

# Stepping into Secondary School

A hearts and minds guide to  
**support your journey**

**Believe in  
children**  
 **Barnardo's**

# Welcome

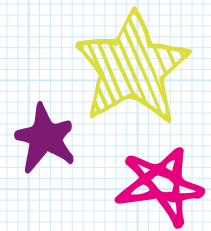
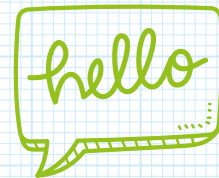


## Welcome to your **Stepping into Secondary School** guide.

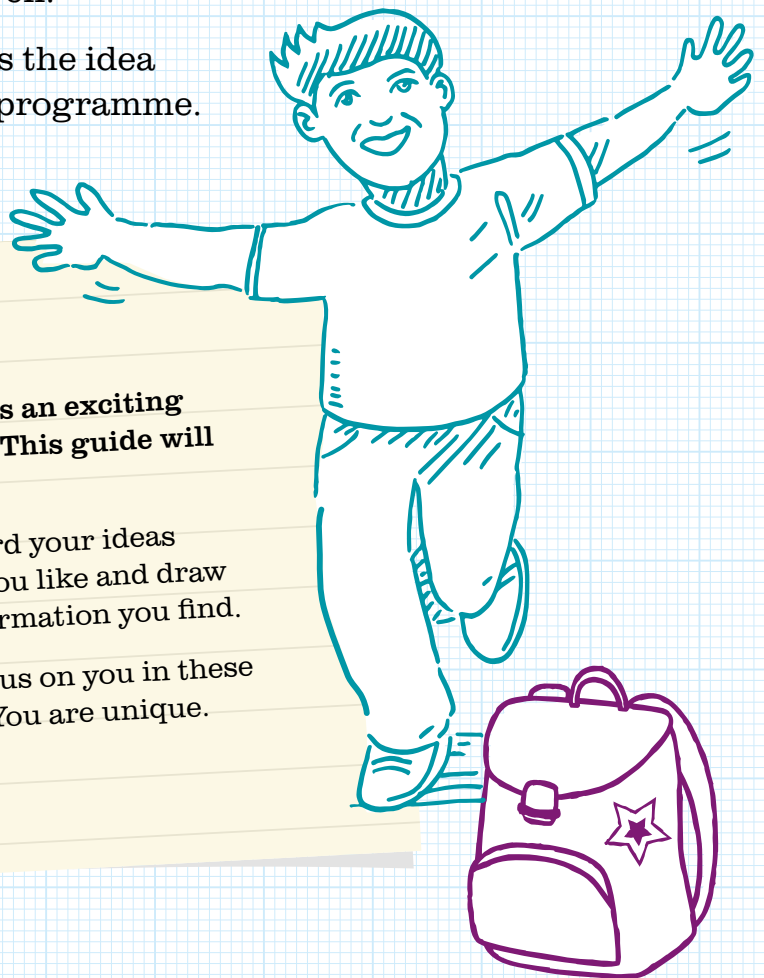
This guide will help you to explore your thoughts and feelings about your move to secondary school. We hope it will make you feel more confident and prepared for your new start.

You may need help from an adult to work through this guide or prefer to complete it on your own. Sharing how you feel with someone means they will be able to help you if you need it.

The key ideas you will find in this guide come from a programme called WRAP which stands for **Wellness Recovery Action Plan**. Anyone can use WRAP to help keep themselves feeling well.



When you see this symbol it means the idea we are sharing is from the WRAP programme.

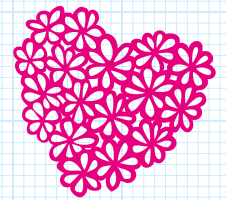


**Moving from primary to secondary school is an exciting time, which can also bring new challenges. This guide will help you to prepare for this next step.**

There is space in this guide for you to record your ideas and make plans. You can be as creative as you like and draw pictures, make notes and even paste in information you find.

We make no apologies for asking you to focus on you in these pages. You are important. You are special. You are unique.

