



PARENT TOOLKIT

Returning to School After a Holiday



It's very common for primary school children to feel reluctant about returning to school after a holiday. Changes in routine, separation from family, or worries about school can all play a part. With the right support, parents can help children feel more confident, calm, and ready to return.

Why Children May Not Want to Go Back

- Loss of routine: Holidays often mean relaxed schedules and more screen time or play.
- Separation anxiety: Spending more time at home can make school feel like a big adjustment.
- Worries about school: Friendships, learning challenges, or specific events.
- Tiredness: Changes in sleep patterns can affect mood and resilience.

Positive Conversations to Have

1. Acknowledge feelings
 - "It sounds like you're feeling a bit worried about going back."
 - Avoid dismissing concerns—validate them first.
2. Focus on the positives
 - Talk about friends, favourite activities, or teachers.
 - "What are you most looking forward to seeing or doing?"
3. Use gentle curiosity
 - "Is there anything you're unsure about?"
 - "What might help make tomorrow easier?"
4. Keep it calm and reassuring
 - Children pick up on adult emotions—stay positive and confident.

Practical Things You Can Put in Place

Rebuild routine early

- Start school bedtime and morning routines a few days before term starts.

Prepare together

- Pack the school bag, lay out uniform, and organise lunches together.

Create a visual plan

- Younger children benefit from seeing what the school day will look like.

Offer a comfort item

- A small object, note, or reminder of home can provide reassurance.

Building Confidence

- Role-play scenarios (e.g. going into class, saying hello to friends)
- Remind them of past success: "You felt nervous last time, but you did it."
- Celebrate small wins after the first few days back

Smooth Drop-Off Tips

- Keep goodbyes short, calm, and predictable
- Avoid lingering if your child becomes more upset
- Reassure them you'll be back and stick to it

A bit of reluctance is completely normal. With patience, consistency, and positive reassurance, most children settle back into school routines quickly.