

SCHOOL TRANSITION



Moving from primary to secondary school is an exciting time of a child's life, and a big part of growing up. Change can be worrying because with change comes uncertainty, the unexpected, and getting to grips with new places, people, and things.. But change is a normal part of life and it can actually be really good for us. When we go through changes, we have new experiences which helps our brain to learn more about the world around us which can make us feel more confident, more resilient to adversity, and better at coping. It is completely normal for children to feel worried when they are getting ready to change schools, but there are lots of ways that you can help them to cope with these worries.

WHY DO SOME CHILDREN STRUGGLE WITH CHANGE?

In year 6 and 7, children are already experiencing lots of changes in their physical and mental development, and the additional change of schools can be overwhelming. Every child will cope with change differently, and some may need more support and preparation than others. Some children that might struggle more than others include those with additional learning needs, mental health needs, behavioural difficulties, and limited parental support or being in care, for example.



COMMON WORRIES WHEN CHANGING SCHOOLS



It is helpful to be aware of what your child might be worried about so that you can help them to deal with the worries. Encourage your child to be open about their worries, so that you can normalise them, validate that it is okay to feel worried, and help them to cope with their worries.

- Will I get lost?
- What if I don't make friends?
- I don't know any of the teachers
- My friends from primary school aren't going to the same school
- What if the work is too hard?
- I don't like the uniform
- How will I find my classrooms?

HOW TO HELP WITH SCHOOL TRANSITION WORRIES

- 1 **Get prepared by** buying the essentials ahead of time, and packing the school bag a week or two before school. Top tip: use a check list to ensure you have everything! You can also practice the walk to school through the summer holidays to help your child become familiar with the journey.
- 2 **Establish a routine that fits with the new school day** during the summer holidays. Waking up and eating lunch at the same time will help create an internal rhythm of routine, and certainty in their new school day.
- 3 **Normalise and validate their worries and concerns.** It is normal to feel worried, especially when something is changing. Help your child to understand that most of their peers will be experiencing the same feelings, let them know that it is okay to feel this way, and guide them to find solutions to their worries.
- 4 **Encourage your child to try new or challenging things.** This helps to improve confidence, problem solving skills, and resilience. Praising them for trying new things will also help to improve their self-esteem.
- 5 **Empower your child to be more independent.** Give them responsibilities at home such as making lunch or tidying their room, and when you are out together such as paying for the shopping, or posting some letters.
- 6 **Help them to problem solve worries that can be solved.** For example if their worry is "what if my uniform doesn't fit?", then they can try on their uniform to find out that it does fit. This will resolve that worry.
- 7 **Helping your child to focus on the positives of starting a new school** can help them to feel more excited, and less worried. Things to look forward to include: making new friends; learning new games; wearing a new uniform; after school clubs; new subjects; new teachers; canteen food; walking to school on their own.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE SUPPORT?

USEFUL APPS:



Chill Panda



What's Up



Kooth (website)



Think Ninja

USEFUL WEBSITES:

www.YoungMinds.co.uk
www.TheMix.org.uk
www.Kooth.com

USEFUL BOOKS:

- Go Big: The Secondary School Survival Guide by Matthew Burton
- You Are Awesome by Matthew Syed & Toby Triumph
- Helping Your Child With Fears and Worries by Cathy Cresswell
- The Little Blue Book of Sunshine (scan the QR codes for a free copy)
- Mindful Kids Activity Books by Dr Sharie Coombes



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