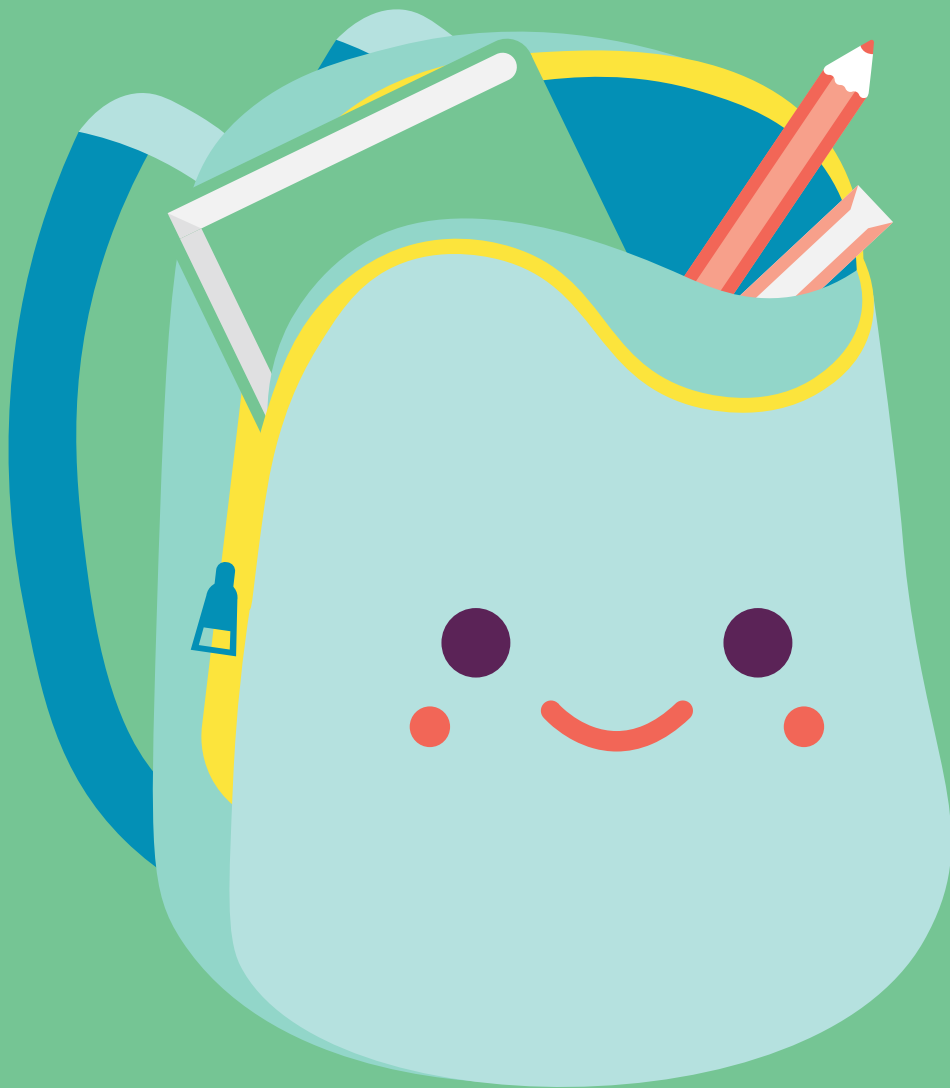


Stepping back to school.



Care Pack
11–12 years



Stepping Forward To School

As parents, carers and teachers, we have found ourselves in the midst of uncertainty during the global health crisis. As we resume our regular school routines, a swirl of mixed emotions is completely normal and to be expected. Some of us can't wait to be back in the social field of a classroom. Others have relished the time at home and found it a welcome respite from the busyness of everyday life. Making a successful transition will be assisted by stepping forward mindfully and with purpose.



A common response to uncertainty is to imagine all kinds of possible scenarios playing out. Our children may feel worried about the virus, for example. They may also find it difficult to be separated from parents and carers who have supported them through this journey so far within the familiar surrounds of home. This is where mindfulness can play a role. When we attend to the present moment, we begin to become fully aware of how we are feeling and what we are doing. For the young people in our care, their ability to learn and grow depends upon being able to develop this essential skill.

Our children observe us closely and take their cues from us, especially in times of uncertainty. Now is the time for us to model stepping forward and re-establishing routines. What might this look like? We can purposefully create time and space for children to express thoughts and feelings and open the door to gentle and supportive conversations. Regular opportunities for mindfulness as a shared activity will bring benefit to both adults and children.

Together with our children, we can gently remind ourselves to bring our full awareness to the present moment – which is always fresh and ready for us to attend to with curiosity. In doing so, young people develop a greater capacity to focus on where they are and what they are doing. This can lead to cultivating sustained attention back in the classroom.

Stepping forward to school may bring challenges after extended time at home and as adults, we can support young people as they make this transition. Alongside conversations and reassurance, mindfulness practice will keep us in the present moment as we travel the journey together. After sharing the mindfulness practice together, have a conversation about how it felt and how mindfulness can help to build awareness. After taking time to share thoughts and feelings, we suggest downloading the companion activities appropriate to this topic and inviting your 11–12 year old to choose one as an added activity. These resources can be found towards the end of the booklet. While the activities are designed so they can be done without adult support, we encourage conversation and collaboration.





Listen to a mindfulness meditation.
A good one for this topic is:
Curiosity and Play

App Location:

- All Programs
- Kids & Youth
- 10 – 12 Year Olds
- Mindfulness 201 – Curiosity
- Curiosity and Play

Web App Link:

<https://app.smilingmind.com.au/sessions/26/149/>



Continue the conversation using
one of the activity sheets at the
back of this booklet:

Curious About My Hands

Giving young people an opportunity to narrow in their focus very deliberately switches on curiosity. [This activity](#) encourages mindful observation.

The School Gates

Young people often have favourite places at school where they love to spend time. [This activity](#) focuses on thinking and writing about them.



Deepen the conversation
by exploring these questions
together. Remember, there are
no wrong answers:

What are some of the things you missed about school when you were home?

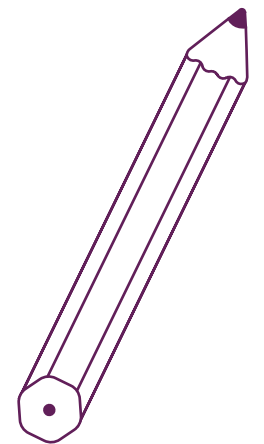
How can you be a great friend to others as you all return to school and get back into the routine?

How do feelings show up for you when you walk into school each morning?

Curious about my hands.



When we breathe in slowly and fill our bellies, we give ourselves a chance to slow down and be in the present moment. After three deep breaths, look at your hands with deep curiosity, as if you've never seen them before. Examine their many properties in detail: skin colours, texture, their ability to move in different ways, the palm lines and fingernails. Trace around your hands, back and front, and sketch in all of the details you have just noticed. Write about what you have just learned from being deeply curious.



The school gates.



As you step through the gates and back into the routines of school after time at home, reflect on all of your favourite places and activities at school. Perhaps you love the library, or the outdoor spaces, or the cosy warmth of your classroom. Write about what you are really looking forward to and sketch the favourite places at school you are looking forward to revisiting.





Smiling Mind

info@smilingmind.com.au

smilingmind.com.au

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