



Esgyn ar Adain Dysg

Going to secondary school

Tips for parents

Children's top 10 worries about starting secondary school



- **Being bullied**
- **Not making friends**
- **Getting lost**
- **Homework**
- **Not being able to do the work**
- **Getting to school and back**
- **Not having the right kit and equipment**
- **Not knowing what to do if there's a problem**
- **Not getting on with the teachers**
- **Getting into trouble**



Many of these worries are addressed in the BBC Bitesize series: **Starting Secondary school.**

You can access a series of videos dealing with most of these issues by using this link/QR code.

How can I help as a parent?



Moving from primary to secondary school is an exciting and significant event in the life of your child.

It is an important milestone which, for many parents and teachers, marks a change in expectations regarding crucial life-skills such as independent working and self organisation.

When a child starts at secondary school, they are expected to cope with a whole variety of new experiences and changes, many of which demand skills and abilities that they have not had to use before. The problem is that these skills do not spontaneously develop in children in the summer before they begin secondary schools - like reading and writing - they have to be taught, and our children need support in developing them.

Most parents would like to help reassure their children, prepare them for these changes, and support them in developing the skills they need, but feel they lack the information and expertise to do so. For many of us our own experience of secondary schools is all we have to go on.

The first point to make is 'Be positive!' Even if your own school days were not the best, don't dwell on this. Try to instil a sense of excitement and enthusiasm in your child, building on the positives - new friends, a fresh start, interesting lessons and many clubs, sports and activities to suit everybody.

The top two worries that Y6 children express are social concerns. Although common, most children report that they are no longer worried about these after just one or two weeks at school. As Y8 student Dylan Stephens says, "The build-up is worse than the reality!".

If your child expresses these worries, it is useful to tell them this and to emphasise that everyone else will be feeling anxious too. As there will be many more children in Year 7 than there were in Year 6, everyone has a good choice of friends, and even children who move up with several children from their class tend to make new friends at secondary school. Talk to your child's Year 6 teacher if these worries become great - they may be able to arrange for your child to meet some other pupils who will be starting (or who are already at the school) and perhaps a 'buddy' for the first two or three weeks.

The remaining worries are nearly all to do with the new organisational demands that they know will be placed upon them. Luckily these are the areas in which we can help.

The aim of this booklet is to provide you with the information you need to help your child to achieve independence while supporting them in getting there. To achieve the balance of doing too much or too little for your child is hard - a useful rule of thumb is:

'Never do anything regularly for your child that they are capable of doing for themselves'.

The book clearly outlines exactly what your child needs to be able to do to succeed at secondary school ('Key tasks for pupils') and provides as many practical tips and ideas as we could cram in to help you to help them develop the skills for success ('Tips for parents').

The suggestions in the book are practical, down to earth and have all been used by real parents with real, busy lives, You do not need to be an 'expert' or devote your life to your child's schooling to help your child to get it right.

Time spent early on in establishing habits of work and independence is an investment that will save endless time, battles and heartache in the long run. The habits and routines that children develop in Y7 are those that will stay with them throughout their secondary schooling and often throughout their working lives. It's worth the effort of getting it right to start with (so much easier than putting things right when they've gone wrong). If you can help your child to do this, you really will be making a difference.

So what is different about secondary school?



- Children often have to travel further. Some will be making their way to and from school independently for the first time and many will be travelling by bus.
- They may have to wear a full school uniform for the first time, and they will have a whole list of new rules and regulations to remember.
- Instead of one teacher, who has often known them since their early years, they will be taught by nine or ten teachers and have to get to know a whole range of adults in different roles within the school.
- The site will be much bigger and children will have to find their way around, moving from classroom to classroom between lessons, often carrying their belongings with them.
- They will have to use and interpret a 2 week timetable, a school App called ClassCharts and a paper 'planner' as well.

- For the first time children may be fully responsible for ensuring that they have the correct books and equipment for five different lessons, bus pass, PE kit, cooking equipment etc.
- Children will be given full responsibility for ensuring they know what homework to do, completing it by the correct day and submitting it on time.
- Homework tasks may be recorded in the planner although we put homework online, accessed via the Apps ClassCharts and Teams. Parents may have access to their own version of ClassCharts which will allow them to view homework tasks.
- There will be new lessons (such as Modern Foreign Languages) and new variations on familiar ones (Science in a laboratory for example).
- Teaching and learning styles may be very different. Children may be expected to write more frequently and for longer, and they may be expected to use the library independently.
- Break-time and lunchtime will be organised differently and children will have a lot more independence in terms of getting back to lessons on time, buying their own snacks and lunches and so on.

