

Kooth's guide to managing back to school or college anxiety



Accessing support from Kooth

It's quick and easy to sign up to Kooth and will only take a few minutes. No formal referral from a GP is needed and you can self refer at anytime.

Support options

You can access a range of support options including:

- Chat with a member of our team (*live chat or send us a message anytime)
- Goal setting and journalling
- Mini activity hub
- Community support (discussion boards and live forums)
- Helpful articles (from the Kooth team and our community)

Live chat hours

You can live chat with a member of our team between:

- 12pm - 10pm on weekdays
- 6pm - 10pm on weekends

Visit **kooth.com** today to find free, safe and anonymous support.

As the summer draws to a close, it nears that stressful time of year for so many students:

You might be feeling worried or nervous about:

- Navigating a new school or college
- Being away from your family
- Making friends
- Upcoming exams or big changes
- Having to return to lessons and having less time to relax



Addressing some of your worries

Packing a bag

Packing your bag early on might help you manage your anxiety. As well as packing the important must-haves, like notebooks and pencils, you could also pack a small trinket to help you feel less alone, soothe difficult feelings, or help you connect with positive thoughts - for example, a seashell from a favourite holiday, a photo of a pet, or some dried herbs that smell nice.



Your first days

Take some time to get to know the building and how long it will take to get to and from lessons. If you're feeling really unsure, is there a friend who can accompany you?

Try to keep in mind that many others in your year are going through the same thing. Many of your classmates won't have been to the new school or college yet, and your teachers will understand that.

Getting to know people in the same class can be important, too, so you don't feel alone and can ask them for help when you're feeling unsure.

Break times can also be a good time to figure out how you want to spend your free time. There are often clubs you can hang out at (art, sports, drama, or music, for example), or maybe you'd like to just spend time in the library.

Finding where you want to be can be a great way to make friends and make your day more fun. If you're not sure what clubs are available during free times, usually a form tutor or head of year will be able to help you.

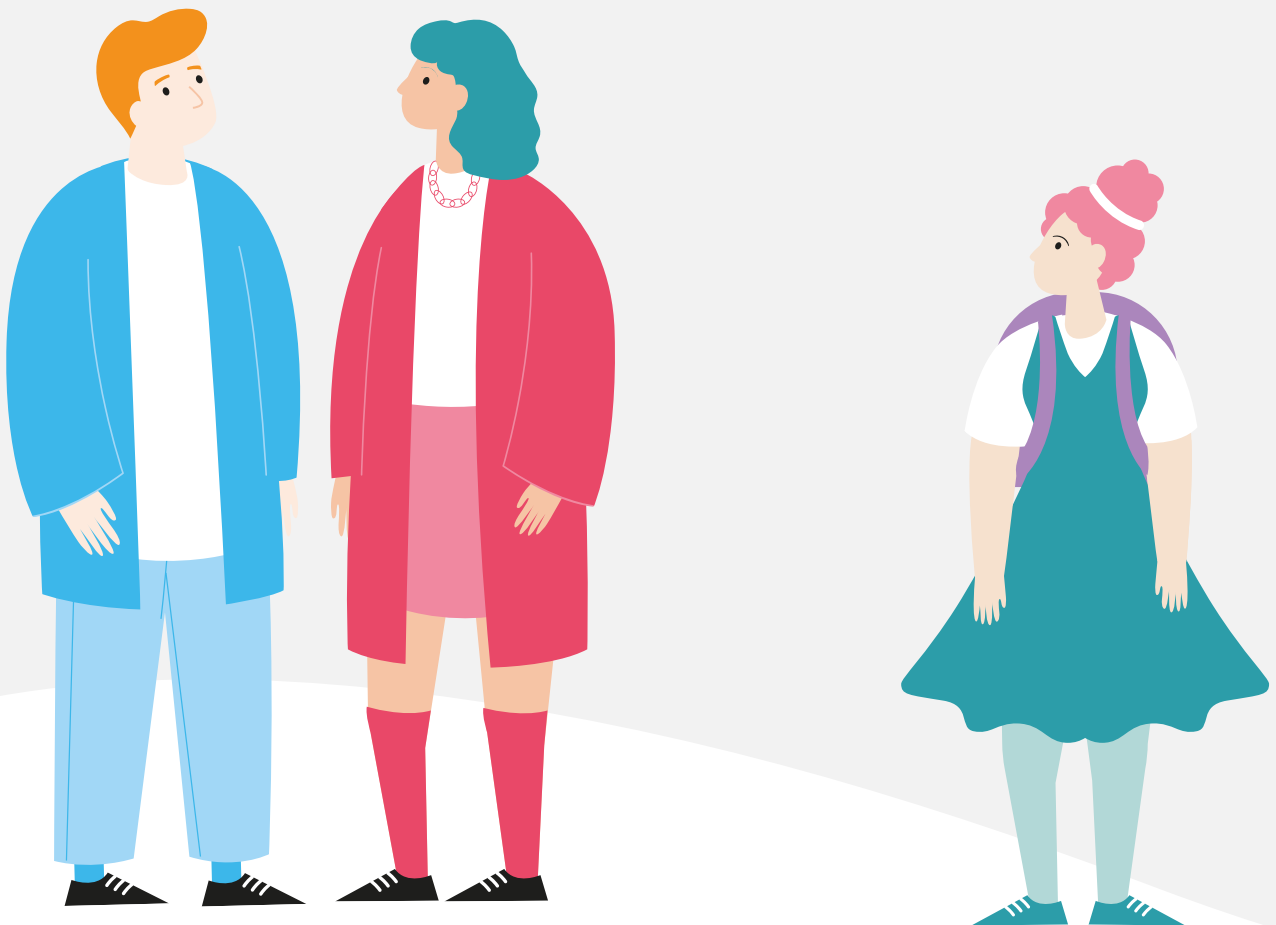
The best thing you can do is take a deep breath and be prepared to ask for directions. Try not to worry - it will be an adjustment period for everybody. Staff are really familiar with new students getting to know their way around, so being late for class or getting lost is expected for the first few weeks of term.



Being away from family

It can be tough to be away from your parents, carers or siblings all day when you've got used to being around them all the time. It can feel isolating to be on your own, out in the world by yourself again.

If you're worried about this, try sitting down and chatting to your family about your concerns. Maybe you could come up with a new family routine together - eating breakfast or dinner together every day or sending a text at a break time. You could also plan to do something together after you finish school/college or at the weekend might also give you a chance to have some quality time together.



Making friends - or meeting old ones

It can feel really odd seeing friends again after a long period apart. You might also be wondering about how to make new friends.

For your old friends, try to remember that even if they're a little different now, we all have changed a bit over time. While it can feel a bit surreal to see someone after months of not seeing them, they are likely feeling the same way.

Try focusing on how to reconnect - for example, doing things you used to enjoy together or trying out new activities, too.

If you're worried about making new friends, remember that others might be feeling the same way. It might feel like an overwhelming idea to go talk to new people, but you don't have to become best friends right away.

Start by just saying "hello" to someone who maybe looks a little lost and uncertain.



You can try asking questions like:

- How is your day going?
- What's your favourite TV show?
- Do you have any pets?
- What's your favourite subject?
- Do you play any sports?
- Are you reading any interesting books right now?
- What are your hobbies?

Even if someone has different tastes to you, that's okay! Sometimes, having friends with different interests, styles, or ways of thinking can give us a whole new experience or lead us to discover new hobbies, music, books, etc.



