

**COVID-19: Supporting the emotional health and wellbeing of students returning to school:  
A brief guide for Calderdale students**

Since 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020, schools and colleges have been closed except to vulnerable students and children of keyworkers. The government made an announcement that they would like schools to plan a phased return of their students back into education. It's really important that this is done in a careful way that prioritises the safety of everyone.

A group of 16 young people and young adults from three young people's groups, Calderdale Young Commissioners, Calderdale SEND Reference Group and the Tough Times Reference Group have worked together and created these top 12 tips on how to help alleviate any worries when returning back to school or college.

Further information and advice can be found to help ease any concerns regarding your return to school on the emotional health and wellbeing website Open Minds [www.openmindscalderdale.org.uk](http://www.openmindscalderdale.org.uk).

<b>Worry</b>	<b>Helpful Suggestion</b>
<b>I'm feeling worried about my existing health condition.</b>	Speak to your GP or another professional to get advice on returning to education, also speak to school/college around what they can do to help you safely return.
<b>I'm feeling worried about the people I live with who have a health condition.</b>	Discuss with your GP and/or family member about whether or not it's appropriate and safe for you to return to school. It's important to follow guidelines to keep you and your family safe.
<b>I'm feeling worried about other people not following the social distancing rules.</b>	Keep yourself safe and feeling comfortable at all times, if others are making you feel uncomfortable remove yourself from the situation. Follow the rules that your school has set out to keep you safe.

<b>Worry</b> I'm feeling worried about being overwhelmed when seeing a lot of people in one place.	<b>Helpful Suggestion</b> The majority of schools are slowly introducing students back for one to two days per week. This will mean that not as many students will be in attendance as usual. Because there will be less people this could help you feel less overwhelmed. Talk to your friends or a trusted adult about how you feel.
<b>Worry</b> I'm feeling worried about the school work I have missed.	<b>Helpful Suggestion</b> Study for subjects you don't feel confident in by using sources like BBC Bitesize and Quizlet. When you go back to school ask your teacher or a member of teaching staff for a work pack or revision guides to help you catch up.
<b>Worry</b> I'm feeling worried about the arrangements travelling to and from school.	<b>Helpful Suggestion</b> Ask your school about the school bus arrangements. If you don't feel comfortable using the school bus then you could ask someone you live with to help. Try and adhere to the transport guidelines as best you can.
<b>Worry</b> I'm feeling worried about the how classes will be taught and if I will be with my friends.	<b>Helpful Suggestion</b> Speak to your school/college about what they are putting into place to prevent people breaking the social distancing guidelines and how they intend on teaching classes prior to returning.
<b>Worry</b> I'm feeling worried about the hygiene and space in the toilets.	<b>Helpful suggestion</b> Follow your school's rules, wear a mask if you want to, and wash your hands after using the toilet and put sanitizer on your hands after leaving.
<b>Worry</b> I'm feeling worried about the relationship I have with my friends.	<b>Helpful Suggestion</b> If and when possible, keep in touch with friends online outside of school hours. Whilst attending school ensure you follow the social distancing rules, it's important to maintain friendships and not isolate yourself from your friends.

<b>Worry</b> I'm feeling worried about how social distancing will be enforced during lunch and break times.	<b>Helpful Suggestion</b> Before returning to school ask your teachers about this and follow the school guidance.
<b>Worry</b> I'm feeling worried about entering and leaving the building.	<b>Helpful Suggestion</b> Speak to your head of year/tutor/teacher regarding being able to arrive late and to be able to leave early to avoid potential crowds. Most schools will have staggered start and finish times.
<b>Worry</b> I'm feeling worried about the hygiene and cleanliness of the furniture and classroom equipment.	<b>Helpful Suggestion</b> Your school will be ensuring that the furniture and classroom equipment will be thoroughly and regularly cleansed. If possible carry around some hand sanitizer and wipes or ask your school if they will provide them.