

FROM THE DIOCESE OF LISMORE SCHOOL COUNSELLOR NETWORK

Anxious feelings are normal and expected in children and teens returning to school after a change to normal school experiences. Some students will be excited to return, while others will be worried about different school-related issues. How each child and teen experienced Blended Learning will be different and could affect their feelings about returning to school.

Some worries may be about:

- Will my friends be at school?
- Will my teachers be at school?
- What will we do on the days at school?
- Transport to and from school.
- I didn't do all the work.
- I didn't do the work the best I could.
- Will the canteen be open?
- What will we be able to do at lunch time?

Some children and teens may be worried about Coronavirus. Support them with accurate information, including what they can do – wash their hands, use hand sanitiser and cover their mouth when they cough or sneeze. Due to social distancing, parents will not be allowed into the school grounds. It will be important for you to talk about this with younger children prior to taking them to school so they know well in advance that you cannot walk in with them. Talk calmly and positively about how these rules, help keep the children and staff healthy.

What can you do to help with the worries?

TAKE CARE OF THE BASICS

Ensure that your child and teen are getting enough sleep, regular meals and exercise. Get back into school routines such as getting out of bed at a regular school time.

PROVIDE EMPATHY

Listen to your child's concerns. What are they worried about? What do they expect to happen? Let your child share their worries and talk about what's on their mind.

PROBLEM SOLVE TO INCREASE YOUR CHILD'S RESILIENCY SKILLS

Once you know what's bothering your child, you can start to develop a coping plan and solutions to reduce their worries. The procedure remains that students talk to a staff member during the day, not use their mobile to phone or text a parent. Encourage them to problem solve any worries with a trusted staff member. Parents can talk to a teacher or pastoral leader regarding their child or teen's needs during this time. Help or prompt your child to pack their bag the night before.

FOCUS ON THE POSITIVE ASPECTS

Ask your child or teen, "What are two things that you are most excited about going back to school?"
Remind your child or teen of their strengths.

PAY ATTENTION TO YOUR OWN ACTIONS

Children take cues from their parents, so the more confidence and calm you can model, the more your child will believe they can cope.