

BACK 2 SCHOOL ADVICE_

PRIMARY STUDENTS

Going back to school might make you feel excited – excited to see friends who you might not have seen in a while and excited about seeing your teachers too! But you might also be feeling worried or anxious about returning to school, especially if you've spent more time at home recently because of lockdown. So we thought it would be helpful to gather all the advice we have about going back to school. Remember, you are going to have a great year, so think positively, be yourself and get excited about the opportunities ahead! And if you are worried or concerned, speak to a trusted adult who can help.

We asked our Anti-Bullying trainers for their advice. Here are their top tips on how you can make a flying start when you go Back 2 School.

Q: I haven't been to school since lockdown and I'm worried about going back. What can I do?

Remember that you are not alone – lots of other young people may be feeling anxious or worried about going back to school. It will likely feel strange for everyone and a lot will have changed since you were last there. If you're feeling worried about going back to school, it's best not to keep things bottled up. Speak to an adult you trust like a parent or carer about how you're feeling.

You could reach out to a friend who goes to the same school as you to see how they're feeling about things. Together, you can support each in feeling better and less worried about the new term.

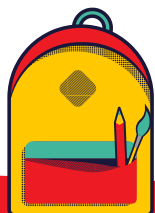
Q: I'm starting a new school and I'm a bit anxious. What can I do to prepare?

Starting a new school can be an exciting but scary time. The best way to calm the nerves is to find out what your new school is like. With your parent/carer, you could read over any information the school has sent and look at the school's website. Think about any of the activities and clubs the school offers that you may want to get involved in. You could also look on the school website to see who your teachers are going to be for the year; most schools have pictures on their website. You may not have been able to visit your new school in person but many schools have created virtual tours on their websites – check out your new school's website to see if they've done this.

If you're moving from year 6 to year 7, you might be getting public transport to school for the first time or travelling by yourself. Why not try the journey over the summer holiday with your parents/carers so you know how long it takes?

Before your first day, make sure you have everything you need for the start of school; your parents/carers may have been sent information about what you'll be doing on your first day and where you need to go – ask them if you're not sure. Don't forget to pack your bag in advance with essentials such as a pencil, pen, calculator, PE kit and anything else you'll need. Try on your uniform to make sure it fits and you feel comfortable in it. If you are wearing a tie for the first time, practice how to tie it – it may take a few attempts!

Remember that it is the first day back for everyone so you are not going to be the only one feeling a bit nervous – even your teachers might be!



Q: How do I make friends at school?

You are not the only one who worries about making friends. Some people find it easy to make friends and some people don't, so don't feel alone. You may already have a group of friends or you might be going to a new school where you don't know anyone.

Here are our top tips for how to make friends at school:

1. **Be yourself.** At school, sometimes people will try to be someone else to fit in; this won't make you happy for long and people may see that it's not the real you. You want to find people with similar interests and hobbies so be proud of what makes you unique. If people don't like it, ask yourself if they are really your friends.
2. **Be kind.** It may sound obvious but being kind to others means that people will see you as a good friend.
3. **Be confident.** This is easier said than done if you are not a confident person but try not to worry. Take a deep breath and remind yourself of all the reasons that you make a good friend. Be the one to make the first move, say hello to new people and remember to smile!
4. **Be interested.** Ask people questions about themselves! They will ask questions about you and, before you know it, you will have found lots in common and will have a new friend.
5. **Be inclusive.** Invite other people to join in with you in school and don't leave people out.
6. **Join a school club.** Joining a new club or starting a new activity is a great way to find people with the same interests as you. Online friends are also an important part of lots of people's lives; it's a great way to stay in touch and share what we have been up to. It is important to have a good balance of both online and offline friends. Just remember to only accept friend requests from people you know and trust. If you have any problems with online friendships, make sure to block and report the person and talk to a teacher or parent/carer if something is worrying you.

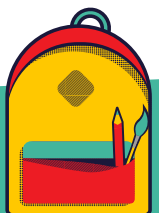
Q: I fell out with one of my friends over the holidays and I'm not sure what to do when I go back. What can I do?

