

## Moving up to senior school

So your child is moving on from primary school – but are they ready? And are you ready to be a secondary school parent with all the new challenges that brings? Be Secondary School Ready with our top tips to help you and your child.

### Keep key dates somewhere safe

Whether you prefer to embrace technology and pin reminders in your phone, or you prefer a physical diary, neither may be the best way of remembering the all-important dates. A post-it note or a timetable under a fridge magnet are great ways of reminding you of what's coming up. Schools are increasingly mindful about this transitional phase, with teachers taking considerable time and care to ensure that children know what to expect and are equipped through student passports, school visits and try-out or induction days. This year it's important to remember that secondary schools are very aware children have missed out on taster sessions and transition days because of lockdown, and will be preparing for a smooth and happy transition when they welcome their new intake later in the year.

### Rehearse the journey

If you rely on public transport, check the latest advice for traveling to and from school. Taking buses and trains on their own is a big step for many children, even without the restrictions of a global pandemic, so take some time prepare them for making the journey when it's safe to do so. [More about getting to school and back safely.](#)

### Be positive

Talk up the school with your child, even if it wasn't your first choice for them. They need to know what an overwhelmingly positive experience it will be. We all love sharing horror stories, but now is not the time! Recall the good days, and tell your child about them. And make sure they know you're there for support and help when it's needed.

### Uniform

Let them try on the school uniform before the big day so that there are no big surprises. Grandparents or other relatives may want to see them in their new uniform, but try not to make too big a deal out of it. You may need to get them used to an earlier wake-up time. Also, children at this age go through growth spurts, so don't buy the uniform too far in advance, and don't expect to get your money's worth out of shirts, blouses or trousers.

### Increase their independence

You'll always have their back, but by the time your child leaves secondary school, they will be on the cusp of adulthood. The transition to secondary school is a great time to start encouraging their independence, in gentle steps at first. For example, you might trust them with solo trips to the letter box, or allow them collect the take-away food from a local restaurant. Show that you

have confidence in them. Encourage your child to pack their bag (themselves) every evening from day one, to help avoid breakfast-time panic.

### **Specific needs**

If your child has any health issues or specific needs, it is important to start talking to the school about this as early as possible. Provide staff with as much information as they need to build their understanding of your child and strong relationships from the off.

The Mental Health Foundation has produced an excellent guide for children with special educational needs to support the transition to secondary school - [Moving On: A guide for pupils with special educational needs moving on to secondary school](#)

## **Once the new term starts...**

### **Allow them to be tired... and hungry!**

It's a major adjustment moving to secondary school. Your child is used to being the oldest in the playground. They'll now be the youngest, and there will be intimidating near-adults in the years above. So they will need you to be at your most understanding and unruffled. They will also need you to provide a fully-stocked fridge!

### **Create a homework station**

Make sure your child can easily access a computer, colour printer, digital camera and craft materials. After-school homework clubs can help kids get into the homework habit and provide helpful resources. Organise a space at home specifically for your child to focus on study and store their books and stationery.

### **Keep their confidence up**

Don't be concerned if their interests change. Secondary school introduces our children to a wide range of subjects from languages to sciences and the arts. An early interest in laboratory experiments may be replaced by a sudden keenness for historical facts and figures. At this time, your child is figuring out who they are and what they're good at. Encourage enthusiasms, but allow space for wiggle room and change!

### **Encourage their friendships**

Know how to keep them safe online. Your child may be keen to use Instagram or other social media to keep in touch with friends old and new. Discuss with them how to keep safe and happy online. [More about keeping your kids safe online.](#)

### **Key points**

- Make a note of key dates
- Rehearse the journey
- Be positive
- School uniform
- Build independence
- Create a homework space

- Keep their confidence up

- Encourage friendships

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