

Home to School transitions reminders

- ❖ Normalise worries - Anxious feelings are normal and expected during times of transition or change. This is especially true for children going back to school, or for first-timers starting Nursery. If your child has worries, tell them that it is normal to have concerns. (Avoidance of school will only increase and reinforce your child's fears over the long-term, and make it increasingly more difficult to attend).
- ❖ Look after the basics. - Nobody copes well when they are tired or hungry; this also applies to parents and carers so remember to look after yourself.
 - Anxious children often forget to eat or don't feel hungry and don't get enough sleep.
 - Provide frequent and nutritious meals and snacks for your child.
 - Get into a good morning routine, so that your child finds it easier to wake at the right time and to reduce the chances of school mornings being stressful, hectic and rushed.
 - Have a regular bedtime routine, so that life is more predictable for your child, to ensure they are getting the right amount of hours sleep they need.
 - Turn off all gadgets and electronics at least one hour before bed and do some calming activities, which will optimise a good night's sleep.
- ❖ Special Time/Worry Time - Before and during the first few weeks of school, set up '*you and me time*' a regular time and place to talk. Older children often welcome some sort of distraction whilst discussing their thoughts and feelings (such as taking a walk or doing an activity together).
- ❖ Children often seek reassurance that bad things won't happen in order to reduce their worry. Do not assure them with "Don't worry!" or "Everything will be fine!" Instead, encourage your child to think of ways to solve his or her problem. For example, "If ... happens what could you do?" or "Let's think of some ways you could handle that

situation.” This gives you the opportunity to coach your child on how to cope with both real and imagined scary situations.

- ❖ **Balanced thinking** - Ask your child questions which will get them to think about positives, such as: *"What are the three things that most excite you about your new school?"* Most children can think of *something* good, even if it's just eating a special snack, playtime, or going home at the end of the day. Remind them of how they have previously managed change successfully.
- ❖ Children take cues from their parents, so the more confidence and comfort you can model, the more your child will understand there is no reason to be afraid. Smile confidently when saying goodbye and waving them off in the morning.

Transition Timeline - at least one week before the new term:

- ❖ Start your child on a school-day routine – waking up, eating, and going to bed at regular times.
- ❖ Ask your child to help plan school lunches for the first week if they are taking a packed lunch or look at the menus on the school website.
- ❖ Explore the new school website together.
- ❖ Create a list of school essentials together and plan a fun shopping trip. (eg: school bag, uniform, water bottle, PE kit).
- ❖ Teach and practice coping skills to use when feeling nervous, such as *'How to Do Calm Breathing'* or *mindfulness*.
- ❖ Go to school once or twice – walking or driving; talk about road safety and who will be dropping them off and collecting them.

If your child is finding separating from you difficult or is taking some time to settle into their new class, speak to the class teacher– most teachers are experts on how to manage this.