



## Supporting Students in Secondary School

At Central Coast Steiner School, we highly value the partnership of parents/guardians and teachers. The journey of our young students through high school becomes more cohesive and supported when we work together. **Please don't 'check out' with your parenting in the high school years- it is just as important as in the younger years!** Wellbeing issues are on the rise and we need to work together to guide our students through these challenging years. The College of Teachers requests that parents and guardians of secondary school students are mindful of actively supporting the following aspects of their child's development until the end of Year 10 and beyond...

### ✓ Nutrition

We recommend fresh, healthy unprocessed foods and regular meals. Eating a healthy breakfast is very important! Make sure the alarm is set in the morning to allow adequate time for a sit-down nutritious breakfast at the start of each school day. An evening meal together around the dinner table (with no screens on, including no phones) is a great opportunity to share what happened during the day.

### ✓ Regular, healthy sleep

Sleep is vital to our wellbeing. According to the *National Sleep Foundation*, teenagers need about 8 to 10 hours of sleep each night to function best. Not getting enough sleep impacts significantly on a student's ability to learn and their wellbeing. Avoid screen time exposure for at least one hour before bedtime. Set an evening alarm so that 'time to go to bed' is a clear and regulated habit.

### ✓ Regular exercise

The links between getting regular exercise for both physical and mental health are well documented. Monitor carefully your child's tendency to living a sedentary lifestyle and 'couch potato' behaviour. Help instil regular habits to get your child moving every day.

### ✓ Hobbies/ Interests/ Involvement outside of school

Staying connected to communities such as scouts, surf-lifesaving, drama clubs etc. helps teenagers 'find their tribe' and feel a sense of belonging. Following passions and working towards high standards e.g. with a musical instrument or sport helps students sustain commitment and build resilience.

### ✓ Time in nature

Time in nature helps us all connect to our centre and 'reset'. It helps release tension, is rejuvenating and gives us a sense of belonging in a big wide world. Even a regular walk around the block with the dog can be an opportunity to notice the beauty in everyday moments.

### ✓ Regular reading of books

Book reading tends to drop off in secondary school and this is a great loss! Encourage your child to engage their imaginations in the world of stories, ideally as a daily habit. It helps them maintain deep focus (as opposed to online skim reading), improves their literacy and broadens their horizons.

### ✓ Limit screen time (including placing firm boundaries around social media usage, internet usage, phone usage and gaming)

This is an area of continual boundary-pushing where you will be sorely tested! You need to stand your ground firmly. Digital technologies are designed to facilitate addiction and get people 'hooked'. A fear of missing out is at the heart of many features of social media design. Carefully monitor the content of what your child is exposed to and ask questions e.g. there are 'G' rated games (such as Fortnite) where the focus is killing other people with assault weapons. Is this what you want your child playing? Ideally, screen usage in your home should take place in a public space with the screen facing outwards. Do you have adequate controls on your devices at home? Consider not purchasing a 'smart' phone, but a simple one instead for communication. Talk to other parents and maintain your boundaries. Don't fall for the 'but everyone's doing it' line. Do not allow your child to dictate their 'needs' to you. **Remember to be the adult who is in charge.**

### ✓ Study and organisation habits

The demands of the secondary curriculum mean that your child will need to 'step up' in their learning. Facilitate this new stage of their lives by creating an orderly place to study, free from noise and other distractions. Do not allow your child to listen to music whilst doing their homework (unless it is Baroque classical music!). Establish regular, well-organised habits. Encourage daily use of the school diary. Organise and pack the bag for school the night before. Put the assessment task calendar on the fridge and guide your child into efficient time management. Avoid overloading your child with so many activities that there is no room to breathe and homework becomes difficult to manage. Communicate with the teachers when needed and attend all parent-teacher evenings.



Receive the children in  
reverence, educate them  
in love, and send them  
forth in freedom.

-Rudolf Steiner