# Top Tips for a great start

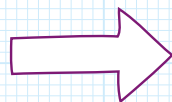
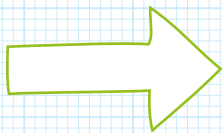


Look out for this sign to read more of our top tips as you prepare for secondary school



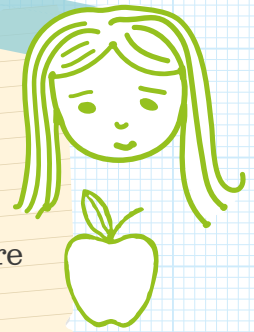
## Rules

School rules are there so that you can learn in a safe and productive way. You can find your schools rules in your planner.



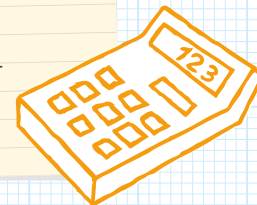
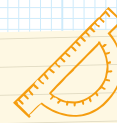
## Money

Many schools have introduced a cash-less system. Some schools use a pre-paid card where you top up at a machine in school. Others use a fingerprint system and some still use cash. Find out what system is used in your school.



## Equipment

Your tutor and planner will tell you what equipment you will need – from stationary to sports kits. Remember to check your planner before the next day to make sure you have the correct equipment with you.



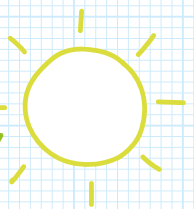
## Homework

You will be encouraged to write homework in your planner so that you don't forget to do it. It can help to plan when you will fit homework into your day whether after school or on the weekend.

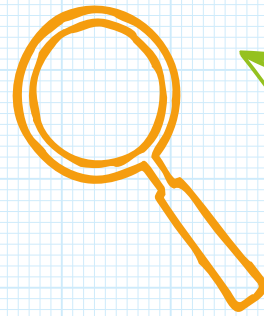


## Break times

Make the most of your break times by using the canteen, toilets and getting some fresh air. There will be staff on duty if you need anything.

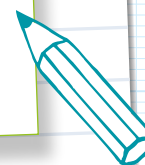


# Explore your school... virtually



There will be lots of information on your school's website. See what you can find out about the areas below:

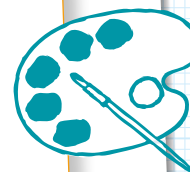
## School Day



## Equipment



## School clubs

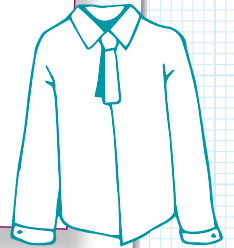


### Top Tips

Clubs are a great wellness tool, they make you happy, you have fun and they are a great way to make new friends.



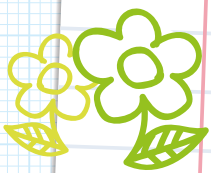
## Uniform and kit



## Teachers and other staff



## Where to get support when you need it



### Top Tips

Find out where student services is and who works there.

# Wellness Tools

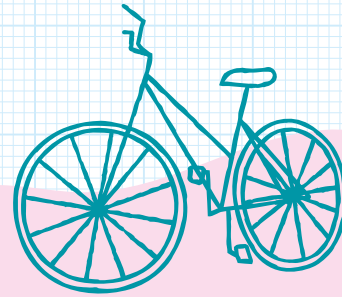
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Wellness tools are the things we do that we enjoy and that make us happy. We can use our wellness tools when we are not feeling great to help lift our mood. Most wellness tools are simple, safe and free. Your list of wellness tools will grow and change over time, just like you!

Here are some examples:



**Listen to music** – music has the power to influence our mood. Consider the types of music that help you feel good.



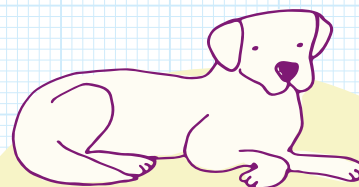
**Keep active** – exercise can help you sleep better, have more energy and keep your heart healthy. Even if you just go for a walk.



