



S | E | N | D | I | A | S | S  
H E R T F O R D S H I R E

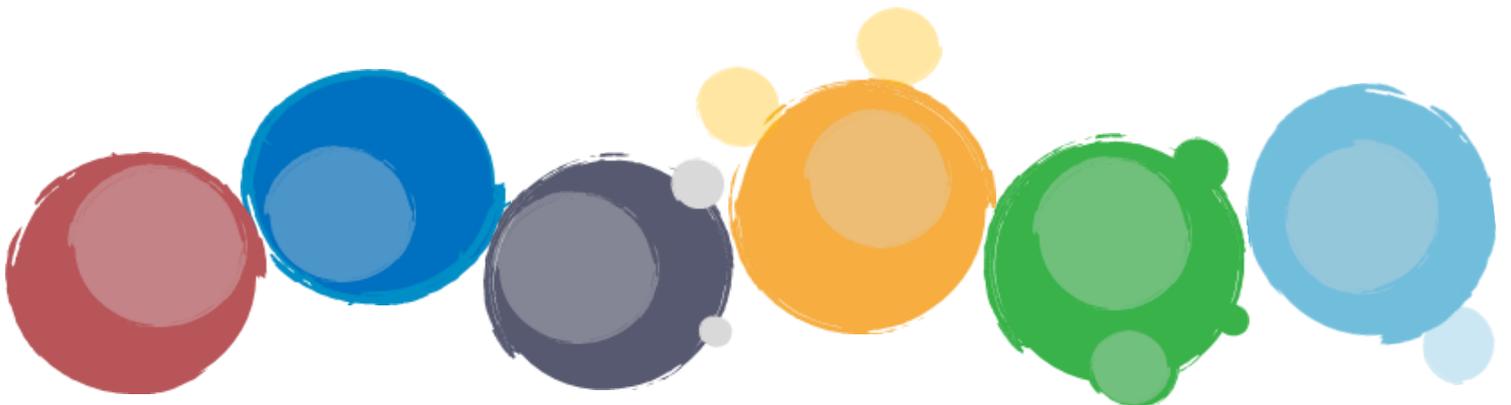
# COVID—19

## Back to school

*In partnership with*



Herts Parent  
Carer Involvement



# Introduction

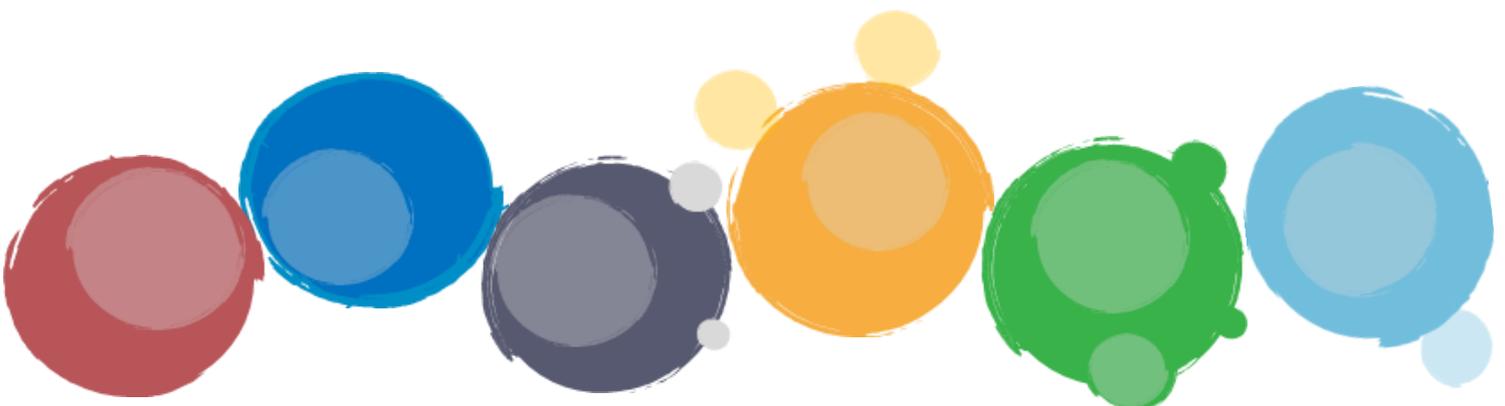
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## **'Back to school'**

Over recent months we have been supporting the additional issues for families caused by the impact of coronavirus to education and other provision. With the plan for schools/colleges to welcome all year groups back from September, we thought it would be helpful to look at the resources currently available and bring them together in one place.

