



BRUMMANA HIGH SCHOOL  
MEDICAL DEPARTMENT

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## **Back to School During COVID-19: Tips for Parents and Caregivers**

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### **My child is worried about getting sick at school and doesn't want to go back. What can I do?**

Children do best when they feel loved.

- Have an open conversation with your child about what's worrying them and let them know that it's completely normal to feel anxious.
- Talk to them calmly about some of the changes they may expect at school, such as needing to wear masks and to keep social distancing from their friends and teachers.
- Reassure them that these safety measures are in place to keep students and teachers healthy.

### **Is there anything I should look out for as my child starts back at school?**

As your child returns to school you should keep an eye on their physical health, learning, emotions and behaviour. Look out for these signs of stress and anxiety to gauge if your child needs extra support from you:

- Sadness
- Worry
- Anger
- Agitation
- Fatigue
- Confusion
- Lack of interest in playing with other children or completing their homework
- Not sleeping or eating well
- Loss of interest in their hobbies or friends

### **My child's school is recommending children wear face masks which is making them feel more nervous. What should I say to them?**

Approach this conversation with empathy. Children may get upset or frustrated if they are finding it hard to wear masks.

You can reassure your child that lots of adults are working hard to keep your family safe, but emphasize that it's important we all follow the recommended measures to take care of more vulnerable members of our community.

## **How can I encourage my child to follow precautions (such as frequent handwashing, physical distancing, etc.) at school without alarming them?**

One of the best ways to keep safe from COVID-19 and other diseases is to simply encourage regular handwashing with soap and water. At school, children will see new signs near their classroom. They should wash their hands regularly and remind their friends to do the same.

It doesn't need to be a scary conversation. Sing along with their favourite song or do a dance together to make learning fun.

## **My child's sleep patterns have changed during lockdown and I'm worried how they'll cope when they go back to school. How can I support them?**

1. Gradually get back into school year structure and routine. Bring up the topic that summer is coming to an end and that school will be restarting.
2. Talk about routines. You might say: "Hey guys, with COVID-19, you've had a lot more screen time than usual, but now that school is starting up again, we're going to get back into our old routine..."
3. Set a bedtime (and/or wake up time) and move it closer to what it should be for the school year.
4. Consider posting a family calendar with the school start marked down, to help your family see how many days are left until school starts.

## **How can I gently check in to see how my child is coping?**

Some children may come to their parents wanting to talk, but others will need their parents to create the space for discussion.

Check in with children and ask how they're doing. You can also create opportunities for your child to express themselves through activities like playing and drawing. This can help them communicate any negative feelings they may be experiencing in a safe and supportive environment.

## **I'm anxious about being away from my child when they go back to school. What can I do to calm down?**

The last few months may have been very stressful for you and your family. You might be worried about financial issues and your own fears of COVID-19.

Here are some tips to manage your stress:

- Keep connected with your loved ones and make time for activities that you enjoy (especially during the hours that your child is at school).
- Talk to people you trust, including your friends and family.
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle. Follow a proper diet, get enough sleep, and exercise.
- Don't smoke, drink alcohol or take other drugs to deal with your emotions.

BHS Medical Department

### **References:**

-UNICEF

-[www.cheo.on.ca](http://www.cheo.on.ca)