**Get outdoors** – connecting with nature can lift your mood. Walk to school if possible and try to listen to the birds, notice the change in the trees or the different flowers.



**Connect with others** – spend time with new friends, old friends and family.



**Talk about any troubling thoughts or feelings** you might have with someone you trust. You could write in a journal or even talk to a pet.

**Watch something funny** – laughing can make you feel better and lift your mood.



Use this space to write down your own wellness tools - the different things you like doing that make you feel good.

People can be part of our wellness tools too, so remember to add the names of people who you enjoy spending time and connecting with.



Getting a good night's sleep is important for your mood and concentration. Not having enough impacts on how you feel in a big way. The average 11-12 year old should get 9-10 hours every night.

At secondary school, you can meet new people, join new clubs and find new wellness tools to add to your list!

# Meeting new people



You will meet lots of new people at your new school. It's normal to feel excited, nervous or a mixture of both; here are some ideas that might help:

## Get involved

Spend time with others at lunch and break times. Joining a club is a great way to meet new people.

## Get to know your friends' friends.

You can meet up in the canteen, on the walk home or you could ask your friend to introduce you to them.

## Take the first step

Say 'Hi' or ask how someone's day has been. Giving someone a compliment on their hair, shoes or bag can be a good way to start a conversation.

## Give everyone a chance

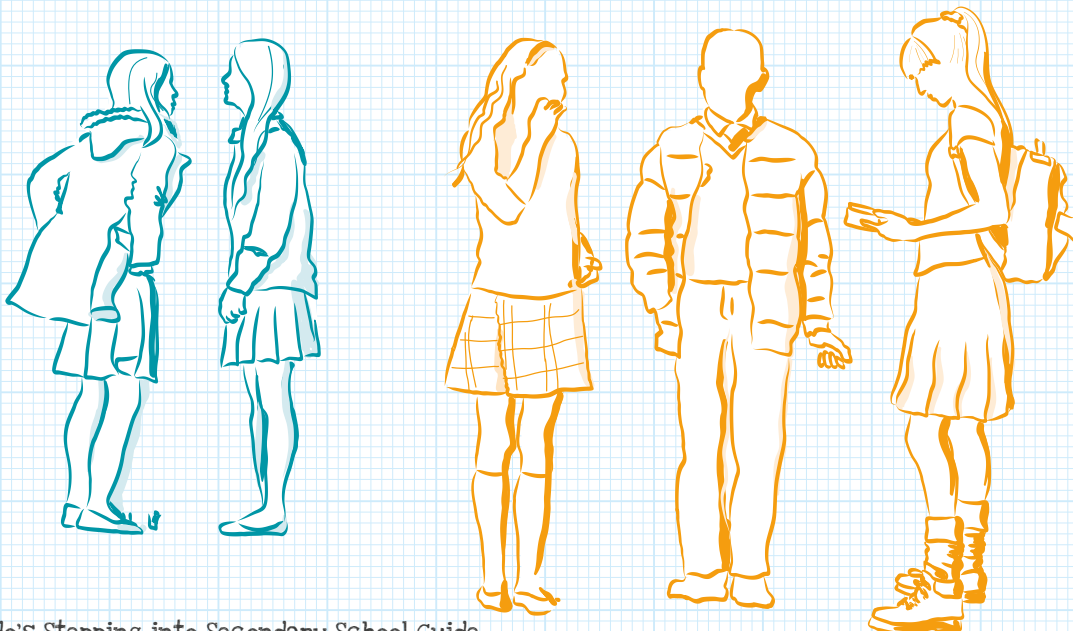
Difference is what makes us interesting, you could learn something new or try a new activity that a new friend enjoys.

## Be a good supporter

Help people where you can. Just offering a smile or saying 'Hi' could help someone to feel better.

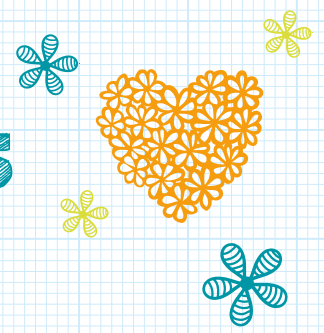
## Be yourself!

