



# POSITIVE TRANSITIONS



## OUR GUIDE TO TRANSITIONING TO HIGH SCHOOL



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## Welcome to an exciting time

You are moving on up to high school soon – this is an exciting time, but it can also be nerve-wracking and can bring up a huge mix of different emotions, sometimes even all at once! People Know How has put together this guide to help you with advice, tips, and activities to help you have a positive transition.

Your body, brain and hormones are going through big changes too as you become a teenager, and we know there can be a lot of other things going on in your life during this time that you may also need a bit of help or support with, so we have included a directory of where you can go to find support if you need it.

*We know you're going to rock this – and we're here for you every step of the way. Let's go!*



## How might you be feeling?

Any period of change can bring up a lot of different feelings and emotions. Some of the main changes P7s have told us they felt worried about were:

- New classes
- Failing tests, exams or falling behind academically
- Meeting new people or making friends
- Having new teachers
- Getting lost or navigating the school

However, P7s also told us they felt excited about:

- New experiences
- New classes and exploring interests
- Meeting new people or making friends
- Having new teachers
- Increased freedom

Wait a minute...a lot of these are the same things! It is completely normal to have a mixture of emotions about going to high school, and to change from excited to nervous from day to day! For the days when the worries outweigh the excitement, we have included some activities you can do to help.

## Top tips from S1s

S1s have been there and done it and have some fab top tips to share with you about how to make the transition to high school smooth and enjoyable.

"If for some reason you do get worried, or scared, or even just a bit, you know, meh, you can always go to guidance who are a bunch of teachers who won't judge you and are there to help you out."

"People in P7 seem to think you get tons and tons of work when you go to high school but you really don't...so I wouldn't get worked up about that."

"You don't need to be sad about it, you need to be happy because it's good to have a change."

"When I came to this school I felt really scared too... but you just have to kind of roll on and it kind of falls into place. It's not scary and the older ones aren't mean to you ...they just mind their own business."

"I think high school is really fun but can be scary and nerve-racking when you start. You shouldn't listen to the rumours."

## What would make the transition easier?

We asked some P7s to tell us one thing that would make this worry smaller and they said:

- "Having a friend"
- "Finding my class"
- "I'll be honest, I could use some help with that one"
- "Not sure"

Over half of the young people we asked were unsure about how to make their worries smaller – it is sometimes tricky narrowing down what things would help. We have some suggestions of things you can do to help in this booklet, but to help you identify what you need, some young people have found it helpful to make a Vision Board including the following themes:

- Qualities you have that will help your positive transition
- What you can improve on to help your positive transition
- People who will support your positive transition
- What can you put in place to support your own transition? What do you need help with?

You can write your answers to these questions, or you can get creative and draw, collage – whatever works for you, but spending time getting these out of your brain can help you picture how things will look at high school.

You can use this space to jot down any ideas!



## Pack your school bag

(Adapted from Healthier Minds resource)

When you get ready to go to school in the morning, often the first thing you'll do is pack your bag. You pack everything you need to make sure you're prepared for the day ahead. This is a physical school bag, but a mental school bag can also help you have tools to help you if you face a tricky situation during the day.

How do you pack your mental bag? First, take a deep breath and close your eyes, focusing on your breath for a minute or two, to help you calm and focus. You might have other thoughts pop in your head during this time, try not to be distracted by them and focus on your breath instead.

Imagine a bag in front of you – it could be your actual school bag, a favourite bag, or one you've made up. With a clear image of this bag now in your head, start thinking about some things that help you to feel calm, confident and happy. This might be:

- A place, like your room or a holiday
- A person, like a friend, sibling or parent
- An object
- A word or phrase – you might have a positive affirmation that you like to use, such as 'You got this' or 'I am strong, I am confident, I am ready to take on the day'
- A coping/calming strategy

Once you have your items, focus on the feelings they make you feel – the items you have chosen should help you feel positive and relaxed. You can now access this bag in your head whenever you need it, when you perhaps feel nervous, or anxious, you can picture yourself opening up this bag and pulling out some of these things to help you feel better.

