# Return to School Support Plan – Secondary students

A Return to School Support Plan can be developed to assist in the reintegration of a student after an extended absence (following a suspension or a family holiday, for instance) or hospitalisation. Not all sections of this plan will be relevant for all students.

The plan should be developed in collaboration with the student, the parents/carers and, where relevant, allied health professionals and/or other supports such as a youth worker.

If the student is returning to school after a hospitalisation for a suicide attempt or an episode of self-harm, ensure that an up to date risk assessment has been completed as this should guide the development of this plan. You can find further information, support and templates to support students returning to schools after a suicide attempt or self-harm in these [Guidelines](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/Documents/school/principals/health/suicideguidelines.pdf) on the DET website.

A safety/calm plan should also be in place, and you may also wish to use the [SAFEMinds Safety Management Plan template](http://deecd.tech-savvy.com.au/mod/resource/view.php?id=323)

|  | | | | |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Student name |  | | Date of last day of school |  |
| Year level |  | | Date of return to school |  |
| Attendees | | | | |
| Objectives (e.g. to support the student to return to school feeling safe and supported.) | | | | |
| Background (e.g. Student has been absent from school due to….) | | | | |
| Support person | | Check in time and place: | | |
| Changes to attendance   * Collaborate with the student, parent/carers and others to decide on a plan for when the student will return and how many days/periods they will be at school. * Where appropriate, plan to gradually increase student’s attendance of the first week or fortnight. Consider the benefits of late starts/early leaving. * Consider allowing the student to temporarily work independently in a supervised area (e.g. the library or staff block). * Highlight the times/periods the student will be attending on a timetable and attach to this plan. Ensure all attendees have their own copy of this revised timetable. | | | | |
| Changes to work   * Collaborate with the student, parents/carers and others about tasks and content it is essential for the student to catch up on. Be mindful of overwhelming the student. * Consider reducing expectations. E.g. the student focuses on core or favourite subjects only for a period of time or doesn’t complete some missed assessment tasks. * Consider if special provisions/conditions for tests and exams is required. | | | | |

|  | |
| --- | --- |
| Signs that \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is feeling overwhelmed | Things \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ can do & places he/she/they can go to feel better |
| Supports that can be put in place at school:  Consider:   * classroom supports (e.g. not calling on the student, allowing them go to for a drink or a walk, letting them listen to music, allowing the student to go to first aid for some quiet time) * ensuring teachers are aware of and support any changes to the student’s timetable and workload * discussing with the student what they will tell peers about their absence * identifying supports amongst the student peers and offer support for these students if required * which staff need to be made aware of this plan & what details they need to know, being mindful of the student’s right to privacy * being flexible around attendance and work requirements * providing a safe place and person for the student * providing a withdrawal card to the student so they can leave class discreetly * creating a calm plan or safety plan for students who are anxious or experiencing suicide ideation | |
| Supports that can be put in place at home   * Amongst other things, consider:   + morning and bedtime routines   + removing technology from the bedroom   + communication with the school   + accessing support from community agencies   + support with homework   + a visit to the family GP for a check-up | |
| Monitoring   * Amongst other things, consider:   + attendance data   + tasks completed   + participation in class   + student observations   + parent observations   + school/Wellbeing observations   Implementation start date: Review date: | |

**Other factors to consider:**

* The important role relationships play in increasing connectedness/engagement
* Identifying a supportive staff member who can check in with the student
* Building social connections and ensuring the student feels safe in the yard
* Some kind of reward system or a way of acknowledging the student’s efforts to improve their attendance
* Student visits to first aid as a way of avoiding class or going home
* Providing an alternative to just leaving school e.g. checking in with wellbeing or working independently in a supervised area like the library
* Participation in specialist classes like PE that the student may be avoiding
* Any student concerns around using the school toilets or change rooms
* Comprehensive learning assessments and additional supports or adjustments if required
* Additional family support via community services
* Referring the student to alternative programs, re-engagement programs or local youth services
* Work experience or TAFE tasters, if an appropriate

**Useful Links**

[SAFEMinds](http://deecd.tech-savvy.com.au/course/view.php?id=6)

[Student Mental Health and Suicide Response](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/school/teachers/health/mentalhealth/Pages/studenthealth.aspx)