



Guidance for Parents/Carers

Moving from Primary to Secondary school is an exciting and significant event in the life of your child. It can however feel daunting for children and parents/carers and at St Mary's College we do not underestimate the importance of managing this step carefully to ensure it is successful.

Inevitably, most children have some worries about starting Secondary school - some of these are social worries and some are to do with the organisational demands that they know will be placed upon them. However, most of the worries children have about starting Secondary school diminish quickly in the first half term as students get used to the new routines and expectations.

We hope the following guidance will provide you with the information you need to support your child as he/she makes the transition from Primary school to Secondary school.

What are the main differences at Secondary school?

- Your child may have to travel further to school, may have to make their way there independently and may have to catch a bus.
- Your child will be taught by between 10 and 15 different teachers and will have to get to know a range of adults in different roles within the school.
- The site is much bigger and students have to find their way around moving from classroom to classroom between lessons.
- Your child must look after all of his/her belongings throughout the school day and he/she must bring all of their own equipment to school each day.
- Your child will follow a timetable and use his / her planner effectively to ensure he/she is organised and ready for each school day.
- Your child will be fully responsible for ensuring they have the correct books, equipment, bus fare, PE kit etc.
- Your child will be responsible for recording homework, completing it by the correct day and giving it in on time – effective use of the student planner facilitates this.
- Teaching and learning styles will differ amongst teachers.
- There is adult supervision at breaktime and lunchtime but students have to be more independent in terms of buying their own snacks/lunch and getting back to lessons on time.

Getting to and from school:

- If your child will be travelling on the bus, before he/she starts St Mary's College, time the journey to school or to the bus stop.
- Work out what time your child will need to get up to get to school on time.
- Agree a routine for the mornings and after school.
- Ensure your child packs his/her school bag the night before.
- Make sure your child has your contact numbers written in his/her planner.
- Make sure your child knows what to do if they are delayed for any reason getting to school or coming home.

Uniform:

- Please be clear on St Mary's College uniform rules (see uniform booklet and guidance enclosed).
- Encourage your child to make sure their uniform is out ready for the next day.
- Make sure the full PE kit is taken to school on the days it is needed.
- NAME EVERYTHING!!! Marker pens that do not wash out, stick on labels or iron on labels are easy and fast to use. Please put your child's FULL name on everything they bring to school.

If your child's belongings are named, any misplaced items will generally be returned to your child – if they are not named, any misplaced belongings will probably not be returned to your child as they cannot be identified.

Timetable:

- Encourage your child to learn what lessons they have on which days so that they can become independent in preparing for each school day.
- Make sure your child knows what to do if they are late to a lesson or get lost.
- Check your child knows where the classroom is and who the teacher is for each lesson.
- Remind your child they must get to lessons on time especially after breaktime/lunchtime.
- Students are encouraged to go to the toilet at breaktime and lunchtime so that they do not request this during lessons as far as possible.

Organisation and equipment:

- Help your child to be organised by ensuring they have a place for their school equipment.
- Encourage your child to empty their school bag at least once a week to check for letters and ensure that any worksheets / homework sheets are completed and kept safely in the student planner or stuck into the appropriate exercise book.
- Encourage your child to check their planner the night before, know what equipment is needed for each lesson and pack his / her school bag ready for the next day.

Homework:

- Ensure your child understands how his / her planner works and that they must write down exactly what they have to do as homework and when it has to be done for.
- Check your child's planner with them for what homework needs to be done and when it must be done for.
- Encourage your child to do their homework on the night it is set not the night before it is due in to prevent homework building up.
- Ideally try to ensure your child has access to a space at home to complete homework.
- Agree a manageable routine for homework and be prepared to invest time at first to ensure your child is supported as they become more confident in managing their work independently.
- Offer support but don't do the homework for your child.
- Communicate with school if there is an issue with any homework so that departmental support can be given prior to the deadline.
- Encourage your child to check with the teacher if he / she is not sure about a homework task before it is due in.
- Make sure your child takes the completed homework to school on the correct day – remind them to hand it in! We recommend using a homework folder which your child can keep in their bag – put the homework set in the folder and then back in the folder once completed.
- Please reinforce the message that homework is valuable and important by taking an interest in the feedback your child receives and celebrating successes.

Contacting school:

- Discuss school with your child regularly especially in the first half term so that you have a good idea of how your child is feeling about Secondary school and any concerns or worries they may have.
- If any aspect of school is a concern please contact us.
- You can communicate with your child's Personal tutor via the student planner regarding minor concerns or general queries.
- You can also communicate with the Year 7 Pastoral team via email or telephone for more serious worries.
- If you are very concerned or have information which you would prefer to share in person please contact the school to arrange an appointment or meeting with the appropriate member(s) of staff from the Year 7 Pastoral team.

Common problems children may experience at the start of secondary school and what to do about them:

- **Changes within friendship groups:**
This is common as children form new friendships - give advice but be assured that most friendship issues sort themselves fairly quickly. If your child is upset or distressed about changes in their friendship group please contact the Year 7 office.
- **Worrying about a particular lesson:**
Try to find out what it is exactly that your child is worried about or why they seem to dislike a certain subject – is the work too hard / too easy / is anything unclear?
Try to spend some time working with them on the subject and make sure homework is done well. Contact your child's Personal Tutor or the Year 7 office if the problem continues so that a solution can be found.
- **Losing belongings:**
This is a common problem for children with organisational difficulties.
Ensure EVERYTHING is named with your child's FULL NAME.
Contact your child's Personal Tutor or the Year 7 office if this remains a problem beyond the first half term so that strategies can be discussed to improve organisation.
- **Getting into trouble for not completing homework:**
Homework is set consistently from almost all subject areas in Year 7 so there will be a notable increase compared to the homework set by most Primary schools. Follow the advice in the homework section to ensure homework does not become an issue.
If the completion of homework is problematic please contact your child's Personal tutor or the Year 7 office so that appropriate strategies can be discussed to resolve the problems.

Most children make the transition from Primary school to Secondary school quickly and smoothly.

Your child will be fully supported in making this transition at St Mary's College and any worries or issues will be addressed early to ensure your child's experience of starting Secondary school is positive.

Thank you in advance for your support in ensuring your child is organised, confident and ready to be independent as they begin their Secondary education at St Mary's College.

