



Year 6 to 7 Transition: Advice and Tips for Parents and Carers

The habits and routines that children develop in their first year of secondary college will stay with them throughout their college lives. Most of it you will know as a parent, but we thought that if we set it down here for you to discuss with your child, it would help you both.

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Children's top 10 worries about starting secondary school

From talking to some of our students, the most common concerns they had when starting Year 7 were:

1. Being bullied
2. Not making friends
3. Getting lost
4. Home learning
5. Not being able to do the work
6. Getting to college and back (especially if it involves a bus journey)
7. Not having the right books and equipment
8. Not knowing what to do if there's a problem
9. Not getting on with the teachers
10. 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 and self-organisation.

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 problem is that these skills do not spontaneously develop in children in the summer before they begin– like reading and writing, they must be taught and children need support in developing them.

The top ten worries that Year 6 children express are social concerns. Although common, most children report that they are no longer worried about these after just one or two weeks at Minsthorpe!

If your child expresses the sorts of worries listed above, it is useful to tell them this, and to emphasise that everyone else will also share the same anxieties. As there will be many more children in Year 7 than in Year 6, everyone has a good choice of friends. Even children who move up to Minsthorpe from the larger primaries tend to make new friends in addition to their old ones.

The remaining worries are nearly all to do with the new organisational demands that they know will be placed upon them. Luckily these are the areas in which we can help the most.



The aim of this booklet is to provide you with the information you need to help your child to achieve independence, whilst supporting them in getting there.

This information clearly outlines exactly what your child needs to be able to do to succeed at secondary college and provides as many practical tips and ideas as we could cram in to help you to help them develop the skills for success.

What is different about secondary school?

- Children often must travel further, some making their way to and from college independently for the first time, some travelling by bus
- They will have to wear a full college uniform and will have a whole list of new expectations remember
- Instead of one teacher, they will be taught by around fifteen teachers and must get to know a whole range of adults with different roles within the college
- The Minsthorpe site will be much bigger, and children will have to find their way around, moving from classroom to classroom between lessons, often carrying their belongings with them
- They will have to use and interpret a timetable, of which they will have a copy in their jotter and on Satchel: One (our Home Learning app)
- Children will be fully responsible for ensuring that they have the correct books and equipment for three different lessons each day, bus fare, PE equipment etc
- Children will have full responsibility for recording home learning, completing it by the correct day and giving it in on time
- There may be new lessons (e.g., French or Learning for Life) and new variations on familiar ones (e.g., science in a laboratory)
- Teaching and learning styles may be different. Snack breaks will be organised differently with less adult supervision and children having a lot more independence in terms of getting back to lessons on time, buying their own snacks and lunches etc.
- In general students are expected to be more independent, self-reliant and organised, a welcome development for many students, but a challenge for most.





Getting there and back

Key Tasks for Students –

- Getting up on time.
- Getting dressed, washed and ready to walk out of the door with everything they need.
- Leaving the house to get to the bus-stop or to college on time.
- Being in the right place at the right time at the end of college.
- Knowing what to do if they are delayed for any reason.

Tips for Parents –

- Before your child starts, time the journey to college or the bus stop.
- Be sure your child is clear about what time they are expected to be home and what to do if they are held up for any reason.
- Make sure they know / have your contact numbers
- Never take a telephone call from your child rung from their mobile. Students are to turn off mobiles from the moment that they enter college, and they are to be left turned off until they leave.
- Any calls home will need to be in an emergency, and this will be done by the college.
- Make sure your child sets their own alarm. Perhaps you could test run it before the first day of college.
- Work out with your child what time they will need to get up to arrive in college on time.
- Work backwards from the time they need to be at college and include all the things they will need to do.
- Agree a routine for the mornings and after college. Will they shower / bath in the morning or the evening? Will they get their college bag ready the night before or in the morning? Who will make the packed lunch and when?
- Agree a bedtime for during term time that will ensure your child gets enough sleep.
- Have a couple of practice runs – set your child the challenge of getting up at the correct time and getting ready.
- When they start, if possible, be around for your child for the first few days/weeks to supervise all of this. Praise and encourage independence but be ready to offer a helping hand.
- Go through the routine regularly with your child; if necessary, provide a tick- list to help them.
- Insist on the routine being kept – it will save you hours in the long run!

Uniform matters

Key Tasks for Students –

- Knowing the college rules regarding uniform, jewellery and make- up.
- Make sure everything is ready to put on the evening before.
- Make sure a full PE kit is taken to college on the days it is needed.

Tips for Parents –

- Check the uniform requirements, including rules regarding make-up and jewellery. This information can be found in the college planner and on the website.
- You are sending your child to a college that you know has a uniform policy so please support us.
- Remind students that mobiles are for emergencies only outside of college hours - if a student is seen using a mobile in college hours it will be confiscated.
- Name everything, even shoes – you would not believe what children lose! A marker pen is as good as labels.
- If possible, have spares of essentials at home. It prevents panic when things get mislaid at 8am (and they do).
- Encourage your child to hang up their uniform straight away after College.
- Encourage your child to put everything out (including shoes, socks or tights, and underwear) the night before – there is much more time in the evening for finding odd socks.
- Have a system for making sure that clothes are clean and ready – the earlier children start to take responsibility the better, but whoever does it, both parties need to know ‘the system’.
- If your child regularly loses or forgets essential items, give spares to the P&A mentor to keep at college.
- If you have a timetable displayed for your child (a good idea), colour the days when your child has PE so they can see each day if they need to take their PE kit.





