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publichealth5-19service



Transition to secondary school FACTSHEET

This factsheet will provide you with information about how to handle transition from primary to secondary school and helpful links to websites for more information.

Transitions are passages from one point or place in our lives to another, and will occur at many different stages throughout life as things change. The transition from primary to secondary school is one of the biggest changes in our lives, and change can often make us feel anxious and worried. Remember that adults get a bit nervous too when starting a new job or meeting new people, so it's ok and perfectly normal to feel a bit scared.

Common worries and concerns often include:

- Bullying and older children
- Getting lost
- Missing friends and making new friends
- Homework and difficulty of work

What can I do if I am feeling worried?

It is normal to have fears and concerns about the transition to secondary school as it is a big change. Below are some tips and advice mostly from other secondary school children to try and help you feel happier about the move:

Missing old friends and making new ones

Leaving friends after primary school can feel really sad, and it's important to make sure you stay in touch and help each other with moving schools. There are lots of ways you can stay in touch with your old friends, especially texting, calling and using FaceTime so you can still see each other and hopefully miss them less. Remember however that there are plenty of new people at secondary school as well, ready for you to make friends with. There are plenty of ways you can try to make new friends, especially as everyone will be trying to do the same:

- Talk with new people in your form as you will see them everyday
- Join in with lunchtime activities

- Just smile and say hi – remember to stay positive and friendly and not to be bossy or showing off
- Teachers often help you in making friends in the first few weeks by getting you to sit next to new people, and setting group-work projects, which makes it easy to get chatting to people. If you are finding it hard to make friends, speak to your form tutor, as they will try and help.

Getting lost

You are bound to feel like you don't know where you are going in the first few days, and even weeks. Schools will have ideas for helping you to find your way around, often by giving out maps and explaining the room and building system to you on the first day. You will be travelling to a lot of lessons with your form group, so try and stick with them if you don't know the way, or arrange to walk with a friend.

Remember you can always ask the teachers the way – they don't mind! Try and retrace your steps to the classroom you just came from to ask if you get stuck, or head to the main reception or office where they will be able to help. Also during the first week or so teachers won't mind if you get lost on the way to a lesson: they will try and help you for next time.

Work being harder

A common concern is not being able to cope with the work being much more difficult than at primary school. However at the beginning, teachers often tend to overlap a lot of work with work you will have done in primary school, which makes the transition easier.

They will teach you how to use reference sources, revise and make notes to write essays so don't worry about that before you get there. The teachers are specialists in their subjects and are always ready to help – they like answering questions if you don't quite understand something, as if you don't understand someone else probably won't either!

More homework

There will be more homework than primary school, however once you adjust into a routine it is easily manageable. Here are some tips from secondary school children about how to cope with the homework:

- Be organized and you will stay on top of it
- Find a good place for concentrating
- Remember to write it down properly in class so you know what you have to do and when it's due
- Create a regular time and routine for homework, but don't forget to plan breaks for other things you want to do too
- Tackle the hardest bits first when you are less tired
- Don't be afraid to ring friends and ask for help
- Remember when it comes to homework, it is always better to hand in something than nothing.

Bullying

Moving to a big school where you are suddenly the youngest is a very daunting thought.

Remember if you are bullied that you are not alone: around 1 in 10 children at secondary school are bullied. Here are some tips to try and avoid being bullied at your new school:

- Expand your friendships early on, as having friends will help to boost your self-esteem
- Try and move to lessons in a crowd with your form or friends, and walk tall in the corridors: don't just shuffle and look at the floor
- Be organised so you settle into the new routine quickly and feel confident around school
- Remember not to fight back as you might end up in trouble. Act confident and look the bully in the eye, before walking along with your friends: don't show them that it is bothering you

Remember bullying is not tolerated in schools. There are lots of people in school you can talk to, including your form tutor or other subject teachers. They will all want to listen, and act discretely to make it stop and to help make your time at school more enjoyable.

How do I stop missing primary school and all my friends?

It's natural to miss your friends and your old school and teachers, as in most cases you have grown up through that school for the last 6 years. However remember that there are many things to look forward to about your new school:

- The opportunity to make new friends: there are so many exciting people to meet, some of whom will be friends for life
- Having a different teacher for each subject: they are specialist in what they do so will be able to make lessons more interesting, varied and exciting
- New school and facilities to use including I.C.T and science laboratories, and specialized art, cookery and workshop rooms
- Work is more challenging and varied, and it will feel great when you master something really tough. You will develop lots of new interests as well
- More responsibility, freedom and choice: there will be many more activities to choose from independently at lunch times and after school, where you can meet lots of new friends, lots of choices in the canteen at lunchtime and of course choices of subjects – you can drop the ones you hate!

What can I do to help settle in quickly and be prepared?

- Make sure you go on all the taster and open days you can to familiarize yourself with the school
- Make a list of teacher's names as you learn them so you have people to go to for advice
- Practice your route to school before you go so you don't get lost
- Practice putting your new uniform on – if you have a tie make sure you can take it on and off easily
- Get a good school bag and always try and pack it the night before so you don't forget anything

- During the day just carry what you need for each lesson – make use of your lockers so you don't lose things

How can I make the transition easier?

Three key steps have been recommended by other children who are already at secondary school:

- Try to be organized with all the stationary and equipment you will need before you start so you feel prepared
- Try to talk to lots of people in your form in the first days so you can make new friends early on
- Try not to let it show that you are worried or scared as this means you won't stand out straight away: remember everyone starting will be feeling just like you, they just might be better at hiding it

Where can I get extra support if I am feeling scared?

- Remember if you are feeling worried or scared you are not alone
- Try to talk to your friends about your worries, as most of them will be feeling very similarly to you, even if they don't always show it
- Your parents and other family members can also be good sources of information – don't forget they were once in your position too
- If you want to talk to someone outside your friends and family, teachers are often good start, especially as year 7 form tutors are often chosen for their role because they are particularly helpful and encouraging. More widely, heads of houses and other subject teachers are always available

Remember that although the transition from primary school can be scary, secondary school can turn into one of the best experiences of your life, with long-lasting friendships. Everyone starting will be feeling just like you, and most people start with no friends. Remember you are not alone and there is always someone to talk to. Most importantly, try to relax, talk over your fears and have fun!

VISIT THESE USEFUL WEBSITES:

www.kooth.com

Free, safe and anonymous online support for young people aged 11-18.

www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/school-college-and-work/school-college/moving-schools/

Childline has lots of information and advice on different topics.

www.bbc.co.uk/cbbc/joinin/surviving-a-new-school

BBC website with some top tips about moving schools.

www.kidscape.org.uk/resources-and-publications/resources-for-young-people/moving-up-to-secondary-school/

Kidscape are a charity that provide advice and support to help prevent bullying.