



INSPIRE. EMPOWER. ACHIEVE.

# RCDSB

# YOU BELONG HERE

## Welcome Back!

Starting a new school year can be stressful if you're a student, staff or parent.

The novelty and unpredictability of a new school with new friends or colleagues can help feed your sense anxiety and fear. What bus do I take? Where's my classroom? Why am I the only one feeling like this?

You're not!

These are normal feelings when you experience a new change in your life. Everyone can feel this way. Even if a person doesn't appear to be nervous like you - chances are they've felt the same feelings at some point.

To help you work through it, you need to feel safe, cared for and part of an inclusive and respectful school environment. The first weeks of the school year is the best time to focus on developing relationships, getting to know people and setting up a routine and structure. These small steps can provide the foundation for safety, belonging and connection throughout the school year.

Below you'll find a range of resources to help you (educator, parent and student) reduce stress, alleviate anxiety and support the development of positive mental health and personal well-being.

## Staff Resources

Click [here](#) to read about the basics of self care with concrete strategies to support well-being. It is important for adults to take care of themselves as part of caring for others!

Excellence in  
Teaching and  
Learning

Safe, Caring,  
Inclusive and  
Respectful  
Learning  
Environments

Wise Use of  
Resources

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Staff can click [here](#) to learn about the ABC's of Stress and [here](#) for a booklet about helping kids cope.

### **Kids Have Stress Too Program**

These skills are best reinforced at school and home. Start with the stress checklist [here](#).

- [Discuss](#) things that upset or stress your child.
- [Learn](#) quick ways to relax.
- [Practice](#) talking nicely to myself.
- [Help](#) students learn self care strategies.
- [Practice](#) Stop, Look and Listen.
- [Practice](#) The What If Game.
- [Incorporate](#) physical activity.
- [Learn](#) to use problem solving.

### **Parents/Guardians**

A great online resource for adults to learn about stress and healthy coping, can be found at: [www.stressstrategies.ca](http://www.stressstrategies.ca)

Click [here](#) for information and resources on the board website, including information about screen time, sleep, attachment and lots more.

### **Students**

[Good2Talk](#) is a free, confidential and anonymous helpline providing professional counselling and information and referrals for mental health, addictions and well-being to post-secondary students in Ontario: 24 hours a day, 7 days of the week, 365 days of the year.

[HealthyMinds](#) is a problem-solving tool to help deal with emotions and cope with the stresses you encounter as a student. The goal: Keeping your mind healthy. HealthyMinds was developed by The Royal - one of Canada's foremost mental health care and academic health science centres. Its mandate is simple: to help more people living with mental illness into recovery faster.

**IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT YOUR FRIEND,  
COLLEAGUE OR A STUDENT'S MENTAL HEALTH,  
CONTACT THE SCHOOL SUPPORT COUNSELLOR  
AND/OR PRINCIPAL, VICE PRINCIPAL. THEY ARE THERE  
TO HELP!**

## **Symptoms of Stress**

Signs that you are over-stressed may include:

- ✓ Feelings of irritability, sadness or guilt
- ✓ Change in sleep patterns
- ✓ Change in weight or appetite
- ✓ Difficulty in concentrating or making decisions
- ✓ Negative thinking
- ✓ Loss of interest, enjoyment or energy in something you used to enjoy
- ✓ Restlessness