

How to help your child with transition to secondary school

1. (Re)Visit the School Website

There's lots of information for your child on the school's website which could help to address many of their concerns about starting secondary school.

For example, they might find:

- a virtual tour of the school led by both teachers and pupils
- a dedicated email for you to write to the school if you've got any questions
- information about timings for the first day back (often year 7 will come in earlier than other year groups).

2. Go Through What Happens on the First Day

Your child may be thinking about the logistics of starting their first day at secondary school. You can help by talking through what's likely to happen.

Their first day could include:

- an extended form-time to make sure that your child is settled and understands how to read their timetable and knows where their lessons are
- an earlier lunch
- a slightly earlier finish.

Your child may have lessons as normal on the first day, or they may have some lessons where teachers take the opportunity to go through school rules and expectations with them.

3. Focus on the Positives

If your child is anxious about starting secondary school, try to stay cheerful and realistic. Yes, the corridors will be crowded, but it's also going to be exciting, such as meeting new teachers and learning new subjects.

4. Get School Equipment Ready

One of the major changes of starting secondary school is the amount of equipment your child has to carry around with them. Their rucksack will seem to get larger by the day!

It's good to make sure that your child has all their basic classroom equipment ready in time, i.e. pencil case, pens, ruler, calculator and PE kit.

5. Make Sure the Uniform is Good to Go

Hopefully, your child's new uniform is ordered and ready. Although you may be hanging on for shoes as late as possible in case your child's feet grow again, your town's supply of school shoes may suddenly dry up in the last week of the holidays – so it's an idea to buy footwear with plenty of time to spare.

6. Label Clothes and Equipment

You could also label clothes and items such as lunchboxes and water bottles.

7. Check the School's Mobile Phone Policy

You could have a quick read through on the website so that your child is clear about the do's and don'ts of the school's rules on mobile phones, as they differ greatly from school to school.

For example, some schools have zones where phones are allowed during break times, whereas other schools might have a zero-tolerance policy.

8. Pass on any Relevant Information about Your Child

9. Make Arrangements for the School Journey

Has your child made arrangements to walk up, or catch the bus, with a group of friends? They might prefer to do this, as opposed to you taking them up in the car. Plus, it will help them be more independent.

10. Have a Good 'Day Before'

The day before school, how about having a pleasant family day with some enjoyable and familiar activities?

- Some exercise could help your child to have a good night's sleep, which means they'll cope better with any concerns the next day – swimming, running or a walk in the park would be great.
- It's a good idea to have a reasonably early night ready for the big day.
- Pack your child plenty to eat for the next day – it could be a very late lunch compared to what they're used to at primary school.
- Reminding your child how amazing they are can also go a long way in "bigging them up" before their first day.