This happens to lots of friends over the holidays. You might not have met up with your friends in a while and sometimes this can make things harder than normal. If you are worrying about it, speak to your parent/carer about things and they can help you decide what to do, for example, you may want to call your friend or send them a message. The chances are that they are worrying about it too. Even if you feel you may not want to be friends with them anymore, it is sometimes best just to clear the air and ensure no one feels hurt or left out.

Q: Who can help and support me if I'm worried or concerned about something?

We all have people in our life, whether they are in school or out of school, that we can go to if we have a worry or concern. These people form your 'support network'. Sometimes it can be helpful to reflect on who these people are before you need them – that way, if something does come up in or out of school that worries you or you need to talk to someone, you've already thought about who these people are. We have a support network activity that you could do in school or at home with a parent/carer.

If you don't feel able to speak to an adult that you trust, we have our own service called The Diana Award Crisis Messenger which is free and available 24/7 – you just need to text DA to 85258 to be matched with a trained volunteer who will help you think what the next steps could be to feeling better.



Q: I experienced bullying behaviour last term or over the summer holidays and I'm worried that the same thing is going to happen this term. What can I do?

It is understandable that you are worried about going back but hopefully this will be a much better term for you. Why not join a club or take up a new hobby to make new friends and boost your confidence?

Ask your parent/carer to help you make an action plan about what you are going to do if you experience bullying behaviour again; this will help you feel more confident about going back.

If you haven't spoken to a teacher in school about what happened, do let them know. They can support you and take action to ensure that the bullying behaviour doesn't happen again.

And if you haven't done so already, do let your parent/carer know about what has been going on. A problem shared is a problem halved.

The most important thing is to try not to think about what happened last term. The other pupils in your school may have grown up a lot over the holidays. Think positively: you are going to have a good term!

Q: I'm starting secondary school this year; what can I expect?

Secondary school is a bit different than primary school. There might be more students, you will have more than one teacher, you'll have new subjects and a maybe a longer school day. But think about it this way, there are also way more people to make friends with, you get to spend more time with them, you have more responsibility and there are so many opportunities and activities to get stuck into!

Feeling worried about starting secondary school is completely normal. Talk to your parents/carers about what's worrying you. At most schools, you will also have a form teacher who is there to support you.

It may take you a few weeks to settle in but just remember to be yourself, build your support network and try your best!

Q: I was bullied over the holiday by some people from my school. How should I act towards them when I go back?

Hold your head high and do your best to be confident. Try to avoid the people who displayed bullying behaviour towards you if possible. If the bullying behaviour starts again, tell your teacher so they can stop it as soon as possible and support you. You may also want to tell your teacher about what happened over the holidays, so they are aware of the situation. Remember to speak to your parent/carer at home too so they know about what's going on and can help you. Stay positive; the likelihood is that it won't carry on. If you have any problems with online friendships or are experiencing cyberbullying behaviour, make sure to screenshot for evidence, block and report the person and talk to a trusted adult.

Q: I'm a bit nervous about having different teachers to last year. Any advice?

Having new teachers can be a good thing! It's a chance for you to start fresh and build new relationships with them. As with any friend or family member, show them respect and you should find that they do the same to you. You may find that teachers are a bit nervous about having new students too! After the first few weeks, you and your teachers will have had some time to get to know one another better.



Q: I'm worried that I'll have more work to do this year and it will be harder – help!

The first thing to do is not panic! You and your friends will all be in the same boat. Your teachers will give you extra help and support if you need it. It's in their best interest to make sure you have a happy year and do the best that you can. If you do struggle with a subject or don't understand something, speak out! The worst thing you can do is keep quiet and struggle on your own. Remember, school is not just about your work - make sure you balance your work with activities and hanging out with friends. Keep calm and you will do great!

Q: What should I do if I see people being bullied at school?

If you don't feel safe or confident to step in yourself, you can indirectly help the person experiencing bullying behaviour by doing one or all of the actions below:

- Offer friendship. Let the person experiencing bullying behaviour know that you understand what they are going through. This could be as simple as asking 'are you ok?' and letting them know you are there to talk.
- Always report any offline or online bullying behaviour you see to a teacher.
- Don't join in with the bullying behaviour! If you are standing by, watching or laughing, you are encouraging the bullying behaviour and giving the person exhibiting the bullying behaviour an audience. Ask the person experiencing the bullying behaviour if they are ok and then remove yourself from the situation whilst encouraging anyone else watching to do the same.
- Think about how you would feel if you were the person experiencing bullying behaviour and how you would like to be treated.

