

The First Few Weeks Away At College/University

After the excitement of heading off, the first few weeks can be difficult for both youngster and parent! Those heading to College or Uni straight from school have been used to a structured day & timetable, so to be in a new environment with strangers and an empty calendar can be overwhelming. There is a huge hype over Fresher's Week but often this can be an anti-climax and result in a difficult week for many. They must be encouraged to get themselves out there and meet people, despite them possibly not feeling like doing so – the temptation to wallow in their room with their mobile device is high! If they're not yet 18, gaining entrance to some events will be difficult but encourage them to attend whatever events they can. A lot of partying takes place in student accommodation rather than licensed premises so under 18's won't always miss out.



For most, staying away from home takes some time to get used to. This process can be helped by sticking it out for several weeks at the start of term before returning home. Sometimes coming home too soon can hinder the settling process – many friendships & bonds are made in first few weekends, so by returning home they risk missing out on that.

It is a transition period for both parent & child which improves with time! Often the student will settle better once their course timetable starts and they get some structure into their day. Some parents cope with the transition easily and others find it very hard (some likening the feeling as similar to bereavement). Often the process is more difficult for the parent than it is for the child!



Mobile devices are great for keeping in touch – messenger and texting is invaluable in the early days – allowing communication when either youngster or parent may be too emotional to talk. Skype and video Messenger is great (and free!) when ready for face to face chats (and to show off their surroundings or new purchases!)

As the weeks progress, everyone generally settles into their new routines. However if problems still exist after a couple of weeks; don't be afraid to seek help from the Student Union/Support Centre. Emotional “wobbles” later in the year (& subsequent years) are common too, so look out for them. Your child may be away from home, but they'll probably still need your support!