

## **Moving on to secondary school – A survival guide for young people –**

**‘Most people are about as happy as  
they make up their minds to be.’**

Abraham Lincoln, 1809 – 1865.

President of the United States of America

In writing this guide, I have thought about conversations I have had with some amazing and really wonderful young people in Year 6 over the past year.

**My very best wishes to you all for your future success and happiness and especially my good wishes to George, Lyndon, Curtis, Jessica, Holly, Michael, Ben, Alexander, Max, Amy, Johnny, Dean, Daniel and many others in this move to the next stage in your life.**

### **New friends**

Secondary school is about entering a whole new social world, full of possibilities. Try to see it as an opportunity to meet many wonderful people who may become good friends over the next five or more years, or even friends for life.

### **Try this:**

Each day at your new school make a point of talking to at least 2 new people in your year group. Find something easy to say to them, maybe at morning or lunch break. Find out a little bit about them - what they enjoy, what they are looking forward to most at school.

At the end of the first week you will have met 10 new people.

At the end of the first month you will have met 40 new people.

All of these people will remember you and may be looking out for you at the start of each day.

They will remember you for taking the first steps towards friendship. One or two of these may become very good friends, maybe even friends for life.

**Break & lunch periods**

Often the most difficult part of the school day is the less organized part, when you have no teachers to guide you or tell you what to do. Break times and lunch periods can be lonely times when you are new and only just getting to know other people.

Remember that other people will be feeling just as you do.

Be aware of people who may not have your good social skills and be shy about talking to people they don't know well. Look out for people you think may be lonely, or sad, or worried.

**Try this:**

Think about other people, as well as yourself.

Try to make a difference to someone's life each day, by smiling, saying hello, helping someone find their way to the tuck shop or giving them advice.

As soon as you feel confident about doing something new, share your skills with someone new.

**Goal setting**

For some people the move to secondary school is made more challenging because of difficulties they have had at primary school, either with learning, or with getting on with people and making friends, or for many reasons.

Think about the new school as a chance for a totally new start.

**Try this:**

Think about what you would like to achieve at your new school.

Give yourself 3 goals to work towards in your first term.

These may be -

I would like to make 4 new friends

I would like to join 2 clubs for lunchtimes

I would like to get good marks for my homework

I would like to be chosen for a sports team

**First impressions**

Other people will make an impression of you, for better or worse, within just a few moments of meeting you. You will do the same about other young people you meet, and also about your new subject teachers.

That is something all people do instinctively. It is called 'first impressions'. Partly, on this basis, we decide whether to get to know someone more, or to not bother.

**Try this:**

- Think about what you would like someone's first impressions of you to be.
- What would you like your form teacher to think about you on the first day?
- What would you like your subject teachers to think about you?
- What would you like your class mates to think about you?

Try to think about yourself, as if you were someone else. Would you like yourself?

**Timetables**

One of the biggest challenges in your first few days at your new school will be your new timetable. In some schools students are asked to write it down themselves, from a guide by the form teacher. In others, it may be printed out in advance.

Timetables can be very complicated, for adults as well as young people.

**Try this:**

- If you do not understand your timetable, find help.
- Ask your form teacher, or get to know someone you feel you could trust to help you.
- Share it with your family when you get home.
- Make a copy of your timetable, if you can, and keep one at home, and one at school.
- Pin your home time-table somewhere you can see it easily, at the start of each day

**Homework**

All secondary schools work hard to make sure that young people can enjoy some life outside of school and do not spend all their evenings studying. Try hard to follow the advice given, and to work out a sensible routine at home. Don't play catch up, thinking that you will do the homework the next night, or the next.

**Try this:**

- Do homework on the night it is given, even if you have 3 days before handing it in
- Every week make that your goal.
- Then hopefully, your weekends can be a homework free time.

**Think positively**

At times you may feel worried or anxious because so much of your life and routines have changed. You may miss old friends and teachers, games you used to play in the playground. You may wish you were still walking to school with your family, or friends. You may be angry each day that you're getting up almost an hour earlier than you used to do.

**Try this:**

Make a simple calendar for you first year in secondary school - or use a diary if you have one.

Write down the goals you thought about earlier on your calendar or in your diary.

Write down all the social events you have been told about - Christmas parties or day trips

Remind yourself about your goals by looking ahead in your diary

Remind yourself about events you have been looking forward to since the start of term.

How close are they now and how much do you have to do to achieve them?

Use your diary or calendar to keep you motivated and looking forward, and not backwards.

**Old friends**

It is sometimes hard to keep in close touch with old friends from primary school. Every day can be so busy and you will also, hopefully, be meeting and spending time with new friends.

**Try this:**

Do give yourself some time to catch up with your friends from primary school each week.

Surprise them with an email, or a phone call, or send them a post card.

Perhaps you could draw them a scene from your new school.

Plan something special for the half term so that you spend some time relaxing with people who know you well.

Life will have moved on so much by the October half term.

You will hardly recognize yourself!

Have a wonderful time.

Remember, this time in your life will only happen once. Make the most of every day!

**'They are able who think they are able.'**

Virgil, 70 – 19 BC