



How to Support Your Child's Transition to Juniors

A practical guide for parents and carers

Moving from Infant to Junior school represents an important step in your child's development. Whilst your child will already be familiar with many elements of school life at the Juniors, like any transition, it can be a time of uncertainty and anxiety for both children and parents/carers.

Most children adapt well, though some may need a little more support along the way, and it's perfectly normal for feelings to shift from excitement to nerves and back again.

As a parent or carer, there is much you can do to help your child to find their feet during this transition period.



Understanding the change

Why transition can feel big — even when the Juniors is next door

Given that both schools share a site, your child will already know many aspects of the Junior school and many will feel reassured by that. That said, moving from Infants to Juniors brings many changes at once; a different building; a new classroom; a bigger hall; new routines and some new adults.

Common worries include: getting lost, not knowing the adults, what happens at break and lunchtimes, whether they'll still see their friends, and what the learning and homework will be like. All of these are very understandable — and all of them have good answers.



What successful transition looks like

- Feeling a sense of belonging at their new school
- Making new friends whilst maintaining old ones
- Settling into new routines without major disruption
- Continuing to thrive and make progress socially, emotionally and academically

What stays the same

One of the most reassuring things to know is how much carries over from the Infant school. From day one your child will recognise many aspects of the school day:

Learning & curriculum

- Daily teaching of guided reading, writing and Maths
- Monster Phonics continues in Year 3
- Topics, PE and Art all continue
- **New this year: Spanish is introduced**

School day & routines

- The school day starts and ends at the same times
- Familiar LSAs and school leaders work across both schools
- The library — your child already uses it
- Afternoon break time (as/when needed)
- **New this year:**
- **The tuck shop – open at break time**
- **A backpack instead of a book bag**
- **Belonging to a Junior House**

Preparing for September

The school runs a transition programme

The team of adults at school work hard to make this move as smooth as possible for every child.

During the Summer term, your child will:

- Visit the Junior school — spend time working in teams to complete a treasure hunt which helps them to get to know their way around the building;
- Spend time on the Junior playground with the current Year 3 children (moving into Year 4 in September)
- Continue using the shared library, which they already know well
- Have opportunities to ask questions of Junior school staff and current Year 3 pupils; as well as talking to their current class teacher and LSAs.



Children who may benefit from a little extra support will also be offered the chance to take part in small group sessions in the afternoons.

Get the practicalities sorted early

- Sort out a backpack — your child will need one instead of a book bag.
- Find out how the tuck shop works: children can buy up to two snacks at break time (bringing in up to £1 per day)
- Your child won't need to bring in their own equipment — the Junior school provides what's needed.
- Practise packing a school bag the evening before — make it a good habit now.
- Talk about the different playground and what they might like to try, including the trim trail.
- Let school know if your child has links to the Junior Houses (family members), so this can be taken into account when they are allocation



Quick wins before September

- Help your child remember which House they will be in — this is new in Juniors and they may be curious about it
- Practise using a backpack and packing it independently
- Talk positively about the trim trail and other new equipment at break time
- Remind them that many aspects of their school day will feel familiar
- If your child has a friend going into a different class, reassure them they will still see each other at lunch and breaktimes

Talking about the move

Open the conversation early

The most valuable thing you can do is encourage your child to share their thoughts and feelings. Let them know they can talk openly — about worries and excitement alike. Don't dismiss anxiety with "there's nothing to worry about"; instead, normalise it: feeling nervous is natural when facing something new.

Reassure them that nerves about starting something new are normal, as is some sadness at leaving familiar things, and that these feelings usually subside.



Be careful not to pass on your own worries. Focus on the exciting things too — a new playground, new equipment, new friends, new learning opportunities. Celebrating the milestone of finishing Infants school and all the ways they have grown, can boost self-esteem and confidence.

Questions that tend to get answers

"How was school?" rarely produces much. Try these instead, after they've had time to decompress:

- "What was the best bit of today?"
- "Was there anything that surprised you?"
- "Did you use the tuck shop? What did you get?"
- "Who did you sit with at lunch?"
- "Is there anything you'd like to tell me, even briefly?"

Saying goodbye to Infant school

Mark the end of Infant school properly. Saying real goodbyes to teachers; talking about favourite memories and acknowledging what they'll miss. This kind of closure helps children process their feelings and look forward rather than backward.

Daily life in the Junior school



Break times and lunch

Here is what a typical day looks like:

Break time (morning)	All children in Juniors share breaktime on the playground. The trim trail and other new equipment is available — something to look forward to!
Tuck shop	Children can buy snacks at break.
Lunchtime	Year 3 children have lunch and plays outside alongside Year 4 only. Children in Years 5 & 6 are not on the playground at the same time as the younger children during lunch. This keeps the lunchtime environment more familiar and manageable.
Afternoon break	There is often an afternoon break when needed — so the structure will feel familiar.
Toilets	Year 3 shares toilets with Year 4 (in the Infants, your child shared with Reception and Year 1).

Classroom life

There is no carpet time in the Juniors, so children work at desks throughout the day and move between activities at their tables, rather than gathering on a carpet.

Houses

The Junior school uses a House system — something your child won't have experienced in the Infants. They will be assigned to a House when they join in September.

Homework and expectations

Homework is part of Junior school life — and the expectations are a step up from the Infants. Here is what to expect:

- Homework is compulsory in Year 3 and teachers will ask for it to be handed in.
- Reading expectations increase: your child will be expected to read regularly and parents will be asked to sign their reading records every Friday.
- Keeping on top of homework from the start builds good habits that will serve your child throughout the Juniors.



