

## BACK TO SCHOOL

### A calm, practical guide

Helping your child feel more prepared, understood and supported.

excitement

worry

tiredness

uncertainty



The aim is not to make every worry disappear. It is to help your child know what is happening, what comes next and who can help.



What is happening?



What can I expect?



Who can help me?



What helps when things feel hard?

**Practical • visual • child-centred**

SachAuDHD turns understanding into practical support for everyday life.

[www.sachaudhd.co.uk](http://www.sachaudhd.co.uk)

# Start with your child

Think about what school may feel like for them - not only what they “should” manage.



## TRY ASKING...

- Which bit of school feels easy?
- Which bit feels tricky?
- Is there anything you want to know before you go back?

If talking is hard, give other ways to answer.

point

draw

choose pictures

show you

type

## SACHAUDHD REMINDER

### Behaviour gives us information.

A child may show worry through behaviour too. More clinginess, tummy aches, irritability, avoiding bedtime or needing more reassurance can all be clues that something feels uncertain.

Look for what your child may be finding hard - not only what you can see on the outside.

## 2

## Make the unknown familiar

Small details can make a big day feel safer.



School



Uniform



Journey



Lunchbox



Goodbye



Home time

### You do not need to explain the whole school year.

Start with what your child is likely to experience first. Photos, a quick visit, a simple map or a short chat can all help.

“Dad will take you to the gate. Mrs Patel will meet you. Mum will collect you after school.”

### Why it helps

**Familiarity can reduce the amount of “new” your child has to process on the day.**

You are not trying to remove every worry - you are giving the brain a little more information to work with.

## 3

## Use a simple visual plan

Spoken instructions can be hard to hold on to when a child is tired, distracted or worried.

Keep it short and show only the steps your child needs.



You can use:

photos

drawings

symbols

words

objects

Try Now & Next

NOW: Get dressed



NEXT: Breakfast

Less information can sometimes be more helpful than more information.

## Practise the tricky bit

You do not need to rehearse the whole school day.



### PICK ONE THING

- Walk or drive the school route.
- Try the uniform on for 10 minutes.
- Practice opening the lunchbox.
- Show where the water bottle goes.
- Practice saying: "I need help."

### Why this helps

**A tiny rehearsal gives the brain a preview.**

The real moment may still feel hard, but it is no longer completely new.

### Keep it low pressure.

If your child does not want to practise, show photos, talk through the first few minutes or let them watch you prepare.

**Practice should build confidence - not become another battle.**

## Make mornings lighter

A difficult morning does not always mean a child is refusing to cooperate.

### A morning can already include...

wake up

get dressed

eat

remember things

leave home

get to school



### Make it easier

- ✓ Prepare clothes the night before.
- ✓ Pack the bag earlier.
- ✓ Keep breakfast choices simple.
- ✓ Leave a little extra time if you can.
- ✓ Give one instruction at a time.

Instead of lots of questions, try one clear step:

**“Shoes next.”**

**Sometimes a calmer morning needs fewer demands - not more motivation.**

## Think sensory comfort

School can be full of sensations children cannot control.



### Noise

ear defenders / quieter spaces

### Clothing

soft options / remove labels

### Crowds

quieter arrival if possible

### Smells

notice strong or unfamiliar smells

### Notice your child's clues.

- Do they cover their ears?
- Complain about socks or labels?
- Avoid busy places?
- Become exhausted after noisy environments?

### Comfort is not a reward.

For some children, sensory comfort is part of being able to learn, communicate and cope.

If needed, talk with school about reasonable ways to reduce sensory pressure.

## Make asking for help easier

A child can know they need help and still struggle to explain what is wrong.

### Helpful phrases

Help please

Too loud

I need a break

Show me

More time



### Words are not the only option.

- point to a card
- use a gesture
- show a picture
- type it
- use a communication device

### Agree the plan before it is needed.

Ask school:

**"If my child becomes overwhelmed, who can they go to?"**

## Share what actually helps

Schools need more than a diagnosis. They need to know your child.

**I enjoy**

interests & strengths

**I find hard**

triggers & pressure

**I communicate**

words, gestures, AAC

**You may notice**

early signs of overload

**What helps**

space, visuals, movement

**Makes it harder**

too many words, rushing

**Make it practical.**

“When my child gets very quiet and looks down, they may need some space. Asking lots of questions straight away usually makes it harder.”

**That tells staff what to notice AND what to try.**

# Expect the after-school release

Some children hold a lot together during the school day.

## The release at home can look like...

- tears
- shouting
- silence
- needing to be alone
- lots of movement
- arguing
- wanting food immediately
- refusing questions



School can use a lot of energy.



## Try a softer landing

snack

drink

quiet

movement

fewer questions

comfy clothes

Instead of “How was school?”  
try:

“I’m glad you’re home.”

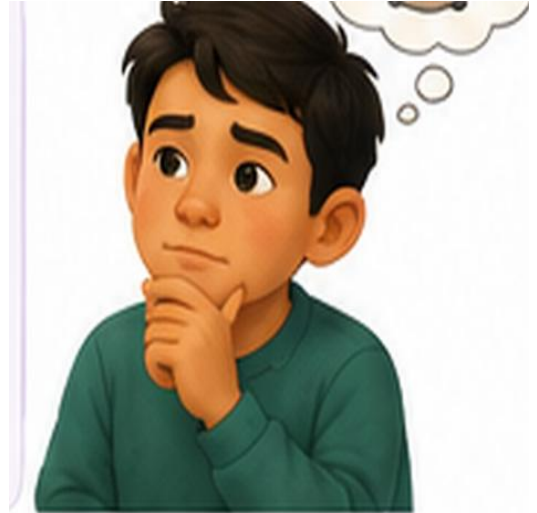
The conversation can **COME** later.

## If behaviour changes, look underneath

A sudden change in behaviour is information.

### What has changed?

- new teacher?
- different classroom?
- earlier mornings?
- less sleep?
- harder work?
- friendship problems?
- more noise?
- different transport?
- longer school day?
- not understanding what is expected?



Then ask:

**“What might my child need more help with?”**

**Supporting the reason behind the behaviour is usually more useful than reacting only to what we can see.**



# YOUR BACK-TO-SCHOOL MINI PLAN

You do not need twenty new strategies. Choose three things that could make the biggest difference.

1

Something I can make more predictable

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2

Something I can make easier

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3

Something school needs to know

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## Watch. Notice. Adjust.

What helped last year may still help. Something new may be needed this year. The best support starts with understanding your child's own pattern.