## **Some of the key themes:**

- Managing anxiety and wellbeing (worries about returning, coping with change and different friendship groups)
- Transition support
- Social distancing and PPE
- Changes to provision
- Catching up on missed education and maintaining interest in learning



# Managing and Reducing Anxiety

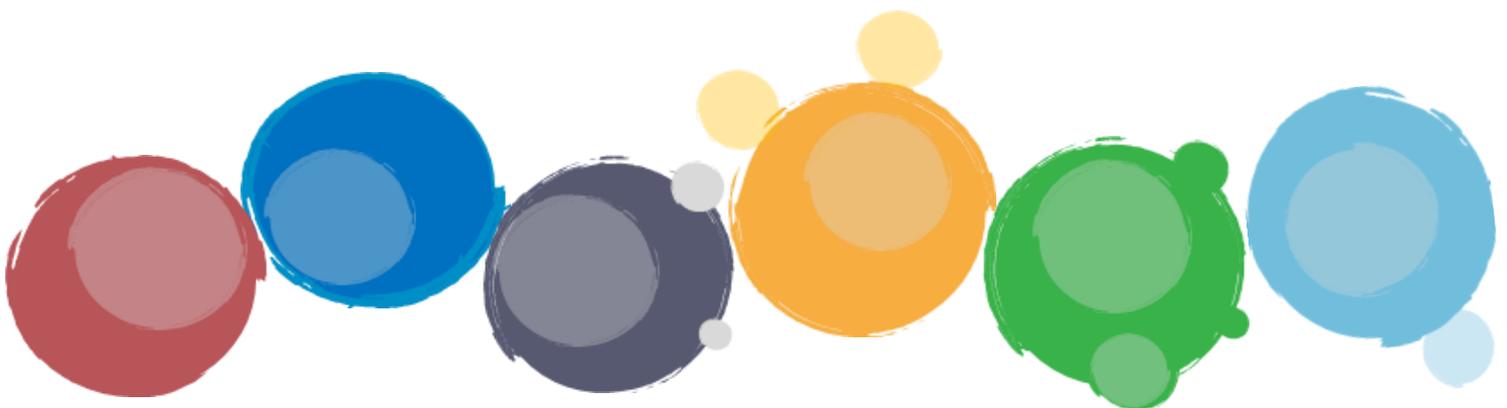
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For children and young people with SEND, anxiety can be a significant barrier to learning. For some, the outbreak has led to increased worry, perhaps about their own or family members health, and has heightened anxiety about going back to school in September following such a long break in lockdown.

Sometimes your child or young person will be able to tell you exactly what it is they are worried about. They may find it hard to talk about this with you so you could consider asking them to write this down, messaging you or talking to someone else.

It might be you notice a change in their mood or behaviour or it could be that, as you know them so well, you are able to anticipate what they will find most difficult.

Because you know your child best, you will have really important information to share with school or college, including strategies for how your child can be supported through this period.

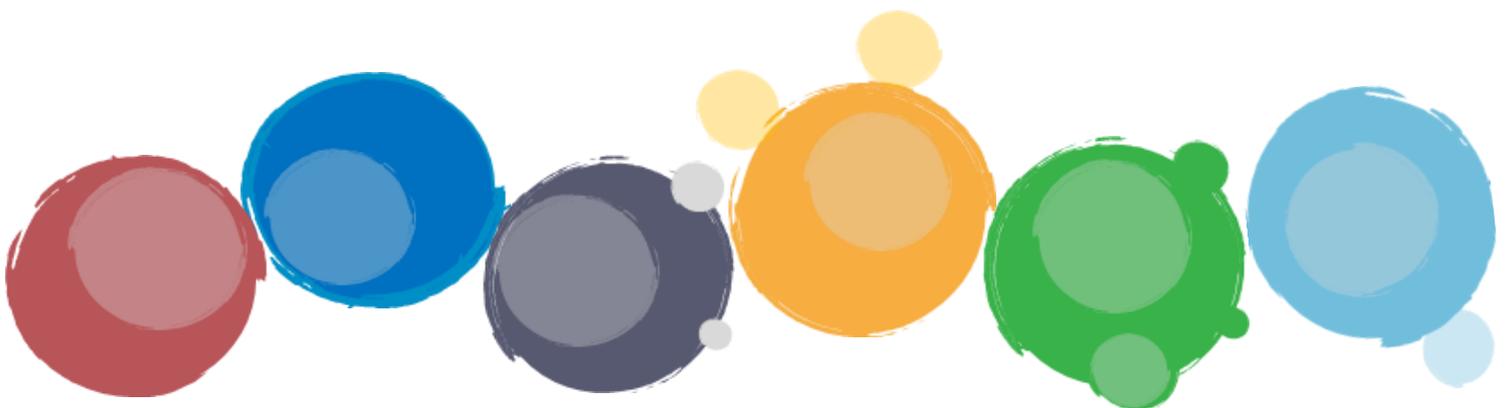


## ***Who can help?***

You can **speak to a [School Nurse](#), your child's GP or visit the [Hertfordshire Just Talk](#) page for further information on mental health and wellbeing.** Make sure you share any information with your child's school or college so they have the full picture, and you can discuss next steps together.