A simple routine makes all the difference. Help your child get into the habit of checking what homework has been set, doing it at the same time each day, and packing it into their bag ready to hand in. A short, consistent routine is far less stressful than a last-minute scramble.

Building confidence and independence

This transition is a brilliant opportunity to grow. Supporting your child to feel capable and independent before September means they will arrive better equipped.

- Encourage small responsibilities at home — getting themselves up, packing their own bag.
- Praise effort and progress, not just results.
- Practise asking for help: “I’m not sure I’ve understood — could you explain it again?”
- Help them identify which friends will be in their class — and reassure them that those in other classes will be on the same playground.
- Talk about the new adults they will meet — and remind them that familiar LSAs are making the move too.

Providing stability and security at home gives your child the confidence to explore their new environment. Knowing they can come back to you is one of the most powerful supports you can give.

Managing anxiety

What anxiety around transition can look like

Some anxiety before a change is completely normal and healthy. However, watch for signs it is becoming significant:

- Refusing to go to school after the first couple of weeks
- Persistent physical symptoms on school days (stomach aches, headaches)
- A marked change in sleep, eating, or mood that is not improving
- Struggling to make friends and telling you they don't feel that they belong
- Any new challenging, worrying or disruptive behaviours
- Loss of interest in things that usually bring joy



Practical anxiety tools

- Give your child a small notebook for writing down worries before bed — it helps prevent them from growing overnight.
- Reassure them that feeling a bit worried about starting at a new school is a normal response to change.
- If your child is very anxious, ask the school about quieter spaces and who they should go to if they are struggling.

New faces

Some children worry about being in a class with adults and children they don't know well. Please reassure your child that there will be some familiar adults and they will know the vast majority of the children. They will meet their new teacher and LSAs before September during the transition visits, which are designed to help children build connections before September.

Children who may need extra support

The school recognises that some children will find this transition harder than others, and the enhanced transition programme is designed with this in mind.

Here are some ways in which you can help them prepare:

Help your child know themselves

Reflect together on what helps them learn and what makes things harder. Build a shared language around their strengths, sensory needs, and early signs that they're becoming overwhelmed.



Practice asking for help at home

Role-play simple scripts like "I don't understand, could you explain it again?" until they feel natural. A skill rehearsed under low pressure is far more likely to be used under stress.

Create a one-page profile together

A short, student-authored document that says "here's what you need to know about me" is one of the most useful things you can give the new school. It should answer five questions:

- What helps me?
- What makes things harder?
- What are my early signs that things are building up?
- What should adults do when I seem overwhelmed?
- What should adults never do?

Written with your child rather than for them, even a few sentences in their own words carries more weight than a polished adult document.

Talk to Juniors before September

Schools can only support what they know about. If you have specific worries about how your child will manage the transition to Juniors, please let school know.

Key things to establish:

- Who is the named adult your child can go to?
- Where is the quiet or safe space, and how do they access it?



What to watch for in the first half-term

Many neurodivergent children hold themselves together all day at school and fall apart at home. This is not putting it on — home is the one place they can let go. It is exhausting for everyone but it is normal.

If your child is struggling significantly after the first fortnight — refusing to go, showing physical symptoms, or very distressed — contact the school sooner rather than later.

Working with school

How to contact school effectively

If something isn't working, be specific and collaborative rather than general. A useful approach:

"I wanted to flag that the last two weeks have been really hard at home after school. I'm seeing [X, Y and Z]. I don't know what's behind it but I wanted to make you aware. Could we have a quick conversation about what's going on and what might help?"

This sets up a partnership rather than a complaint, which leads to better outcomes for your child.

What to expect in the first weeks

The first half-term is often the most demanding part of the transition to Junior School. Children are adjusting to changes in routines, environments, expectations and relationships all at the same time. Many children initially cope well through the excitement and novelty of starting Junior School, but may find the transition feels more challenging as the weeks go on and fatigue builds. It is common for difficulties to become more noticeable around the October half-term, as the reality of the new routine settles in.



You might notice

- Afternoon tiredness or emotional overwhelm after school — your child may have spent much of the day managing social, sensory and learning demands. “I’m fine” might mean “I survived” — both are valid responses.
- Small things feeling huge - don’t dismiss the feeling even if the cause looks small.
- Sleep, food, and mood disruption — this usually settles within a few weeks.

When to step in

A useful rule of thumb: if something is a one-off, watch it. If it’s a pattern, gently raise it. If it’s affecting sleep, mood, or willingness to go to school, raise it with the school sooner rather than later.

Remember: you don’t have to have all the answers, and you don’t have to do this alone. The school is there to help. Between you, the school, and your child, you have everything you need.

Further resources

The following organisations offer excellent free guidance for parents:

YoungMinds – [youngminds.org.uk/parent](https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent) (mental health and transition advice)

Anna Freud Centre – [annafreud.org](https://www.annafreud.org) (transition resources for families and schools)

Parentkind – [parentkind.org.uk](https://www.parentkind.org.uk) (practical guides for parents at every school stage)

BBC Bitesize – [bbc.co.uk/bitesize](https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize) (what to expect in year 4)

Pooky Knightsmith – [pookyknightsmith.com](https://www.pookyknightsmith.com) (transition support for neurodivergent children)

Specialist Teacher Advisory Service – hants.gov.uk/stas

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