



Created by:
Kelly Hannaghan



Managing Tricky Transitions

Practical strategies to help students re-engage, reconnect, and thrive after a break.



Understanding the possible impact of transitions

Even short breaks can disrupt routines and affect students' wellbeing. Some return refreshed, others anxious or socially hesitant. This resource provides practical, student-focused strategies to help all learners settle back into school successfully.



The 4 Steps Framework

For Successful Transitions

Step 1: Check In

Mood meters, emoji charts, or 1–2–1 check-ins

Journaling prompts:

- “Something I’m looking forward to this week...”
- “One thing that’s worrying me...”

Teacher reflection: “Which students might need extra support?”

Step 2: Re-Establish Routines

Visual weekly schedule

Start with short, focused tasks

Positive reminders of classroom norms

Tip: Allow flexibility, some students need time to adjust

Step 3: Foster Connection

Icebreakers / group discussions about
break experiences

Peer buddy systems

Gratitude / positivity wall

Reflection prompt: “How might someone else’s break have
been different?”

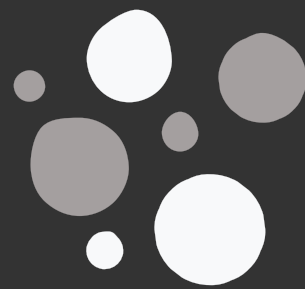
Step 4: Promote Emotional & Cognitive Regulation

Mindfulness or grounding exercises (1–2 minutes)

Movement / brain breaks

Reflection circle: “One goal and one support I need this
week”

Choice moments to encourage autonomy



Situational Strategies Table



| SITUATION | STRATEGY |
|--------------------|---|
| Anxiety / stress | 1-on-1 check-ins, calm corner, breathing exercises |
| Disengagement | Short tasks, gamified learning, peer support |
| Social struggle | Group activities, guided reflection, social scripts |
| Thrived over break | Encourage sharing, mentoring, highlight strengths |





Quick Wellbeing Wins for Students Returning After Half-Term



1. Micro Check-Ins (1–2 minutes)

- Mood emoji board: Students place an emoji on how they feel that morning.
- Temperature check: Students hold up fingers to show energy levels (1 = tired, 5 = ready to engage).
- One-word share: Students say one word to describe their week or current mood.

2. Mindful Moments

- Breathing breaks: 4–7–8 breathing (inhale 4, hold 7, exhale 8).
- Grounding exercise: Ask students to silently notice 5 things they can see, 4 they can touch, 3 they can hear, 2 they can smell, 1 they can taste.
- Mini body scan: Guide students to notice tension in shoulders, neck, jaw, then relax.

3. Movement & Energy Reset

- Stretch breaks: 1–2 minutes of stretching or standing up.
- Shake it out: Quick whole-body shake to release tension.
- Movement games: Quick, low-stakes games like “Simon Says” or a brain-break video.



Quick Wellbeing Wins for Students Returning After Half-Term

4. Connection & Community

- Peer shout-outs: Students name one thing they appreciate about a classmate.
- Classroom gratitude wall: Each student posts one positive thing from the break or week.
- Partner reflection: Students share one goal and one support they'd like this week.

5. Cognitive & Emotional Support

- Focus check: Ask, "What's one small thing you want to achieve today?"
- Calm corner: Space for students to reset when overwhelmed (with fidget toys, soft lighting, or mindfulness cards).
- Emotion labeling: Encourage students to name emotions, e.g., "I feel frustrated because..."

6. Quick Positivity Boosts

- Music pause: Play a 1–2 minute upbeat or calming track while students reset.
- Brain snack: One short fun activity (puzzle, riddle, joke, or mini quiz).
- Visualisation: "Imagine your perfect week—what's one small step you can take today?"



Teacher Reflection

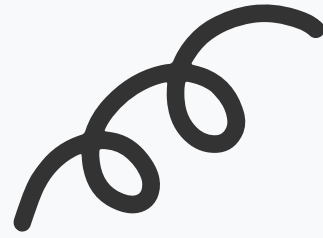
- “Which strategies could I implement immediately?”
- “Which students need extra support?”
- “How will I balance structure and flexibility this week?”

“Every transition is an opportunity.”

Returning from a break isn’t just about getting back to lessons—it’s a chance to reconnect, reflect, and rebuild. Some students return refreshed, some return anxious, and some somewhere in between. What matters most is the small, intentional moments you create: a check-in, a smile, a choice, a safe space.

Remember:

Transitions can be challenging, but support, understanding, and connection make all the difference. Wellbeing is the foundation for learning a student who feels safe, heard, and seen can thrive. Your actions, however small, help students navigate change with confidence.



TOGETHER, WE SUPPORT TRANSITIONS

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Available Workshop:

Managing Tricky Transitions Workshop: **Practical strategies for prevention, early intervention, and restorative responses for periods of transition**

 **Get in touch:**

 **kelly@mindworkmatters.com**

 **www.mindworkmatters.com**

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