**Prepare in advance**

* Before it’s time for them to go back, keep school in the minds of your kids – drive past the school if you can so that they can see that it’s still there.
* When they’ve been given a return date, treat it like the beginning of the school year. Do a test run of getting ready in the morning, make sure school uniform fits, practice packing bags and walking the route to school.

## One step at a time

Even when school re starts, you may find that children are more tired than usual by the extra demands and sensory stimulation placed on them. Ease them back in to their routine gently and wait to start other activities (clubs and activities) in a few weeks time.

**Manage expectations**

* When the time comes, you’ll find you’ll feel less stressed if you know there will be bumps in the road.
* Allow enough space and time in a new schedule for any hiccups so that you’re not having to manage too many demands (i.e batch cook dinners before hand, don’t agree to extra activities or if possible, adopt flexible working hours).
* Try to notice if you’re feeling anxious about the return to school in any way and if so, spend some time thinking about it and unpicking it. If children pick up on your anxieties they may feel anxious too.

## Managing worry and anxiety

If you know your child might struggle with going back to school, try developing a toolbox of things they can do when they are worried at school. This might include a song to sing to them selves, visualising a calm place, some affirmation cards, practicing a breathing techniques and identifying safe staff they can tell. You can make this box together and the child can take some bits with them to school.