

NAIT Returning to School: OK not OK Guidance

Introduction

This resource and accompanying guidance have been developed by allied health and teaching professionals for staff working in schools. It comprises:

- A flexible visual resource
- Guidance for use

What is the 'Returning to School: OK not OK' Resource?

It is a concrete, visual approach to creating shared expectations around the transition back to school. The resource consist of a sorting activity, the end result of which is a visual support, created together by teacher and learners.

It is intended to support learners during the transition stage by:

- Explaining current expectations within the school context
- Communicating expectations in a clear and visual form
- Providing clarity about what children should try to avoid doing
- Providing suggestions of actions they might choose to do instead
- Giving explicit permission to children, who are able and wish to, to express their feelings and needs
- Creating shared understanding between learners and school staff
- Reduce anxiety
- Preventing distress resulting from disrupted expectations
- Creating a predictable environment

It is intended that the content of the OK not OK visual resource will:

- Be tailored to the needs and the level of understanding of learners by staff using it
- Take account of the fact that that some learners require reasonable adjustments to be made to school and class rules and expectations
- Be specific to the environment in which it is to be used (i.e. different versions may be created for different areas of the school)
- Be adapted over time as the national, local and school guidance changes
- Be further developed by practitioners to respond to particular issues arising

What is it not?

The 'Returning to School: OK not OK' is not:

- A behaviour management tool
- A set of class rules
- A list of rules that should result in sanctions for children not following them
- A 'one size fits all' approach
- Relevant for every environment the child is in (e.g. different expectations may apply at home and when shopping, etc.)
- A way to explain all of the things that are potentially OK or not OK in a school environment
- A way to teach children do things they are not yet able to do

Who is it for?

The Return to School: OK not OK resource is only suitable for Conversational Partners (i.e. children who communicate in sentences across several turns). It can be used in Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) settings, primary, secondary or special schools.

It can be used with one learner or with a group of learners. Whilst it has been designed with autistic learners in mind, it is likely to be relevant for learners with a range of needs.

How should it be used?

1. Think of the learners in your class who may benefit from this resource:
 - What are their needs?
 - What are their preferences?
 - What is important to them?
 - What do you want them to know?
2. With this information in mind, select some OK and not OK symbols; ideally 5 and but no more than 10 of each.
3. Start with a sorting game:
 - Before you start, turn all of the symbols you have chosen upside down on a surface
 - Show the learners the 'OK Not OK Board'
 - Explain, 'If we think something is OK, we will put it under the thumbs up; if we think it is not OK, we will put it under the thumbs down'
 - One by one turn over the cards, read each out and ask the learners where it should be put. You may need some discussion to reach agreement.
 - If agreement cannot be reached, ask the wider group to vote.
 - Once complete, attach the symbols to the board with Blu-tac or Velcro and display it as a reference

N.B.

- It can be helpful to take a photograph of the completed board and to share this with other teachers and with parents
- It can be helpful to repeat the sorting game several times to support learning
- Each time you add or remove a symbol you will need to reintroduce the resource to your learners
- Consistent expectations across different staff in the school is helpful

Where?

- OK not OK boards can be adapted for use in any area of the school or for specific subject areas (e.g. science lab or playground)
- It is important to only display the resource in the area to which it refers
- Display the board at the child or young person's eye level, where it can easily be seen and referred to

What else do I need to think about?

Distressed behaviours

With the exception of 'pushing' and 'spitting' that have particular risks in the context of COVID-19, we have not included examples of 'physical behaviours' in this resource. When a learner is displaying distressed behaviours a better approach would be to seek to understand the level of distress that the child is experiencing and to adapt the physical and social environment to reduce sources of discomfort or distress.

Literal understanding

Some learners will interpret expectations in a very literal way so it will be important to try to consider each learner's thinking style as you select symbols, avoiding including messages that are too nuanced, e.g. adding a symbol stating that it is not OK to 'walk around the classroom' when they will have to do this to get in and out of the class, may leave some learners anxious about how they are to get home at the end of the day.

Developmentally appropriate expectations

Simply knowing what is expected does not always mean that a learner will be able to meet with these expectations; learning can take time and some learners may just not be able to. It is therefore important to match expectations to what you are reasonably confident the child or young person will be able to do. A learner at an early developmental stage, whatever their age, is unlikely to be able to stay two metres away from others, so adults around them will instead need to create routines and structures that support distancing, rather than expect the child to make this happen.

Initiating communication can be difficult

For some children, knowing that they can 'ask for help' will be reassuring and may give them the 'permission' they feel they need to do this, however for others, just knowing that it's OK to ask for help won't mean that they are actually able to do this. High levels of anxiety or distress is likely to affect a learner's ability to communicate their thoughts and feelings. Adults working with the learners will have to be vigilant to a range of signs that they are not coping.

Adapting the resource:

This resource could be adapted to suit the needs and preferences of individual learners, e.g. by using word cards or Post-its, as works best for the child and context.

If a learner or learners are familiar with the terms 'Expected and Unexpected', as described in Social Thinking™, you might wish to use these terms rather than 'OK not OK'.

What symbols does it contain?

