

# Changing school



A guidebook for parents and pupils

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## 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 books and equipment
- Not knowing what to do if there's a problem
- Not getting on with the teachers
- Getting into trouble

## 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, self-organisation, working with others and problem solving.

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 child needs support to develop these skills, e.g. reading and writing independently.

Most parents would like to help reassure their children, prepare them for these changes, and support them in developing the skills they need.

Most children are worried about making friends but after a week or two, these worries have gone. If there are problems, there are mentors amongst Year 10 available in every Year 7 class to help, along with members of staff.

Don't do too much for your child or he/she will get used to this and will be happy enough for you to do things for him/her constantly

## So what is different about secondary school?



- Children usually have to travel further - usually on a bus.
- New school uniform.
- New set of rules to follow.
- Instead of one teacher, about 10 teachers will teach them. They must get to know all these.
- Bigger site - they will have to find their way around, moving from one classroom to another between lessons.
- Familiarising with a two-week timetable and the use of a contact book to record homework.
- Bring different books each day for the 5 lessons.
- There will be new lessons e.g. French, and variations on familiar ones e.g. Science lessons in a laboratory.
- Different teaching and learning styles.
- More independence during break and lunch-time

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

## The organisation of secondary schools



In a primary school, the roles and titles of staff are usually quite straightforward - you have a head, a deputy head, several class teachers, some learning support assistants (LSA's), a few 'school meal supervisory assistants', a receptionist or secretary and a caretaker. There is usually a lot of informal contact and you are likely to know exactly who to talk to when you need to and have a close relationship with your child's class teacher.

In comparison, the structure of a secondary school and the many adults involved (some with rather mystifying titles such as 'Pastoral Co-ordinator' or Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator can seem complex.

The school has one Headmaster, one Deputy Head and three Assistant Heads, each with one or more areas of responsibility. All staff have responsibility for an academic area (such as Welsh or Music) and most have, in addition, responsibilities for pupils' well-being (their 'pastoral' role). The school will be divided into departments such as 'Mathematics', 'Science', 'Humanities', Special Needs, etc.

On the pastoral (welfare) side, your child will be placed in a 'tutor group' of other Year 7 pupils and the tutor has responsibility for your child's overall wellbeing. They will generally know your child best. Pupils will register in their tutor groups and learn with them in many classes (although some subjects will be different). There will also be a Head of Year who has the responsibility for all tutor groups in that year.

Generally, the staff you will have most contact with will be your child's tutor and Head of Year. Another person that you may need to make contact with, if your child has special needs of any sort, will be the school's 'Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator' (ALENCO).

## 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 'over-anxious parent' (on the phone to the school every time your child falls out with a friend etc.) 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 follow some of the suggestions in this book. This will give you a sound basis for deciding whether your intervention is required or not.

You know your child best, and if any aspect of school life is persistently distressing him/her, it is probably best to err on the side of caution and intervene early. If you have talked to your child, offered reassurance, helped him/her 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.

**Who to ask for?**

**Head of Year – Miss Catrin Hughes**

Speak initially with her and explain your concerns. Enquiries will be made before contacting you back as soon as possible. You will have the opportunity to come to school for a further chat if this is necessary.

## Who's who?

Headteacher	Mr Geoff Evans
Deputy Head	Mr Eirian Davies
Assistant Head	Mr Adam Powell
Assistant Head	Mr Alun Jones
Assistant Head	Miss Abigail Davies
Uwch Dîm Arwain Estynedig	Miss Rachel Davies Miss Catrin Hughes Mrs Iris Williams
Head of Year 7	Miss Catrin Hughes <a href="mailto:catrin@strade.sirgar.sch.uk">catrin@strade.sirgar.sch.uk</a> 01554745100 (est. 277)
ALNCO CADY	Miss Rachel Davies

## Year 7 Form Tutors

7 Buddug 1	Miss Nia Griffith/Mrs Alma Davies
7 Buddug 2	Mr Matthew Gower
7 Gwenllian 1	Miss Heledd Thomas
7 Gwenllian 2	Miss Rachel Williams
7 Madog 1	Miss Hannah James
7 Madog 2	Mr Josh Williams
7 Rhodri 1	Miss Catrina Jones
7 Rhodri 2	Mrs Heulwen Jones

Telephone no: 01554745100      Fax: 01554745106

Twitterl: @Ysgol\_Strade

Website: [www.ysgolystrade.org](http://www.ysgolystrade.org)



E-mail (office): swyddfa@strade.sirgar.sch.uk

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SA15 4DL

## Mobile phones



Mobile phones are not allowed in school. The school strongly recommends that pupils do not bring mobile phones to school – they cannot be used during school hours, and will be confiscated if found being used.

