

A Parent Guide to Transitioning between Covid-19 Alert Levels and Reintegrating into School

Returning to School

In our last update we likened anticipating an alert level change to anticipating a driving test that was just around the corner. Having successfully navigated that test, returning to school is like that first solo drive. The nerves are there, but everyone wants to put on a brave face. For the parent, it is a time to instil confidence – imparting to the driver that you believe they can do it! For the solo driver, the brave face acts to reassure the parents that they've got this – that there's no need to worry!

Whether it is you or your solo-driver struggling to put on a 'brave face', there are some key things I want to encourage you to give your attention to over the coming week:

Work Together! It's important that students, parents and teachers work as a team, adopting supportive communication and behaviour. Value and encourage open and honest communication.

Listen to your child's experience and seek to **validate** all feelings. Everyone's experience is valid. Avoid dismissive statements that shut down i.e. "harden up" or "get over it." A brave face is not indifferent to feelings and experience – it is showing courage as we validate and navigate them!

Remember your job is to be your child's caring parent, but not their rescuer. Encourage each person in the household to consider **"What am I responsible for?"** and get on with that.

Reduce Demands and Adjust Expectations. Be prepared to relax expectations and encourage your child to work according to their capacity. Allow time for new routines and rhythms to be established.

Remember that everyone's first few experiences of driving alone is different. For some exhilarating, for others, an experience filled with trepidation. However you or your child are feeling, **be kind** to one-another and build confidence by **accentuating what went well**.