

## INFORMATION SHEET

# Supporting a child or young person with a burn injury in the school or community setting

### Returning to life

Going back to school, sport and community activities is a very important step in a child or young person's healing after a burn injury. Learning and being with friends is important for their progress. It can help them return to a good routine and continue learning important social and academic skills, however, it is normal for them to feel some stress as they reintegrate. This stress can be due to changes in the way they may look or may be because what they can do, has changed. The stress could also simply be due to the time away from normal schedules or the experience they have just been through.

### Preparing for a child or young person's return

1. Have an open conversation with parents or carers to develop a greater understanding of the child or young person's specific physical, social, and psychological challenges.
2. Ask questions about any additional or modified support that they may need.
3. Consider a flexible schedule for reintegration back to school, alternate options for sport and other activities, and additional schoolwork to catch up on their learning.



### Establish and maintain a supportive environment

1. Provide simple, easy to understand, and age-appropriate information that is approved by the parents or carer to other children, parents, and families (as required and appropriate).
2. Observe how other children and young people interact with the child and appropriately intervene as necessary. Follow-up any complaints, educate those around the child, and advocate for the child who has had a burn injury.
3. Regularly 'check in' with the child or young person to see how they are tracking.
4. Let them know which adult to speak to if they feel uncomfortable with someone's behaviour and can't manage the situation on their own.





5. Provide appropriate practical help such as minding other children, assisting with school runs, providing healthy meals for the family, and shopping.
6. Limit questions about the burn injury as these may be triggering.
7. Be mindful not to linger your gaze on their scars as this can be confronting.
8. Interact normally with the child, accepting and treating them in the same way as you did before the injury.

### Managing your emotions

You may find that you feel a range of emotions when you see burn scarring or work with a child or young person who has had a burn injury. You might feel personal distress, feel upset, worried, disturbed, distressed, or troubled or experience empathetic feelings, such as sympathy, compassion, and tenderness. You may even feel unsure of what to say or how to act. Identifying and working through your emotions is important. Remember, these types of uncomfortable emotions and reactions are normal and can help you to reflect on how you are feeling, thinking, and behaving as well as how you can support the child or young person.



The most important tip when supporting a child with a burn injury is to keep the communication between parents, carers, and the child open. This way any issues can be raised, discussed, and resolved in a timely manner.