Q: What should I do if see someone I know being cyberbullied?

- Reach out to them and offer your support. By doing this, you're letting them know that they are not alone and that you have their back.
- Encourage them to screenshot any nasty comments/messages/photos that they are receiving to use as evidence further down the line.
- You can report cyberbullying that you see anonymously to the social media company/app - no one will know that it was you that reported the bullying behaviour.
- Encourage your friend to block the person exhibiting the cyberbullying behaviour or to use tools such as mute and restrict. Different social media platforms will have different tools they can use – but they all have the block tool.
- Encourage them to speak to a teacher or parent/carer about what is happening if they haven't done so already.
- Don't share or like negative posts/comments/images online – by sharing this kind of negative content, you're helping the bullying behaviour to continue. Be the upstander, not the bystander!

Further Support

We hope this advice has helped to ease any worries you might have and to feel more prepared for going back to school. Remember, you are going to have a great year. If you are worried or concerned, speak to a trusted adult who can help or contact our free Crisis Messenger, which provides free, 24/7 crisis support across the UK – simply text DA to 85258 and trained

volunteers will listen to how you are feeling and help you think through the next step towards feeling better.

The Diana Award trains young people in schools to stand up to bullying behaviour – if you would like us to come to your school to train you, your peers and your teachers, tell your teachers and parents/carers about The Diana Award's Anti-Bullying Ambassador Programme.



BACK 2 SCHOOL ADVICE_ SECONDARY STUDENTS

Going back to school might make you feel excited – excited to see friends who you might not have seen in a while and excited about seeing your teachers too! But you might also be feeling worried or anxious about returning to school, especially if you've spent more time at home recently because of lockdown. So we thought it would be helpful to gather all the advice we have about going back to school. Remember, you are going to have a great year, so think positively, be yourself and get excited about the opportunities ahead! And if you are worried or concerned, speak to a trusted adult who can help.

We asked our Anti-Bullying trainers for their advice. Here are their top tips on how you can make a flying start when you go Back 2 School.

Q. I'm starting at a new school and I'm a bit anxious. What can I do to prepare?

Starting a new school can be an exciting but nerve-wracking time. The best way to calm your nerves is to familiarise yourself with your new school. Read over any information the school have sent you and look at the school's website. Think about any of the activities and clubs the school offers that you may want to get involved in. You could also look up your teachers for the year on the school website. You may not have been able to visit your new school in person but many schools have created virtual tours on their websites – check out your new school's website to see if they've done this.

If you're getting public transport to school, why not do the journey in advance so you know how long it takes and where to get the bus/train from. Remember to follow all government guidance when talking public transport – ask your parents/carers if you're not sure.

Take advantage of any opportunities the school has to get to know other students. This could be through lunchtime or afterschool clubs for new students.

Before your first day, make sure you have everything you need for the start of school, are clear what you will be doing on your first day and where you need to go. Try on your uniform to make sure it fits and you feel comfortable in it. If you are wearing a tie for the first time, practice how to tie it – it may take a few attempts!

Remember that it is the first day back for everyone so you are not going to be the only one feeling a bit nervous – even the teachers might be!

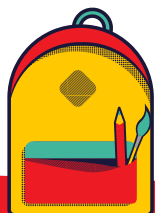
Q: I haven't been back to school since lockdown and I'm a bit worried about going back.

You won't be the only one worried about going back to school. Other students at your school and your teachers will probably all feel a little nervous about things being different.

Going back to school in September is probably going to feel strange for everyone and a lot will have changed since you were last there. It's important to take time to prepare and to feel mentally resilient for the year ahead.

Make sure that you keep up to date with your work and in communication with your teachers – they will have your best interests at heart so if they have set you any work to prepare you for coming back to school, make sure you give it your best effort! If you're feeling worried about what school will look like when you go back, speak with your teachers. They might not know all the answers but can try their best to address your worries or concerns.

