

## PREPARING STUDENTS FOR RE-OPENING SCHOOLS:



### TIPS FOR PARENTS & GUARDIANS

Take time to adjust to the return to school. It will be an exploratory process where you, your child, the teacher(s) and the school figure out the way forward together.

**Acknowledge emotions:** Acknowledge that there will be a range of emotions within yourself and others and that we are all experiencing feelings of uncertainty and some level of anxiety. Validate fears as well as hopes and desires.

**Talk about feelings and make time for questions:** Emotional health and well-being require emotional expression and it helps children to have someone who will listen to them. Listen to your child with your undivided attention and make time to 'just be' together. Be neutral and supportive as they share their feelings with you.

**Model coping strategies:** Promote resiliency and optimism by talking about how you have overcome fears and anxieties. Try to be positive and model positive self-talk. Model taking deep breaths and other strategies to address anxious feelings.

**Nurture hope :** Encourage kindness & patience, hope & gratitude. Be gentle with yourself and your child. Talk positively about "when you go to school", not "if you go." Ask your child what they are looking forward to and what they think might be different than before.

**Communicate calmly:** When we communicate information to a child that might alarm them, be provide the facts and remain calm. Correct any misconceptions your child may have.

**Offer strategies to reduce anxiety:** Bridge the home to school divide by giving your child something to hold onto that represents your relationship (i.e., what you will do after school, a picture in their lunch box). Consider using a calendar to count down to school starting. Make room for recreation and play as these activities will provide necessary physical and emotional outlets.

**Home/School collaboration:** Facilitate learning to the best of your ability. Keep open communication with your child's teacher and inquire if you are unsure about something.

**Lend your support :** Show support for your child and the school by reinforcing school reopening procedures. Remind our children that their teachers have missed them and can be trusted to lean on and trust that they will teach them what they need to know.

**Maintain routines:** When children know what to expect and what is expected of them, it helps build their confidence and can improve their ability to behave in different situations. Start normal routines in advance of going back to school, e.g. getting up, organizing school materials.

**Stay connected:** Help your child to stay connected with peers. Social relationships are a key support in difficult times. Maintain connections via online platforms with friends not yet attending class.

**Reassure safety:** Talk about school safety procedures with your child. Reassure your child. When it comes to feeling secure, making sure children feel taken care of by adults is crucial.

**For more information and resources, click:** [District 44 Social Emotional Learning & Mental Health Website](#)