

Getting back after a longer absence

A return plan should rebuild safety, routine, connection and learning - not simply restart everything at once.

Your role

Keep school informed, report absence using the school's process, share relevant barriers early and work with the school on agreed actions. Legal rules differ across the UK, so use the official guidance for your nation.

Before the return

- Ask your child what they are most worried about and what would make day one easier.
- Agree who will meet them, where they will go first and what happens if they feel overwhelmed.
- Make sure key staff know the plan so your child does not have to explain repeatedly.

During the first days

- Prioritise welcome and belonging.
- Keep expectations clear and predictable.
- Reduce avoidable catch-up pressure; decide what learning matters most.
- Use a simple check-in/check-out with a trusted adult.

If a phased return is being considered

- Make sure it is purposeful, time-limited, reviewed and consistent with the rules that apply in your nation/setting.
- Be clear about what will increase, when, and what support makes the next step possible.

Review questions

- What is easier now?
- What remains difficult?
- Is the plan increasing participation and confidence?
- What needs to change this week?

Use this leaflet as a conversation starter. It is general information, not legal, medical or safeguarding advice. If you are worried about immediate safety, use the appropriate local emergency or safeguarding route.