



### **Things to think about before choosing a secondary school**

- Go and visit schools when your child is in Year 5.
- Speak to other parents who already have children at the school.
- Does the school have a particular specialism - it may influence your child's choice of GCSEs.

When visiting the school, try to speak to the Senco and ask:

- Is there a choice of foreign languages studied?
- Is there a homework club?
- Explain your child's difficulties and if there are pupils with similar difficulties in the school.
- Will all staff be made aware of your child's needs and how?
- Will there be any opportunity for additional literacy/numeracy support?
- Do the school run any transition programmes?



### **Preparing your child for secondary school**

Previous knowledge and skills may deteriorate over the long summer holidays. Try to keep some level of activity going even if it is just reading with them. A summer diary could be used to encourage writing.

The following skills are also useful for your child to have:

- Writes own name and address.
- Knows own telephone number.
- Knows the telephone number of a 'buddy' from whom homework instructions can be obtained if required.
- Order and write the days and the months.
- Read and write the names and abbreviations for all subjects.
- Can follow a timetable.
- Can write the date.

### **Rehearse these potentially difficult situations**

Prepare your child to cope with social & emotional issues by modelling & practising these potential areas of difficulty.

- Lost or forgotten equipment.
- Forgotten homework.
- Not understanding instructions.
- Asking for help.
- Getting lost between lessons.
- Contacting home.

# How you can help

## Homework/Study

- Familiarise your child with the layout of the homework diary.
- Check homework diary everyday. Help prioritise activities.
- Provide a quiet working space with a suitable table and chair.
- Reduce unnecessary distractions to a minimum to help maintain concentration e.g. television/phone.
- Keep a note of how long homework activities take. If you feel the workload is too great, speak to the school about it.
- Get your child into the habit of doing a little homework each night at an agreed time.
- Discuss amount of time to be spent and use a timer.
- Consider using a digital recorder. Homework instructions can be recorded accurately in this way. Staff should be made aware that your child requires this support.
- Encourage attendance at a homework club, if there is one.
- Make an exam timetable and a study timetable. Help your child prioritise the topics to be studied.
- Encourage learning breaks - 5 minutes break for every 20/30 minutes of work.



## General organisation

- Have your child's name on every piece of equipment and clothing.
- Duplicate your child's timetable. Enlarge copies for their room and a prominent position downstairs e.g. on the fridge. Add visual prompts.
- Colour code the timetable, books and folders. This makes it easier to pack the correct resources.
- Encourage your child to pack their bag before going to bed. Place the bag and any other equipment at the door. Look at the timetable and homework diary. Check they have everything.
- Be prepared for your child to regularly lose things. Have a stock of pencils, rubbers, pens and rulers in the house (3 of everything).
- Credit card sized information cards are useful for reference - a multiplication square, key word list, word lists for days, months, subject names, colours and numbers and their own name, address & telephone number.
- Find out if there is appropriate storage at school e.g. lockers.



## Study Skills

- If handwriting is very poor it may be useful for your child to learn to touch type.
- Using a computer would give access to a spellchecker and grammar checker.
- Encourage the writing of answers in bullet points rather than prose, as it is easier to organise and sequence thoughts this way.
- Encourage the use of 'Mind Mapping' to help organise thoughts.
- Help your child to proof read their written work. Look for sense, punctuation and spelling.
- Provide lined paper.
- Listen to your child read as often as possible.
- When they are trying to read an unknown word, encourage them to:-
  1. Look at the first letter.
  2. Think about what the word could be from the context.
  3. Look for any known words within the target word e.g. **rain** in **trainer**
  4. Break the word into smaller chunks for decoding e.g. cat/er/pil/lar.
  5. Blend all the sounds together.
- Ask questions to ensure understanding of the text read.
- Read difficult texts together or put study notes on to tape.
- Find a quiet place to read together.



## Social /Emotional

- Encourage your child to talk about school - likes, dislikes, worries and good points.
- Praise your child for all effort made. He may have to work twice as hard as the others just to keep his head above water.
- Encourage out of school activities to develop confidence and boost self esteem.
- Break information and instructions into small bite sized chunks.
- Understand that the transfer from Year 6 to Year 7 can be very stressful. Make allowances for uncharacteristic behaviour.



# Memory Jogger



## *Things I need to remember*

<u>Monday</u>		
<u>Tuesday</u>		
<u>Wednesday</u>		
<u>Thursday</u>		
<u>Friday</u>		

**It's your bag. You pack it! You check it!**

## Useful Addresses

Herts Dyslexia Association  
Tel Helpline: 01727 867399  
Contact: Michael Paterson  
Weekdays: 12.30 - 3.00  
7.00 - 8.30  
Email: michaelpaterson@tiscali.co.uk

Area Parent Partnership  
Co-ordinator: Kären Edwards  
Tel: 01442 453316

British Dyslexia Association  
Tel: 0845 251 9002  
10-4.00 Mon - Fri  
Tue/Wed: 5.00 - 7.00  
Web: [www.bda-dyslexia.org.uk](http://www.bda-dyslexia.org.uk)  
Email: [helpline@bdadyslexia.org.uk](mailto:helpline@bdadyslexia.org.uk)

*Laurance Haines SpLD Base  
Spring 2010*