



BEUMARIS  
NORTH  
PRIMARY  
SCHOOL

### **Managing the morning separation in Prep and beyond**

Separation anxiety is a normal part of childhood development, beginning at approximately 6 months of age and typically resolving around the time children begin kindergarten. For some children, separating from their parents remains difficult for a longer time.

It is quite common for children in Prep to experience some difficulty in this area, particularly in the first few weeks. Often, separating is just as (or more) difficult for the parents! We understand that you may be anxious about how your child is coping being away from you for several hours, but please be assured that they are safe and very well supported by their teachers. While you may be at home worrying, your child is very likely to be having a lovely time learning new things and making new friends. Most children settle very well immediately after their parent has left their eyesight.

Some strategies that are very useful if your child is clingy, distressed or anxious about you leaving in the morning include:

- Establishing a morning ritual which includes a specific place where you say “See you later” to your child. (“See you later” is often received better than “Goodbye”.)
- Make sure that your child has met up with a friend or is engaged in some kind of activity before you leave.
- Give your child a hug or kiss and let them know that you will pick them up after school (or tell them who will). Keep up your end of the bargain and try to be on time and where you said you will be.
- Remain calm, matter-of-fact and do not linger. Once you have said “See you later” it is important that you leave rather than prolonging the farewell. It is tempting to try to watch your child through a window or from around a corner, but once a child is settled, seeing their parent again often reignites the distress. Children really feel if their parent is anxious about leaving and this can also be a trigger for them.
- Never try to sneak away without saying “See you later” as this will only increase your child’s anxiety about you leaving.
- If your child has forgotten something important, take it to the front office rather than risking distressing your child again by bringing it to the classroom and having another farewell.
- Allow your child to bring something belonging to you to school, such as a note or a piece of fabric with your perfume / aftershave on it.
- After school, talk about all the positive things that occurred throughout the day. Discuss these the following morning on your way to school.
- Engage the support of your child’s class teacher. Together you could develop a plan if your child continues to resist separation.

If separation anxiety persists for many weeks even after consistently using these strategies then further assistance may be useful. Please ensure that you speak to your child’s class teacher if you are concerned about your child.

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