Perfect Preparation Prevents Poor Performance

Key Tasks for Students –

- 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, scientific calculator for Maths)
- Using the jotter and Satchel: One
- Having a bag packed with everything needed for that day

Tips for Parents –

- Help your child organise their living space so that they have a place for everything to do with college. If possible, let them have access to a desk, good light and storage space for their college equipment and books
- Equip them with the tools they will need at home. A useful home 'tool kit' consists of: pencils, pens, rubber, sharpener, crayons, felt-pens, ruler, protractor, compass, scientific calculator, Sellotape, glue, paper and plastic wallets
- Check Satchel: One for notices, details of home learning tasks to be done and Knowledge Organiser Timetable. Do this with your child so you both know what needs to be completed and by when
- Encourage your child to glue any loose sheets of paper into their exercise books, otherwise the sheer volume of bits of paper becomes impossible
- Encourage your child to complete home learning on the day it is set, in order to keep the weekends free for play and rest
- Take an interest in the work they are doing and praise the work they have done.





Contacting the college – 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, it is also hard to achieve the balance between becoming the ‘over-anxious parent’ 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 going. You will have a good idea about how the work is going, and your child’s general feelings about college. If you are following some of the suggestions in this guide it 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 college life is persistently distressing them it is probably best to err on the side of caution and intervene early. If you have talked to your child, offered reassurance, helped them to come up with ways of solving the problem themselves and things still have not changed, then it is time to speak to the college.

You can contact Minsthorpe in several ways: via the School Gateway App, Satchel: One or by contacting the college directly on 01977 657600.

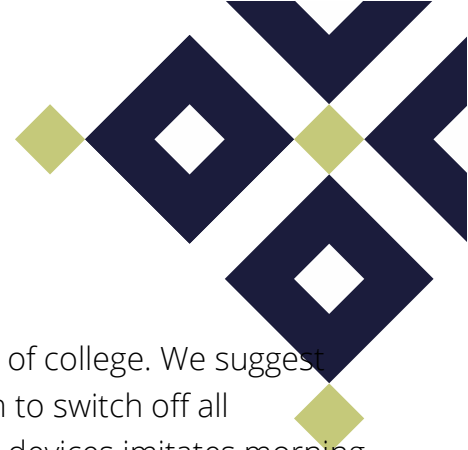
Problems children may experience and what to do about them

Falling out with friends

This is quite common as children form new friendships. Give advice but don’t overreact – the tears and anger are normal, but most friendship patterns sort themselves out without adults getting involved.

If you suspect that things are more serious contact the college if your child becomes depressed or severely withdrawn over this, or if you suspect that what is happening may be bullying. The hallmarks of bullying are intentionally (a deliberate attempt to make someone unhappy), persistence (i.e., an ongoing ‘campaign’, not isolated incidents, or arguments about specific issues) and an imbalance of power (if the perpetrators are older, bigger, more powerful or if they are operating as a gang against an individual). Many students in Year 7 mistake friendship fallouts with bullying and it is important that you discuss the differences between the two with your child.

Minsthorpe operates a zero-tolerance policy towards bullying, so if you feel from the guidance stated above that bullying is occurring, then please contact the college directly.



We are more and more concerned about internet, or cyber-bullying out of college. We suggest you monitor your child's use of the internet closely and encourage them to switch off all electronic devices at least an hour before bedtime. The light from these devices imitates morning light and encourages young people to wake up and not go to sleep. At their age 8-9 hours of sleep is vital and every hour missed reduces his or her cognitive ability by one year- so a student who has only had 5 hours of sleep will be thinking like a 7-year-old the next day! The good news is that there is a sleep rebound effect and a good night's sleep the next night will restore your child's cognitive abilities the next day.

Worrying about particular lessons

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 college if your child continues to find the work too easy or too hard or raise it at parents' evening. Again, if you have concerns, please contact the college directly and our Hub staff will contact the most appropriate staff member to get back in touch with you.

Losing belongings

This is quite common for children (and very expensive for their parents!). It would be ideal if all of your child's belongings are labelled correctly. All lost property in college is sent to the Hub and students can go and check any missing items by speaking to staff at Student Reception.

Getting into trouble for not completing home learning

In many ways, home learning makes the most demands on both Year 7 students and their parents. We have tried to support our students by using the Knowledge Organiser as the primary tool for home learning. There is lots of helpful advice and support on the website to help your child with the process of using the Knowledge Organiser for embedding the crucial information they need to know for each subject. If your child is consistently not able to complete the home learning set, do contact your college and we will be happy to provide support.



A guide to parents' evenings

You will be given the date of the Year 7 parents' evening well in advance. A letter will be sent out when and where you should and will outline how to make appointments using our online system.

Appointments are for five minutes as you have several teachers to speak to all in the same evening. Attendance at parents' evenings is strongly recommended and you should try to speak to as many teachers as possible, especially if there are issues you need to raise with them. It is a good idea to jot down any concerns or questions you may have in advance as well as taking a piece of paper to make notes during the consultation itself.

Your appointments with the teachers 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 any questions or raise any concerns you have. If you or they have major concerns, the teacher will probably suggest a further, longer meeting at another time. It's also a good idea to have your child with you to hear what their teachers have to say.

Any questions?

I hope that this booklet has helped to answer some of the questions you may have about how to support your child with these next steps in their school journey. If you would like to discuss your child's transition to Minsthorpe in more detail, please contact me at the college.

Kind Regards

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