

# EARLY-YEAR OVERWHELM

Understanding the signs & practical ways to respond.

Overwhelm doesn't always look dramatic. Sometimes it shows up quietly.

## It may look like

### Physical symptoms

- Ongoing fatigue
- Headaches or tension
- Trouble sleeping

### Emotional symptoms

- Irritability or tearfulness
- Feeling on edge
- Guilt for "not coping better"

### Mental symptoms

- Difficulty concentrating
- Forgetfulness
- Feeling constantly behind

### Behavioural symptoms

- Working longer hours
- Skipping breaks
- Withdrawing from others

This is not weakness.  
It's your system adjusting to high demand.

## Did you know?

- The first weeks of a school year are among the most cognitively demanding periods.
- During transition, the brain uses more energy while building new routines.
- Overwhelm activates the body's stress response, affecting sleep and concentration.

## When you feel overwhelmed

1. Acknowledge it.
2. Prioritise tomorrow's key tasks.
3. Build small pauses into your day.
4. Adjust perfection expectations.
5. Reach out for support.

## A reminder

## You are not alone

SAOU Help is here for you, and offers confidential emotional support.

Whenever you need it.



## YOUR WELLBEING MATTERS!

FOR IMMEDIATE SUPPORT,  
CONTACT THE SAOU HELP LINE

 012 436 0911

 064 609 1150

24/7 Emotional Support

#WantOursGeeOn  
#BecauseWeCare

[www.saou.co.za/saou-help](http://www.saou.co.za/saou-help)