

**LOWER SCHOOL BACK TO SCHOOL SUPPORT
FROM SCHOOL COUNSELOR KIM VALENTINE**

The return to the school year is full of emotions, some of which may be excitement, joy, sadness, and apprehension. Some students feel nervous starting the year because there is so much “new” ahead of them, and others find all the new things exciting. All of these responses to the start of the year are okay and expected. Hopefully, after the first full week your child is feeling settled in their school routine and environment and finding connection with their peers and teachers. As we enter this new school year, it’s a great time to remind ourselves of where our children are in their developmental stages and what they need from us, their trusted adults. Understanding these stages allows us to support our children at home and school, keeping in mind that all children go through these stages at different rates and at different times (children don’t suddenly enter a stage on their birthday). Please know that your Lower School teachers and staff are here to support you and your children throughout the school year.

Ages	Physical	Social/Emotional	What do kids need?
4s & 5s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●Energetic: need to move ●Motor skills emerging ●Can be clumsy at times - spills and collisions are common 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●Friendly, talkative, strong desire to please and achieve ●May need help finding words to express how they feel ●Imaginative, but not ready for abstract thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●Routine ●Genuine, specific praise ●Predictable environment that is fair, firm, and loving ●Opportunity to practice behavior
6s & 7s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●Movement - often play hard and tire quickly ●Improved motor skills and coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●Curious! ●Enjoy group activities ●Strong sense of justice/fairness ●Sensitive and sometimes moody 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●Reassurance from adults ●Not ready for adults to confide their problems to the child ●Opportunity for independence and responsibility - want to do things on their own
8s & 9s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●Can be restless - want to push their physical limits ●Enjoy tasks that require precision - improved fine motor skills ●Lots of snacks = growth spurts (can also cause awkwardness moments) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●For some - larger friendship groups ●Continued focus on justice/fairness ●Competitive - want to debate and negotiate ●9s and 10s - More concern with who’s “in” and who’s “out” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●Enjoy being noticed - still want praise ●Modeling ●Challenging activities ●Patience and humor to relieve stress
10s & 11s	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●Movement - often play hard and tire quickly ●More snacks! ●Improved motor skills and coordination 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●9s and 10s - More concern with who’s “in” and who’s “out”, strong sense of loyalty (can lead to conflicts) ●Appreciate perspectives other than their own ●Think abstractly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ●A soft landing ●Someone to listen ●Routine, structure, consistency ●Independence, responsibility