

Returning to school

Teenagers with cancer

- Arrange to meet the young person and their parents early on in the treatment then on a regular basis for updates.
- Nominate a 'buddy' for the young person to help them e.g. carrying their rucksack if they are on crutches. Emphasise this is a position of responsibility and an important role and not a burden to prevent any resentment.
- Class timings – Can the young person (and their buddy) leave slightly earlier for lessons, especially if it is a large school, there are lots of steps or they are using crutches?
- PE & Sport – Liaise with the physiotherapist, hospital and occupational therapist to find out what sport it is possible and appropriate for the young person to do. If they are unable to take part in team games, are there gym facilities they can use instead. Can they be incorporated into a group using these facilities?
- Lunch time – Is it possible to have a 'buddy' to carry their tray? If young people are tired or less mobile than before their illness, can they avoid having to queue
- Travel arrangements – Discuss with the parents and young person their travel arrangements to and from school. Will they have to liaise with the LEA to organise more appropriate transport? Will the timings of this tie in with extra curriculum activities and after school clubs that the young person wants to attend?
- Look out for signs of bullying. Raise the appropriate level of awareness either within their class, year or the whole school. Ask the young person if they are willing to talk about their treatment, if not perhaps a nurse or social worker can talk to the other students.
- School dress code – Is it possible to accommodate the young person's requirements? For example, they may really feel the cold so is it possible to wear additional, non-uniform, layers? Perhaps if they have recently had surgery e.g. on the arm it may be difficult to wear heavy fabrics such as a school blazer?
- If the young person has a long stay in hospital, discuss with them their expectations and needs. Early recognition with the school's SENCO (Special Educational Needs Coordinator) will help ensure exams etc go as smoothly as possible.
- Look for ways to incorporate cancer and the work of CLIC Sargent into schemes of work e.g. PSHE. Encourage the students to become more involved in fundraising for organisations like CLIC Sargent who support young people with cancer by taking part in events like Kick for CLIC Sargent (www.clicsargent.org.uk/football), Practice-a-thon! (www.clicsargent.org.uk/practiceathon) or organising their own events.



For further information, advice and teaching resources on supporting a child at school with cancer or leukaemia please call the Child Cancer Helpline helpline on 0800 197 0068.

www.clicsargent.org.uk

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Caring for Children with Cancer