Some serious matters can arise from the use of mobile phones in school, including:

- Bullying
- Inappropriate taking/use of photo's or videos
- Loss of the phone (the school will accept no responsibility for this)
- Undermining discipline.

**We kindly ask for your co-operation in the hope that you appreciate that this rule is for the benefit and welfare of the pupils, and to maintain discipline in the school.**

### Mornings/Evenings



### Key Tasks for pupils

- Getting up on time
- Getting washed, dressed and ready to walk out of the door with everything you need.
- Leaving early enough to get to the bus stop on time
- Being in the right place at the right time at the end of school
- Going straight home
- Knowing what to do if you are delayed for any reason

### Tips for Parents

- Buy an alarm clock for your child
- Work out with your child what time they will need to get up in order to get to school on time
- Agree a routine for the morning and after school.
- Agree a bedtime for schooldays to ensure your child gets enough sleep

## School Uniform



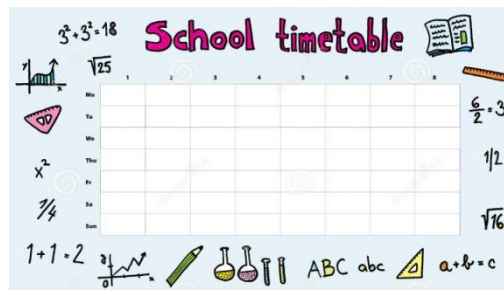
## Key Tasks for pupils

- Knowing the school rules regarding uniform (including jewellery and make-up)
- Learn and practice how to knot the school tie correctly!
- Making sure everything is ready to put on the evening before.
- Making sure a full PE kit is taken to school on the days it is needed

## Tips for Parents

- Make sure that the correct uniform is bought.
- Pupils must always wear the correct uniform - no trainers and no jumper other than the school jumper - no cardigans!
- Label every item of clothing with your child's name.
- Encourage your child to hang up their uniform straight away after school.

## School Timetable



## Key Tasks for pupils

- Knowing what lessons take place on a particular day.
- Knowing where the classroom for each lesson is.
- Knowing who the teacher is.
- Understanding the timetable - remember there are two weeks.
- Getting to lessons on time - especially after breaks.

## Tips for Parents

- Study your child's timetable with him/her and discuss it.
- Become familiar with the names of your child's subject teachers.
- Keep a copy of the timetable close at hand.
- Make sure that your child knows what week it is on the timetable - week 1 or week 2

## Daily Routine



## 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, compass, calculator for Maths etc.).
- Using the contact book to write notes on what is needed

- Having a bag packed with everything needed for that day (packed on the previous night!)

## Tips for Parents

- Help your child to organise a place to keep the books safe.
- Ensure that the child has plenty of space to complete homework.
- Ensure that the child has the required equipment
- Display a copy of the timetable in the house to help the child be organised.
- If your child has PE or sports on a particular day, make sure that the correct kit is packed.
- If your child has Food Technology on a particular day, remember to ask the child at the beginning of the week if any ingredients are needed for a practical lesson.

## Homework



## Key Tasks for pupils

- Writing down every homework task in detail in the contact book.
- Understanding how the contact book works - you will be taught this during your first few days.
- Asking for help from the teacher if you are not sure what the task means.

- Do the homework straight after you come home on the first night.
- Remember to take the completed homework with you to the lesson and hand it in.
- Ask for help if you're not sure what you need to do.
- Tick the homework in the contact book once it is completed.
- Remember to ask a parent for a signature in the contact book every week.

## Tips for Parents

- Agree on a routine for homework with your child.
- A good time for homework is after a short break when your child returns from school.
- Agree with your child that TV, other activities, phone-calls etc. will only be possible after homework is done.
- Be prepared to invest time at first -for example, be available for a set time each day to help with homework until a routine is established.
- Make sure your child has a comfortable place to work and that there is a particular order e.g. a place to keep completed work and work that has not been completed.
- Stick to your agreed routine whenever possible.
- Try to ensure that homework is done on the night it is set to prevent 'build-up'.
- Keep an eye on the time your child spends on homework to ensure that he/she does what is expected of them.
- If your child is having problems, offer support but don't do it for them.
- Encourage your child to check in the lesson if they haven't understood what the task means.
- Be very wary of excuses your child will use to avoid doing their homework.
- Sign the contact book on a weekly basis.
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## Excuses for not doing homework



- We didn't get any.
- I don't need to do that - I did it in class.
- We had a supply teacher.

