

Teacher's Guide

Supporting the wellbeing of primary school children

Maintain the normalcy of school



The familiarity of the school environment and its routines provides a sense of normalcy for students who experience difficulties in social situations and may be avoidant of new situations.

A well organised classroom schedule

Solid classroom rules and organised routines. Routine and structure provides predictability, a sense of safety and helps students feel in control. Students are more likely to remain productive and be less disruptive if they feel in control. Even a simple activity such as the Teacher reading to the class for ten minutes at a regular time each day can lead to a measure of relaxation, reduced anxiety over 'what's next' and give the students something to look forward to.

Priming

Providing notice of change or 'priming' is a method of previewing information or activities that a student is likely to have difficulty with before the student is engaged in the challenging situation. Wherever possible try to let students know of upcoming changes to scheduled routines. Talk through the changes with students and reassure them with a new schedule. These actions will help students mentally prepare for the change in routine and alleviate worry. Priming allows a smoother adjustment, time to prepare and opportunities to ask questions and discuss the change. Some students may need to be informed individually if they are not likely to ask questions in a group.

Prepare for unpredictable events

For events such as a fire drills, substitute teachers, field trips, or rainy-day schedules, it can be helpful for a student to preview scenarios with a teacher. This will support the student to be able to predict what will occur in these situations and have some familiarity with the routine. Visual aids for the student to refer to may assist in helping the student manage these types of change.

When advising students of change remind them that behavioural expectations are not changing.

If the behaviour persists despite trying a number of interventions, discuss the student's situation with a supervisor or member of the learning and wellbeing support staff at your school.

<https://www.islhd.health.nsw.gov.au/services-clinics/school-link-teachers-guide>