
MOVING ON FROM PRIMARY SCHOOL

Progressing from primary to post-primary school can be difficult. Some children will make the move with friends while others will change schools on their own.

At 11, this can all be very daunting. It is sometimes reassuring for them if you do find someone else they know who is moving to the same school.

Parents can help their children to settle into the new environment by encouraging friendships early on in the term. Sometimes, parents can be overly picky about friendships. Let children make choices for themselves – this is how they learn about trust, confidences, find friends with similar interests etc.

Your child will use most of the values and standards they have learned at home. A lot of their choices will be based on these, although they do need space for trial and error when deciding on friendships.

The transition from one school to another can be overwhelming – new teachers, new books, new routines, new styles of teaching – and your child may need opportunities to talk all of this through. Allow them to do this in the way they like best – and most importantly, in their own time.

Remember, if a parent is anxious about a child changing schools, the child will pick up on this. Being positive will help your child to move on.

Q.

My daughter is 11 and the only one moving to a new school without a friend from class. She hasn't said much but I know she's not looking forward to the move.

A.

Because you haven't really talked it through with her means that you are not exactly sure of what she's really worrying about. Is she concerned about being alone and not making friends, or is it the new work and different teachers - or perhaps even knowing her way around a new school?

It would be really useful to know so you can give her the maximum support. You need to strike a balance here between not hyping up the school too much – but, at the same time, selling it to her in a positive light.

At this stage, the most you can say is that there will certainly be children from other schools who are moving without their friends as well. Giving her lots of time and support during the first few weeks of term is very important. If, after that time, she still isn't making friends - then talk discreetly to her year head. And do be discreet, so that you don't cause her any embarrassment.