In general pupils are expected to be more independent, self-reliant and organised - a welcome development for many pupils but a challenge for some!

Although as a parent of a secondary school pupil your relationship with the school may be different from that you had with the primary school, you will build relationships and get to know the school over time, just as you did when they were at primary school.

You may also be able to access a lot of information about your child's day through ClassCharts and Parentpay. These will often tell you what your child has been learning, what homework they've been set, what their behaviour has been like and even what they've had for dinner!

Make sure you know how to access and use them and, if you're not confident with the technology, don't be afraid to ask. Other parents or staff at the school will be happy to talk you through. The Year 6 Open Evening would be a good time to ask.

You as a parent also have new responsibilities (or responsibilities that are managed in a different way now they are at secondary school). These include ensuring that you keep lunch money topped up (via ParentPay), that you pay for trips, bus passes and specific resources, give consent where necessary (usually via ClassCharts), check school notifications and keep up to date with your child's progress and behaviour!



Getting there and back again



Key Tasks for pupils

- **Getting up on time.**
- **Getting dressed, washed and ready to walk out of the door with everything you need for the school day ahead.**
- **Leaving the house to get to the bus stop or to school on time.**
- **Getting on and off the bus at the right time and place. You must show your bus pass every day. You can't go on to another bus (visit friends). You won't be allowed on.**
- **Being in the right place at the right time at the end of school.**
- **Going straight home unless alternative plans have been agreed with your parents.**
- **Knowing what to do if you are delayed for any reason (including keeping your phone on at agreed times).**

Tips for Parents



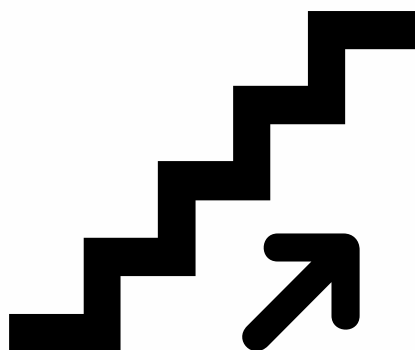
Before your child starts

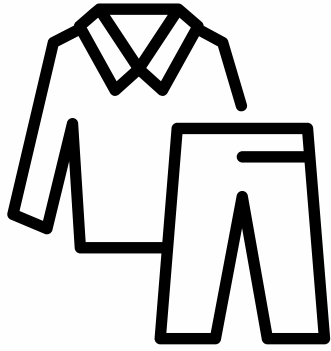
- **Invest time and effort in finding the best parental control app for your child's phone. They each offer a range of options for keeping your child safe, for example:**
 - **location tracking (you have to agree with your child that they will keep their phone on at set times, for example after school until they are home)**
 - **the blocking of inappropriate content and websites**
 - **the facility for viewing their deleted history**
 - **an alert to parents if there are suspicious text messages, photos, etc.**
 - **the blocking of social media at specific times.**
- **Time the journey to school or bus-stop.**
- **Be sure your child is clear about what time they are expected to be home and what to do if they are held up for any reason.**
- **Make sure they know what you are doing when and have your contact numbers.**
- **Make sure you know how the school will notify you if for any reason your child doesn't arrive at school (or at a lesson) and register at the correct time. This will usually be through the ClassCharts App.**

- Make sure your child can set their alarm (phone, Alexa etc.). Test run it before the first day at school. Set a fallback alarm for yourself to begin with, then trust them!
- Work out with your child what time they will need to get up to get to school on time. Work backwards from the time they need to be at school. Include all the things they will need to do.
- Agree a routine for the mornings and after school. Will they shower/bath in the morning or the evening? Will they get their school bag ready the night before or in the morning? Who will make the packed lunch? When?
- Agree a bedtime for school days with your child that will ensure they get enough sleep. Teenagers and pre-teens need between eight and a half and nine and a half hours sleep a night. Be clear about what they can and can't do when they go to bed - for example not using electronic media once they are in bed. The science is clear that electronic devices at night interfere with sleep (because of the type of light waves that they emit). Use a parental control App to block social media after a particular time.
- Build their confidence and independence through a couple of practice morning runs, Set your child the challenge of getting up at the correct time and getting to the school site on time before they have to do it for real.
- Try out any location tracking you have put on their phone (this can be made into a fun game) and make sure that they understand the importance of leaving this activated and their phone on at agreed times.

