

Starting Secondary School – A Parent's Guide

8 common concerns and ways to help overcome them

Starting secondary school can be daunting, even for the most confident of children. We have collated some top tips for parents supporting their child through the transition to Crompton House, including how to approach a suddenly increased workload.

1. Travelling to school by themselves

Have several trial runs of the journey, building up their level of independence gradually.

Consider downloading an app which allows you to track where they are (such as 'Find my Friends' – also useful for picking them up after school trips.

Where possible, arrange for them to travel with a friend and allow plenty of time.

Keep emergency phone numbers in their bag, in case they lose their phone and need to contact you.

2. Getting organised

Use coloured folders to keep the work for each subject together.

Ensure they pack their bag the night before: don't be tempted to do it for them!

Encourage them to check off what they need against their timetable.

Teach them how to put a reminder in their phone for anything extra to remember.

Buy a key ring with stretchy chain to attach to their bag, to avoid lost locker/ door keys.

Make sure there is secure place for bus pass and emergency coins in their bag.

3. Leaving homework to the last minute

Get your child to mark their planner with the deadlines for each subject's homework in different coloured pens.

Teach them how to create a to-do list with the pieces of homework needed soonest at the top – whiteboards are great for this.

If checking their Doodle account, talk through what needs doing and how they will organise their time.

Help them to distinguish between tasks that are best staggered over time (revision, research, etc.) and self-contained tasks that can be done and then ticked off.

Get into a routine for getting homework done and make sure they have a suitable space to work in. A quiet shared area can help you to ensure they are not getting distracted!

4. Building confidence and making friends

Remind your child that everyone is in the same boat when they start. Talk to them about ways to initiate conversation if they find this difficult.

Remember friendships take time to develop: don't panic if they haven't made a friend immediately.

Encourage them to join clubs and become involved in school life. This can be a good way to make friends with students in other forms and year groups

5. Taking longer than expected on homework

If this is a 'one-off', do not panic. Your child may have found something particularly interesting or challenging and wants to do a thorough job.

If it happens regularly, talk about the reason with your child. They may be misunderstanding the level of detail required, finding something hard or simply doing too much.

If it continues, encourage your child to talk to their subject teacher. If your child is not confident enough to do this themselves, a quick call or email to school may be useful.

6. Taking time to settle

Try not to panic if they have not made a new circle of friends immediately: this is very common. Reassure your child that it often takes time for new friendships to form.

Suggest they join a club at lunch time or after school. Sometimes these start once the term has begun, so this can be a good time to meet new people, now that your child has got used to the new routines of school life.

7. Wellbeing

This is a big change for your child, and as such, they are likely to be tired. Encourage them to maintain a regular sleep pattern ensuring they get at least 7 hours sleep. Do not allow them to use devices or computer games in the hour before bedtime. A well-balanced healthy diet and regular meal times is proven to help strengthen mind and body and improve brain function.

8. Look smart and be ready to learn

We have a huge commitment to looking smart and professional and have very high standards which we expect everyone to meet. Wearing a uniform sets a boundary by placing a pupil in a 'working environment' mindset and helps them separate their home and school life. Make sure your child conforms to our uniform rules and wears their uniform with pride.

Your Essential Checklist

The list below is what your child will need:

- Five shirts
- Boys – two pairs of trousers
- Girls – two skirts/trousers (depending on their preference)
- Jumpers – one plain black v-neck jumper
- Shoes – no boots or trainers allowed. Must be sensible school shoes.
- Socks – boys black, girls white ankle socks (knee length socks not allowed) or black tights.
- Tie
- Blazer
- Plain Black bobbles/headband

PE kit checklist

- Shorts/skort
- T-shirt
- Rugby top – boys
- Training top - unisex
- Trainers
- Girls – black leggings
- Spare pair of socks (especially for girls who might be wearing tights that day)
- Hair bobbles – black

Other back to school supplies

- Name labels
- Lunch box
- Water bottle
- Pencil case with pencil, pens, coloured crayons or pencils, ruler, pencil sharpener, rubber, highlighters, Maths set, scientific calculator