You can picture as many things as you like that can go in your 'bag' - some people find it helpful to draw out their bag, with the things drawn or written in it, so we've put a template for you to use if you would like. This could be a fun project to help remind you of your toolkit that you have in your head with you at all times.



## Ready to move on up checklist

We have a tick list of things you may need to help you in your transition to high school:

### In your school bag

- Pencil case
- Water bottle
- Snacks
- Books
- Homework
- PE kit
- Diary
- Perhaps a fidget toy

### Things to prepare the night before

- School uniform
- Shoes
- Deodorant
- Toothpaste and toothbrush
- Breakfast

### In your support network

- A trusted adult you can go to
- A friend or two that you can go to talk to about any worries you may have
- A teacher (this may be your guidance teacher) who you can approach with any concerns

### In your mind

- Your mental school bag you 'packed' earlier
- A favourite, safe place to go to in your head when you need to take a breather
- Calming strategies like breathing exercises

## Positive self-talk and affirmations

Many of the young people we support tell us that they feel building their confidence would help them to have a more positive transition to high school. A way of building your self-confidence over the summer before you head to high school is to use daily positive affirmations.

Positive affirmations are important reminders of the many positive things about yourself – repeating them each day is helpful to remind yourself each day of how far you have come and how great you are, which particularly helps on days you might be feeling low or nervous.

Everyone has their own preferred way of doing positive affirmations – some like to say them to themselves each morning in the mirror, others like to write them on post-its and stick them on a wall in their room that they walk past each day, and some young people we work with have created self-portraits with their self-affirmations drawn around it – you do what works for you!

*"If I would not say it to a friend, why would I say it to myself?"*

It can be easy to get bogged down in talking to yourself in your head in a negative way, such as "I can't do this". Try reframing this to "I can't do this...yet" or "I can try". Another important thing to remember is to be kind to yourself, especially during this time of change – treat yourself like you would treat your friends.

To get you started, we have suggested some positive affirmations for you:

### I can...

- Do what I set my mind to
- Get through anything
- Only do my best
- Face my fears
- Have a good day

### I will...

- Try my best
- See the positive in each situation
- See today as a fresh day
- Make mistakes sometimes...and that's okay

### I am...

- Positive
- Smart
- Brave
- Confident
- Loved
- Grateful
- A great friend
- Enough
- Safe



Young people have told us that they find inspiring quotes from others helpful to print out, write out or collage as positive reminders to use in the same way as affirmations, so we've selected a few below to get you started:

"If you see someone without a smile, give them one of yours."  
- Dolly Parton

"Feelings are much like waves, we can't stop them from coming, but we can choose which one to surf."  
- Jonathan Martensson

"You're braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think."  
- A.A. Milne

"May the Force be with you' is charming but it's not important. What's important is that you become the Force - for yourself and perhaps for other people."  
- Harrison Ford

"It takes courage to grow up and become who you really are."  
- E.E. Cummings

"If you have good thoughts, they will shine out of your face like sunbeams and you will always look lovely!"  
- Roald Dahl

"Don't you ever let a soul in the world tell you that you can't be exactly who you are."  
- Lady Gaga

## Friendships

The majority of the young people we work with ask us for support in building friendships at school and tell us this is one of the biggest worries P7s have about the move up to high school. However, a study by the Scottish Government called Growing Up in Scotland showed that once they were in P7, 85% of young people found it easy to make friends at high school! So soon, it will seem easier than it might just now. In the meantime, here are our top tips for making new friends at high school:

- Summer programmes or activity days, sports groups, drama clubs, art clubs and youth groups are great ways to meet new people over the summer so you know more people
- Jenny told us that "on the first day I had nowhere to sit and sat by myself...someone came and sat next to me and we're really good friends now" – she recommends chatting to people in the lunch hall and if you see someone on their own, why not sit next to them
- Not sure how to start the conversation? Asking open-ended questions (ones that can't be answered with yes or no) to show you are interested can help encourage conversation, and helps you to learn more about the other person to find things you might have in common, like:
  - What is your favourite movie?
  - What's your favourite school subject? What do you like about it?
  - What sports do you like to play?

