

Did you know?



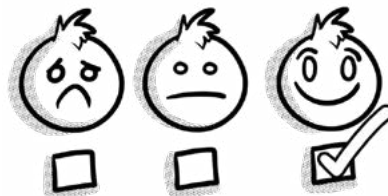
Research highlights that children who kept the same friend during the transition period between primary to secondary school tend to do better. Supporting and encouraging friendships during the transition period and beyond may help pupils to improve attainment and behaviour.

Research also shows that the transition to secondary school can potentially be as difficult for parents as it is for their children.

The move to secondary school brings lots of change, such as different classrooms, different teachers for each subject, bigger buildings, new travel arrangements, unfamiliar environments and mixing with new pupils. Studies suggest that when pupils are supported well, it increases attendance, academic progress, school engagement, confidence and self-esteem, and decreases symptoms of anxiety. This is good news as you can help with this, and your secondary school staff will be keen to help make this transition as smooth as possible, even in the current situation with COVID-19.

Research also suggests that pupils' concerns about transition to secondary school generally involve issues such as:

- Losing old friends.
- The size of their new school and getting lost.
- Rules, discipline and detention.
- Finding their way around.



What can you do?

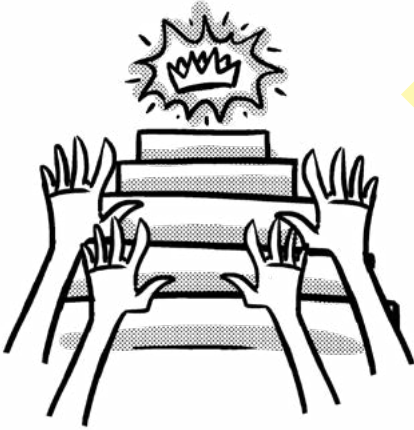
- New experiences, coupled with your feelings about leaving your child in a new place, can be a stressful time in a family's life. It is normal and acceptable to feel anxious as a parent/carers, but it is important not to pass these feelings on to your child. Support your child and encourage them to keep in touch with their group of friends.
- Talk about up and coming change with your child and approach transitions in a positive and exciting way. Help your child express their feelings, worries and

emotions about the change and acknowledge their feelings.

- Watch the video from Young Minds on YouTube and discuss its content. It reassures children that they're not alone when it comes to their worries about secondary school, that there are ways to cope with change and there are people to talk to when things get difficult. This can be found [here](#).



What you need to know



Most of us have a strange relationship with failure as adults, but young people can also find the idea or feeling of failing really difficult to handle. Sometimes their thoughts can become a pattern that holds them back from being able to move forward. You may have heard these kinds of thoughts already:

- No one in my family is any good at maths.
- My sister is the one who is intelligent, not me.
- I can't do creative things.
- I'm not really any good at anything.
- I never understand things.

At secondary school, sometimes these thoughts can become more prominent as they are in bigger year groups and are working out who they are. Young people can often adopt something called a 'fixed mindset', made famous by the work of Carol Dweck. This is when people put limits on what they can and can't do, believing that intelligence, amongst other things, is fixed. The opposite is a 'growth mindset' and is one of the biggest secrets to success.



What can you do?

Your child will be exploring all kinds of different things at secondary school, including studying subjects they haven't had much exposure to so far in primary school. It is easy for them to give up at the first challenge or to assume "I can't do this". At home, it is good to start to slowly change that narrative.

Here are some pointers that may be helpful to use when talking with them:

- Ability can change with practice. Your talents, gifts and skills can be developed.
- It makes sense to have a go at anything. Putting effort in is the only way to get better at things.
- Mistakes happen, they are nothing to be ashamed of

and they show you exactly what you don't know so that you can work on improving your skills.

- Feedback is good – you can't improve without it!
- You should welcome new challenges; trying is how you learn. If you don't get it right first time, try again and again and again.
- Discuss with your child how they have achieved goals before. Ask them to think about what they did and what they could learn about how to achieve success.



