



Take Care, Take
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Health & Wellbeing Bulletin

Back to School

After a few short months of summer it's that time of year again when children and teenagers are back to school. It can be an exciting time of year particularly if your child is starting school or making the transition from primary to secondary.

In this Bulletin there are tips for parents to make these transitions as smooth as possible.

Starting Primary School

A child starting school for the first time can be a trying time for both child and parents. If you as a parent are finding it difficult, try not to indicate this to your child as they could pick up on this.

- Visit the school before the first day, drive past it, park and walk around it to familiarise your child to their new surroundings.
- Make sure your child knows how to open and close items such as new school bag and lunch box as well as opening and closing their jacket zip and shoes. Footwear with Velcro is a good option.
- If there is any change to your schedule at home eg. working late or studying, check that this will not affect your child as they may notice your absences now more than usual if it coincides with starting school.
- Ensure you spend time with your child each evening. Talk and listen to your child.
- If your child is upset when you bring them to school, it is best if you leave the classroom. Your child will stop crying more quickly if you are not there.

Starting Secondary School

Day to Day routine in secondary is a big change from primary. There are more teachers, classrooms, subjects and new faces to become familiar with.

- Advise your child to always stay with at least one other person from the class when moving from classroom to classroom.
- Get them to write down the name of each new teacher and classroom number beside the name of each subject.
- New routine will involve organisation of the school bag before each day.
- This is a chance for your child to get skills in effective time management, get them to develop a homework timetable. Devise a method to spread the workload over the 5 nights of the week.
- Take reports that are sent home seriously particularly for the first year, if you are dismissive of them it can allow a negative attitude to develop in your child.
- Taking part in extra curricular activities builds confidence and your child gets to mix with other students and helps to settle them into their new environment.
- Parents should be supportive, understanding and encouraging and ensure that their child eats well and gets plenty of rest and downtime.

Healthy Eating

- Ensure that your child has breakfast every morning; children will be much more alert in school if their day is kick started with a healthy meal.
- Pack lunchboxes with healthy food that you know your child likes. Use your left over Sunday roast leftover to make a nutritious cold meat sandwich for them.
- Try using wholemeal or wholegrain bread instead of white, this will help your child feel fuller for longer.
- Prepare fruit – peel oranges, dice fruit make it easy for your child to eat and put it in an airtight container to ensure freshness.
- For very young school children avoid packing food that requires a fork or spoon because if it is forgotten this may cause your child to be upset and not eat the food.
- Fill small colourful bottles with water to increase their water intake
- Make sure your child knows how to open their lunch boxes/drinks and try removing any tricky packaging that your child may find difficult to open.
- Pack food for different breaks separately and make sure your child knows what to eat at each break.
- Don't make the portions too big as the school breaks are short and your child might run out of time trying to eat everything that is packed for them.
- Avoid fizzy drinks and sugary snacks and instead use water, milk and healthy dairy snacks such as cheese and yoghurts.
- Let your child know how important it is to eat lunch every day and check that they have eaten it by inspecting their lunch box.

Schoolbag Safety

- Choose one that can be carried on the back, has a padded back, adjustable shoulder straps and a waist strap.
- Child should not carry any more than 10% of their own weight.
- If you feel that your child is carrying excessive weight in their schoolbag check with their teacher to see if they need to bring that much in every day.
- The bag should be worn over both shoulders rather than one shoulder or in one hand.