When they start

- If possible, be around for your child for the first few days/weeks and 'supervise' (in the background, not by hovering over their every move!). Praise and encourage independence but be ready to offer a helping hand.
- Ask how they got on, but don't worry if they are vague or don't want to talk. Let them know you are there to listen if there is anything they want to talk about.
- Use and explore the school ClassCharts App together - you might ask for their help in using the parent version! Show pleasure when you see they have earned 'good' behaviour or achievement points and get them into the habit of checking for notifications and homework tasks every day.
- Keep to your side of the bargain - if you have arranged to leave their clean P.E. kit on the hall table make sure it is there!
- Go through the routine regularly with your child. If necessary provide a tick-list to help them.
- Insist on the routine being kept to whenever possible - it will save you hours in the long run!





Uniform Matters



Key Tasks for pupils

- **Knowing (and keeping to) the school rules regarding uniform (including jewellery, piercings and make-up).**
- **Making sure everything is ready to put on the evening before (including shoes, socks and clean underwear).**
- **Making sure a full PE kit is taken or worn to school on the days it is needed.**

Support

If your child already gets free school meals, there could be more help available for School Essentials (PDG Access), via Carmarthenshire County Council.

The Pupil Development Grant (PDG) grant provides financial assistance to families on low incomes for the purchase of:

- School uniform including coats and shoes;
- School sports kit including footwear;
- Uniform for enrichment activities, including but not limited to, scouts; guides; cadets; martial arts; sports; performing arts or dance;
- Equipment e.g. school bags and stationery;
- Specialist equipment where new curriculum activities begin such as design and technology;

Equipment for out of school hours trips, IT equipment - laptops and tablets only.

Funding of up to £200 is available to each eligible child going into Year 7



<https://www.carmarthenshire.gov.wales/home/council-services/education-schools/financial-support/school-essentials-pupil-development-grant-access/>

Tips for Parents

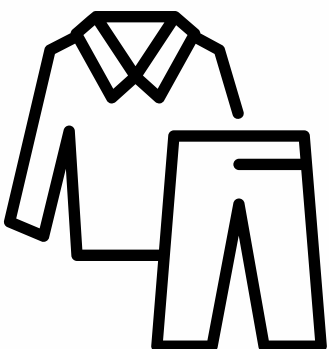
Before your child starts

- Check the uniform requirements including rules regarding make-up, piercings and jewellery. Schools will normally provide details at the Y6 Open Evening and distribute a list of regulations regarding dress and where it can be obtained. This information will usually be available on the school's website and on social media, but if you are unsure on specific points, check directly with the school.
- Buy uniform items early. Shops tend to run out mid-August.
- Make sure your child has shoes they can fasten themselves. If they can't do laces, buy Velcro.
- Buy non-iron whenever possible.
- Our school 'Swap shop' has good quality second hand uniform available to all. Your child can ask their form tutor, to find out more.
- Be sensitive to children's feelings about wearing second-hand items, which they might see as 'cast-offs' and a cause for embarrassment. (This sensitivity will usually decrease with time as your child becomes more confident.)
- Name label everything, even shoes - you would not believe what children can lose at school! A permanent marker pen is as good as labels. Use silver on dark fabrics.

