

Transition Tips for Parents 2026

We know that moving on to secondary school is a big step and want our children to be as well prepared as possible. As parents/ carers, it is normal to feel a mixture of emotions, but it is important to ensure that the children feel that we have confidence in their ability to make a successful move, even if we are feeling a little apprehensive ourselves!

Tips

You will already have received information explaining our school's involvement in the Maidstone Secondary Transition Programme. You will have also received the decision about which school your child will be attending from September. Hopefully, this will be positive for you and your family.

It may not be decided which school your child will be attending in September due to various appeals etc. but it is highly recommended that you look through the weekly tips, which will start after SATs as the activities/advice are suitable for all schools.

- Between now and then, if you haven't already done so, think about how you can help your child to be more independent at home.
 - Do they put clothes away/ complete simple jobs like making their own bed or sandwiches/ make hot drinks etc.?
 - You may wish to start expecting them to make their own packed lunch.
- Ask who else is going to the same school and encourage your child to chat to them. These may not be the children your child usually socialises with, but it is always good to have a familiar face in the first few weeks. Remind your child that they will make new friends when they start their new school.
- You might also wish to think about how to encourage your child to be more independent outside the home. E.g. allowing them to go to the local shops without an adult, allowing them to spend time in town without adult supervision or even allowing them to travel into town and spend time there with friends.
- Can your child start going to and from school independently (if they do not already do so)? Perhaps start by meeting them at the end of the road?
- If you drive them to school, can you start dropping them off/collecting them a distance from school?
- You may wish to think about discussing internet safety with your child. Have a look at this internet safety quiz: <https://saferinternet.org.uk/2025-sid-quiz>

- Consider discussing the advantages and disadvantages of the use of mobile phones. You may want to use the prompt below as a starting point for the discussion.

How is chatting on a mobile phone different from talking face-to-face?

Mistakes can be made much more easily in text messages – typing errors or predictive texts can change your message, sometimes without you even realising.

Text messages can have a time delay – people may not be able to answer straight away if they are busy and this can cause anxiety for the other person in the conversation.

Phone messages can't be accompanied by facial expressions, body language or a helpful tone of voice. Sometimes things may be taken the wrong way.

We have to be aware of these potential problems and causes of anxiety when we send and receive messages

If someone misunderstands or misinterprets you in a normal conversation, you can set them straight immediately. You may not even know they have misunderstood you over the phone.

Messages can be saved and looked at again and again. What you say in a message can't be forgotten and might be analysed much more than in a normal conversation.

You might not be able to tell if the person has read your message or not, which can cause you to worry.

BEANO **YOUNG MINDS**

At school, we will begin with how the children are feeling about moving to secondary school. It would be helpful if you would have similar conversations at home. Below are some areas you might like to cover:

- It is absolutely normal to experience a range of emotions. Moving to a new school can be very exciting but your child may also be a bit nervous.
- Transition is a process rather than a single event and it may take time for your child to feel settled in September, but we are preparing for this now
- Your child may have already coped with big changes in the past and can do it again (remind them of their previous successes).
- Not everything is going to change. Some routines will stay the same (remind your child about what these will be e.g. they will still be going to football/gym club)
- There is always someone to talk to if they are worried at home or at their current school (name the school person if you know who this is)

- Could you and your child practise the journey to and from their new school over the holiday?

Travel planning

How will your child get to and from school every day? If you are intending to drop your child at school, will you also be collecting them at the end of the day? This is a big commitment for the next 7 years.

- Can your child easily walk to school?
- Will they be walking with friends/siblings?
- Will they be confident walking independently?
- Do they have previous experience of travelling by bus/ train if this will be the way they get to school?

- Does your child need a bus/train pass? You may want to start looking into this now
- The Arriva App would be useful to download if they are to travel by bus.
- Does your son/daughter know what to do if there are delays/issues with transport?
- You may have talked about, or even tried the journey during the holidays, but if not, you may wish to practise the journey to school being aware that school specific buses do not run at weekends/ school holidays. Can your son/daughter achieve this independently/with a friend?

