

Think Families – Transition Workshops Training

Talking to the School

The below are useful tips if your child is being bullied, or when there are issues you wish to talk to the school about.

PART Memory Jogger

Points to cover: meeting with the school

It can be easy to rush in feeling angry, flustered or uneasy (perhaps reminded of difficult things from our own school days) – think of taking PART:

Prepare

- What has your child said has happened? Stick to reporting what they have said rather than general accusations.
- How does your child feel? focusing on your child's feeling will help cut through any debate about what happened or trying to 'prove' bullying (if bullying is taking place) – your child's feeling are real, even if there are different interpretations/stories about the events.
- What would you like to happen as a result of this meeting?
- Arrange for a friend/partner to come along if it will help you be more confident

Ask Questions

- What do you want to know or find out? Jot down any questions beforehand, so that you remember to ask them.
- If things are said during the meeting that are unclear to you, ask for more explanation
- Ask the school to suggest ways you can help at home if appropriate

Repeat

- At the end of the meeting, summarise what has been said/agreed. This will help you remember afterwards and will also clarify if there are any misunderstandings

Take Action

- Make sure you do what you agreed to do as a result of the meeting:
 - ? what will you do?
 - ? what will the school do?
 - ? what will your child do?
 - ? when will you review or check back on what has happened?

The 3 P's

- Being Positive
- Persistence
- Problem solving

Being Positive

- Saying what you want, not what you don't.
- Noticing what they are doing and giving specific and descriptive praise; e.g. not just "well done" but "I really liked the description in that poem".
- Giving more praise/encouragement than criticism e.g. not looking at a story and just commenting on the spelling mistakes rather than the wonderful ideas. Many children have fears of failure which can make them become anxious or refuse to attempt something new. Focusing on the positive as parents can help to overcome this fear of failure in our children.
- Letting them try new things when they feel ready and without stretching them to far e.g. letting older children go on public transport alone.
- Avoid comparisons e.g. immediately asking "what did other children get?" when our child comes home with marks for a piece of homework or a test.

Persistence

- Need to face difficulties, stick at things and take risks in order to learn.
- If things are too easy they can get boring and a child won't carry on with them, if too hard the child may give up or freeze with anxiety.
- Model learning e.g. share your experience of learning a new skill.
- Encourage exploration.
- Allow them to learn from their own experience and mistakes, e.g. a child who is struggling may learn how to do it themselves if you avoid jumping to demonstrate the 'best' way to do it.
- Take time to explain and demonstrate when appropriate. Sometimes we just expect our children to know without showing them.
- Help and encourage them to follow their interests, even if you don't think it is appropriate to their age or gender.
- Encouraging positive self-talk e.g. "I'm practising and getting better" rather than "I can't do it"
- Learning happens at different rates, so try to avoid labelling or judging a child at times when learning is slower and more of a struggle.



Problem Solving

Points to cover:

- Children need to be given the opportunity to learn from experience, to enjoy their successes and be allowed to make mistakes – their struggles are a way of learning how to overcome difficulties and developing the confidence that they can do this. Encourage an attitude of 'There are no mistakes, only learning'.
- When your child makes mistakes or when things don't turn out as expected, help them to try things another way rather than jumping in to correct or sort out.
- Encourage your child to ask questions and discuss, work things out together, try to find out if you don't know.
- Parents are role models – children learn from noticing your attitude to learning new things – not just what you say but what you actually do. How do you approach problems? Give up? stick at it?

Remember to **ACT** not react by asking



Adult: What's going on here for me?
How am I feeling?
What do I need



Child: What's going on for my child/teenager?
How are they feeling?
What do they need?



Tools: What skills and ideas can I use here?
What can I say or do that will help us
both?



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STRATEGIES, TIPS & IDEAS FOR A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION

- Get the uniform sorted
- Attend transition events
- Arrive on time
- Make sure that your child is eating well
- Make sure that your child is getting enough sleep
- Get to know your child's school timetable
- Make sure that they have a homework routine
- Know who to speak to if there is a problem (Tutor, Head of Year, Pastoral Staff)
- Encourage your child to pack their bag the night before
- Have a map of the school
- Encourage your child to attend lunchtime and after school clubs
- Do a dummy bus journey if possible
- Encourage your child to attend the mentor sessions
- Find out what your child is worrying about – try to keep worries in perspective
- Break problems into smaller steps
- Report bullying straight away
- Look at the Langtree website with your child before they start in September
- Discuss friendship scenarios – encourage problem solving
- Encourage independence
- Talk about 'Stranger Danger'
- Don't pass on our own worries or fears
- Be positive
- Make sure you see your child's planner regularly
- Encourage your child to invite friends round
- Encourage your child to ask for help
- Let them know it's ok to make mistakes