

Your guide to starting secondary school



Alexandra
Primary School



What is this book about?



We know you must be thinking about the move to secondary school. You will probably have lots of questions and maybe some worries. We have written this guide to answer some of the most common questions that students have and give you some advice and tips about things we know you may be worried about.



It is normal to feel a mixture of excitement and nervousness about big changes and moving to secondary school is a big change!

You may have read books or seen films or TV programmes which may have given you (wrong) ideas about what secondary schools are like. In this guide we will talk about what it is REALLY like!



Questions and answers

Here are some questions and worries that lots of Year 6 pupils tell us about every year:

My secondary school is much bigger than my primary school. What happens if I get lost on my way between lessons?

You probably won't remember your first day in reception, but everything will have seemed very big to you at the time. But you soon got used to it, just like you will soon get used to secondary.

Your secondary school will arrange transition visits so you can start to find your way round before you start in September. You will also receive a map. Teachers and older students will also help you if you get lost.

A big thing to remember is that you will not be alone. You will travel between classes with your form group. You will find that you know where everything is very soon. Year 7 students tell us that it only takes a couple of weeks to feel at home.



I've heard that you get lots of homework and the work is much harder in secondary school. How will I keep up?

You will work to a higher level than in primary, but your teachers will help to make the transition as smooth as possible. You will receive regular homework, but lots of secondary schools build the amount you get up gradually so you can ease into it.

My friends aren't coming to the same school as me. How will I make new friends?

There will be other students in your class that don't know anyone else so they will be keen to make new friends. Friendship groups can change a lot during Year 7. You can also try joining clubs, so you form friendships with people who have the same interests.

Remember that everyone will be feeling a bit nervous when they start Year 7, however confident they appear on the surface. Even if it is out of your comfort zone, be brave and speak to someone you don't know.

I am worried about the older students. What happens if I get bullied?

It is quite normal to feel a bit intimidated about mixing with older, taller students. But, unlike all the films and TV programmes you may have seen, most students are friendly.

Schools take bullying very seriously and will have systems in place to deal with it. It is never tolerated, and students will be encouraged to speak to their teachers straight away if happens to them.



I have to get to secondary school by myself. How will I manage my journey?

You may be going to school by yourself for the first time. It is a good idea to plan out your journey before your first day. Practice the route. Check you have the times for buses or trains if you use public transport. Leave plenty of time for your journey as it is not a good idea to be late!

You will soon get used to it and enjoy your new independence.

I know my teacher at primary, and I can speak to them if I have any problems. Who will I speak to at secondary school if I have any worries?

Because moving to secondary school and entering your teenage years is a time of big change, you may find you have more worries and difficult feelings to deal with. Secondary schools have teams of teachers and staff who are responsible for looking after your welfare.

You will get to know your Form Teacher really well so can speak to them. There will also be a Head of Year 7 and perhaps a Pastoral Team as well. Your school will cover this in your transition days and there will usually be lots of information on their website.

The main thing to remember is that it is always best to talk.

I have looked at the timetable and there are lots of lessons a day. How will I manage with all the books and equipment I will need every day?

The best advice is to get organised. Pack your bag every night so you aren't in a rush in the morning and forget anything. Your school will probably have lockers, so you don't need to carry everything with you all day.



What can I look forward to at secondary school?

We have talked about the things you may be worried about and now we want to tell you all about the brilliant things about secondary school!

New subjects

You will be studying new subjects and you may find something which you excel at.

Great facilities

Your school will have dedicated classrooms for each subject which will be fully equipped.

You will enjoy conducting science experiments, and using brilliant IT and DT equipment. There will also be brilliant sports facilities.

New friends

There will be lots of students in your year group. You may meet them in lessons or extra-curricular activities. Secondary school gives you the chance to increase your friendship group.

Food

Rather than being given a standard school meal, most secondaries will operate a café/canteen system where you can choose what you would like.

