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Transition to Secondary School

Moving to secondary school can be stressful for both children and parents so we have put together some information based on the most common worries that children face with this transition.

Key Points

Make a good start!

- Arrive on time
- In the correct uniform
- With the correct school books and all necessary equipment with you

Getting dressed

Practice putting on your new school uniform. Try timing yourself so you know how long it will take, this will help you figure out how much time you will need in the morning to get ready.

If you find it tricky to get yourself dressed without help you will need to practice the things you find more challenging before you start in your new school. There are lots of things that can help you to learn these skills, YouTube, strategy sheets, pictures; it really depends on how you learn best. If you would like strategy sheets for particular dressing tasks, please speak with your OT.

It is often easier dressing while sitting so start there.

If shoelaces are your problem area, it is best to practice doing up the laces with your shoes off your feet first.

If you must wear a tie for school you need to learn how to do it so ask for help.

Remember you need to practice, practice, practice to learn these complex skills.

When you are dressed, check in the mirror – does everything look how it should?

If there are different parts of dressing that you find challenging or if despite practicing you are still having difficulties, ask a family member to call us to discuss.



Writing

Make sure you are sitting properly to write - desk and chair at a comfortable height, feet flat on the floor, bottom at the back of the chair, chair near the table, shoulders relaxed, paper angled slightly.



Use a pen that feels comfortable in your hand and the ink easily flows.

There are many different types available, you could try pens like PenAgain, Stablo or Yoro.



Try different shapes and thicknesses of pens to see what you like best.

You do not have to use joined-up writing. You can use un-joined, print or a mixture of both. The most important thing is that your teacher's are able to read what you have written. If you are worried about this speak to your form teacher, you might be surprised to know that teachers are well practiced at reading lots of different styles of handwriting!

If you are struggling to write everything down in the lesson speak to your teacher, they might be able to provide additional support like printed instruction sheets rather than whiteboard copying.

Another option is to voice record the lessons so you are able to listen back afterwards. Record the lessons and listen back at a later date or ask your teacher to provide sheets. Ensure you have permission from your teacher before doing this.

It is normal to experience aching in your hands when writing for long periods of time, if this is the case it can help to stop and stretch out your fingers. If you experience pain you should ask a family member to call us to discuss using the contact details provided.

Mathematics Equipment



There will be lots of fun and interesting equipment that you be introduced to in your new school but sometimes it can be challenging them, try:

- using a calculator with larger numbers or one with contrasting colours
- Glue a handle to your equipment to make it easier to hold
- Use little suction cups on pieces of equipment to make them easier to hold
- If you have not used a compass before, it can be difficult to master, ask

an adult to show you how to set it up and use it and have a practice. You may find it easier holding the pencil still and moving the paper.



Lunch

There will be lots of variety on offer for school meals but if this overwhelming then take a packed lunch on the first few days.

It can be challenging to manage lunch times – pick something to eat from a large selection, balancing your food with your school bag on your back, locating your money/card from your pocket to pay all at the same time! Things that can help with this are:

- When you are in the queue try to figure out what you want, is there a menu on the wall or does it get published so you can decide what you want before you go to school.
- Most schools use a card system and do not use cash so have this ready to pay – always keep an eye on your balance so you know when to ask for it to be topped up
- Using the person in front of you to guide you through the motions can help people feel more relaxed
- Know your school expectations – are you expected to put your rubbish in the bin after you have finished!

Remember, you are one of a whole year group that hasn't done this before and it is perfectly normal to feel a little nervous about it.

PE

If getting dressed is something that you have difficulty with then you may be feeling a little anxious about PE sessions. Follow the advice above and practice with each item of clothing. Speak with your teachers about any difficulties you may have, they may be able to arrange extra time for you get changed.

You may be able to choose a buddy/friend you trust to help with some aspects such as buttons and laces.

Remember there are a lot more sports on offer in secondary schools and you might find something you absolutely love!

Being active is very important for your mental wellbeing as well as your physical wellbeing so try and have a go.

Most schools have after school clubs where you can try that sport to see if you like it.

If sport is your thing, meeting new people can help to boost your confidence in other aspects of your life and you might gain a few new friends in the process.

You might want to practice changing into your PE kit and fitting everything into your bag before your first day.

If you are worried, speak to your teacher.

Homework

Make sure your environment is set-up for you to work from home and you have quiet space to work. Are your feet flat on the floor, back supported by the chair and the table is a comfortable height? If not, you might find it helpful to do your homework in school, for example in the library.

Write down your homework – Use your homework diary/planner to write down what is required and the date it is due in. Try to complete it on the day it is set if you can as this can stop you feeling overwhelmed, you can always ask a classmate or teacher if you do not understand.

Most schools have a homework hub either after school or at lunchtime if you need help.

You could use a white board at home to show what homework you need to do each day. Cross things off as you do them.

Last but not least...

If you have a mobile, try to make sure that you keep it charged up or carry a block charger in your bag for emergencies. Have a copy of important numbers in your bag or wallet and find a teacher to ask for help if you are stuck and don't know what to do.

Find out where the school office is or where key members of staff are located during break times so if you need to speak to someone urgently you know where to find them.

If you already know someone at the school speak to them, ask them questions and tell them how you feel.

Remember it was everyone's first day once, it does get easier!

If you are concerned about anything, speak to someone

Get your family to contact us if you need further help or if you are finding the strategies too difficult to follow