- Body language – think about what would make you feel comfortable to approach someone, - they might be smiling, laughing, warm and approachable. Try to copy this so that others feel comfortable approaching you. Bonus – your body can't tell the difference between when you are faking a smile or laughter, and when it is real, so your body still releases the same feel-good chemicals called endorphins, meaning you get a mood boost at the same time! Win-win!
- Fake it 'til you make it – confidence doesn't happen overnight, but by pretending that you are confident, you might soon find that you are feeling more confident already!
- And remember, with friendships, the important thing is quality over quantity – you might feel pressure to have a big group of friends like you see in the movies. But it is much more important to find people you feel yourself around and supported by than it is to have lots of friends who you can't go to.
- Most importantly...remember to be you!





## Looking for a fun day out in the summer?

We're taking part in the Edinburgh Kiltwalk on 15 September and are inviting you to join Team People Know How to have a fun day (hopefully in the sun!) in walking 5 miles in the Wee Wander! We're offering free places on our team – why not join us with your friends or family?

You'll get a free People Know How t-shirt, plenty of snacks along the way, and a Kiltwalk medal at the end!

You're welcome to join purely for a fun day out or you can join in our fundraising efforts by asking friends and family to sponsor you. Last year we raised a grand total of £3,406 and we hope to smash that total this year. Every penny raised as part of our team will go to our work in communities supporting children, young people, families and adults.

To find out more and claim a free place on our team visit:

[peopleknowhow.org/donate/kiltwalk](https://peopleknowhow.org/donate/kiltwalk)



## Transitioning in a digital age

Over the summer holidays and as you move towards your teenage years into high school, you might find your screen time increases, perhaps playing online games, watching your favourite YouTube stars or chatting to friends on social media. Screen time and going online can be fun and can help you keep in touch with friends and find useful information. However, there are also more negative sides to this – it can become addictive, and there can be people using the internet in a negative, hurtful, and sometimes even illegal way.

Part of supporting you through the transition to high school is to help you do this in a positive and safe way. Children and young people from the Children's Parliament and the Scottish Youth Parliament have created a helpful website - [mindyertime.scot](https://mindyertime.scot) – which has a huge range of information and advice around screen time and using digital safely, including guidance around mental health and wellbeing, body image, and online bullying.

On the next page, you'll find some helpful resources for you to explore the online world safely.



Helpful resources to explore the online world safely:

Resource	What is it?
<b>Young Scot</b> young.scot/campaigns/ digiknow	A list of resources to help you to develop your digital skills.
<b>CEOP Education</b> www.ceopeducation.co.uk	A game for 8-10-year olds to learn about online safety in a more interactive way, and further information for 11+ year olds.
<b>Be Internet Legends</b> beinternetawesome.withgoogle.com	An interactive website which empowers you to use the web safely and wisely, so you can be confident explorers of the online world.
<b>Kidscape: Help with Bullying</b> www.kidscape.org.uk/advice/ advice-for-young-people/im- being-bullied-online	Advice around staying safe on social media and cyberbullying.

**Remember**, seeing influencers and friends on social media having what looks like great time can make you feel quite lonely. The filters frequently used on images can set unrealistic expectations of how people should look and can make you feel a bit rubbish. But someone's highlights reel is just that – a short period of time they have chosen to share that makes them look their best. They often don't share the reality, so try not to compare your day-to-day with the unrealistic images shown.

If you are ever uncomfortable or unsure about anything you see online, always speak to a trusted adult about it.

## I need more support with something else

Sometimes, we might need some extra advice or support with different areas of our lives. It is always okay to ask for help, and is a brave thing to do. We would encourage you to speak with a friend, family member, parent/carer, teacher, or another trusted adult.

However, this doesn't always feel easy, and other things might need specialist support, so we have made some suggestions on the next few pages of different places to go for different things, but some might only be available in some locations. If you need any help finding the right support, please speak to your parent/carer or teacher.