You could also reach out to a friend who goes to the same school as you to see how they're feeling about things. Together, you can support each in feeling better and less worried about the new term.



Q: How do I make friends at school?

You are not the only one who worries about making friends. Some people find it easy to make friends and some people don't, so don't feel alone. You may already have a group of friends but feel you have drifted from them, fallen out with friends or want to hang out with new people. It's very natural to change friendship groups during your school life. As you change, so will your friends. Here are our top tips for how to make friends at school:

1. **Be approachable.** Have open body language, smile and don't be afraid to say hi to new people. It may seem a bit awkward at first but as soon as you get chatting, you will be fine.
2. **Be yourself.** At school, sometimes people will try to be someone else to fit in; this won't necessarily make you happy and, before long, people will see it's not the real you. You want to find people with similar interests and hobbies so be proud of what makes you unique. If people don't like it or make fun of you for it, ask yourself if they are really your friends.
3. **Be kind.** It may sound obvious but being kind to others will earn you respect from your peers and people will see you as a good friend.
4. **Be confident.** This is easier said than done if you are not a confident person but take a deep breath and remind yourself of all the reasons that you make a good friend. Be the one to make the first move and say hello to new people. They'll probably be relieved you've broken the ice!
5. **Be interested.** Ask people questions about themselves. They will then ask questions about you and, before you know it, you will have found lots in common and will have a new friend.
6. **Be inclusive.** Invite other people to join in with you; don't be exclusive and don't leave people out.
7. **Join a school club.** Joining a new club or starting a new activity is a great way to find people with the same interests as you. Online friends are also an important part of lots of people's lives; it's a great way to stay in touch and share what you have been up to. It is important to have a good balance of both online and offline friends. Just remember to only accept friend requests from people you know and trust. If you have any problems with online friendships, make sure to block and report the person and talk to a trusted adult if it's bothering you.

Q: I experienced bullying behaviour last term/over the summer holidays and I'm worried that the same thing is going to happen this term. What can I do?

It is understandable that you are worried about going back and we hope that this will be a much better term for you. Remember that experiencing bullying behaviour is never your fault and you shouldn't have to change who you are to fit in.

You could join a club or take up a new hobby to make some new friends and boost your confidence, all while learning a new skill. You could also message someone who you trust and get on well with at school and ask if they would like to hang out - remember to follow government guidance, let your parents/carers know where you will be meeting your friend and only meet someone you know and trust.

Make an action plan with your parents/carers about what you are going to do if you experience bullying behaviour again; this will help you feel more confident about going back.

If you haven't spoken to a trusted adult in school about what happened, do let them know. They can support you and take appropriate action to ensure that the bullying behaviour doesn't happen again.

And if you haven't done so already, do tell a trusted adult in the home like a parent or carer; a problem shared is a problem halved.

The most important thing is to try not to think about what happened last term. Your peers may have grown up a lot over the holidays. Think positively: you are going to have a good term!



Q: Who can help if I'm worried or concerned about something?

We all have people in our life, whether they are in school or out of school, who we can go to if we have a worry or concern. These people form your 'support network'. Sometimes, it can be helpful to reflect on who these people are before you need them – that way, if something does come up in or out of school that worries you or you need to talk to someone, you've already identified who these people are.

If you don't feel able to speak to an adult who you trust, we have our own service called The Diana Award Crisis Messenger which is free and available 24/7 – you just need to text **DA** to **85258** to be linked with a trained volunteer who will help you think what the next steps could be to feeling better.

Q: I'm starting secondary school this year; what can I expect?

Secondary school is a bit different than primary school. There might be more students, you will have more than one teacher, you'll have new subjects and a maybe a longer school day. But think about it this way: there are also way more people to make friends with, you get to spend more time with them, you have more responsibility and there are so many opportunities and activities to get stuck into!

Feeling worried about starting secondary school is completely normal! Speak with your parents/carers about what's worrying you. At most schools, you will have a form teacher who doesn't teach you a subject like maths or English but is there to be a source of support for you.

It may take you a few weeks to settle in but be yourself, try your best and you will love it in no time!

Q: I was bullied over the holiday by some people from my school. How should I act towards them when I go back?

