



School Re-engagement Planning Template

For families, schools, and support professionals

Re-engaging a PDA child with school after a period of refusal requires careful, collaborative planning. This template supports families, schools, and professionals to develop a shared plan that prioritises the child's wellbeing alongside their educational engagement.

Before starting re-engagement Ensure the child is sufficiently recovered from any burnout or crisis period before beginning. Premature re-engagement deepens avoidance. Consult with your child's psychologist or paediatrician before starting the re-engagement process.

Stage 1 — Foundation (Weeks 1–2)

Goal: restore positive association with the school environment without demands.

- Stage 1 activities**
- Informal visit to the school outside hours — no classes, just the space
 - Meet with key school contact in a low-pressure context
 - Identify the child's preferred spaces and people at school
 - No academic expectations — purely social and environmental

Stage 1 duration: _____ Responsible: _____ Signs of readiness to progress: _____

Stage 2 — Partial Attendance (Weeks 2–4)

Goal: brief, successful, low-demand school time.

- Stage 2 principles**
- Child chooses their preferred class or time to attend
 - Duration: 30–60 minutes initially
 - Safe person meets at arrival and stays available
 - No academic requirements during this phase
 - Clear, reliable exit plan if distress increases

Planned days/times: _____ Safe person: _____ Exit plan: _____



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Stage 3 — Building Hours (Weeks 4–8)

Goal: gradual increase in attendance with genuine choice and agency.

- Increase based on the child's readiness, not a fixed timeline
- Identify preferred subjects and start there
- Continue to allow choice about timing and attendance
- Academic demands introduced slowly — never before emotional safety is established

Stage 4 — Full Plan (Beyond Week 8)

Full attendance (if appropriate) or flexible ongoing arrangement.

- Formal Student Support Plan in place
- Reasonable adjustments documented
- Regular review meetings with family
- Clear escalation plan if distress returns

Communication Plan

- Family contact: _____
- School contact: _____
- Communication frequency: _____
- Indicators that plan needs review: _____

This plan should be reviewed regularly and adapted based on the child's response. Rigid adherence to a timeline that doesn't suit the child will set back progress significantly.