## Mental Health/Counselling

Resource	What is it?
<b>Shout</b> <a href="http://giveusashout.org">giveusashout.org</a>	A free, confidential and 24/7 text messaging service for anyone of any age in the UK who needs support. Text the word 'Shout' to 85258.
<b>Childline</b> <a href="http://childline.org.uk">childline.org.uk</a>	You can contact Childline about anything that's worrying you. Call 0800 1111 or get in touch online.
<b>Papyrus</b> <a href="http://www.papyrus-uk.org">www.papyrus-uk.org</a>	Support for children and young people who are experiencing thoughts of suicide. You can contact HOPELINE247 for confidential support and practical advice.  Call: 0800 068 4141 Text: 88247 Email: <a href="mailto:pat@papyrus-uk.org">pat@papyrus-uk.org</a>
<b>MYPAS</b> <a href="http://www.mypas.co.uk/counselling">www.mypas.co.uk/counselling</a>	A range of counselling and art therapy support services for young people aged 12 to 18 in East Lothian and Midlothian.
<b>Space</b> <a href="http://spacescot.org/counselling">spacescot.org/counselling</a>	Counselling and art therapy services for young people aged 5-25 at The Broomhouse Hub and in schools across South West Edinburgh. You can request support through their online form.

## LGBTQ+

Resource	What is it?
<b>LGBT Youth Scotland</b> <a href="http://lgbtyouth.org.uk">lgbtyouth.org.uk</a>	Scotland's national charity for LGBTQ+ young people aged 13-25. They support young people in all aspects of their lives.
<b>Mypas LGBT</b> <a href="http://www.mypas.co.uk/services/lgbt-youth-group">www.mypas.co.uk/services/lgbt-youth-group</a>	Individualised support and groups for all young people in the LGBTQ+ community residing in East Lothian and Midlothian.

## ASD/ADHD/Autism

Resource	What is it?
<b>Salvesen Mindroom Centre</b> <a href="http://mindroom.org">mindroom.org</a>	Provides one-to-one advocacy and support for children and young people with learning difficulties across Scotland. You do not need a diagnosis.
<b>Tailor Ed Foundation</b> <a href="http://tailoredfoundation.co.uk/support-services">tailoredfoundation.co.uk/support-services</a>	Support for children and young people with autism in Edinburgh.

## Other

Resource	What is it?
<b>East Lothian Young Carers</b> <a href="http://eastlothianyoungcarers.org">eastlothianyoungcarers.org</a>	Provides information, support and breaks from caring to young carers and their families living in East Lothian.

<b>Edinburgh Young Carers</b> youngcarers.org.uk	Provides respite and support to young people living in North and South East Edinburgh, between the ages of 5-25, who care for somebody at home.
<b>Richmond's Hope</b> richmondshope.org.uk	Provides support for children and young people aged 4-18 years who have been bereaved.
<b>The Junction</b> the-junction.org	A safe, friendly, confidential centre offering lots of health-related services, education and support for young people in Leith and North East Edinburgh aged 12-21.
<b>Reach</b> reach.scot	Support to understand your rights to support with your learning and your rights to be included, listened to and involved in decisions about your education.
<b>Edinburgh Uniform Bank</b> edinburghuniform.org	Provides free school uniform and crisis clothing packs for those experiencing financial hardship.
<b>My Period</b> myperiod.org.uk	Shows where to find free period products near you.
<b>Young Scot</b> young.scot	A wide range of information for young people on a variety of different, current topics.

## Who are we?

We're a charity called People Know How. We run services and campaigns in Scotland that place people at the centre, making their voices heard to improve their wellbeing, overcome barriers and solve social issues.

Positive Transitions is one of these services. It supports children, young people and their families in the transition from primary to secondary school across Edinburgh and the Lothians. The service is designed to support you to feel valued and understood, improve your self-esteem and peer relationships, and enable you to fulfil their potential.

Find out more on our website:

[peopleknowhow.org/positive-transitions](https://peopleknowhow.org/positive-transitions)

Or get in touch with us at:

[positive.transitions@peopleknowhow.org](mailto:positive.transitions@peopleknowhow.org)





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