We are gearing up...CHRISTMAS IS NEARLY HERE! I hear you saying "The last thing I want to think about is next year!!" So if your head is too much in Christmas mode and you don’t want to read this now, put it away in a safe place for a little holiday reading once the rush is over. It may come in handy!

Although we don’t want Christmas and the holidays to come and go too quickly, our minds do tend to wander to next year.

This is true of the children too. Questions like – Which grade will I be in next year? Who will be my teacher? Which friends will I be with? Will the work be hard next year? – all run through their minds at some stage. For our Year 6’s the uncertainties of moving on to Secondary school raise even more questions – However will I work out that timetable? Will I get homework every day? Will I get a detention?

Whether it’s moving from Kindergarten to Prep, Year 6 to Year 7 or moving up to the next grade in Primary school, each of these transitions involves students’ expectations and concerns – leaving one location & settling into another, leaving old friends, making new friends and continuing learning and development.

How we help our children prepare for and manage these transitions will influence whether or not the transition is a positive and successful experience. An attention to making the transition an exciting challenge, can ensure that students remain engaged with their learning. The holidays, when there is time to chat, can be a good time to begin the process.

Kids are surprisingly resilient when it comes to change and for the vast majority of children transitions throughout their school life happen smoothly. However for some it is not an easy process. Instead of it being a time excitedly anticipated, it becomes a time of anxiety and fear.

How can we help our kids to feel comfortable and happy about their transitions? What can we do to help ourselves to feel the same? Perhaps some of the tips over the page may be useful to answer these questions. Our ORIENTATION DAY is next Tuesday 17th December - they may also be helpful in the lead up to that.

Best wishes for a happy, safe & peace filled Christmas & New Year

Margaret Masseni: Wellbeing leader
Sometimes they just need some simple **reassurance** that everything will be okay; a **smile**, a few **positive words of encouragement**.

**Give them strategies** to manage difficult situations that they face and if they can’t manage alone, encourage them to talk to staff members.

**Talk about the positives**; what are the good things about being in a different grade with different people.

**Mark your calendar**. Make a note of important school dates, especially those early in the year. This is especially important if you have children in more than one school and need to juggle obligations.

Our Awards: Support Social & Emotional Learning

**AUSSIE OF THE MONTH**

For consistently demonstrating great behaviour and the values we promote at St Mary’s

**OCTOBER**

Ethan Le-Roux for being a caring and inclusive class member

Alex Teo for displaying a mature approach towards his learning & for being a dependable student

Ella Crowley for being a thoughtful and caring member of our community

**NOVEMBER**

Taj Tanti for having a mature and sensible attitude to his classroom learning and for his considerate nature to the others in his class

Dlbanchi Teshomi for her respectful approach to everyone around her and for her enthusiastic commitment to academic excellence

Tiana Zanatta for her excellent manners, growth in self confidence and for being diligent and persistent in her learning

**KEYS TO SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS**

**Children absorb their parent’s anxiety, so model optimism and confidence for your child.**

**Encourage them to talk about their feelings but don’t dwell on all the negatives.** Kids can have a knack of making their parents think that the whole day was **terrible** when really it might only have been ‘a bit bad for 5 minutes’.

**IT’S NOT ALL ABOUT THE KIDS...**

**Freeze a few easy dinners.** It will be much easier on you if you have dinner prepared so that meal preparation will not add to household tensions during the first week of school.

**A THOUGHT FOR THE DAY...**

“Calmness is not a character trait, it’s simply a skill. You have to decide if it matters............Then you practise it until it gradually becomes part of you. It benefits everyone around you: they feel comfortable in your presence. It’s exactly what children need in a parent. And it benefits you too –with fewer stress hormones, you will live longer and feel better. It’s well worth cultivating.”

Steve Biddulph – Author Raising Girls / Raising Boys

If you want calm, less anxious kids you need to know how to be calm and relieve your own stresses. **Calm** is something to practise.

Calmness is **physiological**. Slow your breathing. Drop your shoulders. Settle your muscles.

Calmness is also **psychological**. Focus your thinking on what you are doing. Replace panic thoughts with rational thoughts. In an emergency slow yourself to see what’s needed.

**MICHAEL GROSE’s new resource for parents.**

The Secret to having RESILIENT, CONFIDENT and OPTIMISTIC children is to... **TEACH YOUR KIDS TO SHRUG!**

See the attached article.

Book available for $27.50 from www.parentingideas.com.au

More MG articles on the school website: WELLBEING: Resources for Parents