



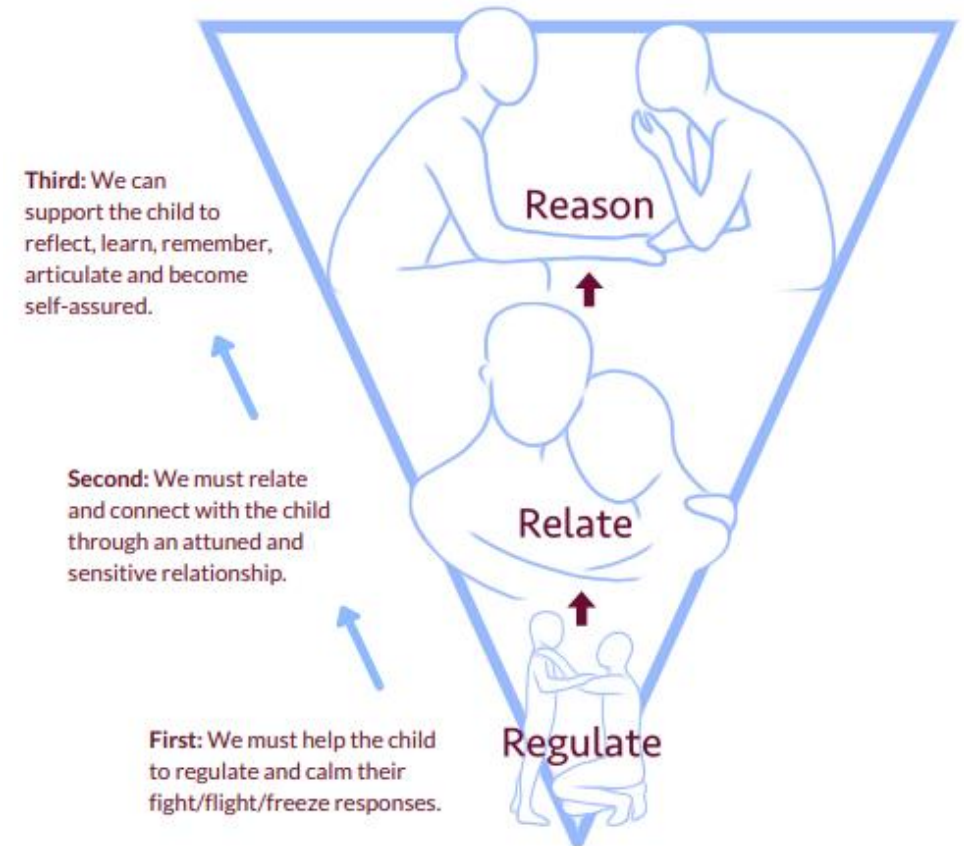
## Ideas for parents/carers to support children transition back to school

It is important to acknowledge that we will all have had a range of different experiences during school closure. We will have experienced (and are no doubt still experiencing) a range of different emotions during the school closure period such as helplessness, isolation, fear and disbelief.

It is critical that we all look after ourselves at this time; we must put on our own emotional oxygen mask before tending to the needs of others. This may seem impossible at times but it is important to try and carve out some time for self-care which might just be 3 minutes of deep breathing or a nice cup of tea.

All of the staff at St Nics recognise that, at this time, it is critical to remember Dr Bruce Perry's 3 Rs to help children reach the 'learning brain': Regulate, Relate and Reason. Dr Perry is a pioneering neuroscientist in the field of trauma and he has shown that to help a child to learn, think and reflect, we need to ensure that they feel regulated and connected. Heading straight for the 'reasoning' part of the brain with an expectation of learning will not work so well if the child is dysregulated and disconnected from others.

Therefore, on their return to school the children will be spending time participating in activities to help them reconnect with their peers and the grown-ups at school. The children will have some downtime and opportunities to take part in regulating activities such as singing and body percussion. Alongside this, staff will also help to ensure they feel contained with the use of visual timetables, for example, and clear expectations/boundaries.



