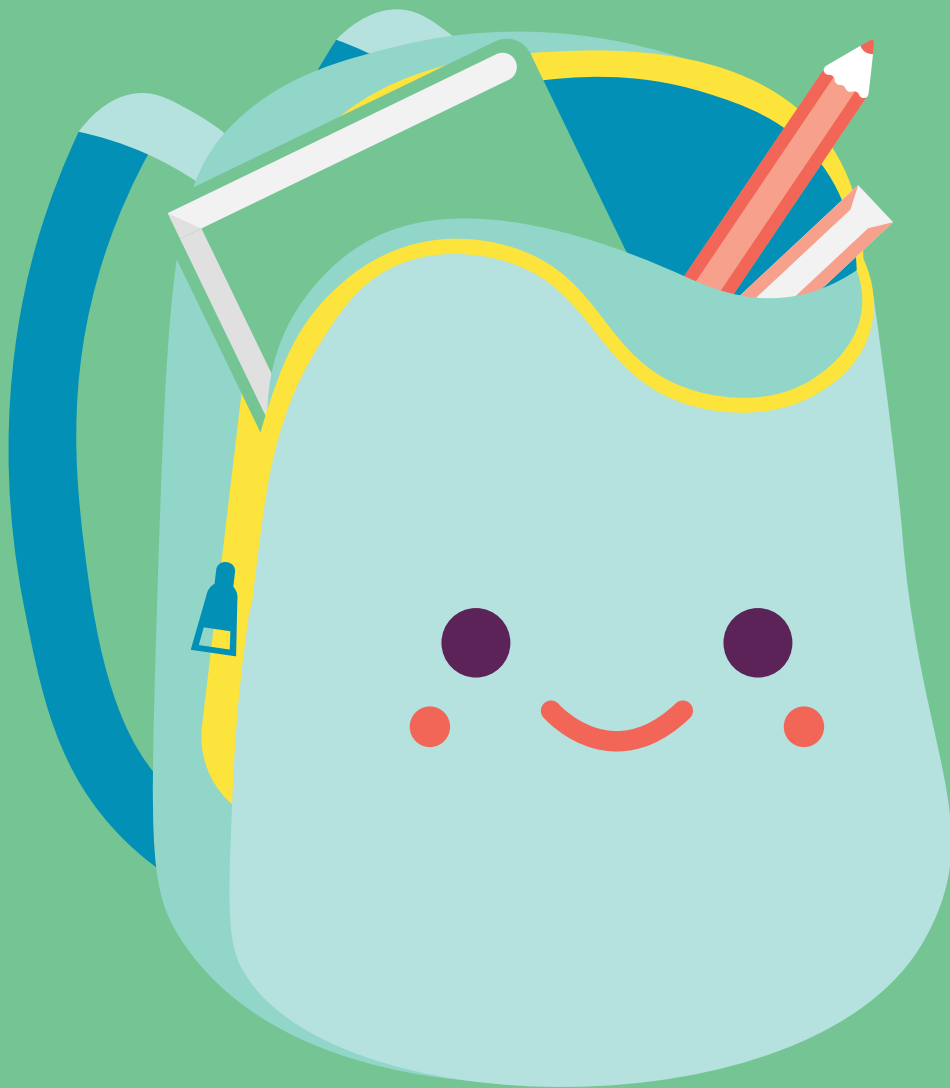


Stepping back to school.



Care Pack
5-7 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 5–7 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:
In the Car

App Location:

- All Programs
- Families
- On the Go
- In the Car

Web App Link:

<https://app.smilingmind.com.au/sessions/475/1356/2774/>



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

Stepping Forward to School

This activity encourages children to focus on the positive aspects of returning to school and reflect on some of the emotions they are currently feeling. It will assist children to be curious about how they are feeling.

Welcome Back

This activity takes a big picture look at returning to school and asks children to imagine reconnecting with people, places and things they enjoy. It will assist children to focus on the good aspects of school.



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

How can we support each other as we get back into our school routine?

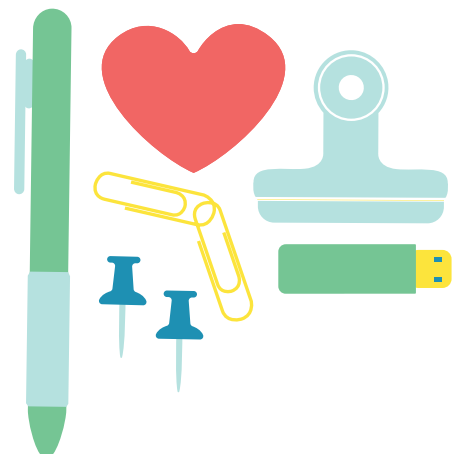
Let's share some of the feelings we are both having around returning to school after this long break.

Where are your favourite places at school?
Tell me about them.

Stepping forward to school.



What are you excited about as you step forward to school? Think about some of the things you missed while at home. Draw yourself back at school. Think of some emotions you are feeling in this moment and make sure you add them in too.



Welcome back.



Returning to school brings lots of opportunities to reconnect with things you have missed. Fill the welcome mat with all of the people, places and things you have missed and cannot wait to get back to. Write some emotions you may be feeling in this moment.

WELCOME BACK!



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Smiling Mind is a not-for-profit organisation that works to make mindfulness meditation accessible to all.

Visit us online or download the free app to get started.

