey to school in advance and talk them through the expectations of saying 'goodbye' and why it has to be this way.

## Talk about worries, fears and excitement

In the next few weeks, make time for little conversations about how your child is feeling about going back to school. Be careful how you do this - the aim is to see if they do have concerns, not to plant new ones. If your child does have worries, acknowledge their concerns first before offering reassurance.

For example:

- It is normal to feel worried about the virus but here's what you can do to stay safe in school
- I bet other children will feel worried about having a new teacher, too. That is why Mrs. Smith will spend lots of time explaining how everything will work.

A good way of turning a negative into a positive is using the phrase, "At least..."

As in:

- I know we can't spend time together today but at least we can have some time straight after school and you can tell me all about your day
- I know you are in a new year group with new learning but at least all of your friends will be learning the same things as you will be and your teacher will help you if it is tricky

Don't be surprised if children want to talk about the same issue a number of times. Children often need to repeatedly revisit an idea with an adult to get reassurance nothing has changed. If your child has been at Lonesome for a little while, do remind them of all of the 'fun' times too and what they can look forward to, as children can sometimes forget, when they are feeling worried.

## Convey calm

It will be natural for you to have some level of anxiety about returning your child to school but it is important to convey a calm disposition in front of your child. Children pick up on lots of little clues about how their parents are feeling and they use this information to inform how they should be feeling. If we look worried, they pick up on this and start worrying too. If you do have concerns, it is time to perfect your acting skills. However you are feeling on the inside, aim to convey calm on the outside.

To do this, please think about:

- What we say (and what they overhear)
- Our tone of voice
- Our body language



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## Routines for sleep and mealtimes

This may be your toughest battle, as bedtimes have drifted until later in the evening, which has also meant that your child is getting up later in the morning. To move immediately from these routines to the 'school routine' and getting into school for 8.30 am (in some cases) could be a real battle. I would start moving your child's bedtime back to its earlier time now or very soon. Do this gradually, before they get back to school and plan a bedtime routine. If you leave it to the last minute, it's likely your child will not have the time needed to adjust and won't be able to get to sleep at the earlier time. I would also now start thinking carefully about your child's eating habits, because when they are back at school, the times to eat will be at a set time and a hungry child will struggle to manage all of the new learning that will be shared with them. Please make sure that your early morning routine has time set aside for a good breakfast-they will need it. You could even spend a few lunchtimes ahead of returning to school, eating a packed lunch together, without the distraction of a 'screen'. This would be a really useful activity, as quite often some of our youngest children are still eating their packed lunches, thirty or forty minutes into their lunchtime, which has a huge impact on the amount of time they get to play with their friends so your help with this would be most welcomed.

## One little extra

As a final request, I would also be inclined to practise supporting your child (if they need it) with putting their uniform on, as I know that this can be a very laboured task that can make the mornings quite stressful. Perhaps make it competitive and set a timer with a deadline to beat? I know that this has helped me in the past.

May I also update you to the fact that there is a slight increase in the cost of school lunches, which will now be priced at **£2.18**.

We look forward to welcoming you all back to Lonesome very soon and in the meantime, look after yourselves.

Kind regards,

Mrs N Bull

Chief Executive Headteacher



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