

## Journey

Before terms starts, make test journeys – ideally more than once – to school from home and back again.

If your child will be walking, point out the best places to cross the road, local landmarks and time your journey. If your child will be taking public transport, get hold of an up to date timetable and work out together exactly which bus stop is best.

Find out if any other children will be taking the same route and arrange to hook up before school starts.

Encourage children not to have their ear phones in or looking at their phone whilst walking to school. They won't hear/see the traffic.

Make sure your child knows what to do if he/she loses their bus pass; misses the school bus; has his/her money stolen; he couldn't find his locker key.

## Mobile Phones

Although most schools allow children to have their mobile phones in school, they will not be allowed to use them during the school day. If they do they will be confiscated and parents will need to collect them from the office.

Don't be tempted to provide you child with the latest iphone for school. It is may get lost or even stolen. They only need a phone that makes calls and texts. Keep the flash ones for home.

Make sure your child knows important numbers (or have them written down in their bag somewhere) so that they can contact you if they lose them or have them confiscated.

## Lateness

Unlike in primary school where you receive the ticking off if your child is persistently late, at secondary school your child will be the one in detention for late arrivals.

Get a good alarm for yourself and your child and set it early enough.

## Homework

A big change will be that your child will have a different teacher for each subject. Therefore, they will be given different homework from different teachers. Some due in the next day/ next week etc.

Your child will be expected to do around an hour every evening.

It's a good idea to have a personal zone where their school things can be based.

Make sure they have a quiet place where they can do their homework without being disturbed.

Most schools have a learning platform where you can see what homework they have been set and when it is due in.

Children will be expected to do their homework and hand it in on time and they will be unlikely to take any excuses. Your child will receive detention if homework is not handed in on time and completed to a high standard.

Avoid 'I can't find my maths' stress at 7am by getting your child to check the night before that they have their homework in their bag ready to hand in.

Check planners for any messages from teachers and ask your child if you need to sign anything. Sometimes you are required to sign their planner every week.

## Being Organised

Uniform – make sure you buy all the uniform and PE kit during the school holidays so that they are ready for the first day of term.

All items need to be labelled including socks and all their equipment, including their calculator.

Buy as many shirts and socks as you can afford. These are the items that will cause the '7am stress'.

If your child does not have the required uniform and PE kit, they are likely to get a detention.

Children will receive a timetable of their week. Sometimes this is a two week timetable. Get some copies of their timetable and put them on the fridge etc. so that you can talk to your child about what subjects they have tomorrow, what books they need, the homework they need to take in. If they are ready the night before you will not again have '7am stress'.

## Play Dates

The days of organising 'play dates' are over. Chances are your child will invite friends back or pop into friends' homes. You'll need to lay down some ground rules on times expected back, numbers welcomed back to yours, still making homework a priority, but allowing your child some degree of freedom is all part of trusting your child now they are at secondary school.

Secondary school friendships are more long distance because you won't be allowed within a mile of the school gates (unless it's for parent's evening)

Don't let your children go for visits, sleepovers or parties unless you have spoken to the child's parents, been reassured by them and have those vital contact details. Don't let your child invite anyone until you have had a chance to call parents and give your numbers and reassurance.

## Parent/Teacher contact

Most children will settle into secondary school very happily, but if anything is troubling your child or you, do not hesitate to contact the school immediately.

There is often a member of staff in charge of pastoral care of Year 7s, whose job is specifically to sort out problems with settling in or being bullied. Your child will have a form tutor who is also a good point of contact.

## Lunch-times

Schools normally have a bio-metric system of paying for school meals. This will involve you putting money on to an account and when they choose their dinner, they put their finger print on a machine and it deducts the amount.

Check with your school what system they use. Children are not allowed to leave school at break and lunch-times so the need for them to carry large amounts of money around has now disappeared.

## Social Media

Be aware of what your children are doing on their mobiles/ipads/xbox games etc.

Ensure that they do not put any private details about themselves on social media.

Children over the age of 10 can be charged if they send inappropriate material to other people.

Ensure that any privacy settings are set to the very highest setting.

Ensure that your children only message/interact with people they actually know. That does not mean a friend of a friend or a sister/brother of their friend.