Services offering general support with anxiety for children and young people:

- [Kooth](#)
- [BBC Bitesize tips & advice](#)
- [Young Minds – Anxiety](#)
- [Young Minds – Supporting your child with school anxiety & refusal](#)
- [Childline Calm Zone](#)
- [The Children Society advice & support](#)



# Transition Support

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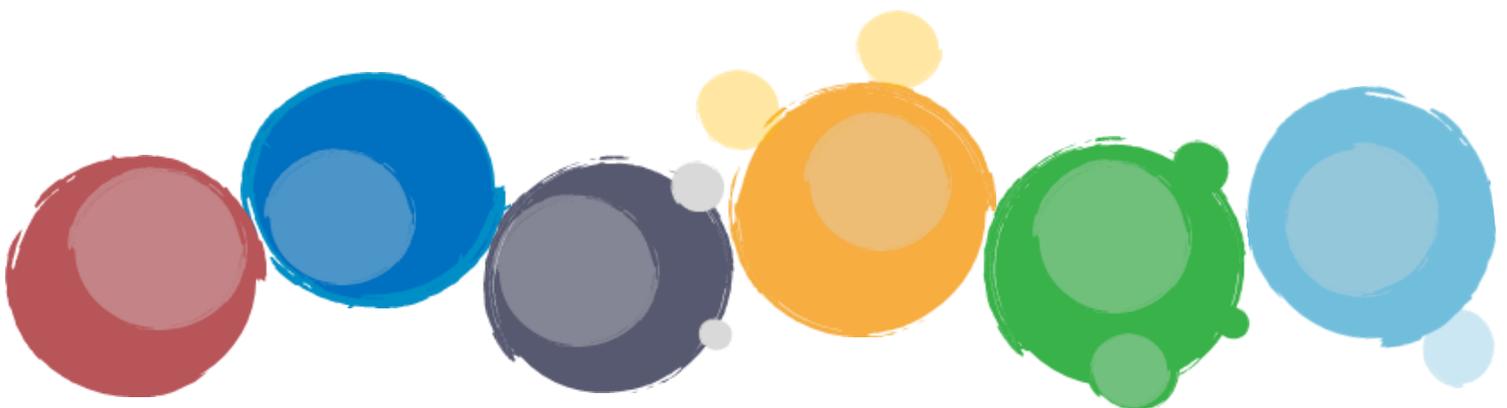
We recognise it will be an anxious time for children returning to school/college after the lengthy lockdown, and particularly moving up to primary, secondary school or college.

Schools and colleges have experience of planning transition and though traditional 'transition days' will not be happening, they will be thinking about alternative ways to prepare children and young people for the move.

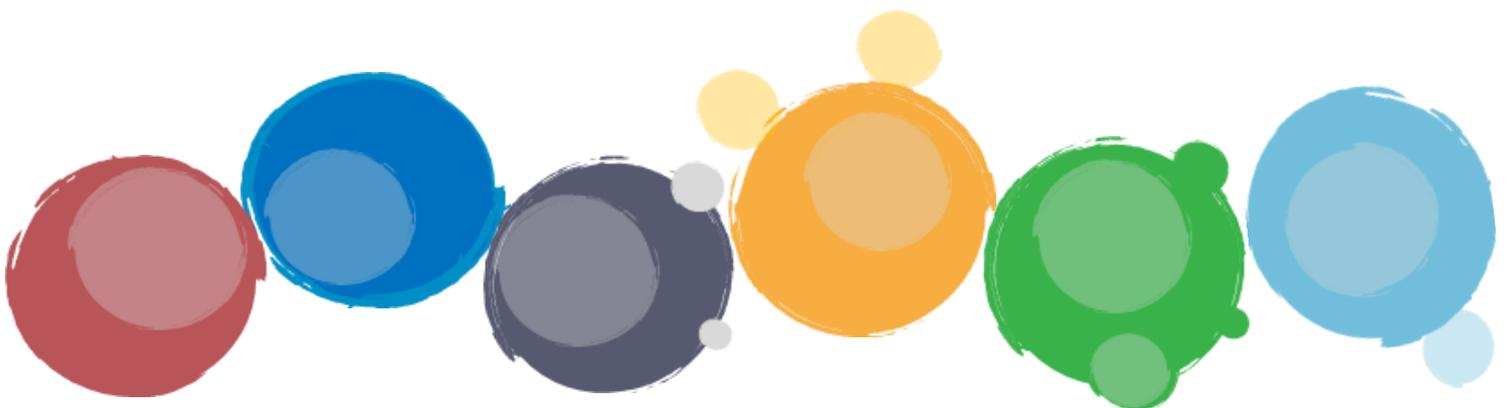
Some settings have a member of staff solely for planning transition and you can ask to speak with them directly. If your child has specialists working with them, they could also be part of the transition planning.

## ***How you can help***

- The most important thing is to think about what your child will find most difficult (e.g. changes to routine, environment, or staff and with social distancing/PPE) and discuss ways they can be supported with this.



- Try to find out **what your child is worried about** and talk to them about what might make things better.
- Find out from school or college if there are any **changes to teaching staff** or with the support they usually receive.
- Explain to your child that **things are going to be different** for a while. You may find this activity useful: [Transition – What changes? What stays the same?](#)
- Seeing **photos or a virtual tour** of the class/school layout may benefit your child.
- Think about **what has worked well** in the past when you've helped your child prepare for a new experience.
- Your child will be **reassured by your calming responses** and a reminder that you and school or college can support them in managing the changes.



