

Back-to-School Anxiety

We trust that everyone is back in the swing of the school routine and all students are feeling settled and comfortable in their classes. We understand change can be a very stressful time for students, especially if students find in the new year that their friends are not in the same classes. In these instances, we ask that you allow for a few weeks of adjustment before approaching the school. Why?

Anxiety is a normal experience

Many students will be placed into a class without their friends, and it is normal for them to experience some level of anxiety in response to this.

About anxiety: Humans experience anxiety when they sense that they are in some kind of danger. Most of the time, we overestimate the level of danger in our environment. For students anxious about being in a classroom without their friends, there is no actual danger. It is important that we encourage them to face their fear, and (in this instance) attend class so they learn that there is no real danger. As difficult as it may feel to ask your child to remain in a class knowing that they will feel temporarily uncomfortable, it will help them to learn to manage their anxiety. Developing skills to manage anxiety while at school will help them to become confident and resilient adults.

For more information on anxiety and the importance of facing fears, check out this TED Talk by Dawn Huebner.



Students need to continue to develop their social skills

School is one of the first experiences where we learn how to make friends. Children that are given the opportunity to practice these skills and make new friends will feel more confident about their ability to do this in the future. This will be helpful when they are faced with making friends at work, university and in various social settings, for example. Students who are able to make new friends and build their social network are more likely to have a positive experience at school.

Please give your child some time to attempt to make new friends before asking that they be moved to classes with their existing friends.

Model positive behaviour to your child

Children learn a lot of their behaviours from their parents. If a parent becomes anxious about the child not having their friends in their class, the child is likely to feel anxious themselves (or feel even more anxious). A better way to respond is by encouraging your child to give it a

go. The most likely outcome (and most common outcome) is that your child's anxiety about their classes will fade after the first few weeks and they will make new friends.

We have requested that you allow three weeks before approaching the school to change classes for the above reasons, but we will be happy to hear your concerns following this adjustment period.

We hope this information was helpful.

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