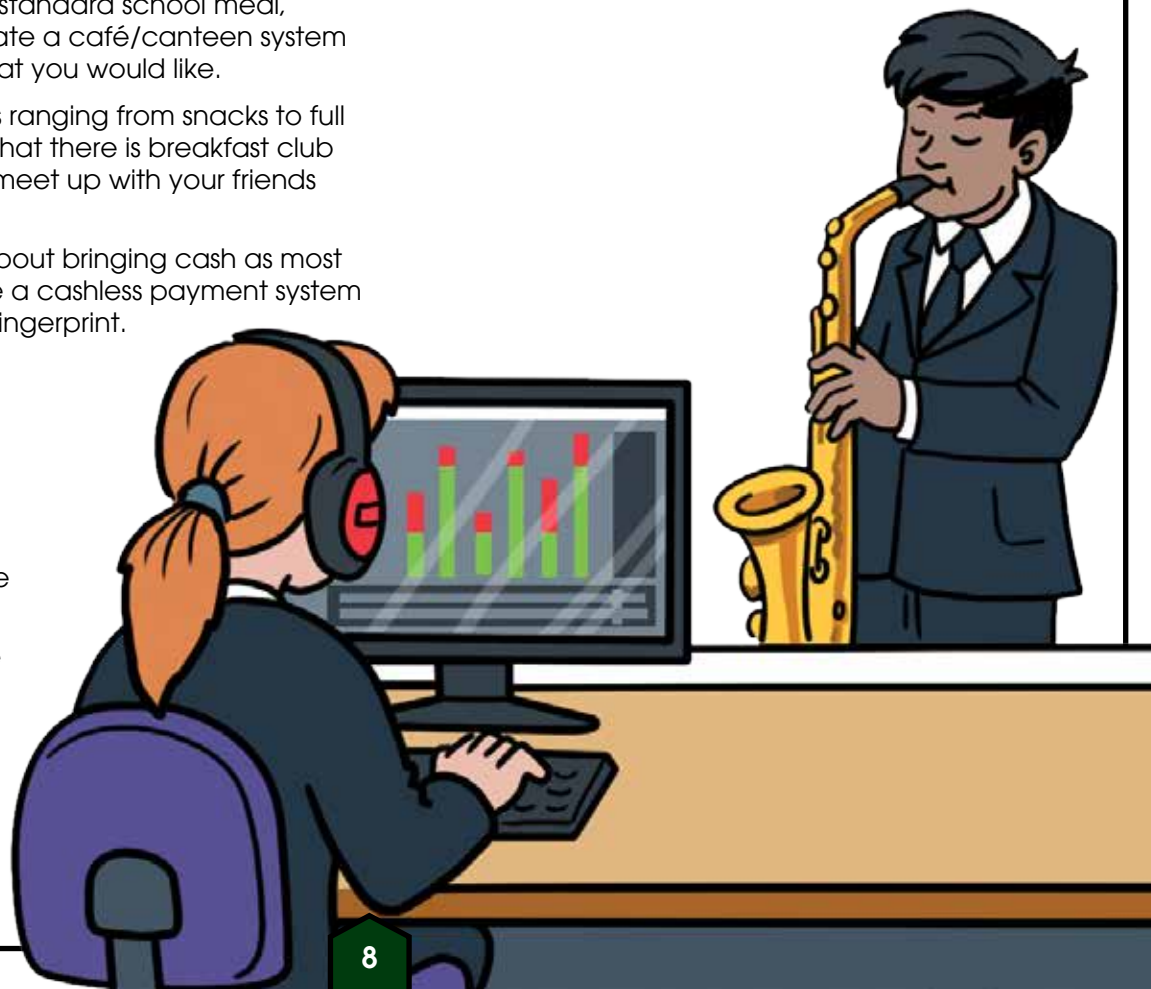
There will be lots of choices ranging from snacks to full meals. You may even find that there is breakfast club at your school so you can meet up with your friends before school.

You won't need to worry about bringing cash as most secondary schools operate a cashless payment system where you pay using your fingerprint.

Extra-curricular clubs and activities

There will be lots of clubs, trips and activities on offer. You may pursue an interest you have already or find something that you will love for the rest of your life.

Lots of people discover the career that they will follow through clubs that their schools have run.