Spend time with people who accept you for who you are.





# Positive friendships



Real friends encourage you to be the best that you can be.

Think about the qualities you would look for in a good friend and what might warn you that a friendship was unhelpful. Write them in the boxes below.



## Helpful friendship

Examples:

- Respects my opinions
- Listens to me

## Unhelpful friendship

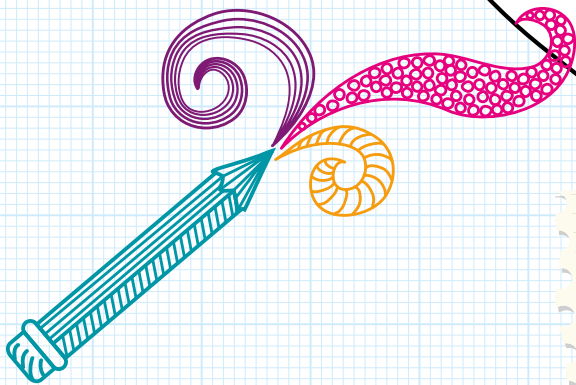
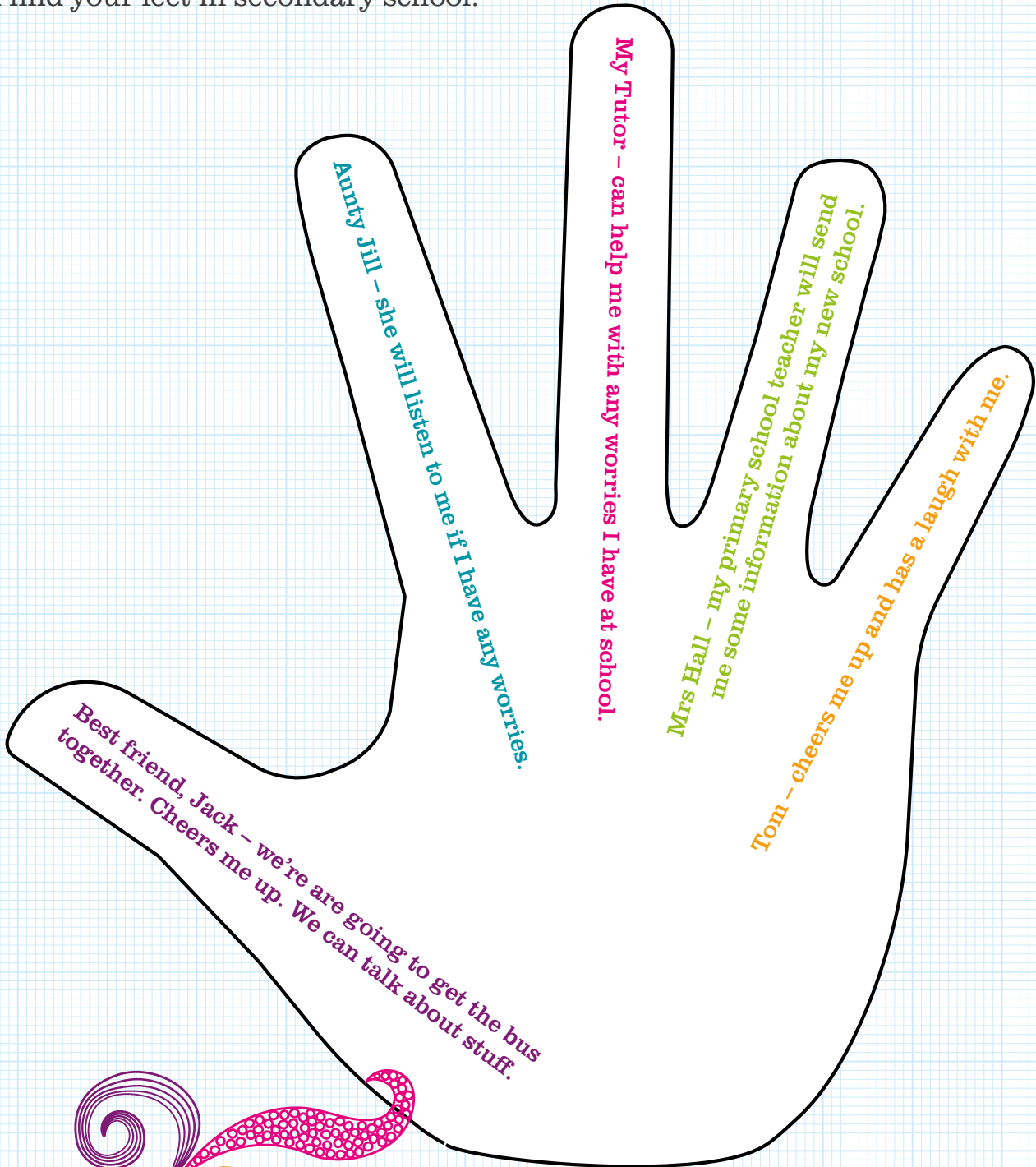
Examples:

