

## 10 Back-To-School Tips

### 1. Label Everything

Everything! Especially all items of clothing and those tiny lunch containers and great big water bottles that seem to have legs of their own should have your child's name on them. It's not just about keeping track; it's about saving your sanity and wallet when these items decide to take a detour.

### 2. Practice the Routine

Before the school year kicked off you may have already had some rehearsal time. A few days prior, mimic the morning routine – waking up early, getting dressed, having breakfast, and maybe even a mock journey to school. This sets the tone for your kids and gives you a chance to iron out any kinks in your plan. And remember, a smooth morning often leads to a smoother day. When children get into the classroom, teachers will reset routines, procedures, and expectations. This assists greatly with students feeling welcome and helps them settle quickly.

### 3. Bedtime Rules

Sleep is not just for the weary but also for the young scholars. Re-establishing a consistent bedtime routine is essential for those early school mornings. Well-rested kids are like well-oiled machines; they function better, think clearer, and, yes, are significantly less cranky. This goes for parents, too! A bedtime ritual might include winding down activities, a set lights-out time, and a bedtime story for the younger ones. It's a time to disconnect from the day's hustle and bustle and transition into a peaceful slumber.

### 4. Reinforce Safety Rules

Reinforcing essential safety rules is crucial to preparing your child for the school year, especially if they travel to and from school independently.

It's about instilling a sense of awareness and responsibility beyond the classroom. Discussing and regularly refreshing these guidelines helps ensure your child remains safe and develops good habits for life.

Start by reviewing the basics, like looking both ways before crossing the street. Emphasise the importance of staying vigilant and avoiding distractions like mobile phones or overly loud music when crossing roads.

Sticking to familiar routes when walking or biking to school is another key safety rule. Map out the safest path with your child and walk or ride it with them a few times before school starts. This not only familiarises them with the route but also helps you identify any potentially unsafe areas. Remind them to always take these predetermined routes and avoid shortcuts through less-travelled or poorly-lit areas.

Understanding the concept of "stranger danger" is also vital. Discuss with your child what they should do if approached by a stranger. This includes:

- Not accepting rides or gifts from someone they don't know.
- Keeping a safe distance.
- Knowing when and how to seek help.

Please encourage them to trust their instincts and to report any encounters that make them feel uncomfortable immediately.

In addition to these, it's essential to discuss what to do in case of emergencies. Make sure they know their full name, address, contact number, and how to dial emergency services. They should also know a safe place to go if they need help, like a trusted neighbour's house or a school.

## 5. Balance Screen Time

In today's tech-centric world, it's increasingly important to establish and maintain clear screen time rules, especially as a new school term begins. With children being more exposed to screens for educational and recreational purposes, setting boundaries is key to ensuring a healthy balance.

Start by defining what constitutes purposeful screen time. Distinguish between screen time for homework or educational apps and screen time for leisure, like gaming or social media. Make it clear that the former is a priority, while the latter is a privilege that comes with responsibilities. Create a daily routine that allocates specific times for various activities.

This routine should include time for study, rest, play, and limited recreational screen time. For example, you might decide that screen time is allowed only after homework is completed and for a set duration. This helps children understand that screen time is a part of their day, not the focus of it.

Remember, the goal of establishing screen time rules is not to restrict your child but to promote a balanced and healthy lifestyle. It's about making them understand the value of time and how to use it effectively in a world where screens are omnipresent. By setting these boundaries and providing diverse experiences, you're helping your child develop a well-rounded perspective on technology's role in their life.

## 6. Address First-Week Nerves

It's normal for children to feel apprehensive about the new school term.

Encourage open dialogue about their worries. Share your own first-day experiences and how you overcame your nerves. Discuss positive aspects of school and highlight exciting opportunities that the new term brings.

## 7. Construct a Homework Zone

Establishing a dedicated homework station is more than just organising a space; it's creating a mindset for academic success. This area should be a designated zone where focus and learning take centre stage. Whether it's a quiet corner of their bedroom, a section of the living room, or even a part of the dining table, this space signals to your child that their schoolwork is a priority. In setting up this area, involve your child in the process. Let them choose some supplies or decorations to personalise their space. This gives them a sense of ownership and pride in their homework station. Make sure the area is well-lit and equipped with all the necessary materials: pens, paper, calculators, or a computer if needed. Think of it as a mini office for your mini CEO. The homework station should be a distraction-free zone. You might even consider having a 'homework time' for the whole family, where everyone engages in quiet activities or reading. This not only supports your child but also promotes a family culture of valuing learning and education.

## 8. Connect with the Classroom Teacher and Attend Information Events

Come along to Year Level Information Sessions to become more familiar with the year ahead for your child. If you are having difficulty accessing any of the College communication platforms – School box, Seesaw, Signmee, Flexischools be sure to ask for help, so you are not missing out on any information.

## 9. Discuss Social Challenges

Equip your child with strategies to handle potential social challenges such as [bullying](#) and [peer pressure](#). In the diverse social landscape of a school, children may encounter various situations such as bullying, peer pressure, and conflicts. It's essential to provide them with tools and guidance on navigating these complexities with confidence and integrity.

Start by having open discussions about bullying. Explain bullying, including its different forms – physical, verbal, and online. Emphasize that it's not just the act of hurting someone; it's ongoing behaviour that makes someone feel isolated, threatened, or belittled. Teach them how to recognize bullying, not only towards themselves but also towards others, and discuss the importance of not being a bystander. Encourage them to stand up for themselves and others safely and always report bullying incidents to a teacher or trusted adult.



Peer pressure can be another significant challenge. Talk to your child about the importance of staying true to their values and beliefs, even when others might try to influence them otherwise. Discuss ways they can assertively but respectfully decline and the value of choosing friends who respect their choices.

It's also crucial to teach them about seeking help from a trusted adult in difficult situations. Children should know that it's not a sign of weakness to ask for help. Identify specific adults in their lives, such as family members, teachers, or school counsellors, whom they can approach when they feel overwhelmed, scared, or confused.

### **10. Prep Nutritious Lunches**

Planning and preparing a week's worth of healthy lunches and snacks is a game-changer for busy parents during the school year. This strategy is not just about ensuring your child has various nutritious options to keep them energised and focused throughout the day; it's also about simplifying your life and reducing daily stress.

To start, consider creating a lunch menu that rotates every week. This can include a balance of proteins, carbohydrates, fruits, and vegetables. Think of sandwiches with different fillings, wraps, pasta salads, or homemade sushi rolls. Including a small treat or a personal note can add a bit of joy to their lunchbox. Variety is key to keeping your child interested in their meals and ensuring they get a range of nutrients.

Snack preparation is equally important. Instead of resorting to pre-packaged snacks, try preparing batches of healthy options like veggie sticks with hummus, fruit slices, yogurt, or homemade granola bars. These can be portioned out for each day, making it easy to grab and go in the mornings.

Involve your child in the preparation process. This can be a fun weekend activity and a great opportunity to teach them about nutrition and cooking. Let them choose some of the items for their lunches or help with simple tasks like washing fruits or assembling sandwiches. This not only makes them more likely to eat what is packed but also fosters a sense of independence and responsibility.

