



Coronavirus (COVID-19)

For students

Tips for autistic secondary students returning to school

Expect some changes

Many things will be the same, but there will be some changes to your usual routines. The changes are to keep everyone safe. Your school will tell you and your parent or carer about the changes and what they are. If you feel unsure, you and your parent or carer can contact the school to find out more.

There may be changes to:

- Drop-off and pick-up areas and times.
- Bell times and the length of each period.
- Your classmates. Some of your friends may be absent.
- Your timetable, your classrooms and some of your subject teachers.
- Cleaning. For example, you might see more cleaning at school during the day.
- Assembly. There may not be any assembly.



Keep yourself and your school environment clean

There may be some changes to your usual routines to improve hygiene and keep everyone safe.

You may need to:

- Wash your hands and use hand sanitiser regularly.
- Come to school in sports uniform on the days you have P.E. or sport.
- Bring your lunch and snacks from home. The canteen may be shut or may only do lunch orders.
- Bring your own water bottle to drink from because the school has closed the drink taps.
- Use a locker in a different place or keep your books in your bag with you.
- Sit in a different place in your classroom. The classroom may be set up to keep students further away from each other.

Practise

Are you feeling worried about going back to school? Talk about your worries with your parent or carer. If you're worried about changes at school it might help to ask your parent or carer if they can organise a visit to school before you start. You can visit the new pick-up/drop-off area. Your parent or carer may even be able to organise for you to visit your classroom and locker area. You will need to check with your school whether this is possible.

Supports



- Ask for help. If you feel worried, tell a teacher you feel comfortable with, a trusted friend, a counsellor, or your parent or carer.
- If you don't know what to say, try writing a list of your worries or record yourself saying them and give this to your parent, carer or teacher.
- Remember your usual strategies and supports. What has helped you to be calm in the past? Do you have any new strategies or supports that you have been using? It might be a toy or fidget item, an emotions chart, a social script, a visual schedule, breathing exercises, or, once you go back to school – a special signal for your teacher to tell them you need a break.

Remember that everyone will be getting used to the changes. When we feel anxious it can help to do something for someone else. What can you do to help a classmate, a friend, or a teacher?

Need help with the transition back to school?

Go to <http://www.amaze.org.au/returntoschool2020>

Amaze Autism Advisors

Contact the Amaze Autism Advisors for more information about autism, or to discuss your individual situation:

Phone: **1300 308 699**

Email: info@amaze.org.au

Website and webchat: www.amaze.org.au

This service is available from 8am to 7pm, Monday to Friday (excluding public holidays).

Victorian Department of Education learning from home advice line for parents

If you have questions about learning from home, call the advice phone line for parents on **1800 338 663**.



Education and Training