Settling Back in to School

Welcome to the new school year! I hope everyone had a very good summer break, and that we are all ready for a wonderful start to the term. There will be many opportunities for involvement, growth, and learning across the College this year. This is a very exciting time of year for most students – learning how to navigate the new layout and class schedules, meeting new friends and teachers, and reconnecting with old ones, will likely be the primary focus of interest for the first few days. As in any time of change and transition, this can also be a rather stressful period; this is true for both returning families as well as those brand new to Suzhou and the College. Students who are starting school for the first time or moving to a new school have the biggest adjustment, but even moving up a year means coping with a new teacher, more academic demands and a changing social circle. These are a few things you can do to help your child settle back into school.

1. Be prepared
   It is important to get to know what is expected of you and your child, so that you don’t tell your child one thing while the school says another. Take full advantage of information sessions where possible. If you are new to the College, encourage your children to make some friends in the same class; if they feel lost or overwhelmed during the school day, encourage them to seek out a Friendly Face. Friendly Faces are returning students who have volunteered to help new students settle in to school, and they will be ready to help any student who needs assistance; just look for the smiling face badges!

2. Set up a good routine
   Make sure your child’s body clock is ready for the school day. It is a good idea to start adjusting bed times and wake up times early enough to get children back into the rhythm of the school day. Tired and grumpy children, or children who are rushing out of the house in the morning and dropped off in a hurry often get anxious and irritable because they don’t have enough time to adjust.

3. Stay Positive
   It is important to stay positive about the new school year. Children need to feel that you are happy about them going to school or being away from you so that they don’t worry about you or feel that they are missing out on some other fun.

4. Tell them what you want them to do
   Letting children know how you want them to behave at school in a positive way is really helpful, for example saying, “Share the toys and listen to the teacher,” rather than what you don’t want such as, “Don’t fight and don’t be naughty”. Explaining as much as you think they will understand helps them to be well prepared.

If you have particular concerns about your child’s settling in, please do not hesitate to either email me, or drop by the counsellor’s office to have a chat.