



Best buddies: Riley, Olivia and Jake Myers take their first big step into "big school".

Picture: Jane Dyson

■ Siblings ready for start of the school year

Triple treat starts kindy

By **Eva Tejszski**

IF THREE is a crowd, then these cheeky triplets wouldn't know it.

Of course it helps that the siblings, who start school today, are also best friends.

Riley, Olivia and Jake Myers, 4, are off to Regina Coeli School, Beverly Hills.

They will join their older brother Zachary who is in year 1.

Mornings are sure to be a hectic time for mum Megan, who is gearing up for the lunch box packing and shoelace tying routine.

"It will be busy," Mrs Myers said.

"It's a good thing that they are all in the one class, so their homework will be the same.

"I was worried about them starting kindy early but they are ready."

She said the triplets had different personalities.

"Riley is cheeky, Olivia is the talker and Jake is Mr Sporty," she said.

"But they all look after each other."

Even the \$2000-plus uniform cost does not dampen Mrs Myers's excitement.

"It's a new chapter in our lives."

AVOID ANXIETY

Leaving mum and dad for the first time or moving from primary school to high school, while exciting, can also cause anxiety.

Narwee lifestyle coach Kim Townsend said starting "big school" came with mixed emotions.

"It is exciting when the kids look so cute in their new uniforms and we see them growing up," Ms Townsend said. "Then as parents, on the first day in particular, the fears of them missing home, not fitting in or getting bullied kicks in.

"Children pick up on your anxiety and react."

Ms Townsend encouraged parents to listen to their children's concerns and follow these steps:

- Practise getting into routine by doing things such as unwrapping lunches or tying shoe laces.
- Talk positively about school and reinforce things such as playing, drawing, singing and making new friends.

- Manage your feelings. It is a day for your child to start the next part of their life's journey, not a day of sadness that they won't be with you.

- Leave as soon as the teacher says you can. Your child is in expert hands. Wish them a great day.

Australia's counselling service, Kids Helpline, is offering tips for managing back-to-school stress.

Details: kidshelp.com.au or 1800 55 1800.