

YOUR

# BACK SCHOOL

CHECKLIST

The busy parents guide for helping children prepare for a successful school year

BY ANDREA GUTIERREZ

**NEED TO GET A JUMP** on preparing your student for the coming school year? Here are a few ways to make the transition back to the classroom a little easier.

## 1 Get started

- Obtain school policies regarding disciplinary action, safety, school closures, procedures, etc., and review them with your child before school begins.
  - Look over the school calendar and consider a sensible number of extracurricular activities your family can participate in.
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- If you're starting at a new school, enroll your student and submit all registration paperwork.
  - Find out when the semester starts and what time to arrive.
  - If laptops or tablets will be issued for homework or remote learning days, make sure your internet connection can handle the load.
  - Discuss what may be required in your home to keep your child safe and focused while using school-provided technology.
  - Review usage of the online tools for monitoring your child's progress.
  - Sign up for alerts and inform your child that you'll help explain assignment expectations if the directions are unclear.

## 2 Meals & snacks

- Create a list of items you'll need to purchase for packed lunches, snacks or quick breakfast items.
- Make note of whether your child will be required to bring his own healthy snack each day or if the teacher wants students to contribute to a shared snack cabinet.
- Determine if the school has a breakfast program, if you're interested, and find out if your family qualifies for free lunches or reduced pricing.
- Find out the cost of breakfast and lunch menu items as well as acceptable forms of payment. Sign up for the online payment portal, if needed.

### 3 Clothing & appearance

- If your child's school has a dress code or guidelines for PE attire, shop for needed apparel.
- Involve your child in purging closets of outgrown clothes, shoes and coats. Donate items to charity.
- Help organize your child's wardrobe and determine what items need to be purchased. Write out a shopping list.
- Schedule a haircut appointment for your child.

### 4 Medical requirements

- Ask your family physician if your child is up to date on immunizations.
- Inform the school of your child's medical needs, allergies or medications (if any) that will require special attention.
- Schedule a physical exam if it's required for PE or extracurricular activities.
- Review whatever continuing COVID policies your school district has for the start of the year.

### 5 To and from school

- If your child will ride the bus, become familiar with the pick-up and drop-off times and locations.
- If you'll be driving your child to school, find out the school's policy on pick-up and drop-off times and locations.
- Check with other families if you're interested in arranging carpool groups.
- If your child will walk to and from school, determine the safest route, and find out if there are crossing guards or monitors at busy intersections. Walk the route with your child. Practice crossing the street at designated crosswalks and review pedestrian safety.

### 6 School supplies

- Search the school's website or call the office for a supply list.
- Go through your school supplies from last year to see what can be reused.
- Follow back-to-school sales to get the best price on each item on your list.
- Buy extra supplies to keep at home for homework or continuing projects. Keep them in a central location.
- Label your child's supplies, as well as his coat and lunchbox, with his first and last name.

### 7 Teacher & classroom

- Find out who your child's teacher is and where the classroom is located. Visit the school to tour common areas such as the nearest restrooms, the library, the cafeteria and the gymnasium.
- Ask your child's teacher how he or she prefers to communicate with parents.
- Know where to find teachers' and administrators' contact information.
- Ask the teacher for the basics of what your child will be learning in this grade level and how you can help reinforce these principles at home.
- Update your calendar with scheduled parent-teacher conferences, fundraising events, volunteer opportunities, etc.

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