

**Tips for Parents:**

* Stay engaged:
	+ It’s important to keep asking your child how their day has been and to listen to what they say – and what they don’t say. You know your child best so remember that throughout this transition as they attempt to negotiate a whole new environment
	+ Remember the transition from home/playschool to primary school. Your child is older now but they still need you to be a touchstone of stability and comfort for them as things change in their day-to-day educational lives
* Be consistent and positive:
	+ Secondary schoolwork can be different and challenging for first year students so you must be careful not to pressure your child to achieve high marks or to keep up a similar achievement record to what they produced in primary school. They need time to adjust and this can sometimes be reflected in their work. Offer encouragement, not pressure.
	+ Remind your child that some subjects will come easier to them than others but that they can always ask for help; all learning is important and valuable, even if it feels like a slog
* Make sure the routine is in place before your child starts at secondary school:
	+ Work out what time you’ll all need to get up at to ensure that your child can have breakfast and get to school early so they don’t feel panicked or anxious
	+ Because open days have been curtailed due to the Coronavirus pandemic, your child may not have the chance to see the school before the new academic year starts. If the school has a website, look through it together. View images of the school through Google Maps, to familiarise your child with the building, even just from the outside. The more information your child has about what their new routine will look like, the happier they’ll be in the lead up to the transition.
* Explain their new school life to them as much as you can. Don’t take it for granted that they understand how different secondary school will be;
	+ Explain to them that very often they’ll have to move classrooms for each subject. If you have access to their timetable, work it through with them and make sure they understand how to read it and what it means for their movements through the school.
	+ Prepare them for the fact that they will now be the youngest students in the school instead of the oldest, and remind them that everyone has a place in the school, from the tallest 6th years to the smallest 1st years.
	+ Think about the books and materials they’ll need. Encourage them to get into the habit of keeping subject folders where they can store their notes and homework. The more organised they are, the easier the transition will be.
	+ Staying on top of homework is essential. Encourage your child to complete the homework the day it is assigned to them so they don’t fall behind and become overwhelmed. Some teachers might assign homework via an app or website so try and make sure that you have a working knowledge of these too so your child doesn’t feel like they’re operating in a vacuum when they’re at home.
	+ You can encourage a routine in terms of homework as well; it might happen after dinner, at the kitchen table or at a deskspace in their room but consistency is important
	+ Always remember that you can stay involved in your child’s school life by monitoring their school journals to check on workload and by communicating with them to see how they’re handling the transition. If you feel your child is under-engaging, speak to them about it. If, on the other hand, you feel your child is over-worked and overwhelmed, speak to their teachers about it. Always remember that you are your child’s best advocate.
* Wellbeing;
	+ If your child eats well, gets a decent amount of sleep and exercises, they’ll be better equipped to deal with the new challenges of secondary school.
	+ This can also involve helping them to moderate their screen time so it doesn’t affect their schoolwork or sleep patterns.
	+ Your child needs your help to maintain a balance between their school life and their personal life
	+ The potential for your child to meet new friends and experience positive friendships in secondary school is exponential; support them in this as they explore the new school environment, and the other children that they encounter there.
	+ You can also do your best to help your child maintain the friendships they’ve developed in primary school, especially if those friends will be attending different secondary schools