

STARTING THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR TIPS FROM CARLA School Psychologist



The beginning of any school year marks a time of transition which can bring academic, social, and/or emotional challenges for students of any age.

Some of our Seaview students are transitioning from primary school to high school, others from middle school to senior school, and some just from one grade to the next. Even the transition from holiday mode to a five-day school week can be tricky! Especially when holidays have involved a routine of staying up late and sleeping in.

While many students will find settling back into school reasonably easy others might find it more challenging.

Below are some tips to help the transition process back to school run as smoothly as possible:



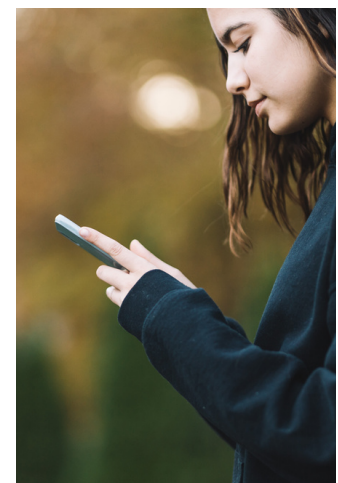
Routine - If you have not already done so, re-establish a consistent sleep and wake up time.

Liaising together as a family to establish a routine for morning, afternoon and evening times will also be helpful.

Technology - Parents may wish to consider limiting technology use with the return to school. It is common for technology use to increase over the school holidays.

Establishing new rules and boundaries with regard to using technology during the school week and on weekends will assist with developing a healthy sleep routine and also give your child dedicated active and down-time.

It may not be easy and straightforward though as technology can be very addictive!



Preparation - We all have very busy lives and returning to school requires lots of prep-work from both parents and students. Some families find it helpful to encourage their children to prepare uniforms and lunches the evening before. Even packing as much into their bags as they can the night before assists with alleviating some stress in the morning.

Some students will also find it helpful to know where their classrooms are located, how they will get to and from school, what bus they will be catching etc. A brief tour of the school and trial bus run can sometimes be helpful.

Visual Supports - Visual supports (can be as simple as a list on a whiteboard) can be helpful for many students, whether they assist with what to expect each day (what is happening and when) or remembering what they need to take to school.

More structured visual supports can also help alleviate anxiety and difficult behaviours in many children with additional needs.



Some further things to consider:

Your child may be cranky, irritable and tired as they settle back into their daily routine. This is to be expected as they navigate the new routine, classrooms, teachers and peers for the year. It is incredibly important for the adults in their lives to remain positive and calm. Young people are great at sensing if adults are not feeling calm and will consequently feel less calm themselves (feelings are contagious).

While many things will seem out of your child's control when starting the school year, some level of choice and control to your child can be helpful. Particularly when anxiety is present. One example could be by offering them a choice of what to have available in the house to pack for lunches or recess or offering a choice for dinner (offer two favoured options) the night of their first day at school.

Be aware of any ongoing differences in your child's behaviour in relation to school, to identify if your child's reluctance is part of the normal settling in period or something more significant. Identifying any challenges early and reaching out to appropriate supports can help ensure students are helped in the suitable ways and can avoid the risk of the problem getting worse or your child experiencing long term disengagement from school.

If you do notice any potential concerns please reach out to the school. Collaboration and information sharing is important to addressing any challenges.

Have a wonderful year!



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