

PARENT COMMUNICATION · ALL GRADES

Back-to-School

Family guide

A note for families

Welcome back. We're looking forward to having [child] in our class. The last week of summer can feel a bit chaotic. This guide is just a few practical things you can do — none of them essential, all of them helpful — to make the first week back smoother for you and for [child].

A week before school starts

<p>Start adjusting bedtime</p> <p>Move it earlier by 15 minutes a night. By the first day, they'll be on school sleep schedule. Easier than a sudden shift on Sunday.</p>	<p>Practice the morning routine</p> <p>One day, do a 'pretend morning' — get up at school time, get dressed, eat breakfast. Spots problems before the real day.</p>
<p>Try on uniform / school clothes</p> <p>Last year's may not fit. Check. Replace. Iron in or label new pieces.</p>	<p>Read the school's information</p> <p>Whatever the school sent home — class teacher's letter, school dates, uniform updates. Don't leave it for the first week.</p>

A few days before

<p>Check school supplies</p> <p>Pencil case, water bottle, book bag, PE kit. Replace what's missing. Names on everything.</p>	<p>Talk about the year ahead</p> <p>What is [child] looking forward to? What are they worried about? Listen. Don't dismiss worries — even small ones matter.</p>
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<p>Visit the school grounds if possible</p> <p>Especially for new schools or year groups. Walk past, peek through the fence, talk about which classroom they'll be in. Familiarity reduces anxiety.</p>	<p>Plan the first-day breakfast</p> <p>Something they like. Easy to eat. Available the night before so morning is calm.</p>
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The night before

<p>Pack the bag together</p> <p>Book bag, water bottle, lunch (if packed). Together, calmly. They learn what goes in. You catch what's missing.</p>	<p>Lay out clothes</p> <p>Uniform out, ready to put on. Removes 15 minutes of friction from the morning.</p>
<p>Early bedtime</p> <p>Aim for an hour earlier than usual the day before. They'll be excited. You'll be glad of the buffer.</p>	<p>Reassuring chat</p> <p>5 minutes. 'Tomorrow's the big day. You'll be brilliant. I love you.' Doesn't matter if they roll their eyes — they hear you.</p>

On the first morning

<p>Calm energy from you</p> <p>Children's nervous systems mirror their parents'. If you're rushing, they'll feel it. Build in extra time.</p>	<p>A good breakfast</p> <p>Even if they don't usually eat much. Hungry children struggle in lessons. Something small is better than nothing.</p>
<p>Photo if you want one</p> <p>Many families have a 'first day' photo tradition. If you do, make sure they're not late because of it.</p>	<p>Quick goodbye at the door</p> <p>Long goodbyes prolong anxiety. A confident 'have a great day' and walking away is kindest. Tears at the door are usually over within 5 minutes.</p>

If your child is anxious

Some children find the start of the year really hard. A few things that often help: • **ACKNOWLEDGE THE FEELING.** 'It makes sense to feel nervous. New teacher, new class. That's a lot.' • **DON'T REASSURE TOO MUCH.** 'Don't worry, it'll be fine!' often makes anxiety worse — implies the feeling is wrong. • **MAKE A PLAN FOR THE WORRY.** 'If you feel sad in lessons, what could you do?' Helps them feel they have agency. • **TELL THE TEACHER.** Honestly. 'Sam's been worrying about coming back. Could you keep an eye on him in week 1?' We won't make a big deal of it; we'll just check in. • **DON'T LINGER AT THE GATE.** Drop-off should be brief and confident. Lingering communicates that something is wrong. Most first-day anxiety eases within a week or two. If it's still acute by half-term, please tell us — we want to help.



What you don't need to do

- You DON'T need to teach reading or maths over the summer
- You DON'T need to have made academic 'progress'
- You DON'T need to have read any specific books
- You DON'T need to have done summer homework (unless explicitly required)

The summer is for rest, family, fun, outdoor play, library trips, and the non-academic things that feed children. The school will handle the academics. Send a happy, rested child back to us — that's the best preparation there is.

