St. Bene’s Counselling Corner
(Week 1 – Back to school)

Welcome Back!
I’m back this year as part-time Student Counsellor, working alongside staff to support the needs of our students and families. Together we aim to provide a safe and positive learning environment. I will see children individually and in groups for discussions on various topics – so stay tuned for my page! If you think your child may benefit from some additional support please do not hesitate to contact me or they can drop a note in my box in their classroom.

So it’s back to school
With that can bring stress, worry, lack of sleep, busy-ness, but also optimism, excitement, hope, energy and enthusiasm.

As parents we naturally want to assist our children to begin the year with a strong, healthy and stable mind.

Almost anything can become a learning experience if there is enough caring involved...... (Mary MacCraken).

So some handy hints:
✓ Re-establish bed, wake up and dinner times. Children who are well rested perform better at school, largely due to a clearer focus, and ability to follow direction. They are better able to self-regulate their behaviour and make positive choices due to being less frustrated and confused. These feelingsoften accompany tiredness.

✓ Organise a study area and central place where school notes/calendars are displayed and actioned. For example; a pin up board in the kitchen. For older children make it their responsibility to place notes on, ensure they are signed etc. The more organised the night before the calmer everyone is in the morning!

✓ Turn off TV – encourage quiet reading or puzzles if any free time in the morning before school, and cut out screen time at least an hour before bedtime to allow your child sufficient time to wind down.

✓ If your child is worried or scared show them you care by reinforcing their ability to cope – model positivity and optimism. At drop off don’t linger, reassure them you love them, will be thinking of them and will be back. For children who suffer from separation anxiety perhaps a photo or note may help them feel more secure whilst you are away. Remain positive and calm. Your child’s anxiety will reduce and yours will too, (sometimes this can take up to 20-40mins). Removing your child will not send them the message that you believe in their ability to cope.

✓ At the end of the day allow them a break! They have been working hard all day, so don’t bombard them with questions. Instead try open communication. Try “wow looks like you’ve had a busy day!” The sharing of news may come after dinner or bath time, not necessarily in the car ride home.

✓ Starting the school year is like any change – exciting but a little daunting. Make it a celebration, write a note in their lunch box, cook their favourite dinner, show them you love and are proud of all they have and will achieve!

References: Przeorski, A (PHD), psychologytoday.com
Gilmore, H. (LLMSW), pro.psychcentral.com
Maggie Dent, Facebook Page
www.raisingchildren.com.au