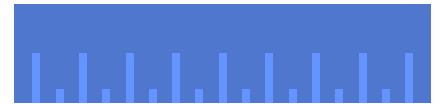
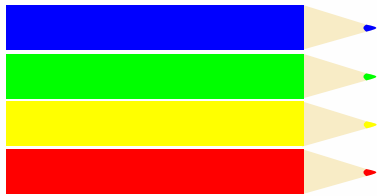
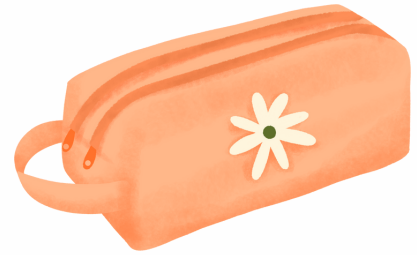
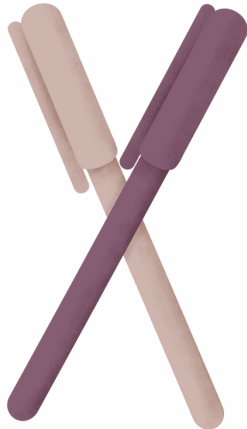
- Have spares of all essentials at home if possible, it prevents panic when things get mislaid at 8.30am (and they will!).
- If things have gone horribly wrong and your child just can't wear one or more item of uniform or bring in their P.E. kit, make sure you let the school know (via email or by phoning the Head of Year or Form Tutor).

When they start

- Encourage your child to get changed straight after school so that they can hang up and sort out their uniform and washing.
- Have a system for making sure that clothes are clean and ready - the earlier children start to take responsibility the better, but whoever does it, both parties need to know 'the system'.
- If your child is very disorganised check items one by one, or give a checklist at first. Hanging shelves can be used with one shelf for every school day.
- Encourage your child to put everything out (including shoes, socks or tights, and underwear) the night before, There's much more time in the evening for finding odd socks!
- If you have a timetable displayed for your child, colour the days when your child has PE so they can see each day if they need to take their PE kit.



Organising books and equipment



Key Tasks for pupils

- Having a good system for keeping books and equipment.
- Knowing what lessons there are on a particular day.
- Knowing what equipment is needed for each lesson (e.g. ruler, highlighters, calculator, P.E. kit).
- Using the paper planner or App to record important notes and messages and to set reminders.
- Having a bag packed with everything needed the night before, including snacks, drinks etc.

Tips for Parents

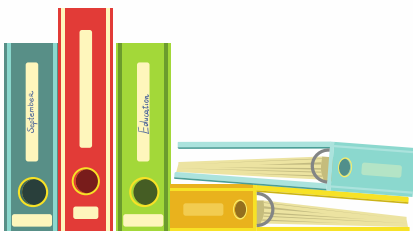


Before your child starts

- Help your child organise their living space so that they have a place for everything to do with school. Try to make sure they have access to a desk, good light and storage space for their school files and resources.
- Equip them with the tools they will need at home. It's best to keep two sets of everything - one for school and one for home - so that losing a pen at school does not stop them doing their homework.
- A useful home 'tool kit' consists of:
 - Pencils; pens (blue, black, red, green); rubber; sharpener; crayons; felt-pens; correction fluid; highlighters; ruler; maths equipment (protractor, calculator); sticky glue- stick; scissors; paper (lined and plain).
- A box-file or stacking system is useful for pupils with organisational problems - each file can be labelled with the subject and everything to do with that subject can be kept ready to put in the school-bag when required.
- Although many homework tasks will be completed online, in some subjects pupils are given course booklets to complete and/or worksheets. An A4 plastic or card folder labelled with the subject name to keep these accessible and in usable form can be useful.
- Keep a spare, labelled lunch box and drinks bottle.

When they start

- Teach a routine for making sure the school bag is emptied and checked each day.
- Encourage your child to glue any worksheet/odd bits of paper into their subject book if possible each night so that they are not lost.
- Supervise the packing of the bag for the following day to begin with. Encourage the habit of having everything ready to walk out the door the next morning.
- Although you and your child will have their timetable on the ClassCharts App, it is useful to have a displayed timetable at home which can be used as a checklist for equipment and kit.
- Write the equipment needed at the top for each day.
- Encourage your child to check the ClassCharts App and/or their paper planner for any reminders or notes each night. Remember to check using the parent App to begin with, until you are confident that your child has established the habit (a habit can take several months to establish for some children).
- If you know your child has a Health (Cooking) lesson on a certain day, and the school ask children to bring in ingredients, check what they need in plenty of time - searching through cupboards in the morning ten minutes before the bus leaves is not to be recommended!



Homework

Key Tasks for pupils

- Understanding how the ClassCharts homework App works and using it each day.
- Making sure you double check the date on which homework is due to be handed in.
- Understanding exactly what you have to do and asking the teacher to explain or give you more details if you are not sure what the task means,
- Making sure you bring home everything you need to do the homework.
- Working by yourself to complete tasks and spending the correct amount of time on each. Doing your best without someone standing over you!
- Asking for help if it is difficult, or you don't understand something.
- Making sure your completed homework is submitted on the correct day.