*Dr Bruce Perry's 3 Rs*

## What can I do to help my child prior to reopening?

- Take time to look at the resources on our website (there is a tab entitled 'Returning After Closure' at the top).
- Read the social story to your child a few times as this will help them absorb the content. There is a social story that touches upon how it might feel if a sibling is still at home.
- Complete the *Countdown Calendar* with your child and other school returning resources that have been uploaded. School will keep adding resources, as appropriate.
- Rainbow Class and the other returning classes will all have a letter and video from their teacher posted on their class page a few days prior to them returning (you will get a notification of when this has happened). Give your child time to re-read/re-watch this letter and video.
- Look at the 'Keep Calm' book by Dr Sharie Coombes.
- Have a look at the helpful resources on the school website – in the "Pupils" tab – Useful Home Learning Links & Resources – tab on the right: Wellbeing – Parent & Carer Support.
- Talk positively about school, focus on it being safe to go back to school.
- Familiarise yourself with the route into school before arriving – talk it through with your child and make it a fun activity to follow the map!
- The night before your child returns to school set out their school uniform, bag etc. in preparation for the next morning.
- Look through the Zones of Regulation materials on our website (Parents/Carers>Curriculum>Zones of Regulation) and create a toolbox with your child of things they might want to do when they go into the different Zones.



## What can I do on the first day back to school?

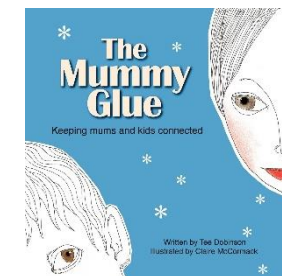
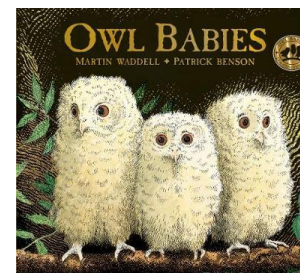
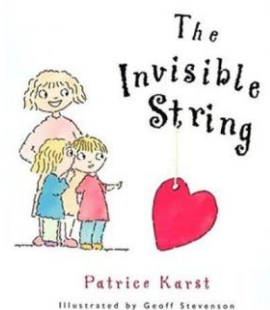
- If you show your child that you are positive and calm about a return to school, he or she will pick up on that positivity. Consider your body language and tone of voice when talking about school. Focus on the good: seeing friends again, learning new things etc.
- If your child is worried about returning to school, encourage them to tell you or draw a picture of what is concerning them. Acknowledge and sit with their feelings – it is OK to not always have the answers or solutions. Empathy is the key rather than sympathy. There is an excellent You Tube clip explaining the key differences by Brene Brown:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Ewvgu369Jw>
- Put a note in your child's lunchbox if they are bringing one – ideas: "Enjoy your lunch! Love from Mummy" or "I'm thinking about you today. Love from Daddy." If your child has hot school lunch, you can tell your child that you will be thinking about them at lunchtime, eating their lunch and pudding.
- On your walk to school, play games like Eye Spy, count red cars or how many bikes you see.
- Have a goodbye routine (eg. High five, blow a kiss) and possibly a goodbye script: "Mummy/Daddy says goodbye, you go to school and then Mummy/Daddy comes back. I love you, bye."

- Have set times to discuss any worries otherwise they can spill into the whole day. Your child could write down their worry to discuss at a set time later that day.
- Consider your child bringing in a transitional object (only if needed). Your child could bring in a small, inexpensive item from home eg. key ring that they could keep in their bag. Before leaving for school, you can swap objects (you keeping hold of something belonging to your child) to keep you connected all day even when you cannot see each other.

Here are some ideas of things that you can say:

- “Mr Etherton and Mr Lincoln and all the teachers will help to keep you safe.”
- “I know this is hard but we can all help each other.”
- “I need your help to follow the map into school.”
- “It’s really tricky to not know all the answers.”
- “I wonder what the note in your lunchbox will say today.”
- “Let me worry about that so that you don’t have to.”
- “I will be thinking of you and wondering what you will learn in maths today / what you will do at breaktime / what your assembly will be about today.”
- “Let’s think of 3 good things that happened today.”
- “Shall we do some slow breathing to make us feel calmer?”

Here are some books that you could share with your child that have the theme of separation and reunion:



You can find these books being read on You Tube if you cannot get hold of a copy.

If you or your child continue to have concerns, please share this with school.

In addition, advice and support can be obtained from the School Nursing Service: ChatHealth Messaging Service (NHS) by sending a text to **07480 635424**. This service is for parents of a child aged between 5 and 19 years old and is available from 9am to 4.30pm Monday – Friday. They aim to reply within one working day.

**The most important things are to:**

- **Listen, observe and respond**
- **Remain curious and empathetic**
- **Be kind to yourself**
- **Seek help if needed – we are all in this together!**