

RETURNING TO SCHOOL



Going back to school typically means moving into a new class or it could mean starting a new school entirely. Children with ASD may be worried about what this will entail. Both transitions involve uncertainty, change to routine, socialising with others and adapting to new environments, all of which can be tricky and anxiety-provoking for young people with ASD. This pack includes some tips and strategies to prepare for the return to school.

For support with transitioning to secondary please click here: <https://reachoutasc.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/>

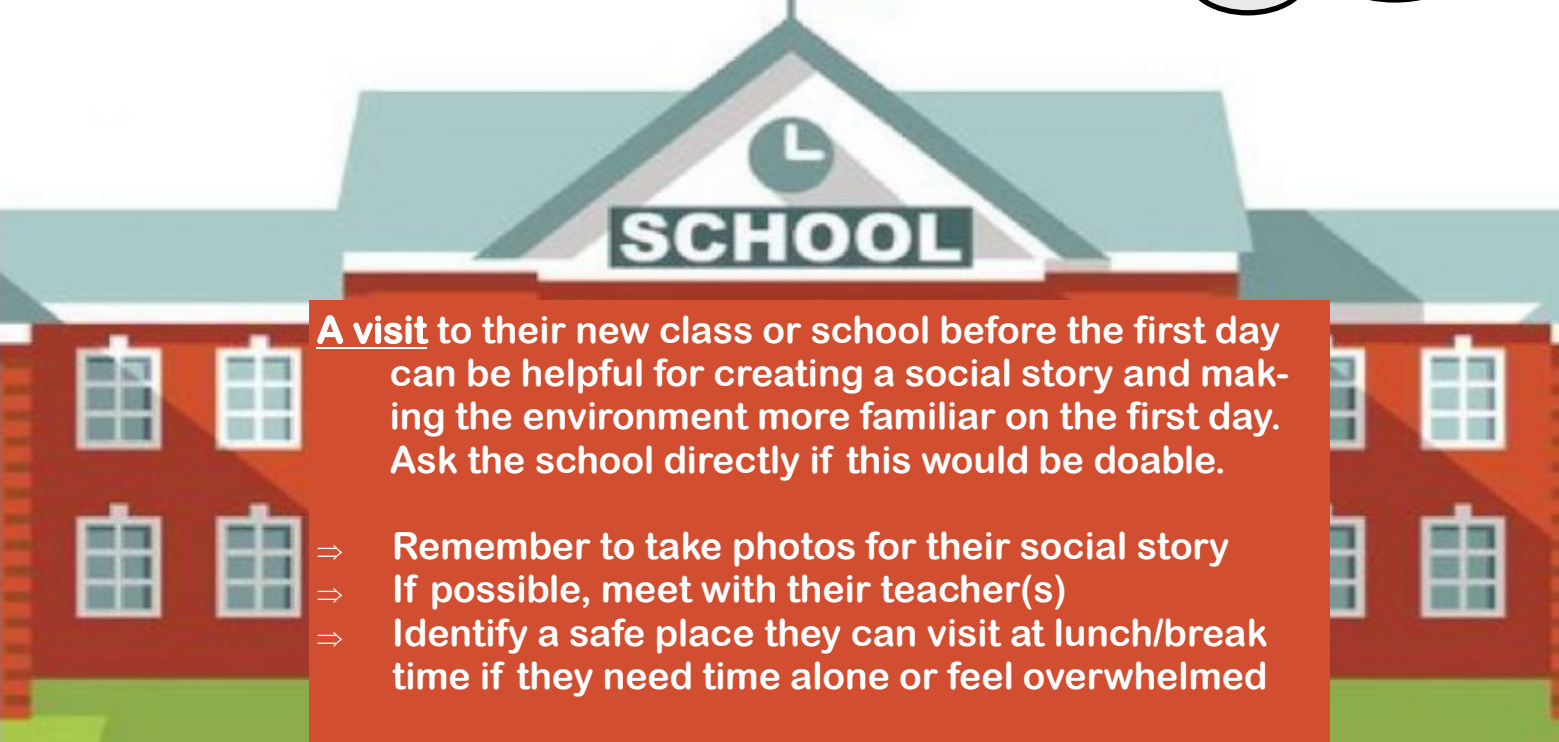
Social Stories

Young people might ask questions about how the new class will look, what the teacher is like, who they will sit with and play with, where they will eat snack or lunch and where they can put their belongings.

Creating a personalised social story may answer the questions and provide a visual reminder of what they can expect. This could contain details and, if possible, pictures of the new class, their teachers

For examples of social stories you can print at home, click here:

<https://www.abaresources.com/social-stories/>



A visit to their new class or school before the first day can be helpful for creating a social story and making the environment more familiar on the first day. Ask the school directly if this would be doable.

- ⇒ Remember to take photos for their social story
- ⇒ If possible, meet with their teacher(s)
- ⇒ Identify a safe place they can visit at lunch/break time if they need time alone or feel overwhelmed

Set up a communication plan with your child's teacher. Give them information about your child and their diagnosis. For tips on what to include please click here:

<https://www.marcus.org/autism-resources/autism-tips-and-resources/communicating-with-your-childs-teachers>

Spend time with your child picking **new stationery** they like. They can associate these items with the excitement of preparing for school.



When you buy the **school uniform**, practice getting dressed in the morning. Build up to the full school morning routine, including wake up time, having breakfast, and driving to school. This will help build familiarity with the process so it is less daunting when school starts.



Arrange with other families in the class to **meet up before school starts** – let the young people stay in touch so they are comfortable with one another in school.



Autism NI have created some helpful resources for supporting young people in the school setting
<https://www.autismni.org/education>

Anxiety Management

Talk over any worries with your child or encourage them to put them in a worry box or use a worry monster: <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/blog/how-to-make-a-worry-box-a-guide-for-parents/>

Practice (in advance!) anxiety management techniques they can use at home and in school: <http://sensory-processing.middletownautism.com/resources/>