## ***Starting a new school***

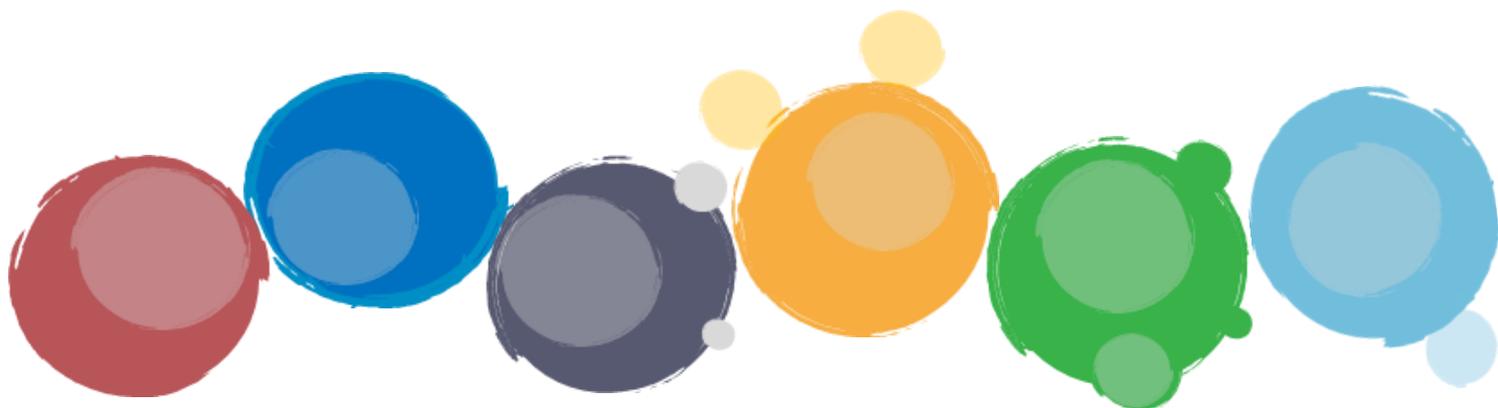
You can contact the SENCO/SEN lead at the new school or college before your child starts, to discuss their needs and to explore and agree a plan of support. There may be opportunities for a joint (virtual) meeting involving the current and new SENCO.

Find out names and roles of key staff you can contact at the new setting.

Let the new school or college know about any signs to look out for that your child is anxious, and the best way to communicate with them.

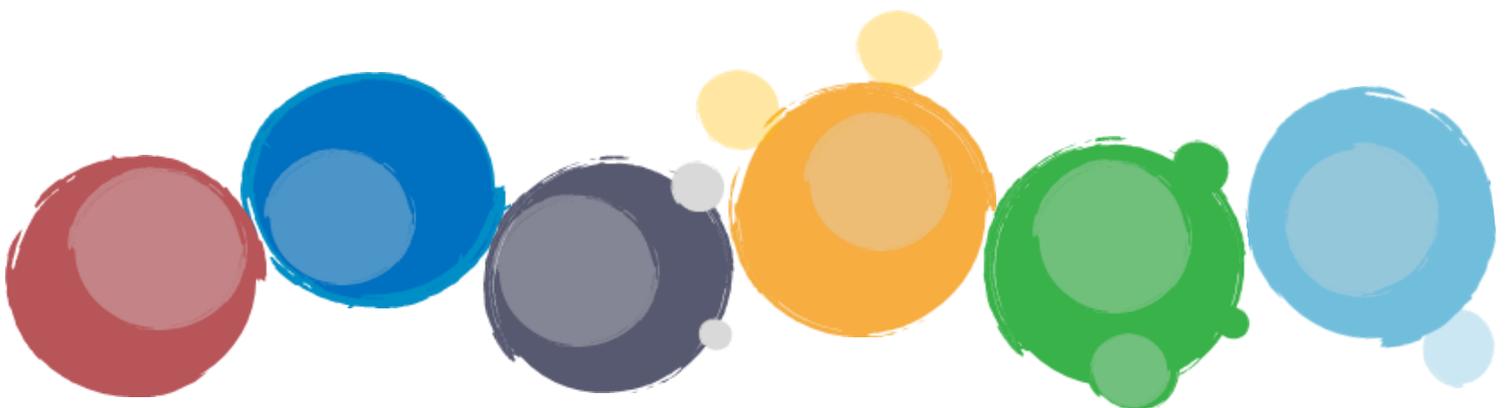
It may be helpful to ask if you can arrange a visit on an inset day or at another quiet time so they can familiarise themselves with the school surroundings. Enquire about any opportunities to meet with their teacher/tutor in advance (this can work just as well virtually)

A 'scrapbook' or 'photo journal' around changing schools can be very reassuring. This can include leaflets, maps, times of the school day, timetable if available, a checklist and also photos of entrance, classrooms, lunch hall and key staff/'who to go to when...'