- TIP: Try to do homework on the night it is set - not the night before it is due in (you may get three other homework's on that night!).



Tips for Parents

Before your child starts

- Agree a routine for homework with your child. Life can become a constant 'nag' if you don't start this from the beginning. Homework becomes an increasingly important part of the curriculum as your child goes through school - what they starts off doing is what they will do until they leave!
- A good time for homework is after a short break when your child returns from school. This gets it out of the way early, leaving the rest of the evening free - who wants to start work at 7.00 p.m.?
- It is a good idea to agree with your child from the beginning that TV, phone time etc. will only be possible after homework is done. A social media blocker installed on your child's phone can be very useful for 'homework time'.
- Many children will say that listening to music helps them concentrate and do their work. Agree whether this is allowed.
- Be prepared to invest time at first - for example be available for a set time each day to help with homework until the routine is established - it will be time well spent.
- If your child finds it tricky to motivate themselves, get them off to a good start by setting up a reward system. Use stickers or points which build up to a 'menu' of rewards which are agreed with them.
- Small rewards that are quickly earned are more effective than offering something big - but at the end of the month or term - they will easily lose heart.

- Don't have a set period within which your child has to achieve so many stickers or points. Just keep counting until the required number of stickers or points have been earned, however long it takes!
- Never take stickers or points away - they have been earned even if your child has done something dreadful since!
- And remember, rewards don't have to be material things - staying up late or special time with parents/a family member or shopping with friends can be just as motivating.
- Using the ideas in 'organising books and equipment' will help enormously - make sure your child has a comfortable place to work, with as few distractions as possible and all the resources they need.
- Check on the ClassCharts App about how long children are expected to spend on homework each night. Check also what you can do if your child is having difficulty.

When they start

- Stick to your agreed routine whenever possible.
- If you have agreed a reward system, stick to it! Remember never to take points or stickers away that have been earned, and keep to the reward 'menu' you have agreed however busy you are. If you don't keep your word, the system is unlikely to work the next time you try.
- Try to ensure that homework is done on the night it is set to prevent 'build-up'.

- Spend time with your child in the first few weeks, establishing the routine.
- Encourage your child to check their planner and/or ClassCharts homework App. To begin with check alongside them using the parent App if you are able, to see what homework needs to be done, and when it is to be done for. Check they have everything they need to complete the tasks. Ask them to tell you what they will need, to encourage independence.
- Recognise how hard it is to work unsupervised. Help your child structure their time and use it usefully - encourage them to set an alarm or timer and agree the tasks that should be done in each e.g. half-hour period. Try to be available to encourage and reward through gentle 'progress checks' e.g. 'How's it going? You had hoped you might have got x done'. Otherwise leave them to it - don't establish a pattern of always doing homework with them it's unsustainable and they won't learn to work independently.
- Be matter of fact about any media blocker set and don't give in to complaints or promises to work harder if they can access Instagram or TikTok! They won't.
- Remind them of the rewards of working in this way homework doesn't drag on all night, and it feels good to have completed tasks.
- Don't let children struggle on for longer than the recommended time. If they have done the half an hour that is expected and only answered half the questions, let them stop. If they are worried about the consequences, write a note on the homework, or use the App or email to confirm that the correct amount of time was spent on the task.
- If children are stuck - either because they don't understand the task, or because they can't do it, offer support but don't do it for them.

- Encourage your child to check during the lesson if they haven't understood what the task means - it's too late by the time they get home.
- If neither of you understands the task set, encourage your child to ring a friend in the same group, or use ClassCharts or email where appropriate to ask the teacher setting the task for clarification, explaining the difficulty and offering to ensure the work is completed as soon as possible.
- If there is a problem with the level of work, it is important that the teacher knows this. If work is consistently too difficult or too easy, it is important to let the teacher know.
- Take an interest in the marks and comments on the homework your child gets back - celebrate success and give the clear message that homework is valuable and important.
- Homework may not be automatically valued by the children in school. Some children in your child's class may never do it and appear to 'get away with it'. This won't be the case, but you may need to explain to your child that different children in school will have different needs and contexts and the school treats everyone as an individual.
- Be very wary of excuses your child may use (see the list overleaf). They will accumulate many new ideas for excuses from their peers over the first few weeks and only some will be genuine!
- If an excuse is given, see if you can verify that it is true on the App or by contacting the teacher who set it. Always ensure that your child still does the homework as soon as the problem is sorted out. If you do this the first few times, the excuses will lessen but if they are successful in getting out of homework in this way to start with, they will carry on and it becomes very hard to re-establish good patterns later on when homework becomes absolutely crucial to examination grades.
- If your child is consistently not getting homework when they should be, contact the Form Tutor to explain your concerns.