- Tells lies about me
- Makes fun of me



# Help is at hand...

There is a whole team of people in your new school who can help you if you need it, as well as friends and family who can support you as you find your feet in secondary school.



This example shows who could support you in your move to secondary school. It will be different for everyone. Think about who can support you in different areas and create your own hand of support.

# My supporters

Draw around your hand in the space below.

write the name of a supporter in each finger and how they help you.







Let your supporters know that you have included them on your hand of support and tell them the different ways they help you.

# My daily plan



Making a daily plan helps to ensure we include key things in our day which we recognise as helpful in keeping us emotionally well. Getting a shower in the morning and then eating a bowl of cereal might be something you do every day before styling your hair and leaving for school.

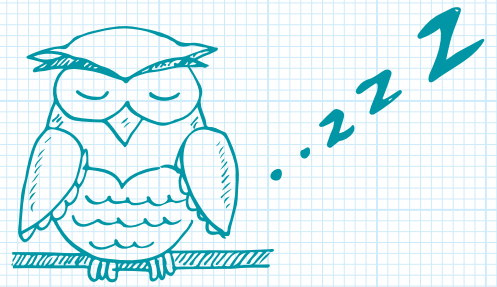
Complete the plan below including times that have been left blank. Remember to include time to talk to friends and supporters at school, time to eat and time to complete homework and do things you enjoy after school.

<p>_____ am time to get up</p> 				<p>_____ am leave the house</p> 
<p>_____ am arrive at school</p> 				<p>_____ pm finish school</p>
<p>_____ pm arrive home from school</p>				<p>_____ pm bedtime</p> 



Check your planner for an equipment list. Have you packed everything you need for the next day?

# Getting a good night's sleep



It's important to get into a good sleep routine. Practicing your routine will give your body time to get used to it and help you feel less tired.

Write in the boxes things you can do to prepare for sleep and which times you will do them.

Have a bath.

Go to bed at a set time on school nights, and try to stick to it.

Lack of sleep can trigger a change in behaviour.

Stop looking at my phone and screens 1 hour before bed.

You can't bank sleep in advance; a regular sleep pattern will keep you at the top of your game.

Relax and read a book.

\_\_\_\_\_ pm  
time to sleep



# Me on my best day

W

It's important to know what you are like on a good day, when you are feeling your best. Knowing this helps you and others to recognise when you are not feeling your best and might need some extra support.

Think about what you look like on a good day. What would your friends, family and teachers notice about you?

Tick any of the following that you notice about yourself that might signal you're ok.

Happy

Chatty

Chilled out

Smiley

Excercise

Helpful

Friendly

Organised

Sociable

Creative

Like to go out

Attends clubs

Sleeps well

Plays music

Enjoys some alone time

Use social media

Eat well

Try new things

Spends time with family

Make an effort with appearance

Style hair

# Some messages from year 7s



Sometimes strong, uncomfortable emotions such as worry or anxiety can get in the way of us feeling our best. Remember, having mixed feelings about starting secondary school is common. Some year 7 pupils share their experiences of moving to secondary school, the different feelings they had and how they managed.

