



# Return to on-site schooling for students with neurodevelopmental disabilities

## Information for teachers

Consistent routines and additional supports can support students with neurodevelopmental disabilities when they return to school. AllPlay Learn has created class schedules, school stories, emotions cards and many other resources to support the return of students to school. To view these resources and other helpful information, visit [allplaylearn.org.au/covid-support](https://allplaylearn.org.au/covid-support)

### Students with neurodevelopmental disabilities may benefit from consistent routines and structure when transitioning back to school.

- **Establish consistent routines and structure.** Having consistent routines or schedules can increase feelings of stability or security. Consider providing a visual class schedule, and let students know if you will be transitioning to a new activity. Provide time for students to reacquire organisation skills.
- **Clearly communicate any new routines and rules.** Short and clear instructions that are repeated are best. Consider modelling new routines and rules, providing visual reminders (such as posters), and lots of prompts.
- **Consider which changes could be a trigger.** Changes such as a different teacher, new classroom layout, or new ways of doing things could increase anxiety. Communicate about these changes well before they occur, and consider what additional support may be needed.

### Students with neurodevelopmental disabilities may need time and support to adapt to the changes in their normal school routine.

- **Consider how you can support psychological well-being.** Various types of anxiety may be heightened in some children. Some strategies include using emotion cards or other tools to talk about emotions. Model positive coping and ensure students are aware of support services they can access at school.
- **Provide breaks and access to safe spaces.** Students might require more breaks as they settle back in. Provide breaks or energisers after challenging work. Having a safe space where students can choose to go if they are feeling overwhelmed can be helpful for assisting some students to manage difficult feelings.
- **Recognise that students' learning needs may now have changed.** Some students may require similar supports to what they received previously, while others may now require different or increased supports. Check-in frequently with the students about how they are finding learning in the classroom once again
- **A whole-school approach to well-being is important during this time.** Consider how safe spaces for distressed or anxious students can be adapted or created, and ways wellbeing activities can be integrated into the school day. Positive wellbeing activities to support staff will also have positive flow-on effects for students. Self-care can help staff overcome some of the demands and challenges associated with supporting students with the transition back to school.