Common excuses for not being able to do homework

"I don't need to do that, we did it in class."

"We had a supply teacher."

"My little sister poured her drink over the keyboard."

"The Wi-Fi went down."

"The electric went so I couldn't use the computer."

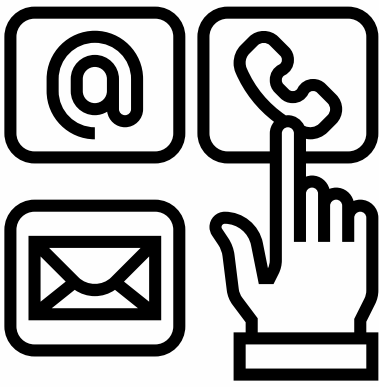
"I lost my password and couldn't log into the server."

"My mum had to use my computer for work."

"I left the stuff I need to do it at School."

"I'm going to do it with my friend on the bus/at break."

"I need to do it in the library - I'll do it lunchtime tomorrow."



Contacting the School

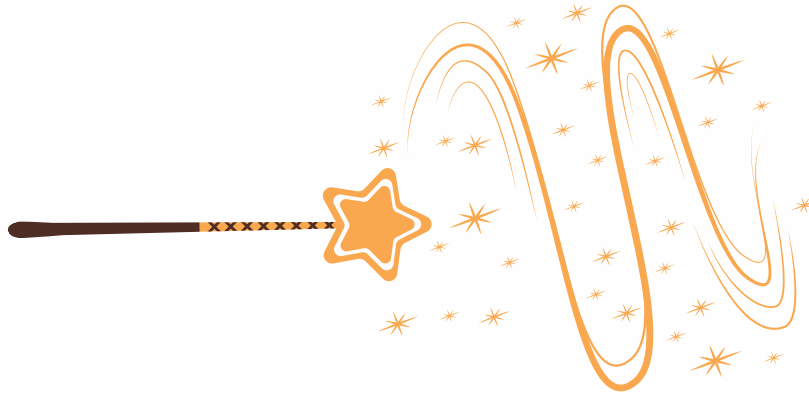
- when and who?

Just as it is hard to know how to achieve the balance between offering your child too much support (and being accused of fussing) and leaving them to flounder and perhaps fail, it is also hard to achieve the balance between becoming the 'overanxious parent' (on the phone to the school every time your child falls out with a friend or grazes their knee) and letting things go on too long because you don't want to interfere.

The job is made much easier if you keep talking to your child about how things are at school. You will have a good idea about how the work is going, and your child's general feelings about school if you are following some of the suggestions in this guide, and this will give you a sound basis for deciding whether your intervention is required or not.

You know your children best, and if any aspect of school life is persistently distressing them it is probably best to err on the side of caution and intervene early. If you have talked to your child, offered reassurance, helped them come up with ways of solving the problem themselves and things still haven't changed after a couple of weeks, then it is time to speak to the school. The key person to contact will usually be the Form Tutor or Head of Year.

Common problems and what to do about them



Falling out with friends

This is very common as children form new friendships and new 'pecking orders' are established. Listen (endlessly), validate their feelings and give advice if it's asked for - but don't overreact - the tears and anger are normal and most friendship issues sort themselves out without adults getting involved. Contact the school if your child becomes anxious, miserable or severely withdrawn over this for more than a couple of weeks, or if you suspect that what is happening may be bullying.

The hallmarks of bullying are intentionality (a deliberate attempt to make someone unhappy); persistence (i.e. an ongoing 'campaign', not isolated incidents or arguments about specific issues); and an imbalance of power (if the perpetrators are older, bigger, more powerful or if they are operating as a gang against an individual).