OK	Not OK
<p>Distancing:</p> <p>Hug people who live with me</p> <p>Wash my hands</p> <p>Use hand sanitiser</p> <p>Stay 2m away from other people</p> <p>Sit on the floor</p> <p>Sit on my chair</p> <p>Sit on a spot</p> <p>Stand on a footprint</p> <p>Stand behind the line</p> <p>Follow the arrows on the floor</p> <p>Ask someone to move away</p> <p>Cough into a tissue and throw it in the bin</p> <p>Sneeze into a tissue and throw it in the bin</p> <p>Cough or sneeze into my elbow</p> <p>Sharing:</p> <p>Talk to children in school</p> <p>Talk to teachers</p> <p>Use the pencils my teacher gives me</p> <p>Use objects my teacher gives me</p> <p>Show a picture</p> <p>Regulation:</p> <p>Feel sad</p> <p>Feel happy</p> <p>Feel angry</p> <p>Feel upset</p> <p>Feel okay</p> <p>Feel worried</p> <p>Ask for help</p> <p>Put my hand up</p> <p>Say 'I don't understand'</p> <p>Say 'no'</p> <p>Go to my Safe Space</p> <p>Do chair push ups</p> <p>Bounce on a gym ball</p> <p>Ask to take a break</p> <p>Drink from my water bottle</p> <p>Move around on my chair</p> <p>Use a fidget toy</p> <p>Routines:</p> <p>Say hello</p> <p>Wave to my friends</p> <p>Wave to adults</p> <p>Clap to say 'well done'</p> <p>Give someone a 'thumbs up'</p>	<p>Distancing:</p> <p>Hug children in school</p> <p>Hug adults in school</p> <p>Stand close to other people</p> <p>Sit close to other people</p> <p>Go into other classrooms</p> <p>Play Tig</p> <p>Hold hands with other children</p> <p>Tell others that they are doing something wrong</p> <p>Cough into my hand</p> <p>Sharing:</p> <p>Bring pencils from home</p> <p>Bring objects from home</p> <p>Bring a gym kit from home</p> <p>Bring a school bag from home</p> <p>Share toys</p> <p>Share food</p> <p>Touch other people's tissues</p> <p>Regulation:</p> <p>Push people</p> <p>Lick objects</p> <p>Spit</p> <p>Routines:</p> <p>Shake hands</p> <p>Give a High 5</p> <p>Play in other classrooms</p> <p>Give other people some of my food</p>

<p>Play in my class</p> <p>Play in my class area</p> <p>Play in my class area of the playground</p> <p>Use an iPad</p> <p>Follow my timetable</p> <p>Eat lunch at my desk</p> <p>Eat a snack at my desk</p> <p>Go to the toilet</p>		
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okay



not okay



wash my hands



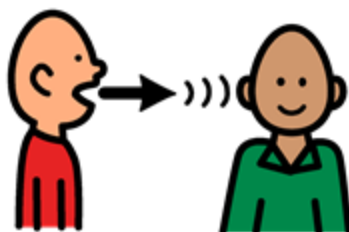
use hand sanitiser



talk to children in my school



talk to children



talk to teachers



talk to adults in school



use pencils my teacher gives me



sit on a spot



put my hand up



put my hand up



put my hand up



ask for help



sit on the floor



sit on the floor



sit on my chair



sit on my chair



drink from my water
bottle



feel sad



feel happy



feel angry



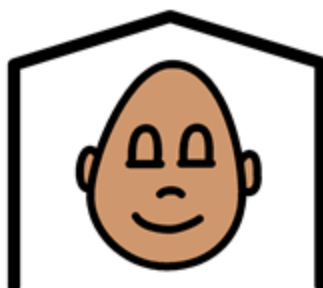
feel okay



say no



go to my safe space



go to my safe space



do chair push ups



bounce on a gym ball



ask to take a break



play in my class area



use the iPad



say hello



use a fidget toy



eat lunch at my desk



go to the toilet



eat snack at my desk



follow my timetable



wave to my friend



wave to adults I know



say hi to my friend



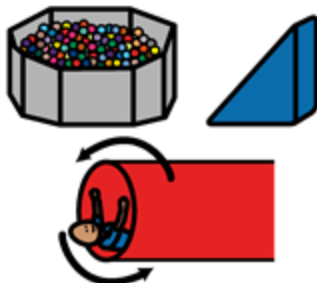
clap to say well done



give a thumbs up



play in soft play



feel upset



feel worried



show a picture



say I don't understand



stand behind the line



sneeze into elbow



cough into elbow



sneeze into tissue and
put in bin



cough into tissue and
put in bin



move around on my
chair



play in my class area



stand on a footprint



say I don't know



say I don't understand



ask someone to move away



follow the arrows



move away from someone



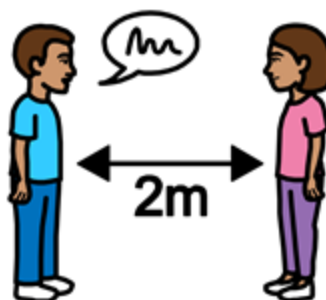
ask someone to move back



hug people who live in my house



stand 2 metres away



ask someone to move back



ask someone to move away



hug adults in school



hug children in school



stand close to other people



sit close to other people



sneeze into hand



give children a row



cough into hand



tell people they are doing something wrong



hold hands



play tig



bring pencils from home



bring objects from home



bring PE kit from
home



bring gym kit from
home



share toys



share objects



share food



cough



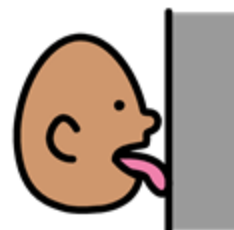
touch other people's
tissues



push people



lick objects



spit



go to other classroom



shake hands



give a high 5



touch other people's
tissues



give other people
some of my food



play in another
classroom