Here are some useful support videos from the BBC about friendships and school/college life which your child/Young Person may find helpful:

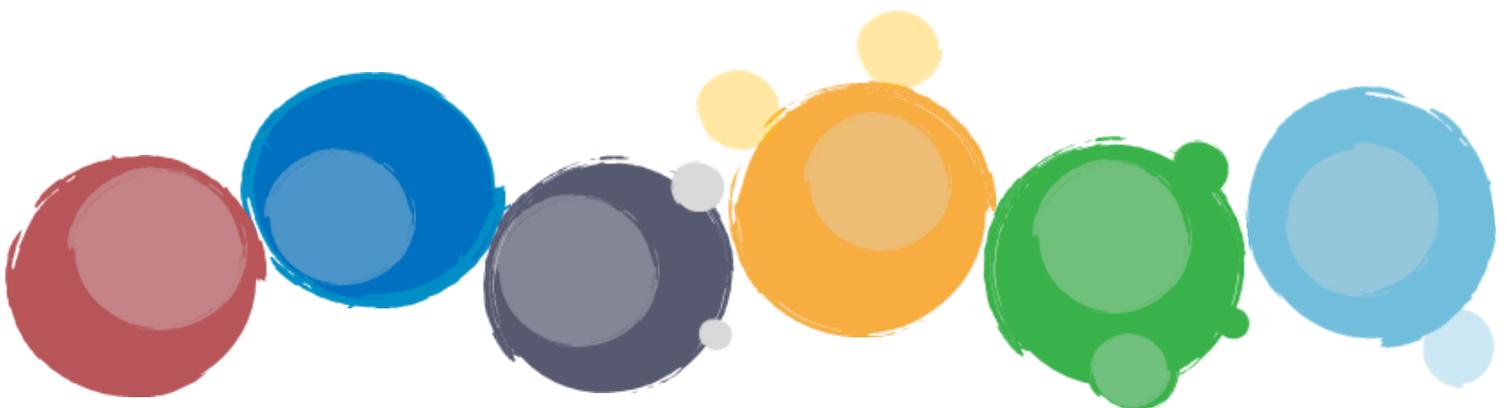
- [\*\*Making new friends\*\*](#)
- [\*\*The size of the school\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Favourite thing about secondary school\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Year 7: A day in the life\*\*](#)
- [\*\*The truth about starting secondary school\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Will I lose my old friends?\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Coping with classwork\*\*](#)
- [\*\*What to do if you're being bullied\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Older students advice to new starters\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Developing friendships\*\*](#)



Here is another resource you may find useful to share with your child/young person from Young Minds - [\*\*Find your Feet\*\*](#)

As parents you may also find links from the BBC that you may find useful:

- [\*\*Supporting a child moving to secondary school\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Starting a secondary school with Special Educational Needs\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Top tips for mobile phone and online safety\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Survival guide and cheat sheet\*\*](#)



# Social Distancing and PPE

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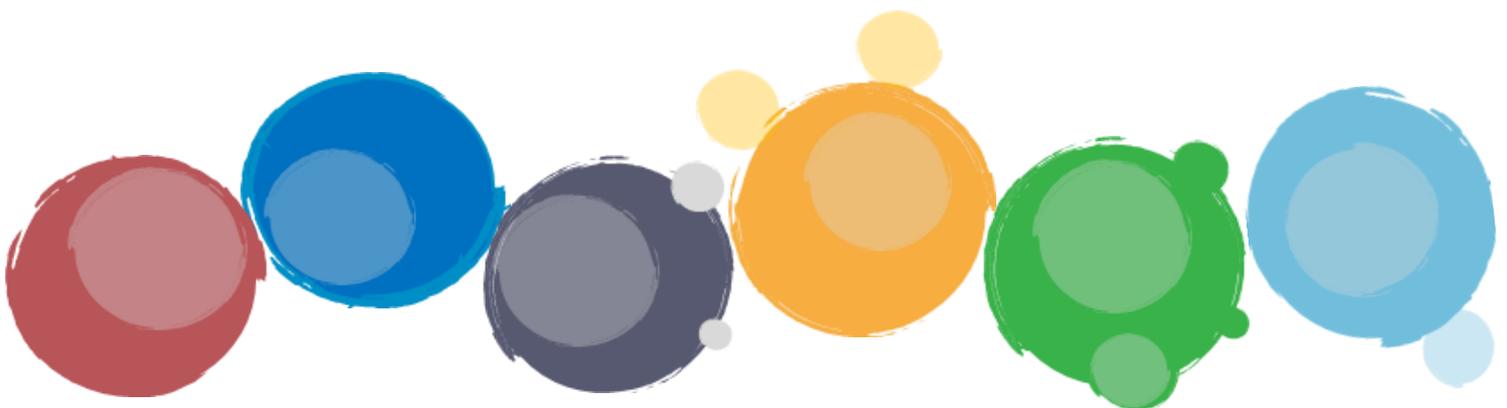
Settings are following guidance and carrying out risk assessments to prepare for the return of children and young people.

Government guidance says settings are to limit contact with others as much as possible with children, young people and staff, only mixing in small consistent groups and staying 2 meters away from each other where possible.

The guidance states that the return to classrooms will be based on separating groups of children into "bubbles" and minimising contacts between them by:

- Grouping children together in groups or "bubbles", a class in primary and a year group in secondary
- Avoiding contact in school/college between these groups, with separate starting, finishing, lunch and break times

Settings will also be helping to lower the risk of spreading the virus by applying regular hand cleaning, hygiene and cleaning measures.