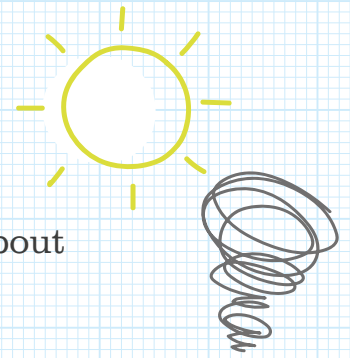
Hello I'm Ahmed. I remember feeling really nervous about moving to a new school. Sometimes I couldn't sleep and I asked my dad a lot of questions, he didn't always have the answers. The best advice I got was from my granddad. He told me that when he went to secondary school he would smile and chat to people and he made lots of friends. My granddad helped me plan a walking route to school, he also told me to be myself and respect others. He taught me that when things get tough I should take a few moments to think about five things I could hear, four things I could smell, three things I could touch and two things I could see. When I do this I usually forget about the thing that is bothering me.

my name is Leo, i started secondary school last year and remember feeling ready to leave primary school and make a fresh start. i was a bit nervous and excited about my move. i find it hard when my routines change. i remember my year six leavers assembly where my teacher said we all experience changes and it won't be long before it feels like normal again. when i get anxious, i get fidgety and i talk really fast. my friends noticed this and i was able to let them know how i was feeling, which helped as i realised they felt the same.

Hi I'm Jinna. I left my primary school to go to a secondary school where none of my friends were going. I was really anxious about this; I would bite my nails and feel like I had butterflies in my tummy. My mum told me that we all feel nervous about doing new things. She told me to breathe gently and listen to my breath, this really helped me. I'm at the end of year 7 now. I have enjoyed my first year and have made lots of friends. When you first arrive at school you do lots of new subjects and lots of activities to encourage you to make new friendships. I now think worrying was quite normal as my new friends told me they felt the same too!

Hi I'm Lydia. I remember my first day at secondary school and the worry I felt on my journey there about not finding my way around and not knowing where things were. I worried that I would be late to class, but there were lots of teachers around to help and lots of signs too. The teachers were understanding of anyone arriving a little late to lessons in the first week or so which helped a lot. My first week was busy so it was important to get enough sleep so I could get up early and get to school in good time. I wrote things in my planner so I wouldn't forget and asked for help if I got stuck. I settled in really well and hope you will too.

# Hopes and Worries



Consider any questions or concerns you might have and think about the things you are looking forward to.

## Example

### What am I looking forward to?

- Meeting new friends
- Using Bunsen burners in science
- Cooking lessons
- Moving around school during the day
- Getting food at break time
- Trampolining club

### What is my biggest worry about starting secondary school?

I don't know the school. I might get lost and then get into trouble.

### What can I do that might help?

Look at the map in my planner. Ask for help if I need it.

### Can anyone else support me?

Teachers, friends, siblings.

## Your turn

### What am I looking forward to?

### What is my biggest worry about starting secondary school?

### What can I do that might help?

### Can anyone else support me?





## Example

**What are my other worries about starting secondary school?**

I might forget something.

**What can I do that might help?**

I will get everything I need ready the night before.

**Can anyone else support me?**

I will ask Mum to remind me.

**What are your hopes for secondary school?**

I would like to make some new friends and do my best in lessons.

**What can I do that might help?**

I will be kind to others, I might join a club. I will ask for help if I need it.

**Can anyone else support me?**

Teachers if I need help in lessons. Friends I already know.