- It doesn't have to be in for ages.
- The teacher's got my book - they took them in.
- My friend's borrowing my book.
- I did it on the computer and the computer wouldn't print it out/and I forgot to save it/can't remember what file I saved it in ...
- 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.
- I've lost my contact book.

## Problems children may experience 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. Give advice but don't overreact -the tears and anger are normal but most friendship patterns sort themselves out without adults getting involved. Contact the school if your child becomes depressed 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).
- Imbalance of power (if the perpetrators are older, bigger, more powerful or if they are operating as a gang against an individual).

Keep a close eye on your child's use of the computer - cyberbullying is on the increase and can cause distress to those involved. If you do come across evidence of cyber-bullying directed towards your child through MSN, Facebook etc. print the page and contact the school immediately. The school may have to contact the Police Liaison Officer, depending on the nature of the bullying.

The school has an anti-bullying policy, ask if you require a copy.



### 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. 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 it at parents' evening.

If it is because they feel 'picked on' it may be the teacher's individual style that 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. 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 the Head of Year if the problem continues. Many teachers may not even be 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' the teacher has suddenly become ...



### Losing belongings

This is very common for children with organisational difficulties (and very expensive for their parents). Follow the suggestions under 'Organising books and equipment'. If after half term this is not making a difference, contact your child's Head of Year or Deputy Head of Year and ask for their support - they can often provide 'checks' at key times and support your child towards independence in school.

# DETENTION



## Getting into trouble for not completing homework

In many ways, homework makes the most demands on both Year 7 pupils and their parents. Follow the suggestions in the 'Homework' section. If your child is consistently not getting homework (over a period of five or six weeks), not able to do the homework set, or writing down tasks that are so general that neither you nor they can work out what has to be done, do contact the school and explain the problem.

## A guide to parents' evenings



You will be given the date of the Year 7 parents' evening well in advance - it is held during the first term.

Because of the larger numbers of pupils, and the fact that your child now has several teachers, parents' evenings are organised rather differently in secondary schools.

Your child will organise appointments with each subject teacher, using the Contact Book.

The appointments are 5 minutes long. Try to see as many teachers as possible, especially if there are issues you need to raise with them. It is always a good idea to see your child's tutor and perhaps the Head of Year, as they will have the best 'overview' of how your child is settling in generally. Jot down any questions or concerns before the meeting.

Your appointments with the teacher will provide an opportunity for them to tell you how they feel your child is getting on in general terms, and for you to ask questions or raise any concerns you may have.

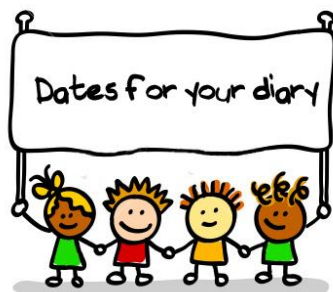
On the night, appointments rarely run exactly to time, so be prepared for some waiting around.

It's a good idea to take your child with you - not only to hear what their teachers have to say, but also to guide you and find the teachers you have arranged to meet!

Finally, don't feel daunted - all new parents will feel exactly the same.



## IMPORTANT DATES FOR YEAR 7'S CALENDAR 2017-2018



Sept 5th      School opens for YR7, 12 & 13 pupils.

Sept 6th	School opens for all.
Oct 30th	Half Term Holidays (1 week)
Nov 6th	School re-opens for pupils
Nov 20th	YR7 'tracking' of work
Nov 22nd	INSET
Nov 30th	YR 7 parents evening
Dec 21st	School Carol Service
Dec 22nd	Christmas Holidays (2 weeks)
Jan 8th	School closed - INSET
Jan 9th	School re-opens for pupils
Feb 15th	School Eisteddfod
Feb 19th	Half Term Holidays (1 week)
Feb 26th	School re-opens for pupils
March 30th	Easter Holidays (2 weeks)
April 16th	INSET
April 17th	School re-opens for pupils
April 25th	National Tests
May 7th	May Day Bank Holiday
May 28th	Half Term Holidays (1 week)
June 4th	School re-opens for pupils
June 18th	Year 7 exams
July 17th	Sports Day
July 20th	YR7 School Trip
July 24th	INSET/END OF TERM.