## ***Will PPE be used in school?***

The guidance says that PPE should only be needed in a very small number of cases, where a child's intimate care needs (given by an adult) routinely involves using PPE or where a learner becomes unwell with symptoms of the virus while in their setting.

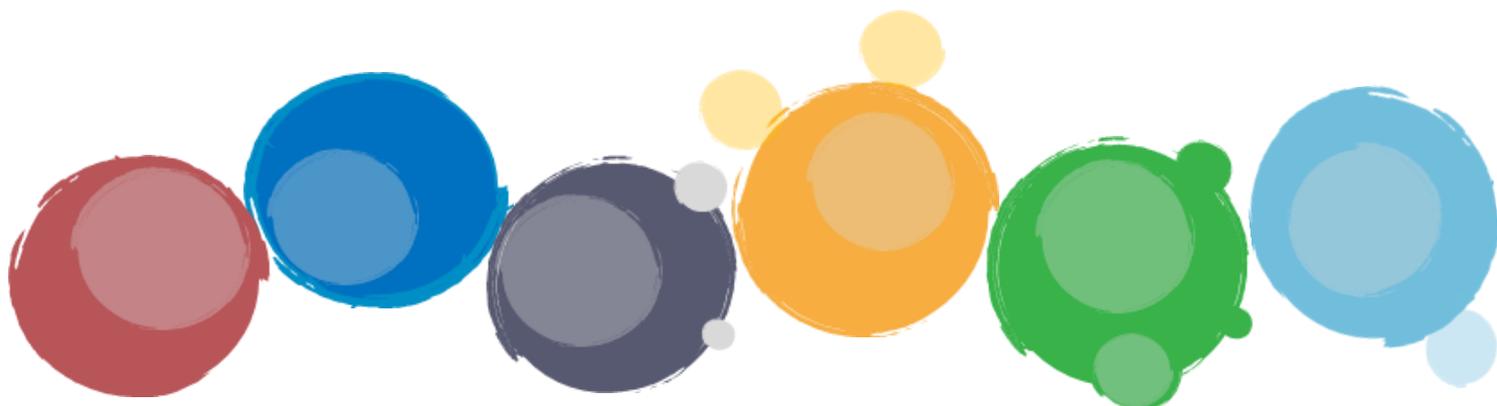
**[Read the Department for Education guidance](#)** around protective measures.

Contact school or college if you have any specific questions or concerns about any changes to your child's class or provision as a result of these protective measures.

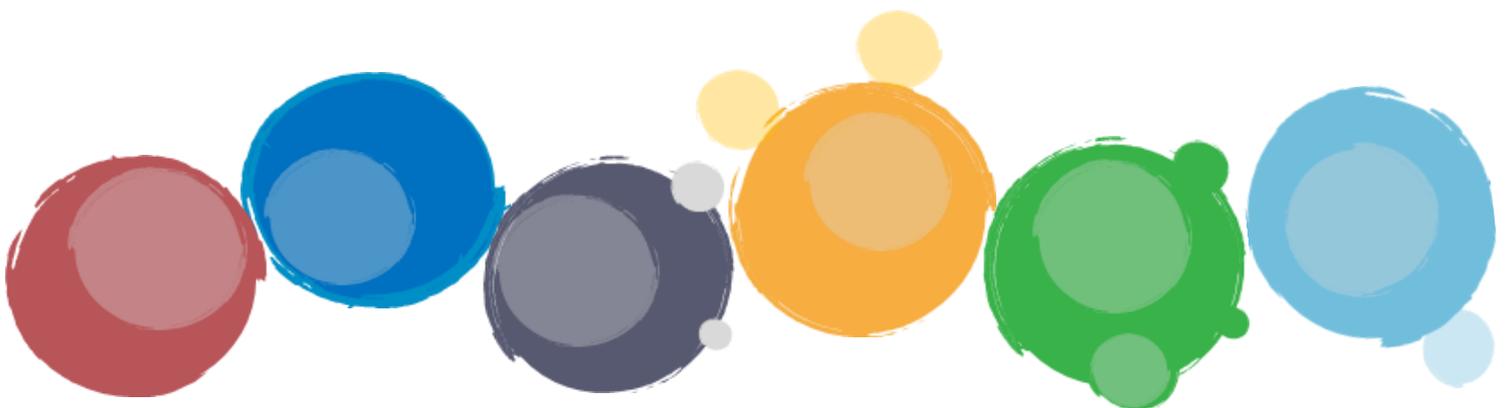
## ***Resources to support understanding***

Things are going to be different when your child or young person goes back or starts a new school. We have pulled together some resources below which may help them to understand all the changes.

- **[CISS – Am I too close?](#)**
- **[My back to school bubble](#)**



- [Managing Hygiene](#) – for children and young people with sensory difficulties
- [Social distancing reminder props](#)
- [Coronavirus:](#) easy read guide from Public Health England



# Catching up on missed education

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In June 2020, the Department for Education (DfE) announced funds and National Tutoring to help school-aged children catch up with lost learning. The funding will be given directly to the school to spend.