Growing up

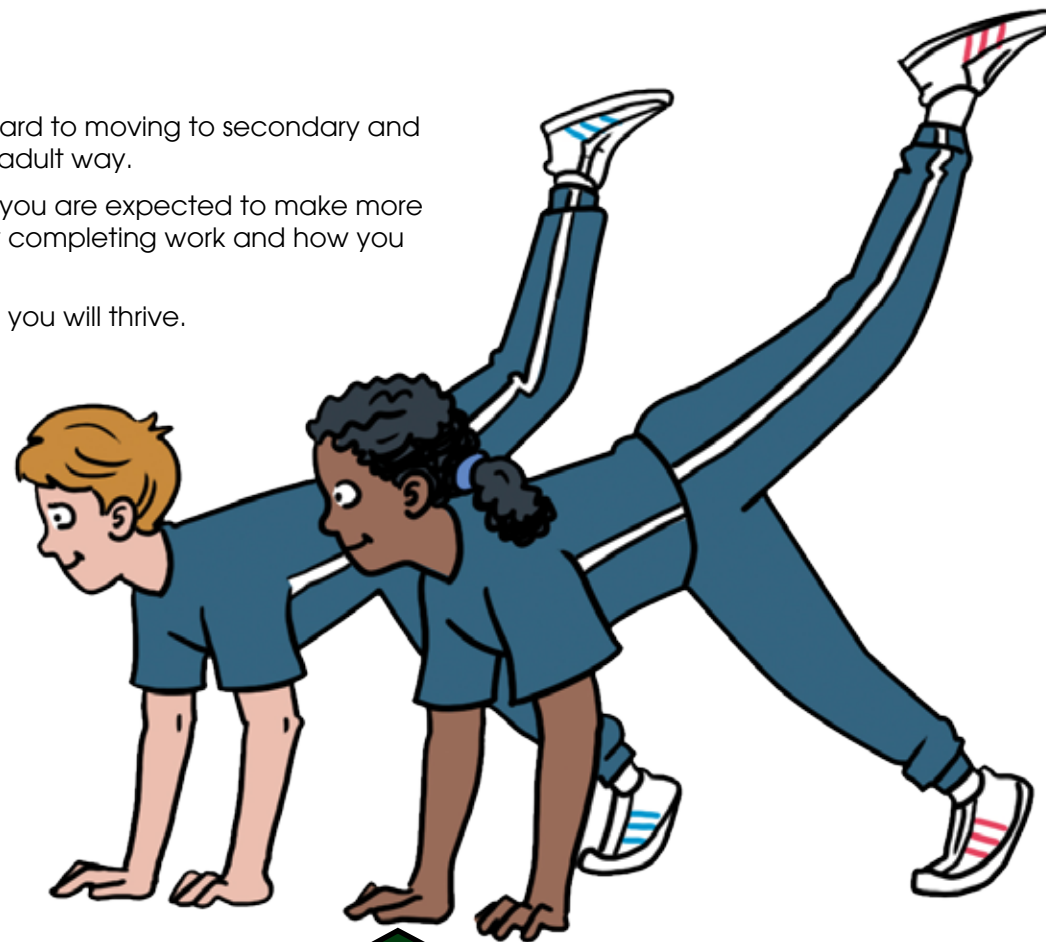
You may be looking forward to moving to secondary and being treated in a more adult way.

You will soon notice that you are expected to make more personal responsibility for completing work and how you behave.

It is an exciting time, and you will thrive.

More freedom

You will also be given more freedom. For example, you can choose how you spend your breaktimes. Once the final lesson has finished and your teacher has dismissed you, you will be able to leave the school premises without needing permission or waiting for your parent or carer.



