

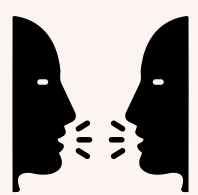
Helping students manage the transition back to full-time schooling

Tips for Parents from Dr Prue Salter



1. BE GENTLE WITH EXPECTATIONS FOR QUITE SOME TIME

Everyone (parents, teachers and students) will be affected differently by the experiences this year and for different periods of time. We need to remember that this anxiety can manifest in many ways and therefore be gentle. We are better to err on the side of being uber-supportive this year. If you are concerned about your student's level of anxiety, reach out and seek help from a professional.



2. KEEP LINES OF COMMUNICATION AS OPEN AS POSSIBLE

Students who are anxious often will bottle up their worries and concerns. Without being annoying (and it is a fine line) we need to let students know they can talk about what is worrying them. Both parents and teachers need to create opportunities that give students permission to share in a non-threatening environment.



3. MINIMISE NEWS CONSUMPTION AND PANDEMIC DISCUSSION OR DIRECT FOCUS TO ENCOURAGING STATISTICS

If students are anxious, over-exposure to constant negative news can wear them down. Highlighting the positive and encouraging news and statistics can help students to focus their thoughts in a constructive direction. Make positive plans together for the future so students have good things to focus on instead and focus more on what they can control rather than what they can't.



4. RE-FOCUS ON THE PILLARS OF HEALTH: EXERCISE, SLEEP, HEALTHY EATING

Even though we will no longer be in complete lock-down, students still won't be able to do all of their usual activities for some time. We need to ensure students are still exercising in some way, perhaps snacking a bit less and more of a focus on healthy eating. Good sleep has been proven time and again to contribute to happiness, health and academic success.



5. ALLOW STUDENTS LOTS OF OPPORTUNITIES TO RE-CONNECT

We need to be over-generous in allowing students to spend time with friends and extended family members for the rest of this year. Students may find the school day overwhelming and exhausting at the moment. After so much 'family' time, don't be hurt if they aren't that keen to socialise when they get home and just want to go to their room. Don't let them be a complete hermit, but do let them have time to themselves to decompress from the day. Many students will need to renegotiate the dynamics with their peers and this readjustment may be stressful for some students.



6. RESET THE ROUTINE & DAILY SCHEDULE

Routine creates certainty in an uncertain world. Having established routines and guidelines to follow is reassuring for students. Giving students a chance to contribute to the decisions as to what the new routine should be (such as bedtime) is also important. This will include starting to dial back screen time if it was increased during the last few months. In line with our 'take it slow' approach, you won't be going back to how things were earlier this year yet. It is more about reducing the screen time to make way for the schoolwork that will need to be done.



7. LOOK FOR LOTS OF WAYS TO SUPPORT STUDENTS' STUDIES

After they have been back at school for a week or so, ask your student directly if there is anything they have fallen behind in or need help with. Of course many students won't tell you, so if you do have concerns contact the school - either a form or roll teacher or a subject teacher directly. While we do want students to start getting into good working habits again, it needs to be a gently gently approach. This means they may not be doing as much work at home as they did earlier this year, and that is ok for now. The exception is our senior students. We want these students to get back into their regular study patterns as soon as they are able. If this means that parents are making extra snacks for Year 12 or googling to find a study guide for them, then so be it.