## Your turn

**What are my other worries about starting secondary school?**

**What can I do that might help?**

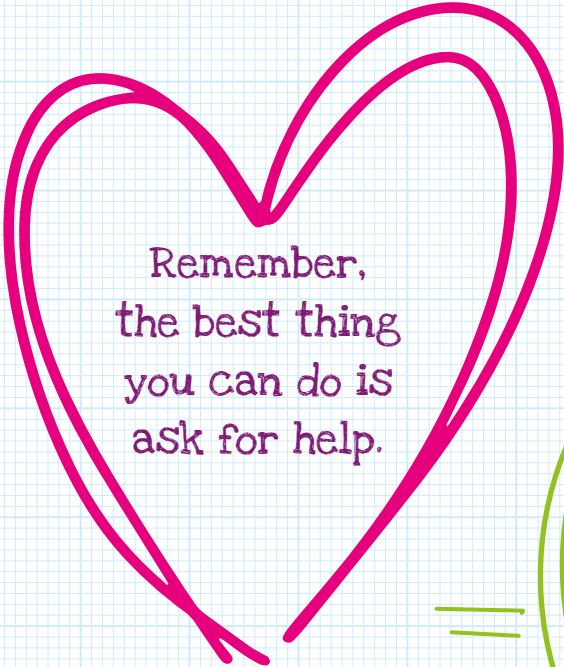
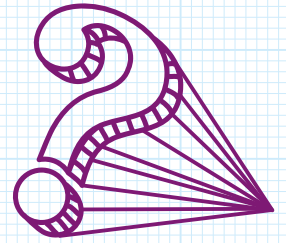
**Can anyone else support me?**

**What are my hopes for secondary school?**


**What can I do that might help?**

**Can anyone else support me?**

# What to do if I still feel worried



Remember,  
the best thing  
you can do is  
ask for help.



Remember your  
supporters who can  
help you to feel better.



Here are some useful websites:

[sleepfoundation.org](https://www.sleepfoundation.org)

More tips and tricks on how to get a good night's sleep and why it is good for your emotional and physical health.

[youngminds.org.uk](https://www.youngminds.org.uk)

Help to support your emotional health and build your resilience.

[howareyoufeeling.org.uk](https://www.howareyoufeeling.org.uk)

Advice and support for your emotional health.

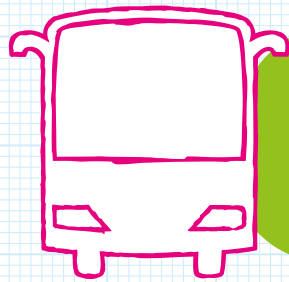
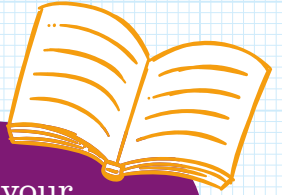
[bbc.co.uk/bitesize](https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize)

Lots of information about starting secondary school.



# Some snappy solutions from year 7s

Any one of us can experience an unexpected challenge at some point. Some year 7's have shared solutions to some that you might find useful.



If you miss your bus home, don't worry. Go back into school and tell a member of staff.

Forgot your homework? Explain the situation to the teacher before the lesson.

Only bring what you need in your bag because you will have to carry it around all day.

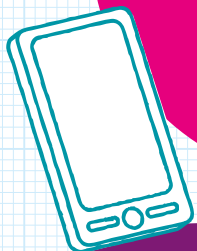
Check you have important numbers in your planner or phone including the school phone number.



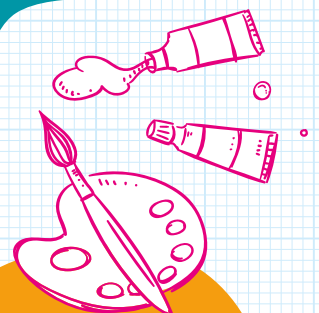
If you forget to put money on your lunch card, let a teacher know. Don't go hungry; you'll still be able to get something to eat.



If you have a mobile phone make sure it is on silent or turned off in school. If you need to ring home during the day you can ask at reception.



If you get up late for school, still go in. It's better to be late to school than not go at all.



It's useful to plan ahead and get your school bag ready the night before to avoid forgetting something and rushing around in a morning.

Join clubs and school activities, this will help you make friends.



Don't be hard on yourself. You're not expected to know everything straight away in your new school. Remember, everyone in year 7 is starting together and so the experience is new to you all.

