

## PREPARING FOR SCHOOL

### **How to Help Your Child Overcome Back-to-School Blues: A Parent's Guide to Reducing Nerves and Anxiety.**

As the new school year approaches, some children may experience back-to-school blues, which can manifest as nerves and anxiety. These feelings are normal, but as a parent, you can provide valuable support to help alleviate your child's worries when preparing for school. Here are some practical strategies to empower you in assisting your child or young person in transitioning back to school with confidence and positivity.

#### **1. Open Communication:**

Encourage open and honest communication with your child. Create a safe space where they feel comfortable expressing their concerns and fears about returning to school. Listen attentively to their worries and validate their emotions. Assure them that it's natural to feel nervous but emphasise that you are there to support them throughout the transition.

#### **2. Establish a Routine:**

A structured routine can provide a sense of security and stability. Prior to the start of school, gradually reintroduce regular bedtimes, meal schedules, and study routines. This will help your child adjust to the rhythm of the school day and reduce anxiety associated with unpredictable changes. The night before, help them get their uniform out and bag ready with the right equipment for the following day. Stress can make us flustered and forgetful, so it is helpful to support them to prepare whilst they settle in (and if you know they have a busy day coming up).

#### **3. Familiarise with the school routine and timetable :**

Complete the journey to school beforehand with your child before the academic year begins, especially if they are transitioning to a new school. Familiarise or talk through the layout,

classrooms, and playground. In advance, ask them to list the teachers and staff they know and to talk to who can help alleviate fears about the unknown. If possible, write a note to their form tutor so they are aware extra reassurance and check-ins may be needed on the day. For the first month, each night or morning before school, you may need to talk through the timings of the school day and when the lessons start – especially after break and lunch. This reduces any worries about getting lost or being late for a lesson.

#### **4. Encourage Social Connections:**

Building and maintaining positive social connections is crucial for your child's well-being. Encourage them to reach out to friends and arrange to meet up at break or lunch time. If they are starting at a new school, help them identify opportunities to make new friends, such as joining extracurricular activities or clubs that align with their interests.

#### **5. Address Academic Concerns:**

Academic worries can contribute to back-to-school anxiety. Take time to discuss any academic concerns your child may have and offer reassurance. Remind them that learning is a process, and it's okay to ask for help. Consider reviewing previous academic material together or exploring online resources that can support their learning.

#### **6. Be a Positive Role Model:**

Children often look to their parents for cues on how to handle challenging situations. Model positive behaviour by expressing optimism and excitement about the upcoming school year. Share your own stories of overcoming nerves or difficulties, highlighting the growth and positive experiences that can come from them.

#### **7. Practice Self-Care:**

Encourage your child to prioritise self-care. Teach them techniques to manage stress, such as deep breathing exercises, mindfulness, or engaging in activities they enjoy. Ensure they get

enough sleep, eat nutritious meals, and engage in physical activity. Taking care of their well-being will build resilience and enhance their ability to cope with back-to-school blues.

Helping your child navigate the back-to-school blues requires understanding, patience, and support. By fostering open communication, establishing routines, and encouraging social connections, you can empower your child to face the new school year with reduced nerves and anxiety. Remember, your presence and guidance will make a significant difference in their confidence and overall well-being.