Hold your head high and be confident! Try to avoid them if possible. If the bullying behaviour starts again, tell your teacher so they can stop it as soon as possible and support you. You may also want to tell your teacher about what happened over the holidays so they are aware of the situation. Remember to speak with a trusted adult in the home too so they know about what's going on and can be a source of support for you. Stay positive; the likelihood is that it won't carry on. If you have any problems with online friendships or are experiencing cyberbullying, make sure to screenshot for evidence, block and report the person and talk to a trusted adult.

Q: I fell out with one of my friends over the holidays and I'm not sure what to do when I go back.

This happens to lots of friends over the holidays. You might not have met up with your friends physically in a while and sometimes this can put strain on friendships. If you are really worrying about it, depending on the situation, why not give them a call or send them a message to try to resolve the problem? The chances are that they are worrying about it too. Even if you feel you may not want to be friends with them anymore, it is sometimes best just to clear the air and ensure you start fresh for the new term.

Q: I'm a bit nervous about having different teachers to last year. Any advice?

Having a new set of teachers can be a good thing! It's a chance for you to start fresh and build new relationships with them. Make a good impression on your teachers by getting on with tasks in lessons and handing in your homework on time. As with any friend or family member, show them respect and you should find that they do the same to you. You may find that teachers are a bit nervous about a new term and working with new students too!

After the first few weeks, you should find that you'll know how different teachers work and the expectation that they have for you in their classroom and they'll have got to know you better too.



Q: I'm worried about my workload and exams. How can I make sure I stay on top of it all?

The first thing to do is to not panic! You and your friends will all be in the same boat. Your teachers also know that this may be a tough year for you and will give you extra help and support. It's in their best interest too to make sure you have a happy year and achieve good grades. If you do struggle with a subject or don't understand something, speak out! The worst thing you can do is keep quiet and struggle on your own. There are lots of apps and tools to help you manage your workload too. Your teacher may have some good examples, you could ask your peers or you could do an internet search. Remember that school is not just about work; make sure you balance your work with activities and hanging out with friends. Keep calm and you will do great!

Q: What should I do if I see people being bullied at school?

If you don't feel safe or confident to step in yourself, you can indirectly help the person experiencing bullying behaviour by doing one or all of the actions below:

- Offer friendship. Let the person experiencing bullying behaviour know that you understand what they are going through. This could just be by asking if they are ok and letting them know you are there to talk.
- Always report any offline or online bullying behaviour you see to a staff member.
- Don't join in with the bullying behaviour! If you are standing by, watching or laughing you, are encouraging the bullying behaviour and giving the person exhibiting the bullying behaviour an audience. Check in with the person experiencing bullying behaviour to see if they are ok and then remove yourself from the situation whilst encouraging other onlookers to do the same.
- Think about how you would feel if you were the person experiencing bullying behaviour and how you would like to be treated.

Q: What should I do if see someone I know being cyberbullied?

- Reach out to them and offer your support. By doing this, you're letting them know that they are not alone and that you have their back.
- Encourage them to screenshot any nasty comments/messages/photos to use as evidence further down the line.
- You can report cyberbullying that you see anonymously to the social media company/app - this means that they can take action to address it and hopefully get it removed.
- Encourage your friend to block the person exhibiting the cyberbullying behaviour or to use tools such as mute and restrict. Different social media platforms will have different tools they can use - but they all have the block feature as a minimum!
- Encourage them to speak to a trusted adult about what is happening if they haven't done so already.
- Don't share or like negative posts/comments/images online - by sharing this kind of negative content, you're helping the bullying behaviour to continue. Be the upstander, not the bystander!

Further Support

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**DIGITAL
BACKPACK**

We're proud to be the only charity set up in memory of Diana, Princess of Wales and her belief that young people have the power to change the world. It's a big mission but there are two things within it that we focus our charity's efforts on – young people and change.

Throughout all of our programmes and initiatives 'change' for and by young people is central, including our anti-bullying work which encourages change in attitudes and behaviours for young people by young people.

We hope you found this resource useful and wish you all the best in your anti-bullying journey. If you would like to help us create more resources and train even more Anti-Bullying Ambassadors you can make a £5 donation by texting CHANGE 5 to 70470 or visit diana-award.org.uk/donate

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