Time Management

At school, your child will be discussing what they will need to do in order to be 'ready to go to school' each day, i.e. what they need to do to be ready, what time they will need to get up so they have enough time to eat and get ready and what time they need to leave home in order to get to school on time.

- Many children struggle with completing these tasks independently so the more they are prepared between now and September the better. (This will include how to tie a tie, tie shoe laces and pack a bag ready with the appropriate items ready for the school day!)
- Thinking about your child, what can they already do independently without you telling them to?
- Is there anything that you know they are not doing without you intervening, but know they can?
- Make a list of what you would like them to be able to do on their own and what they/you need to do to be able to achieve this.

Managing Money

In school your child will start to think about how they will manage paying for their snacks/lunches. Most schools now use a pre-paid system.

- Will your child be bringing a packed lunch or using the school canteen?
- Will you be adding money to their pre-paid card on a daily or weekly basis?
- You may wish to discuss how much money your child will have to spend each day and what will happen if they overspend earlier in the week.
- Is your child able to plan for healthy options?
- You might like to look together to see if there is information about menus etc. on the school website?
- If your child has specific dietary needs, you may want to discuss this during transition events.

Managing Situations

We know there are certain scenarios which Y6 children often worry about. In school, we will be role playing/discussing these and hopefully alleviating any worries your child may have. Your child may come home and talk to you about this.

- It may be helpful to find out what their thoughts and feelings are and if they now feel more confident about dealing with situations such as:
 - What if I forget my homework/PE kit?
 - What do I do if I feel a pupil/teacher is picking on me?
 - Who do I speak to if I have lost my pre-paid canteen card?
 - What should I do if I fall out with my close friend from Primary School?
- You may wish to talk about how you have asked people to help you in different situations, emphasise that everyone needs help sometimes.

Secondary School Visits

If your child is going to a Maidstone secondary school, they will have a visit to their new secondary school. This is a really valuable opportunity and will be a focus for discussion later. If they are unwell and unable to attend, you might like to find out if there will be other opportunities for them to visit. If they are going farther afield, they should be offered an opportunity to visit, but it might be on a different date.

Have you had any contact with/information from their new school? If not, please ensure that you contact the secondary school's office, to ensure that they have not 'fallen through the net'.

Acknowledge and validate your child's thoughts/feelings about any visit and keep communicating with them.

- Understand that some children will be chattier than others.
- Try to ensure that if there are any negatives, they can be turned into a positive (e.g. "No one I know is going to be in my class/school." "That's a great opportunity to meet new people, you will still get to see at the weekend.").

Memories/Time to say goodbye

Allow your child to talk about their feelings about leaving primary school and the new challenges that lie ahead.

Although the end of term is a couple of weeks away, it may be beneficial for your child to start thinking about saying their goodbyes little by little.

- Make sure that you acknowledge all their feelings. They may change their mind day to day (or even hour to hour). They may have been at their primary school since YR so could be understandably very sad (or happy) to be leaving.
- Would your son/daughter like to say goodbye to any particular staff. You may like to help them make cards? Who will they always remember? What are their favourite experiences?
- Do you have a real or virtual 'memory box' of photos or items from your child's primary school journey (for example, their first day at school, any sports days, World Book day/other dress up events, any other occasions or any certificates/awards) that you can share with them? If not, now might be a time to create one.

Look how far I have come

In school, the children will have been looking back over their time at Primary School.

- You might like to talk to your child about some of the many things they have learned, the skills they have gained and the fun experiences they have had over the last seven years.
- Remind them that some skills have taken time to develop – the same will be true at their new school.
- You may also like to ask them what new things they would like to try at their new school such as clubs, sports etc.

- You might like to revise any of the above activities.
- It would be helpful to support your child to practise travelling to and from their new school independently.