Tips from Year 7s

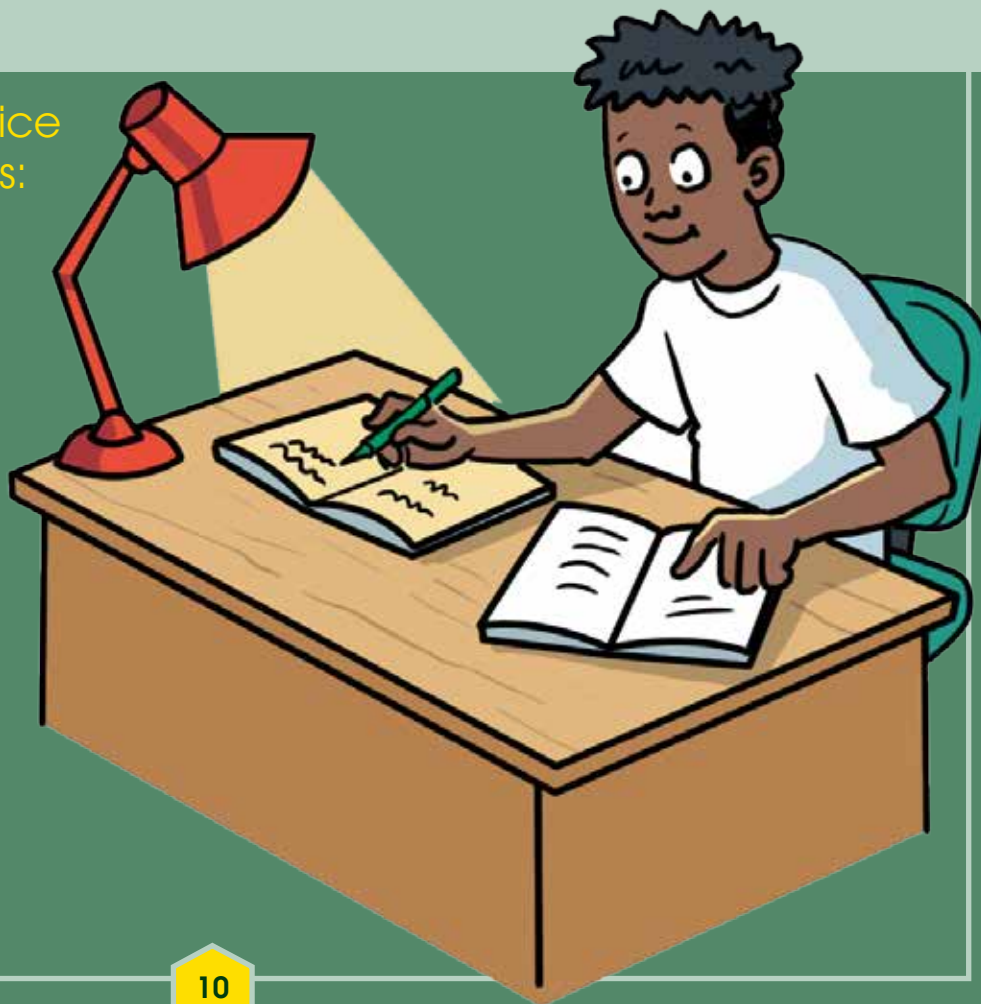
Here is some helpful advice from current Year 7 pupils:

"It's really important to get organised! You will probably have things to do after school and at the weekend, but you need to remember your homework too. I try and do as much as I can at Homework Club, so I don't need to think about it when I get home."

"Make sure your parents buy all of the uniform in plenty of time because you need to be wearing the correct uniform from your very first day."

"Try out the route to school a couple of times before you start and make sure you allow extra time until you know how long it takes."

"I love walking to school with my friends. I have even made some new friends that way."



"Make extra copies of your timetable. I have lost mine a few times."

"I really like my teachers. They are all different and they make lessons really interesting."

"Don't be worried about teachers being strict. If everyone follows the rules, their lessons are great because you can get on and learn."

"Don't be scared of the older kids! They are really friendly."

"Don't worry if you don't settle in right away. For the first week, I missed my old school and friends. I made new friends after that and now I feel at home."

"If things get on top of you, don't keep it bottled up. Speak to your Form Tutor and they will help."

"I was nervous on my first day and I thought I was the only one feeling that way. I made myself speak to a few people and found out that everyone was feeling nervous. It's funny that I was so stressed because I love it here now!"



Don't forget us at
Alexandra Primary
School when you have
settled into your next
school. You are always
welcome here.

Let us know how you are getting on
and tell us about any advice we can
give to future Year 6s.

Good luck on the next
exciting stage of your life.

We wish you a **happy**
and **successful** time at
secondary school!



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