

A Guide for Students & their families Graduating from Primary School

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Congratulations on graduating from primary school. It is a great achievement and you should feel proud of what you have done.

This paper is written to help you and your family think about what we can do over the next few months to help with the next stage of life.

Let's get the Number One worry out of the way first

Most graduating primary school students worry that they won't make friends at their new school. So before we talk other ideas, find out who else is going to your new school.

If no one you know is going to your new school, think about who you want to remain in touch with from your primary school and how you are going to do that.

Making new friends

Going to a new school is a chance to make new friends. I'm going to guess that your friends now are mostly people you didn't know when you started school. When you finish school it will be just like that- you will have a whole lot of friends that you don't know now. So you are about to meet new friends.

You want to know the hardest thing about making friends?

Saying hello. I suspect you know how to do this even though you might feel uncomfortable saying hello to people you don't know.

When you start at a new school you have a choice- you can either get to know one or two people or lots of people.

I would like to suggest that you consider getting to know lots of people in the first few days at a new school. I know it can feel cool to sit back and only speak to people who speak to you but over the school break it is worth getting used to saying hello to more people.

Go up to someone you don't know and say hello, my name is... Ask what's your name? Repeat their name and start a conversation.

You want to know the second hardest thing?

Knowing what to say. Having a few standard questions can be useful. Some examples are
What do you do for fun?

Where are you from?

Do you have a favourite sport/ computer game/ youtube clip?

It might feel hard to believe this but everyone feels a bit nervous on the first few days of a new school. People are as worried about what you think of them as you probably are about what they think of you.

By being brave and talking to people you not only help yourself, you help others.

Seal the relationship

Now you've broken the ice and said hello and you've had a bit of a chat, now its time to seal the deal. The next day go up to that person and say, "hi, (use their name) how

are you?" I know this probably sounds really basic to you but just being friendly gets you a lot of friends because people like people who like them.

You are ready for this

It feels weird doing new things at first and you are ready for this move. All of the time you have spent at primary school has been preparing you for this moment.

Know the layout

Visiting your new school and knowing where things are will help you to go on the first day will help a lot. Most schools have open days for graduating primary school students. Make sure you go. If you still feel worried visit the school again with your family. Your holidays are too precious to waste them worrying and things you don't need to worry about.

Have a learning adventure

Over the holidays have a learning adventure. If you can get your family involved. Find something you are interested in and learn more about it. Read books, watch videos, and visit places with your family. This is a really good time to remind yourself that learning is fun and when you are interested you can learn anything.

Planning and decision-making

Get involved in planning events over the Christmas/ summer time. Success in school relies a lot on your ability to plan effectively.

Try

I recently asked a really top scoring student for his recipe for success at school. He answered, "try". He explained that so many people feel scared to try to do their best. If

you try, you will certainly improve and probably amaze yourself.

Mistakes are the way we all learn

Learning is like in science. In science we come up with our best idea. We call that a hypothesis. Then we conduct a series of experiments to work out if that is indeed the best idea or if there is a better idea. In science there are no mistakes. There are just experiments that help you to get to better ideas.

You will make mistakes. Everyone makes mistakes. That is how we learn. If you feel too scared to make a mistake you can't be creative and you can't be the genius you truly are.

Not every one will be your best friend

You are not going to like everyone and not everyone will like you that much either. Be as friendly as you can be but don't get too upset if a few people don't seem to want to be close to you. That should be ok. Focus on the people who like and appreciate you.

Have fun and be adventurous

Over the next few years, you can have some of the best times in your life. Set out to enjoy yourself as much as you can. Try to amaze yourself with what you can achieve at school, in making new friends, in learning new things and in becoming an even more wonderful person.

Andrew is the creator of Student Transition and Resilience Training (START). His most recent book is "Unlocking Your Child's Genius"