By law, the school must have an anti-bullying policy. Do have a look at it and contact your child's Tutor or Head of Year if you fear bullying. The National Bullying Helpline is an excellent source of support for parents, and offers a free consultation.

<https://www.nationalbullyinghelpline.co.uk/kids.html>

Worrying about particular lessons or feeling picked on or disliked by certain teachers

Try to find out what it is exactly that your child is worried about or why they dislike a certain teacher or subject. If it is because the work is too hard (or too easy), try to spend some time working with them on the subject to check this out. It does take time for new teachers to find out an individual's strengths and weaknesses. Contact the school if your child continues to find the work too easy or too hard after half a term or so, or raise the issue at parents' evening.

If it is because they feel 'picked on' it may be the teacher's individual style which your child is taking personally. It is a life-skill to learn that you won't get on with everyone you have to work with and a pragmatic approach is to be recommended. Advise them to smile a lot at this teacher and see if it makes a difference! Make sure homework is done well for this subject. Do try not to run down the teacher in front of your child - this invariably makes the problem worse.

Contact your child's Tutor if the problem continues. Ask to meet with the teacher concerned if necessary and talk to them about the problem. Teachers are often not even aware there is a problem. You do not have to let your child know you have done this - they are often amazed by how 'nice' Mr. X has suddenly become...





Losing belongings

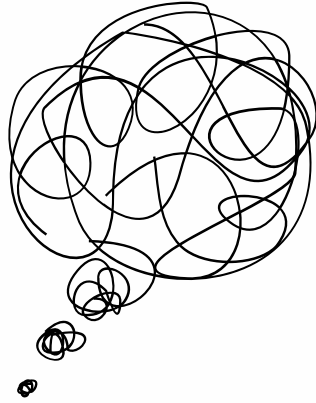
This is very common for children with organisational difficulties (and very expensive for their parents). If after half a term you're not seeing a difference, contact your child's Tutor and ask for their support - they can often provide 'checks' at key times and be very creative in supporting your child towards independence in school, sometimes keeping spares of commonly lost items. The school has a 'Swap Shop' for uniform and tutors can direct them to this.

Getting into trouble for not completing homework

In many ways, homework makes the most demands on both Year 7 pupils and their parents.

If your child is consistently not getting homework (over a period of five or six weeks), is not able to do the homework set, or if the tasks set are difficult for your child to understand, contact your child's teacher for that subject and explain the problem. If nothing changes, ask for a meeting with the Head of Year to see what you can come up with together to help your child. Remember that this is what the school wants as well as what you want as a parent!

Strategies for dealing with anxiety



A degree of anxiety and stress is normal at a time of change. If you or your child feel that they are becoming too stressed or that their anxiety is impacting on significant aspects of their life, encourage them to talk about the underlying issues.

Pre-teens and teenagers often become prone to 'all or nothing' thinking, leading them to exaggerate the importance of incidents. This is because their emotions are so strong at this age, and their strategies for dealing with them so limited.

Try to find out exactly what is causing the problem by encouraging your child to talk about what happens in the class, what is it that someone has actually done or said that your child finds difficult. Don't minimise the feelings that your child is experiencing as this leads to the 'you just don't understand' response - accept that the feelings are real and that the problem to be resolved is one of finding a strategy they are happy with.

For pre-teens and teenagers, problems often seem permanent ('I will never be able to understand this subject/ get on with this teacher'), global ('I hate everything about this new school' or 'Everything about science is boring/ difficult/ stupid'), and insoluble ('There is nothing that I or anyone else can do about it').

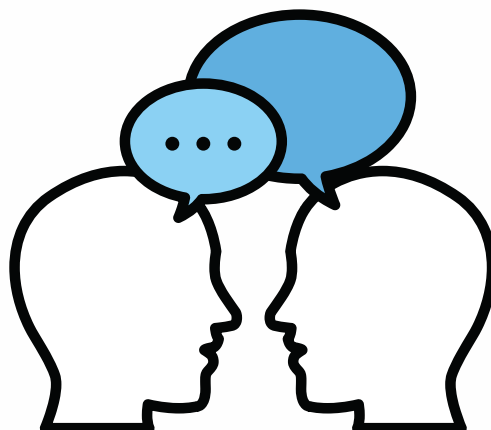
The trick is to talk to them using language that makes the problem more manageable, by making it seem:

- specific rather than global ('What is it specifically that you find difficult/don't like about what she says/does?')
- temporary ('How long have you been feeling like this about her/the subject?')
- solvable ('What would you like to happen? What would make it more bearable?')

