

# MOVING ON TO SECONDARY SCHOOL

Part of the **SCHOOLS'** series



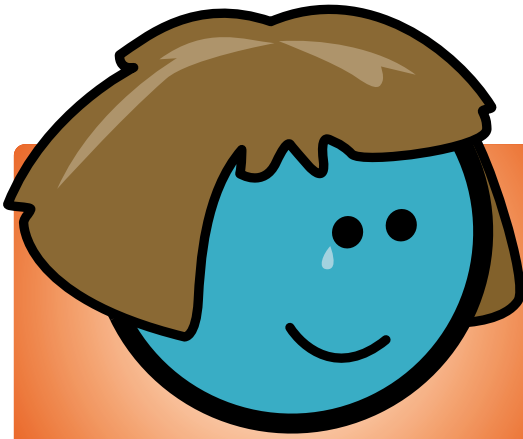
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0808 800 2222

**Free Textphone**  
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**Website**  
[www.parentlineplus.org.uk](http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk)

**Email**  
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Going to secondary school is part of a time of great change in your child's life as puberty is on the horizon, together with all the worry and excitement of becoming a teenager. Now they have to face going from being the oldest at primary school to being the youngest in a huge school.



## GETTING PREPARED

- Once your child has a place at a school, make sure you aren't taking a holiday at the time of the taster days which most secondary schools arrange for the new intake.
- Make sure you have the right uniform if applicable and if this is expensive contact the school or the local education authority about getting help with the cost.
- Schools usually send out lists of items needed. Make it a shopping treat and choose the materials together.
- Encourage your child to talk about feelings of nervousness and tell them that all children feel nervous when they first go to 'big' school.
- Where possible, practise the journey with your child a few times beforehand.
- Try to find at least one other neighbouring pupil who is going to the same school so that your child has a travelling companion.
- If the local education authority (LEA) provides transport costs, make sure to apply for a bus pass in good time and remind your child of the importance of keeping it in a safe place.
- Make sure your child always has 'emergency money' (separate from lunch money etc.) in case he or she forgets their pass or has to phone for help. You could also give them a phone card if you don't want them to have a mobile.

## THE JOURNEY

Your child's journey to school will probably take a new and unfamiliar route, possibly involving a longer walk, bike ride or public transport.

- Find out whether the local education authority (LEA) lays on buses for the journey especially if you live in a rural area.

## YOU AND THE SCHOOL

Many parents tell us that once their child goes to secondary school, the friends they made at the primary school gate are not around so much. Parents say that they feel isolated and miss the sharing of ideas and problems with other parents. It is also difficult to get involved with a secondary school if you had a bad time when you were at school. But there are ways to keep in touch:

- Find out more about the school's meetings with parents and if there is a Parent Teacher Association, make contact to find out what events they lay on.
- Make a point of signing the home school agreement and use the opportunity to ask any questions you have about the new school.
- Talk to your child's class teacher about any problems you or your child might have.
- If you and your partner are separated, tell the school and make sure that they include a non-resident partner in any mailing.
- Remember, the school is there to help your child through this time of transition.

## TALK ABOUT BULLYING

Without being scary, it is wise to take time to talk to your child about bullying. Tell them that bullying is completely wrong and that if anything happens they must tell you and their class teacher as soon as possible. Tell them that you will do what you can to get the bullying to stop. Children may find it hard to talk about being bullied or bullying others,

and you may not be sure that your child is being bullied. But there are some signs that may suggest there is a problem. Look out for:

- Excuses to miss school, such as stomach complaints or headaches (or your child may be skipping school altogether).
- Torn clothes, school things that are missing or broken, or lost money.
- More bruises and scrapes than usual.
- Signs of stress – being moody, silent or crying, or bullying a younger sibling or friend.
- Bed-wetting (in younger children).
- A change in eating habits.

For further advice about bullying you might want to read our 'Be Someone to Tell' leaflet, or visit our new website [www.besomeonetotell.org.uk](http://www.besomeonetotell.org.uk)

## FINALLY

- Look after yourself and your family too. It's a time of life change and it is all right to feel loss and sadness as your child begins to grow up and find independence, making choices without you.

## CHOOSING A SECONDARY SCHOOL

Choosing a secondary school is an exciting and important time in your child's life. It means they are growing up and life as they know it is about to change. They go from being the oldest at primary school to being the youngest at a much larger school. We all worry about choosing the right school for our children, about the standards of lessons, whether our child will make friends or whether they are ready for the challenges of secondary school.

### Parentline Plus tips WHAT TO DO

- ✓ Make time to talk to your child about what they want out of secondary school and discuss their choice together. You and your child may have very different reasons for picking a school and it is important that you listen to what they want and talk through some of the concerns you might have about their choice.
- ✓ Do your research. At the end of year 5 or the start of year 6 your local authority will produce a booklet giving details of secondary schools in your area, their open evenings, their admissions criteria and important dates for you to remember. Check out the school's own website which may give you a fuller picture of what the school is like. Talk to other parents about their experiences, especially those who already have children at secondary school.
- ✓ Try to make sure you visit the possible schools with your child. You could make a list of things you want to know before you visit any schools. Ask your child what they would want to know about and talk about it together afterwards.
- ✓ Your local authority may be able to offer you the support of a Choice Adviser, someone who can help you to fill in the forms and make practical choices. Ask your head teacher for more details.
- ✓ It's important to get your child's application form in on time. Many local authorities like the forms to be sent via the internet so if you would like more help with this ask at your primary school or local library.
- ✓ Your child might not get into the school you have chosen and it might be a time of huge disappointment so try for a 'plan B'. You can appeal against this decision and to find out more visit [www.direct.gov.uk/en/index.htm](http://www.direct.gov.uk/en/index.htm)

## FURTHER HELP

Parentline Plus provides help and information on parenting issues. Try our free\*, confidential,

24-hour Parentline **0808 800 2222**

Or if you are deaf, hard of hearing or have a speech impairment try our free textphone **0800 783 6783**

For online help visit our website

**[www.parentlineplus.org.uk](http://www.parentlineplus.org.uk)**

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