



Classlist

www.classlist.com

STARTING SECONDARY SCHOOL



A guide for parents

Moving up into secondary school is a big milestone in your child's life.

They go from being one of the oldest children in school to one of the youngest. And then there's the unfamiliar timetable, buildings and people to get used to.

This guide is designed to help parents make the first few weeks of secondary school easier for their children and give you a heads up on the issues coming your way - from mobile phones to homework.

Read on for our **tips**, a **handy checklist** and to **hear from parents** who've been through the process recently.



IT'S ALL ABOUT...

Encouraging independence (and keeping them safe at the same time)

Secondary school is the point at which children in the UK suddenly get a lot of independence. One minute you are walking them to school everyday, the next minute they are heading to the bus with fare in hand. To help you ease the transition, here are some tips: Practice the journey to and from school together a couple of times until they're confident they can do it without you.

Find a friend for your child to share the walk or bus ride with. Whilst they are walking to school without you, they don't need to be alone.

Talk to your child about how they can protect themselves when they're out, for example, staying with their friends in busy areas and knowing it's ok to hand over their phone or money if someone threatens them.

Talk through contingency plans too - like what to do if they miss the school bus.

Getting the bag right

When you're in uniform, it's hard to express individuality. That's why the school bag at secondary is key.

Emma, mum of Charlie who started secondary school last year says: "The school bag is important. You've got to get them the right bag for school. At Charlie's school you need to have a rucksack and it has to be cool. One of my friend's says at her children's school it has to be a Jack Wills bag or a sporty rucksack. They've got to be happy with their bag. It just takes a bit of research to get it right."

Setting up a good routine from the start

Most secondary schools are further away than primary schools, and this means an earlier start to the day. Encourage your child to get everything ready the night before so there are no panics in the morning or missed buses.

It's also important to establish a good bedtime routine. The National Sleep Foundation says "Teens need about 8 to 10 hours of sleep each night to function best. Most teens do not get enough sleep — one study found that only 15% reported sleeping 8 1/2 hours on school nights."

Jessica, mum of Marcia (Year 7) says: "Marcia was incredibly tired for the first couple of terms. She has to get up early to get organised in the morning. We encourage her to get plenty of sleep or at least go to bed at a good time. Recently she's been trying out a meditation app like headspace for children to help her wind down at night."

Getting the tech rules right

11 is the most common age to get a mobile phone and it's also the time when children typically start using social media. It's a good idea to set some rules of use upfront.

Consider making a mobile phone pact with your child including:

- to stick to agreed daily time limits
- to put the phone away on silent when asked
- to never provide any personal information (address, school, phone number) online
- to share the passwords to all their accounts with you
- to never share these with anyone else
- to not say anything rude or mean online
- to let you know if they receive messages or see content that makes me feel uncomfortable

A survey of 2,750 11- to 18-year-olds found one in 10 admitted checking their mobile phones for notifications at least 10 times a night. The poll was carried out by Digital Awareness UK and the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference. The organisations warn night-time usage of mobiles means pupils are coming to school tired and unable to concentrate.

They recommend having a "digital detox" and putting mobile devices away for 90 minutes before lights-out or keeping them out of the bedroom.



Staying connected

The way secondary schools communicate is different to primary schools. It's often a lot more formal and through email or via the children.

Jessica says: "If you have issues make sure you know who to communicate with. At primary school you'd just talk to the class teacher. At secondary school you need to know whether you should be talking to the form tutor, the subject teacher or the head of year."

Joining the PTA is another way to get more involved with the school.

START OF TERM CHECKLIST FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL

Preparation

- ✓ Make sure your child attends any school induction days
- ✓ Fill in all the school paperwork well before term starts to make things go as smoothly as possible for your child
- ✓ Practise the new school run so your child is confident getting there from day one
- ✓ Arrange to meet up with other new starters over the summer
- ✓ Master putting on that tricky new tie
- ✓ Establish a homework station in a quiet place
- ✓ Make a checklist of what your child needs to remember each day

Equipment

- ✓ Get all the gear – school bag, uniform and PE kit
- ✓ Rally the stationery (schools often provide a list) and technology required (mobile? iPad?)
- ✓ Tuck a written list of family phone numbers into the school bag, in case the above-mentioned phone goes missing
- ✓ Attach a stretchy key fob to the school bag to make that locker key harder to lose
- ✓ Put some emergency money in a hidden bag pocket, just in case
- ✓ Stick the radio on and label everything in sight, starting with the most expensive items

USEFUL RESOURCES



NSPCC

- Be Share Aware campaign with O2 - with advice on e-safety
- Download a family agreement template at

<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/share-aware/>



Think campaign

- advice on teenagers making independent journeys at think.direct.gov.uk



Anti- Bullying Alliance

- advice on bullying for parents and teenagers
- what to do if you need to make a complaint at www.anti-bullyingalliance.org.uk



Digital Awareness UK

- Video series to help parents and children stay safe online
- Cyberbullying, digital footprint, identity and self esteem, relationships and self esteem, security and privacy, sexting at www.digitalawarenessuk.com

MISSING THE SCHOOL GATE?

We've got just the thing.

Many parents feel distanced from the school community when their child moves up into secondary. And with teenagers encountering all sorts of new freedoms, parents need to find reliable ways of communicating with each other.

Luckily for you, there's a network where you can get all the contacts you need without needing to go through a mortified teenager.

Classlist is an award-winning online platform and mobile app designed to make life easier for parents. It's great for helping you to talk to other parents in your child's class, share lifts, check the homework – like a problem-solving network that's specific to your child's school.

It's a one-stop site for:

- Messaging other parents
- Sharing lifts
- Organising social events
- Keeping tabs on teenage parties
- Selling items
- Rehoming lost property
- Making friends

Classlist is free to use and completely secure. With thousands of schools signed up, it's being used by tens of thousands of happy Mums and Dads nationwide.


Try the UK's most popular app for school parent-to-parent communication today.

Sign up your class for free at www.classlist.com



Available on the App Store and Google Play.



A vibrant photograph of four children and a dog jumping on a blue trampoline. The background is filled with lush green trees and sunlight filtering through the leaves. One child in a white shirt is upside down, holding a dog. Another child in a red shirt is in mid-air with arms outstretched. A girl in a colorful patterned shirt is on the left, and a girl in a black tank top and light blue pants is on the right. The scene is full of energy and joy.

Dan used Classlist
to find his son
more playmates
for big school.

Join the network where
families can make friends
before starting a new school.



Classlist