Some of the symptoms of stress are listed below. However, you know your child best so any marked changes in behaviour are worth checking out, whether these involve uncharacteristic aggression, risk-taking or withdrawal and tearfulness.

- Difficulty getting to sleep or waking up
- Tiredness e Poor appetite
- Loss of interest in things they used to enjoy
- Headaches and other unexplained aches and pains
- Irritability and frequent angry episodes.

Talking to your child about anxiety might help. You could explain that anxiety might impact on our bodies, our feelings, our thoughts and even our behaviours. Some of the ways that anxiety impacts on us are listed here.



- **Body/ physical reactions** (e.g. fast heartbeat, shallow quick breathing, chest pain, feeling sick, feeling fidgety, shaking, tense muscles, sweating, light-headedness).
- **Feelings** (e.g. nervous, frightened, a sense of dread panic, embarrassment, confusion, restlessness).
- **Thoughts** (racing thoughts, constant worries, difficulty concentrating, imagining the worst).
- **Behaviours** (avoidance of situations, people or places, unable to sit still, changes in appetite).

It might be helpful to tell your child that:

- Anxiety is a normal emotion that we all experience from time to time.
- Anxiety is an adaptive response (triggering the primitive fight, flight or freeze response which protects us from harm).
- Anxiety is not harmful to you. The physical symptoms are there to protect you.
- Anxiety won't last forever. It is temporary and will pass.

If your child is stressed or clearly very anxious, try to encourage them to notice and label their feelings, accept that they will pass and take time out away from work, doing something that they enjoy. Exercise promotes hormones that actively counter stress, so try to encourage this. Ensure your child eats well, and let them know that you are always there to listen. (Try not to offer immediate solutions to worries or to give advice, unless they ask for it - what stressed people most need is somebody to listen and empathise with the feelings they express.)

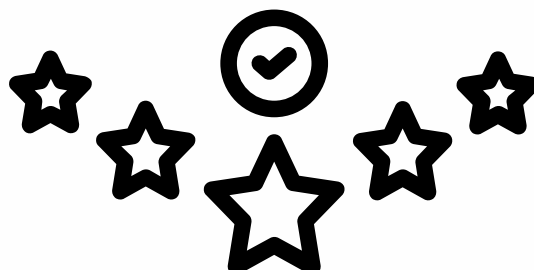
Some of the following strategies may be useful with some success in helping them to regain a sense of perspective, but the important thing is to use the strategies that you know have worked in the past:

- Asking them 'What's the worst that can happen?' or saying, 'OK, well the starting point is that nobody is going to die'.
- Reminding them of when they have overcome difficulties in the past, and of their own skills and qualities that have enabled them to do so.
- Getting them to focus on what they have achieved, despite this 'blip'.
- Pointing out that little is achieved without hard work and mistakes being made - it's part of life and learning and adults frequently make mistakes too.

One more structured approach that many parents have found useful is to use a framework to work through, such as a 'Worry Flow-Chart', (examples can be found online). You could try it out yourself, or look at it with your child, applying it to a particular worry. Some of the suggested questions and statements at each stage might 'strike a chord', so focus on those that you or your child find helpful.

There are a range of online sources of support for dealing with stress and anxieties (in the form of Apps, videos, telephone helplines, chatlines, forums etc). Many of them can be found by using the link below, or your child's Head of Year will have details of local options.

<https://www.supportline.org.uk/problems/children-and-young-people-support/>



We hope this document has offered you some support. In working together, we will ensure a smooth transition for your child and we look forward to welcoming them to Ysgol Bro Dinefwr.

For up to date information, please look at our school website under the 'Parents & Guardians' tab, then 'Year 6 Transition'.

For further information on aspects of Transition, contact:

dewi.howells@brodinefwr.org.uk - general transition information

sarah.tiddy@brodinefwr.org.uk - information relating to Welsh language provision

lisa.thomas@brodinefwr.org.uk - information relating to Additional Learning Needs provision

learnertravel@carmarthenshire.gov.uk - for information regarding school transport

