

# A young person's guide to starting secondary school.

## A to Z guide

**A** Ask for help: If you are worried about something ask a teacher or your parent for help.

**B** Bullying: Bullying will not be tolerated, no exceptions. If you are being bullied in school, tell someone. Bullying can happen anywhere and be about anything. Talk to your parent/carer or a teacher, get more information from [www.childline.org](http://www.childline.org), or phone Childline on 0800 1111. [Mums, Dads and carers, for advice and further information check out Anti Bullying Alliance @ www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/toolsinformation.](http://www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk/toolsinformation)

**C** Cyber Bullying: When becoming part of secondary school you may also sign up to new social media. This is great because it lets you keep in touch with friends, however it can lead to cyber bullying and **this is not ok**. If you are being called names or threatened, being teased or talked about, you can tell your parent or carer, or tell a teacher; you can even phone Childline on 0800 1111. There is always someone you can talk to. [Mums, Dads and carers, for more information on CEOP look at www.ceop.police.uk.](http://www.ceop.police.uk)

**D** Dinner time: This time can be hectic, students use this time to eat lunch and catch up with friends. Don't forget how important eating a balanced lunch is. Eat your dinner so you have enough energy for your afternoon lessons. <https://www.nutrition.org.uk/healthyliving/healthydiet/healthybalanceddiet.html>. Go to <https://www.gov.uk/apply-free-school-meals> to see if you can get free school meals.

**E** Expectations: Expectations are high, you are in secondary school now, you are expected to go to school on time and learn lots of new things. Don't worry, this can be fun.

**F Friends:** It may seem scary to leave your old friends when going to a new school, but don't worry you will make new friends. Check out [www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk) for top tips on making friends.

**G Getting home safely:** Going home from school on your own may be new to you. Practice your journey, make sure you are with friends and walk on the main routes, don't take short cuts. Have a back up plan if something unexpected happens like missing the bus. To see if you are eligible for free school transport go to [www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk) with the help of a parent or carer.

**H Homework:** Teachers are on hand if you are stuck with your homework. Don't worry, just ask. Remember it is your responsibility to manage your time and get homework in on the day it is due. Don't forget to write it down in your planner. Ask about homework clubs for extra support.

**I Internet safety:** Keeping safe on line is very important. Do not post any personal information online, like your address, email address or mobile number. Think before posting pictures or videos of yourself. Keep privacy settings high and never give out your password. Don't befriend anyone you don't know, remember not everyone online is who they say they are. For more information, try [www.safetynetkids.org.uk](http://www.safetynetkids.org.uk)

**J Join a club:** Join a club in school, this will give you an opportunity to make new friends and follow an interest. Speak to your teachers to find out what's going on in school. This is a great opportunity to try something new.

**K Knowledge:** You will learn lots of new subjects in school. If there is anything you don't understand, just ask.

**L Late:** Turning up to school on time and ready to learn is important. If you are late, report to the office with the reason why. To see your school's policy on being late, please go to the school's website. You will find useful information about your school there.

**M Making the wrong choice:** If you make the wrong choice in school, you will have to face the consequences. If you don't do your homework, or if you are rude to

teachers, your school will have clear system to address this. It may lead to correction or other disciplinary action. For your school's policies, look in your school planner or on the school website.

**N New:** Everything feels like it is different now, but don't worry it's a good change. But if you are worried about anything, please talk to someone. There are loads of people in school that can help.

**O Options:** Something to look forward to. Choosing your options gives you the opportunity to continue to study the subjects you are interested in, and drop some of the ones you're not.

**P Puberty:** School is not the only thing changing, going through puberty can be very frustrating. For all your questions, go to [www.healthpromotion.ie/health/inner/busy\\_bodies](http://www.healthpromotion.ie/health/inner/busy_bodies)

**Q Questions:** If you are unsure of anything, ask questions, no question is silly or stupid . Be brave, put your hand up in class because the question you want to ask, lots of other people will want to ask too.

**R Responsibility:** You are older now and you need to learn that YOU are responsible for getting yourself ready in the mornings and making sure you are organised. Start taking on a little more responsibility at home.

**S Stress:** This can be a stressful time, don't forget to eat and exercise regularly, take regular breaks and get a good night's sleep. Learn some relaxation exercises and remember to make time for the things you enjoy. For helpful tips and advice visit [www.youngminds.org.uk/blog/back-to-school-fight-the-stress/](http://www.youngminds.org.uk/blog/back-to-school-fight-the-stress/)

**T Teachers:** One of the main differences between junior school and secondary school will be the amount of teachers you have, you will have a different teacher for each subject. All teachers are there to help you, just ask.

**U Uniform:** You have to wear a uniform at secondary school, you have to look smart, it's ok to take pride in your appearance. Worrying about what you are wearing is

not important because everyone is dressed the same. For guidance on makeup, hair colour/styles and piercings, go to your school's website.

**V** **Volunteer at school:** Just like joining groups, volunteering at school will help you meet new people, and this will give your confidence a boost. Ask at school what opportunities are available.

**W** **What you need for school:** It's up to you to be organised for school. Everyday you will need a pen, pencil, rubber, ruler, compass, protractor, calculator and a bag to put all your school things in. If you have any problems getting any of this equipment tell school, they are always willing to help.

**X** **Xbox after homework:** Do your homework before you play on your Xbox or PlayStation. Also remember to be gadget free for at least 30 minutes before bed time, as the artificial light makes it difficult for your body to produce melatonin, which is the hormone that makes you go to sleep. [www.nhs.uk/news/pregnancy-and-child/smartphones-and-tablets-disrupt-childrens-sleep/](http://www.nhs.uk/news/pregnancy-and-child/smartphones-and-tablets-disrupt-childrens-sleep/)

**Y** **Youth club:** Keep a look out for your local youth clubs or groups. Look out for the Early Help "What's On" guide.

**Z** **Zzzzzzz get lots of sleep:** Getting a good night's sleep is important for many health reasons, it benefits your physical health and immune system. A good night's sleep also helps you concentrate. [www.nhs.uk/live-well/sleep](http://www.nhs.uk/live-well/sleep)

# Top Tips

## **Beginning of the school day .....**

The start to a day can be a rush for everyone, and your child will need to be organised and ready for their day ahead. Try these tips for a better start .....

- Encourage your child to prepare their school bag and uniform the night before
- Encourage your child to eat breakfast as this provides vital energy needed throughout the school day
- Allow plenty of time to get ready especially if travel is involved, this can help avoid the stress of being late
- Check every evening for letters from school to avoid any surprise letters or missed homework, as this will prevent any last minute panic about forgotten homework

## **Helping with homework**

Your child will be expected to work more independently with their homework from secondary school, however you can still help them and chat to them about what it is they are doing.

Here is a rough guide on how long children may be expected to spend on homework.

Years 7 & 8 - 45 to 90 minutes a day

Year 9 - 60 to 120 minutes a day

Years 10 & 11 - 90 to 150 minutes a day

This is just a rough guide, timings may change depending on level of homework and year group.

***“Don’t worry about getting lost, people will be there to help you”***

Year 7 pupil

***“Be polite, but don’t be afraid to ask questions”***

Year 8 pupil

***“Make plenty of friends”***

Year 7 pupil

***“Try to bring your homework in on time”***

Year 7 pupil

***“Be respectful of others and they will respect you back”***

Year 7 pupil

***“Never give up. You will never be alone, there are plenty of people to make new friends with”***

Year 7 pupil