**SCHOOLS ARE ‘OPEN’ SOCIAL STORIES**

*We are very aware that the return to school – when it comes- will be really challenging for many pupils. Not only will they have had a long absence, they will have been exposed to repeated messages that going out/to school was not safe. Additionally, it seems likely that school will look different to what they were familiar with before the crisis.*

*Please find below some EXAMPLEs - the most effective social stories are those written for a specific pupil based on personal knowledge of the child. We have tried to put together some useful phrases and some points to consider when writing social stories for individual pupils. Obviously, these will need to be ‘tweaked’ depending on Government advice and your individual school situation, as well as your knowledge of the child concerned. You may wish to include photos/ symbols.*

*The stories below have been written to cater roughly for 3 different developmental stages. Pictures can be included but avoid very specific photos unless you are absolutely sure that the child will be in that particular room/ with that adult. Also be aware of the child’s particular interests/ dislikes – if Thomas the Tank is visible in the background, that is probably the only thing the child will see!*

*Please don’t hesitate to get in contact if you need further assistance with this.*

\*If you are using the term ‘bubbles’ remember you will need to explain what this means!

E.g. Bubbles are groups of children and adults who stay together – like a small class. People stay with their own bubble and do not mix with adults or children from different bubbles. You may want to include E.g. ‘My bubble will be Mrs Smith or Miss Jones, and about ten children. The children will be people I know.’ Avoid being too specific.

**I am going back to school – Version 1**

My school has been closed to me because of coronavirus

It is now safe to go back to school *in* *small groups* (to be adapted dependent on restrictions put on schools returning – may need to add information about siblings returning/not returning) I need to stay with my group.

The grown ups will help me keep safe when I leave my house to go to school.

I must remember to wash my hands, stay in my own classroom, only play on our playground, sit at my own table…etc (to be adapted dependent on social distancing measures in different schools)

The first day I will go back to school will be….

The plan is to go to school (with my mum/on my bus…etc) in the morning

The plan is I will stay in school (all day/until lunchtime) and follow the school timetable

The plan is I will come home (with my mum/on my bus…etc) at the end of the school day

The adults will tell me if the plan needs to change

Going to school is important

Going to school helps me learn new things

When we go back to school, I will be able to see my friends and teachers (be cautious in cases where someone might be ill and not be able to return just yet/died)

School will be open for me on…(to be adapted dependent on restrictions put on schools returning – may need to add information about class groupings/timetable changes)

The teachers in school will be able to keep me safe (think about adding specific information about key people if necessary e.g. if specific key people are not able to work, who will be supporting the child)

It is ok to feel happy about going back to school

It is ok to feel sad or worried about going back to school

If I am sad or worried about going back to school, I can talk to an adult that looks after me

**I am going back to school – Version 2**

My school has been closed to me because of coronavirus

It has been very different whilst my school has been closed

Coronavirus is not spreading as fast as it was

It is now safe to go back to school *in* *small groups* / bubbles\*/ but I need to stay with my class (to be adapted dependent on restrictions put on schools returning – may need to add information about siblings returning/not returning)

It is safe to leave my house to go to school. I must remember to stay about 2 metres from adults who do not live with me apart from the ones my family say I can get closer to. At school I need to stay away from adults and children who are not in my ‘bubble’/ class (to be adapted dependent on Government advice and social distancing measures in different schools)

There are some new rules at school. I must remember to wash my hands/ stay in my own classroom/ only play on our playground/ sit at my own table…etc (to be adapted dependent on social distancing measures in different schools)

When I go back to school, I will be able to see my friends and teachers (be cautious in cases where someone might be ill and not be able to return just yet/died) but I might not be able to play with them yet.

The first day I will go back to school will be…. (to be adapted dependent on restrictions put on schools returning – may need to add information about class groupings/timetable changes)

The plan is to go to school (with my mum/on my bus…etc) in the morning

The plan is I will stay in school (all day/until lunchtime) and follow the school timetable

The plan is I will come home (with my mum/on my bus…etc) at the end of the school day

My family and/or my teachers will tell me if the plan needs to change

Going to school is important

Going to school helps me learn new things

The teachers in school will be able to keep me safe (think about adding specific information about key people if necessary e.g. if specific key people are not able to work, who will be supporting the child)

 It is ok to feel happy about going back to school

It is ok to feel sad or worried about going back to school

If I am sad or worried about going back to school, I can talk to an adult

**I am going back to school – Version 3**

My school has been closed to me because of coronavirus

The Government is in charge of keeping us safe. They decided that it was important to close schools for a while to keep everyone safe, now they have decided that it is safe to go back to school. The Government has all the best scientists and doctors to help them to know what is safe

It has been very different whilst my school has been closed

Coronavirus is not spreading as fast as it was

It is now safe to go back to school *in* *small groups/ bubbles\*/ but I need to stay with my class* (to be adapted dependent on restrictions put on schools returning – may need to add information about siblings returning/not returning)

It is safe to leave my house to go to school. I must remember to stay about 2 metres from adults who do not live with me apart from the ones my family say I can get closer to. At school I need to stay away from adults and children who are not in my ‘bubble’/ class at school (to be adapted dependent on Government advice and social distancing measures in different schools)

There are some new rules to keep everyone safe. I must remember to wash my hands, stay in my own classroom, only play on our playground, sit at my own table…etc (to be adapted dependent on social distancing measures in different schools)

The first day I will go back to school will be…. (to be adapted dependent on restrictions put on schools returning – may need to add information about class groupings/timetable changes)

The plan is to go to school (with my mum/on my bus…etc) in the morning

The plan is I will stay in school (all day/until lunchtime) and follow the school timetable

The plan is I will come home (with my mum/on my bus…etc) at the end of the school day

My family and/or my teachers will tell me if the plan needs to change

Whilst my school was shut, I have had more free time

It can be fun to have more free time

Going to school is important

Going to school helps me learn new things

I can still have free time when I am at home in the evenings and at the weekends

When we go back to school, I will be able to see my friends and (my new?) teachers (be cautious in cases where someone might be ill and not be able to return just yet/died) I may not be able to play with all my friends or talk to last year’s teacher if they are in different bubbles/ classes. This is not because they don’t want to see me, we are keeping everyone safe.