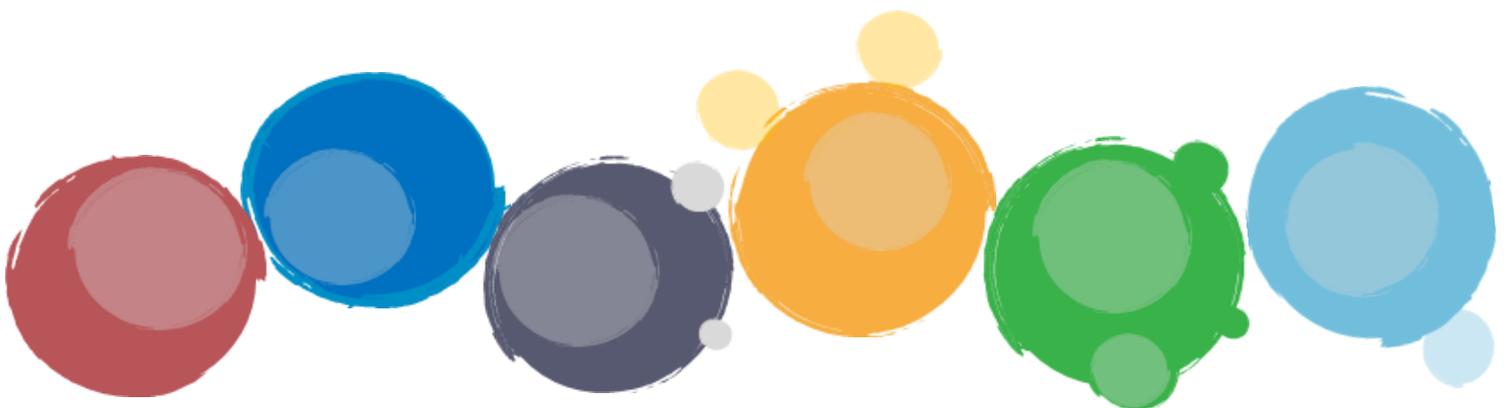
The Education Endowment Foundation will be publishing a quick guide to implementation for 2020 to 2021 in August 2020.

Talk to your child's school/college if you have any questions about how they are planning to support pupils to catch up and if you have any concerns about how your child will manage you can talk to the SENCO.

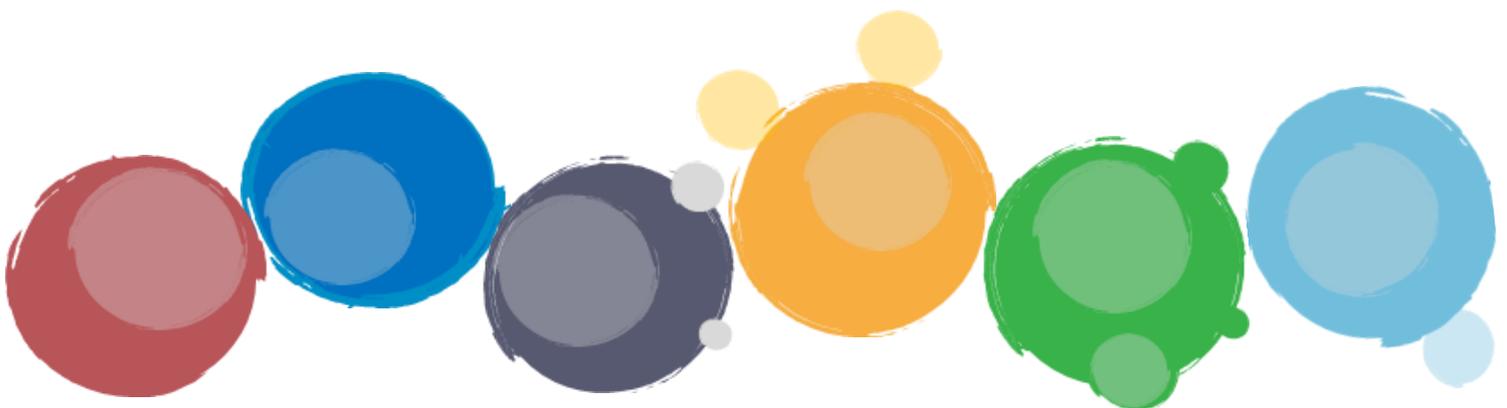
**[Department for Education Information for schools on how to use the catch-up premium and the National Tutoring Programme](#)** (20th July 2020)

Other useful links you may wish to access include:

- **[DfE guidance for supporting SEND pupils](#)**



- [\*\*Government funded catch up information\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Education endowment foundation\*\*](#)
- [\*\*National tutoring programme\*\*](#)
- [\*\*The Inspired Treehouse\*\*](#) – Activity ideas
- [\*\*What parent and carers need to know\*\*](#)  
about the early years providers schools and colleges during the coronavirus COVID-19 outbreak
- [\*\*Hertfordshire—Returning to school\*\*](#)
- [\*\*Hertfordshire Educational Psychologist Service on returning to school\*\*](#)



