

TRANSITION ADVICE FROM EX-PARENTS FOR WHEN YOUR CHILD MOVES TO SECONDARY SCHOOL

Make their lives as simple as possible:



They end their time at St Edmund's feeling like top dogs and full of confidence, but they start at the bottom when it comes to secondary school and that confidence disappears when faced with the new challenges of secondary school – they need your support and reassurance and then the confidence builds up again very quickly.

Food:

It's good to make the rest of their life as easy and as stress free as possible – this may mean making favourite dinners, making sure they eat well and making sure they get to bed at a reasonable time so that they get plenty of sleep.

Homework:

Don't be afraid to help with homework such as covering books and stuff that will ease their burden at the beginning of term.

Let them rest and recuperate at weekends as much as possible – they do get very tired and need to be allowed to relax and sleep in as much as possible. Keep all screens out of their bedrooms so that they can do homework uninterrupted and sleep well too.



Travelling:

Apply early for their Oyster card so that they have it in plenty of time and keep it in a brightly coloured holder which makes it harder to lose! Write down travel details for them just until they are confident of all different options.

This may include bus numbers, where to get off/on and then alternative routes in case of cancellations/travel disruption. Make sure you practice their journey with them during the summer and even get them to do it by themselves before the start of term – this just gives them more confidence when term starts.



Tell them to be confident/bold when on buses and trains as people can be impolite towards them, but also make sure they know to be polite/respectful to other travellers, particularly those with a need ie elderly people, wheelchairs, pushchairs.

Advise them to be confident enough to distance themselves from other people's bad behaviour on buses & trains and not to get involved. Make sure they have someone to travel home with if staying late for after school activities, especially for the first few weeks. Talk to them about sticking to safe routes home during the darker months and keeping to main roads as much as possible.

Mobiles:



If they are not allowed their phone with them in school make sure they have emergency numbers and keep them somewhere safe, this may be useful even if they are allowed to have a mobile with them, just in case they lose/break their phone or it runs out of battery.

Talk to them about not having their phones out when walking home and also they should not have both earphones in, just having one in means they can still hear what is going on around them and are able to keep themselves safer.

Talk to them about what they would do if approached and asked to hand over their phones – what is more valuable, them or the phone!? A good idea is to have a less expensive phone to take to school so that it is less of a worry in case of loss or damage, and also it makes the phone less attractive to others!

Uniform:

If they attend a school where all children must have the same school bag, it's useful to attach a distinctive key ring etc to the zip which then makes it easier to identify when all the bags get left together.

Most schools have second hand uniform shops/sales – use them! Uniform is so expensive and they do tend to lose lots. Don't rush to buy things like lab coats as usually they don't need their own as school have them to borrow.

Look after them:

Make time to talk to them and find out how things are going at school, it can be a very busy stressful time so it's good that they can chat through things that may be worrying them and then you can help them figure things out. They have a lot to remember and they do need help figuring out how they can prioritise their lives and organise themselves.

Be prepared that they may get anxious again when going back to school after the first half term break or Christmas holidays, but they just need to get back in to the swing of things. Be patient with them and give them a bit of a break while they settle down – they have a lot to learn and remember and get right, and while it may seem that they're fine, they may still be quite stressed deep down.

Organisation:

Make sure you make plenty of copies of their timetable for the first few weeks while they are getting to grips with things, then you can have copies at home and they can have one in their locker, their pocket and in their bedroom – this just helps them be on top of things.

It's crucial that they get everything ready for the following day before they go to bed – EVERYTHING! This means that their school bag is packed, their uniform is ready, any sports kit, instruments etc are packed and ready. This avoids having a panic in the morning when they realise they've forgotten something or can't find something.

Make sure you attend everything you are invited to as the more info you have, the better. Also you can get to know parents of new friends.

Useful apps:

Screen Time Parental Control: allows parents to control the amount of screen time that kids have on their phones and tablets.

Find Friends or Find My iPhone: allows you to track their devices.

