

Strategies for Preparation for Secondary School

Some children can find the transfer to secondary school challenging. School and home will need to work together to prepare them for this. The following suggestions may be useful:

- Extra visits to the school may be needed to help them learn their way round. They will need to look at some of the key classrooms, learn where to keep belongings and where the toilets, dining room, gym etc. are.
- They need to be very clear about to whom they should go if they encounter difficulties at secondary school. It would be very helpful if they could meet this adult before the transfer to secondary school.
- Obtain a plan of the layout of the school to help them become familiar with it.
- Learn how to use a planner and homework diary.
- Bag packing. Children should start to take responsibility for this before going to secondary school. Write on a card what is needed for school each day. Use this to pack the bag the night before so that it is ready for the morning. Use a timetable/planner to make sure that the right books are packed. This could be colour coded for different subject areas to aid recognition.
- Get clothes out the night before ready for the morning. Place them in the order that they are needed for getting dressed.
- Organise and label clothes drawers in a way that makes it easy and logical to find clothes. Involve your child in the process of organisation; it will help them to remember where things are.
- Try out a selection of pens and pencils with and without grips to see what suits best.
- A ridged ruler is easier to place on the paper than a conventional flat ruler.
- Some thought should be given to preparing for the journey to school. If there are roads to cross show them where to cross safely. Practise travelling on the bus and have a back-up plan in place in case they miss the bus.

To improve organisational skills

- Use a timer when working on a piece of homework. Set it every 15 minutes to remind your child what this amount of time feels like.
- A digital watch is easier to read than a traditional watch and can be set to go off at certain times to remind them to complete an activity.
- Put up a timetable in their room and place another copy on the inside of their school bag to act as a reminder during the day. Colour coding different subject areas may help.
- To keep locker keys safe use a key ring on a plastic curly chain. If trousers don't have a belt loop sew a tape inside a pocket to attach the chain.

- A clear plastic pencil case with two holes that can be attached to a ring binder is useful. It is more difficult to lose the pencil case and it is easy to see all the items in the case. A list of contents can be stapled to the inside so that all the items can be checked back into the pencil case.
- Keep a spare pencil case and set of pens and pencils at home so that the school set can stay in the bag for the following day.
- Getting changed quickly may be an issue for some children. If this is the case practise this at home. Adapt clothes so that they are easy to take off/put on. Velcro fasteners are easy to use, but as children get older they may prefer to have the same things as the others in the class.
- Ensure the child has a “passport” with them detailing their main needs which can be shown to staff as a prompt; e.g.

My name is.....
I have difficulty with writing and copying
notes. Any dictation, board work or
homework needs to be photocopied for me.
Thank you for your help.
Signed.....