



SEPTEMBER 2019 BACK TO SCHOOL

Here in West Vancouver we are counting down the days until school starts. Some students may be nervous for their first day back while others cannot wait to see familiar faces. During this busy time we turn to our experts to break down these transitions and give us some tips for thriving.

ELEMENTARY

Pauline Johnson Principal, Tara Zielinski encourages parents to include the following in their back to school prep:

- Start to alter bedtime and wake up time so they more closely align with your child's school start time.
- Discuss your family expectations about time management and what that looks like in the morning (brushing teeth, washing face, getting dressed, having breakfast, collecting backpack and lunch, out the door) and the afternoon routines (what time does school end, how do they get home, where they will work on class projects, after-school activities).
- Prepare yourself for the separation and changes ahead. Independence is a good thing!

WHAT TO EXPECT:

Kindergarten

Robert Fulghum's poem "*All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*" is a great start.

Grades 1-2

Begin to talk to your child about the joys of seeing old friends as well as the possibility of a new classroom of friends. Younger students may assume they will have all the same peers and classroom setting as the previous year.

Grades 3-4

This is the time when students move from learning to read to reading to learn. These grades become more rigorous and higher expectations are set with the possibility of homework and combined classes.

Grades 5-7

Social dynamics begin to play more of a role in students' lives. Schools begin to focus on career conversations as well as executive functioning (skills that enable us to plan, manage time and organize ourselves).



SECONDARY

We spoke to a group of teens about their return to school in September, their favourite social media platforms, subjects at school, sneakers, music and everything in between.

We also asked them about goal setting, things they are looking forward to, advice they would give their 13 year old selves and advice for parents to best support their teen with back to school times. Here is what they are talking about:

- **Be realistic about time.** Start with “done”. What does that look like? What is it going to take to get your project/assignment looking that way? What supplies do I need?
- **Make some ground rules.** Even though all of the teens we spoke with love Snap Chat the most, they also know this consumes a tremendous amount of time. Get homework done first, then social media. Write down your personal ground rules and stick to them.
- **Morning routine.** Figure out how much time you need to wake up, get dressed, eat, and organize yourself. This way, you will know when you need to wake up and you can work back from there.
- **Set goals.** Do you want to make the volleyball team this year? Or maybe you want to challenge yourself and take the IB Diploma Program. Make a list and keep checking in with it.
- **Write things down.** Make notes for yourself either in an agenda or on your phone. Put down everything you want to do for the day. Once it is out of your head, it is easier to prioritize goals for the day.
- **Rest.** Instagram and SnapChat will always be there. Start the year off right feeling rested and ready, thanks to a good night’s sleep.
- **Chill.** School can feel stressful at times as you juggle academics, friends, sports and clubs. Find some stress-relieving activities that you enjoy – whether that be a spin class, a walk through Whytecliff Park or hanging with friends, take some time for yourself to recharge your batteries.
- **Make memories!** Start a monthly tradition with friends – taco Tuesdays, movie nights or football on the beach.

Advice our teens would love to give their 13 year old selves ranged from *“calm down”, “be patient with your friends”, “be yourself” and “be open to finding new friends who like to laugh at the same things you do” to “don’t procrastinate!”*

They like to set goals with positive statements such as *“I am going to try out for Choir”, “I will make the Honour Roll” and “Find out what financial literacy means. My dad keeps talking about it!”*

We wish all of you a very happy and healthy year!