

St. Mary's Catholic Primary

READY TO LEARN EVERY DAY!

Preparing for change at school: A short guide for parents

READY TO LEARN EVERY DAY!

Change will happen throughout your child's time at school; some will be easy and some harder. Change can affect both your child and the rest of the family. With the right support at home and school, you can help your child to succeed through these changes.

Everything changes...

No matter what age your child is, some elements of coping with change will be just the same. These top tips will be beneficial for children of all ages...

- Talk positively about the upcoming changes and give them time to adjust—it won't happen over night
- Ask about your child's day and show an interest in what they have been doing
- Changes will affect routines at home for your child and other family members; try and pre-plan where possible
- Be prepared by attending taster sessions or parents' meetings so you and your child know what to expect
- Introduce your child to their new environment; take them past their new school and encourage them to try on their uniform before their first day
- Try to maintain meal times, bed times and other home routines so that change elsewhere is minimised
- Change means leaving something behind—favourite teachers or best friends. Let your child talk about what they miss, and discuss what they have to look forward to

First School

- Help your child be as independent as possible by being able to: dress themselves, hold a knife and fork, and take themselves to the toilet
- Encourage your child to share with others; attending a playgroup or nursery will help
- Create opportunities for your child to interact and play with other children
- Organise play dates and time away from you to help your child be happy to start school on their own

Moving Up

- Your child will receive more homework the older they get; create dedicated time and a quiet place for them to complete it
- Longer days at school can be tiring; help your child by giving them a good night's sleep and a healthy breakfast
- Read communications that the school sends to you know about school trips, parents' evenings and dress down days

Starting Secondary

- Help your child be prepared by checking they have the right equipment each day, such as their PE Kit, dictionary or calculator
- Your child may have some worries; listen, explore solutions with them and maintain a balanced view
- Talk to your child about keeping safe on their way to and from school and make sure they are familiar with the route

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Your child's wellbeing:
A short guide for parents

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In today's society, almost everyone faces stress at some point. Children can pick up on this stress and also feel pressure to 'follow the crowd'. This leaflet suggests ways to keep your child happy, healthy and safe, and we hope it will also provide a starting point for you to talk to them about wellbeing.

Emotional wellbeing

Relationships

- Tell your child that you love them every day
- It's good to establish and maintain boundaries with your child—it helps them to feel safe
- Be a positive role model for your child; don't shout and swear in front of them, it is rarely effective

Managing Behaviour

- Praise your child's effort as well as their achievements—for example, telling them they've done well for trying hard
- It's okay to make mistakes, and let your child know this—it provides them with important learning opportunities
- If your child does something wrong, tell them, but focus on their action and how to do better next time

Raising self-esteem

- When things are difficult help your child to see it as part of life and learning and that it happens to all of us
- Teach your child not to give up and to keep trying
- Listen to your child and show them you value their view and opinions

Physical wellbeing

Healthy Eating

- Help your child to understand about a balanced diet and the importance of eating fruit and vegetable to keep them fit and healthy
- Encourage your child to try a variety of foods and dishes from around the world
- Let your child help when you bake and prepare family meals; it will help them understand about food and encourage them to be creative

Exercise and activity

- Support your child to exercise vigorously for at least 30 minutes each day
- Encourage your child to have at least one hobby involving exercise, such as dance, swimming or football
- Get out and about as a family; play tag in the park, go for a bike ride or plan a timed treasure hunt—it's more fun to do things as a family

Body matters

- Book regular appointments with the optician and dentist, as well as frequent health checks and immunisations
- Exposure to cigarette smoke is damaging to your child's health; think before lighting up in front of them
- Talk to your child about the importance of personal hygiene, such as showering regularly, having clean PE kit and using deodorant when they need to

Sources of information and support

Do you have any worries or concerns about your child's emotional or physical wellbeing? Do you need some help to better understand what your child is going through?

These people can help:

- Your family GP or school nurse
- Your child's School or Children's Centre
- Your local health visitor
- Your family and friends

These websites are useful:

- Information and support for families: www.family-action.org.uk
- Information and support about mental health: www.mind.org.uk
- Healthy food and activity tips: www.change4life.co.uk
- Cheap and nutritious recipes: www.netmums.com/family-food

Saying 'well done' will encourage your child to learn that taking challenges and making mistakes is an essential part of learning. Here are some ways to praise them:

- "Keep working on it, you're nearly there"
- "You are learning fast"
- "That was a kind thing to do"
- "One more time and you'll get there"

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**Independence and Responsibility:
A short guide for parents**

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Preparing for Primary School (age 4-7):

The start of independence

- Teach your child to use the toilet (and urinal) independently; this will improve their self-esteem when they are at school with their peers
- Ensure they can dress themselves and put on their own coat
- Encourage them to carry their own bag to school
- Be confident when dropping them off at school; don't let them 'cling' to you at the school gate
- Encourage them to become a 'playground friend' or 'school buddy'
- Support them to hang up their school uniform ready for the next day
- Include them when completing household tasks

Preparing for Junior School (age 7-11):

Supporting your child to organise themselves

- Take turns in finding the way to the shops, playground etc; this will give them confidence when navigating their way round the school building and playground
- Support them to make their own bed each morning
- Make them responsible for organising their own homework activities
- Ensure they pack their own school bag in plenty of time
- Encourage them to walk or cycle to school by themselves or with friends when it's safe to do so
- Make time for your child to play out with their friends in a safe area
- Encourage them to become a 'reading buddy' and to take on responsibilities at school

Preparing for Secondary School (age 11+):

Supporting your child to be responsible for themselves

- Ensure your child is aware of the dangers of using social media and the internet inappropriately
- Teach them to manage a small budget
- Create a tidy space at home for them to complete their homework
- Show them how you create a study timetable; encourage them to complete their homework without unnecessary help or intervention
- Explain the importance of packing the right equipment for school each day e.g. calculator, books, PE Kit
- Encourage them to travel independently by public transport, bike or foot
- Make them aware of the costs of using a mobile phone
- Teach them how to prepare a simple meal
- Ensure they change their bed regularly

Hints and tips for encouraging independence:

- Set appropriate boundaries for your child but help them to try out new things
- Try to guide your child rather than tell them what to do; this will encourage them to develop their own thoughts and ideas with your support
- Give positive support when your child faces challenges
- Praise effort rather than success and help them see we all learn from mistakes
- Don't do everything for your child, even if that seems easier!
- Try to be positive when your child is demonstrating independence