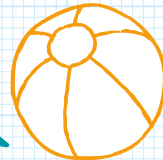
# More Top Tips for a great start

Look out for this sign to read more of our top tips as you prepare for secondary school



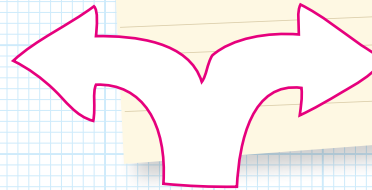
## Remember to be you

You will meet lots of different people at your new school. We all have different qualities that make us interesting, try to enjoy finding out about others. There will be lots of other people who feel the same as you.



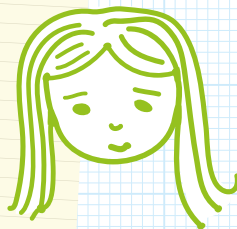
## Getting around

You may be shown around the school before you are expected to find lessons. The school will also have signposts and there will be a map in your planner.



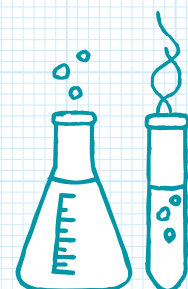
## Sanctions

Schools give sanctions for when behaviour and attitudes do not meet the expected level. Your planner will give you a clear outline of the warnings system and what is expected.



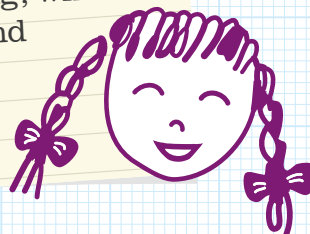
## Rewards

All secondary schools have a reward system. You can collect points in lessons and around school that can be used towards treats and rewards.



## Crowds

Lesson change-over times and breaks can be busy with everyone trying to get somewhere. Follow the school system for moving around the building, which should help you find the easiest route.



# First day checklist



There are different things to prepare for and remember for your first day. Use the checklist below to help you make your first day get off to a great start!

Rucksack or school bag

Planner

Lunch money or card

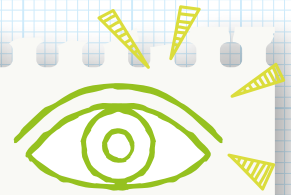
PE kit

Pencil case (check your school website for specific things you need)

Water bottle



Extra things my school has asked me to bring



Your journey to and from school:

Catching the bus?

Remember your bus pass and check the bus timetable.

Walking to school?

Plan and practice the safest walking route.

Cycling to school?

Remember a bike lock, lights and helmet.

# Top Tips for parents

Barnardo's tips on how to help your child feel ready for the move to secondary school.

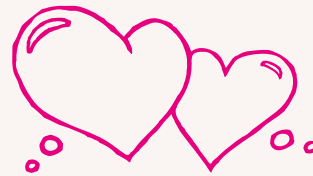
## Make the holidays count

Use the time during the summer holidays to prepare for the start of term; get uniform and equipment ready, do a practise run of the journey to school and spend some time online researching the school day, rules and maps.



## Think about what could help them take on the day

We all have little things that can make us feel more like ourselves. It's worth talking to your child about what makes them feel safe. This might be styling their hair in a way they like, having a conversation with a friend or family member, eating their favourite breakfast, doing power poses in the mirror or doing something fun the night before.



## Help them to speak up about their needs

If there are particular things your child would like their school/new teacher to know about them, but feel unable to tell them in person, you could help them create a note to their new teachers. This can include useful information such as "I like it when I'm sat near the front of the room so I can see the door" or "I don't like it when people stand too close to me". This can be created with words, pictures or anything creative.

## Reassure them they're not alone

It's completely normal for your child to feel worried and anxious about starting a new school. It's also important that your child knows that they can talk to you about this, so try to talk to them about how they feel about going to secondary school. If they're comfortable to talk about it with others, you could suggest they speak to children who may be in a similar situation. That way, they can share their experiences and go through the school transition together.



# Certificate of Completion

This certificate is proudly presented to

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who has completed this  
'Stepping into Secondary School'  
guide and has taken personal  
responsibility for getting them  
selves ready for their next steps.



[barnardos.org.uk](http://barnardos.org.uk)

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