The teachers in school will be able to keep me safe (think about adding specific information about key people if necessary e.g. if specific key people are not able to work, who will be supporting the child)

 It is ok to feel happy about going back to school

It is ok to feel sad, angry or worried about going back to school

If I am sad, angry or worried about going back to school, I can talk to an adult

*Not only have we got some children who will have been off for extended periods of time, we also have some children who will have remained in schools for a variety of reasons. They may find the prospect of other children returning challenging – they may have been used to more free time, demands being met almost instantly (due to higher pupil staff ratios) and relaxed expectations. School is likely to look different to what they were familiar with before and during the crisis.*

*As with the previous stories, please find below some EXAMPLEs. We have tried to put together some useful phrases and some points to consider when writing social stories for individual pupils. Obviously, these will need to be ‘tweaked’ depending on Government advice and your individual school situation, as well as your knowledge of the child concerned. You may wish to include photos/ symbols.*

*The stories below have been written to cater roughly for 2 different developmental stages. Please do not hesitate to get in contact if you need further assistance with this.*

**Other people are coming back to school – Version 1**

My school has been closed for some people because of coronavirus

I have been going to school because…(add in reason why it is safer for this young person to have been in school)

The grown ups helped to keep me safe in school

It is now safe for more people to go back to school *as long we all stay* *in our bubbles\*/ with our class* (to be adapted dependent on restrictions put on schools returning – may need to add information about siblings returning/not returning)

The first day other people will be back in school will be….

The plan is I will stay in school (all day/until lunchtime) and follow the school timetable

I must remember to follow the school rules *which may be a bit different now that there are more children in school* I must remember to wash my hands, stay in my own classroom, only play on our playground, sit at my own table…etc. (to be adapted dependent on social distancing measures in different schools - may need to be customised to remind children about specific expectations - lining up, putting my hand up to ask a question/gain staff attention, sitting on the carpet/at desks etc)

Going to school is important

Going to school helps me learn new things

When we go back to school, I will be able to see my friends but I may not be able to play with them if they are in a different bubble or class. I will be able to see teachers but I may not be able to talk much to my last year’s teacher because s/he will have a new class of children and s/he has to keep them safe. This is not because my teacher doesn’t want to talk to me (be cautious in cases where someone might be ill and not be able to return just yet/died)

The grown ups might be pleased to see children who they haven’t seen for a long time. This is ok (consider how the children who have remained in school may feel when staff are more pleased to see the children who haven’t been in school)

The teachers in school will be able to keep me safe (think about adding specific information about key people if necessary e.g. if specific key people are not able to work, who will be supporting the child)

It is ok to feel happy about other people coming back to school

It is ok to feel sad or worried about other people coming back to school

If I am sad or worried about other people coming back to school, I can talk to an adult that looks after me

**Everyone else is coming back to school – Version 2**

My school has been closed for some people because of coronavirus

I have been going to school because…(add in reason why it is safer for this young person to have been in school)

My school has kept me safe by…(to be adapted dependent on social distancing measures in different schools)

It has been very different whilst my school has been closed to most people (consider adding in specific information about what school has looked like for this young person – lots of 1:1 time with an adult, not having to wait for attention or needs to be met, change in expectations)

Coronavirus is not spreading as fast as it was

It is now safe for more people/ everyone to come back to school *in* *small group/ bubbles\*/if they stay in their own classes* (to be adapted dependent on restrictions put on schools returning – may need to add information about siblings returning/not returning)

I must remember to wash my hands, stay in my own classroom, only play on our playground, sit at my own table…etc (to be adapted dependent on social distancing measures in different schools)

When other people come back to school, I will be able to see some more of my friends and teachers (be cautious in cases where someone might be ill and not be able to return just yet/died) but I may not be able to play or chat with them if they are in a different bubbles/ class. This is not because they don’t want to see me, we are keeping safe.

The teachers might be pleased to see the other children that they haven’t seen in a while. This is ok (consider how the children who have remained in school may feel when staff are more pleased to see the children who haven’t been in school)

The first day other people will come back to school will be….

The plan is I will stay in school (all day/until lunchtime) and follow the school timetable

There will be some new rules because there are more people. I must remember to follow the new school rules (may need to be customised to remind children about specific expectations - lining up, putting my hand up to ask a question/gain staff attention, sitting on the carpet/at desks etc)

Whilst my school was shut for everyone else, I have had more free time in school

It can be fun to have more free time

I can still have free time when I am at home in the evenings and at the weekends (and during golden time at school?)

Learning new things is important. Going to school helps me learn new things

The teachers in school will be able to keep me safe (think about adding specific information about key people if necessary e.g. if specific key people are not able to work, who will be supporting the child)

It is ok to feel happy about other people coming back to school

It is ok to feel sad or worried about other people coming back to school

If I am sad or worried about other people coming back to school, I can talk to an adult

*We are aware there are quite likely to be additional issues such as children not wanting to come because they are aware that another child’s family are concerned and not sending their children back to school or members of extended families have concerns about them returning to school. These children may need a secondary story. If you need any further support with this please get in touch. Good luck!*