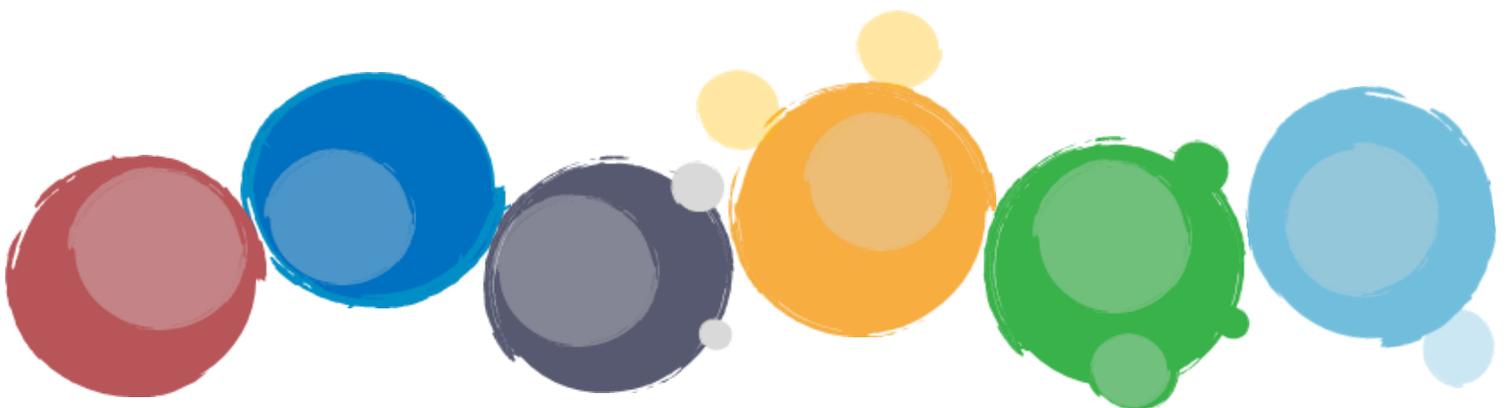
# Herts Parent Carer Involvement

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The SENDIASS service works in partnership with Herts Parent Carer Involvement (HPCI) and encourages parents and carers to join HPCI's free parent network.

HPCI is an independent parent led organisation that listens to the views and experiences of parent carers and speaks up for families with SEND to Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire health services.

To add your voice and find out more visit their website [www.hertsparentcarers.org.uk](http://www.hertsparentcarers.org.uk)



# Further sources of information

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**contact** *For families  
with disabled children*

[Contact](#)



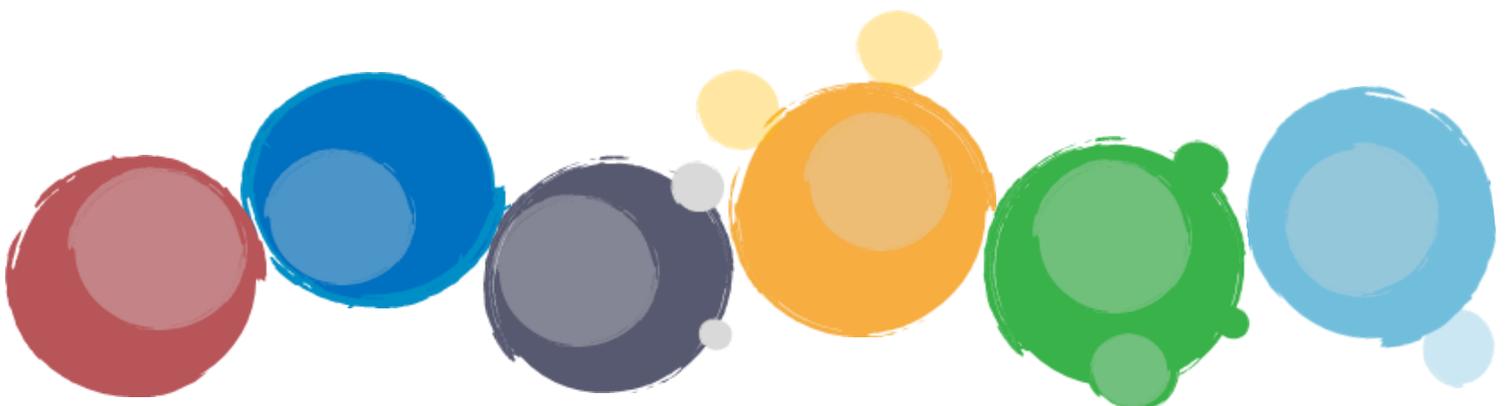
[Council for Disabled  
Children](#)



[IPSEA](#)



[Special Needs  
Jungle](#)



***For free confidential, impartial  
information, advice and support please  
contact us:***



**[www.hertssendiass.org.uk](http://www.hertssendiass.org.uk)**



**[sendiass@hertfordshire.gov.uk](mailto:sendiass@hertfordshire.gov.uk)**



**01992 555847**

**Telephone  
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*Friday: 9:30am - 2pm*

