

You have now finished the rehabilitation programme for your spinal cord injury at Stoke Mandeville Hospital. As a team we will continue to support you after you leave and we will be seeing you from time to time to check everything is OK. Now it's time to think about life outside the hospital and particularly about going back to school. Returning to school may have physical and emotional challenges for you and we hope this guide will help you think positively about those challenges and give you some ideas on how you might overcome them.




preparing you for the future...



BLUEPRINT
HOSPITAL TEACHING SERVICE

Stoke Mandeville Hospital, Aylesbury
T: 01296 315067
W: www.blueprint.org.uk

GOING BACK TO SCHOOL



**SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE
RETURNING TO SCHOOL WITH
SPINAL CORD INJURY:**

A GUIDE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

GOING BACK TO SCHOOL

A guide for children and young people going back to school after a spinal cord injury.



EMOTIONAL CHALLENGES

There are lots of things to think about when returning to school but you can always ask for help and advice

One of the best ways to prepare for going back to school is by thinking of things ahead of time.

- Be prepared for how you might respond to questions about your spinal cord injury
- If you feel you would like extra emotional support consider talking to a teacher, friends or a family member about how you are feeling. You could contact the Back Up Trust or visit your GP if you would like extra counselling
- Think about talking to your class about your injury so that everyone has a better understanding of Spinal Cord Injury
- See if someone can be the named contact in school for you
- Keep asking questions and keep teaching people about what you need
- Be assertive, you've come through a lot!
- Remember you are still the same person

IN THE CLASSROOM

Ideas to help you if you have limited hand movement

- Listen to the lesson and ask a friend or your teacher for their notes
- Use a laptop computer with internet access and take a memory stick around with you. Use voice activated software like Dragon
- Ask for help with someone writing down what you need to do for homework
- Write only key words in lessons
- Ask for extra support when you are doing exams
- Be aware that you need to keep drinking throughout the day
- Take an extra layer of clothing in case you get cold

CLUBS, SPORTS AND EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

- Don't forget to get involved with sports and clubs outside school time. This is your opportunity to take up things you have enjoyed in the past and think about if you want to start new clubs and sports
- Ask your club to meet in an accessible area
- If you are going on a trip phone ahead to ask about accessibility
- Let your school know about wheelchair sports
- See your Connexions Advisor regularly for support with current and future Education and careers

PHYSICAL CHALLENGES

- Visit the school to make sure you can get around. The Occupational Therapy department in the National Spinal Injuries Centre will help you
- Ask for two sets of books for each subject, one to keep at home and one for school. Can textbooks be accessed via the internet?
- Make sure the desks or tables are the right height
- Find out where the accessible toilet is and where you can keep a change of clothes in case of accidents
- Store supplies you use often in a place you can easily get to
- Ask how to use the school lifts and check you can operate them
- Every school is required to have an emergency exit plan. Ask your teacher to go over what you should do in an emergency.
- Find out what you will be doing in PE, Food Technology, Science and Design Technology
- Consider how you are going to take part in swimming lessons. Look at the changing facilities, hoist and transport arrangements



Ask how to use school lifts



Visit the school to check you can get around



Keep asking questions and teaching people about what you need



Store things where you can easily get to them



Make sure desks are the right height



Be ready to answer questions about your spinal cord injury