(Material adapted from 'You Are Awesome' by Matthew Syed)

What you need to know



Many young people feel a mixture of excitement, fear and nerves as they go to secondary school, probably more so this year because Year 6 has been disrupted due to COVID-19 and social distancing measures. Secondary schools are very well aware of how big this transition is and, even with the restrictions, will do all they can to help your child, and you, settle into a new routine.

Matthew Burton's book 'Go Big', is written for young people who are about to make this change and is written to help them navigate some of their fears. This may be helpful for them to read alongside the lessons from Be Awesome, Go Big. There are also some things you can do as parents to help them too.

What can you do?

1. Help talk them through some of the changes – they move around the school to their next teacher, have different lessons and have lots more people to communicate with. They are also able to be more independent than perhaps they have been used to.
2. Getting ready becomes their responsibility – get them to pack their bag the night before, check their equipment, make sure they have their planner signed



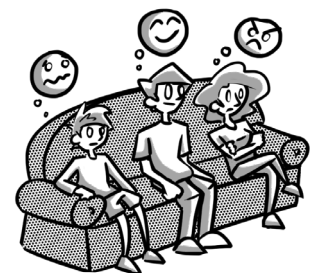
(or whatever system your school uses to communicate with parents). Make sure they know which is their PE lesson day. This will pay off in the future if you start now!

3. Create a space for them to work quietly at home – they will get homework and will need to be able to complete it and concentrate without distractions. Often it is easier



if they get this completed when they come home, before they get into social time and then don't want to do it!

4. Get to know their form tutor – this is the person who will see them the most. Contact them if you need to and if you are concerned, always let them know. They will see your child every day in most cases and so they are a great point of contact.
5. Keep encouraging a growth mindset: make sure they understand they won't be good at everything YET – things take time and practice and they should not give up. As a culture, we are often used to seeing supposed 'overnight success' without seeing the hours of effort that went into that success. This is worth reminding them about when they start to say negative things.



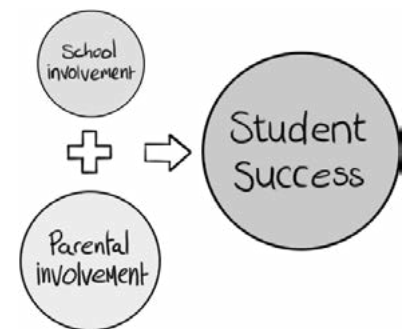
Did you know?



Healthy habits are essential to living a long and happy life, and they are important to instil in children from a young age. If you help your child to form these habits now, you will be giving them the tools to navigate any obstacles they may face as they grow into adulthood.

Research highlights that the late teenage years have been identified as the peak age for exposure to health risks with lifelong implications. The report, by the Association for Young People's Health (AYPH), revealed teenagers eat eight times the recommended sugar allowance and almost half have tooth decay. This worrying research also found out that most smokers start by the age of 25.

Research reveals that there is a strong link between healthy habits and pupil achievement. Poor health habits add up to poor grades, and research suggests that healthy habits and good health-related decisions can lead to improved academic performance. For instance, research has shown that students who eat breakfast exhibit improved concentration when compared to their peers who skip it.



What can you do?

Cultivate healthy habits by being a role model to your child. Try to exhibit good habits, offer health advice and build fun healthy activities into your family life. Examples include being active as a family, having evening and sleep routines, providing a water bottle to encourage hydration, or making family meals together.

Good nutrition can help improve concentration, so pay attention to the food you buy for your family. Provide a healthy balanced diet of meals which include fresh vegetables, fruit, proteins, good fats and whole grains.

Encourage your child to snack on low sugar foods and drinks, which you could make together.



Help and encourage your child to get enough sleep, live a physically active life and feel good about themselves. Work with them to map out their week to include healthy habits such as exercise, relaxation and seeing friends. Set some healthy lifestyle goals together, and keep each other motivated to stay on track.