



Canterbury District
STLS & Outreach

Primary School Transition 2020 Parent/Carer Guide



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Preparing to start School

Starting schools can be an exciting and anxious time for both children and their parents. This guide aims to help parents/carers support their children at this time. With the added uncertainty of the current coronavirus pandemic, transition this year is a little trickier than normal as your child's routine will be turned upside down and they may not be socialising with other children.

Independence:

Starting primary school is a big jump for all children but you can help your child in preparation to become a little more independent before they start.

Uniform:

If your child struggles with getting themselves dressed it may be helpful if you 'back chain' their dressing routine. This means you might help them with most of the dressing process but leave them a simple last job to do— for example if you put their socks on their feet, they pull them up. Once they master this, you can maybe put on one sock and get them to do the other and so on until they can dress themselves with less and less adult support. It can be tricky for children to put on socks or do up buttons but practice will help.

It might also help them to be familiar with their school uniform before they start school perhaps by trying it on occasionally or hanging it somewhere they can see it and talk about it. Some children struggle with the feel of new school uniform so if your child is sensitive to labels or certain clothes then try and remove any unnecessary labels (although uniform must be named) and you may want to wash the uniform before it is worn to soften the material.

Teaching your child to put on their coat would be very helpful too. This is quite easy if they place the coat on the floor upside down and then Arm, Arm Flip!

Sleep

A 4 year old needs 11 ½ and a 5 year old needs 11 hours of sleep a night. It can be difficult for everyone in the household if your child does not sleep or is reluctant to sleep in their own bed.

Sleep is essential not only for physical and emotional reasons, but also enables growth repair, concentration, memory and learning. If you are having significant issues and your child has not yet had their 5th birthday you can contact your Health Visitor who may be able to give you more support.

Saying goodbye and separating from an anxious child

- Work with school to develop a routine for dropping off – try to ensure this is consistent. It can be helpful to use a “script” to help structure the good byes for example “Goodbye love you lots. I will be back at 3pm and I can’t wait to hear about your exciting day when I pick you up.”
- Be really positive about their school day and tell them how excited you are to be picking them up later and to be able to hear about all the wonderful things they have done.
- Don’t sneak away – this is more unsettling for the child.
- Manage a careful and consistent transition if drop off time is challenging.
- Work towards a quick drop off – do not hang around – if you are meeting another parent or friend do so outside of the school gate so your child does not see you.
- Try to minimise your own emotions as children will pick up on parental anxiety. Even if you are scared or anxious for them, try to smile. If you feel tearful try not to get upset in front of your child (although it can be very hard!)
- If your child is being collected by someone else make sure they know in advance.

Attendance and Absence

Ideally your child will attend school every day but in the event of illness it is vital you telephone the school to report your child’s absence. It is also important your child arrives at school on time as this will allow them to start the day calmly with their peers.

Schools have similar attendance policies and they generally expect parents to:

- Ensure that their children attend school regularly
- Notify school on the first day of absence before 8.30am by phone/letter
- Ensure when their child returns to school they bring in written confirmation of why they were absent (this may be through a home/school contact book)
- Hand in medical evidence for 4 or more days absence due to illness

Please refer to individual School policies.

Illness	Length of absence from school
Coronavirus	7 days from onset of symptoms though household will need to be in isolation for 14 days
Sickness and/or diarrhoea e.g. norovirus	Keep them at home until they have been symptom free and eating normally for 48 hours.

Chickenpox	5 days from onset of rash
German Measles	6 days from onset of rash
Measles	4 days from onset of rash
Mumps	5 days after the onset of swelling
Whooping Cough	21 days if no antibiotics or 5 days from start of antibiotics
Impetigo	until lesions are crusted or 2 days after start of antibiotics

Curriculum

Your child will mostly be taught through games and play.

The areas of learning are:

- communication and language
- physical development
- personal, social and emotional development
- literacy
- mathematics
- understanding the world
- expressive arts and design

Recognising their name when seeing it written down is a skill needed regularly throughout the school day. The school will write it with both upper (capital letters) and lower case letters like this – John Smith.

Developing your child's ability to sit and concentrate for a period of time will really help. This can be challenging for very young children, but sitting and reading, drawing, and doing structured activities like puzzles, painting, or cooking will all help develop their concentration skills.

There are 3 characteristics for effective learning:

Playing and exploring – engagement

- Finding out and exploring
- Playing with what they know
- Being willing to have a go

Active learning – motivation

- Being involved and concentrating
- Keeping trying
- Enjoying achieving what they set out to do

Creating and thinking critically – thinking

- Having their own ideas
- Making links
- Choosing to do things

RBA Reception Baseline Assessment

The reception baseline assessment is a short and simple check of a child's early literacy, communication, language and maths skills when they begin school.

During a 20-minute one-to-one session with their teacher or teaching assistant, your child will do a number of practical and interactive tasks.

Your child can answer questions verbally or by pointing or moving objects. The assessment has been designed to be inclusive and there are modified materials available – this means it is also accessible to children with SEND or English as a second language. The teacher may pause and restart the check if they feel a child is distracted.

Your child does not need to prepare for this assessment.

Before and after school routines

It can be difficult to get children up and out of the house for school but a consistent routine will make this easier.

Try and encourage your child to help you get uniform and their book bag ready the night before as this will remove the stress of trying to find things in the morning.

It is important the routine works for everyone in the house so how you organise it will depend on different things, eg other children and whether you are working. Try to ensure your child is up, washed and dressed ready to leave home in plenty of time, as this will help achieve a calm start to the day. Make sure they have a good breakfast, which will keep them going until snack time. If they go to breakfast club, they may still want a small breakfast at home.

If your child struggles with the morning routine, you might want to try using visual supports where you have a set routine they can follow. This will also encourage greater independence. You might also want to use timers (there are lots of child friendly timer apps for mobile phones). Try not to get in a battle with your child before school – where possible tactically ignore the behaviours – it may be a sign they are tired or anxious. However, speak to the school FLO, Pastoral support or SENCo if these issues are problematic or frequent.

After school, you may also initially find your child is tired and maybe tearful and it may be beneficial to limit afterschool activities to begin with. When they get home, encourage them to change out of their school clothes and have a snack. Let them have some down time such as playing in the garden or even limited screen time. Ask them 2 or 3 things they enjoyed that day focusses on the positives.

Try to share a book with them daily if possible or encourage an older child to do so.

Home/School Partnership

Most primary schools have a Family Support Advisor (FSA) or Family Liaison Officer (FLO), they are there to support you and your family. If you have any worries or issues concerning your child, and how they are settling in to school, they may also be able to offer help or signpost you to who can help you.

Sometimes, parents/carers, particularly if they have had a bad experience of school themselves; can feel anxious about their child starting school. This is natural; however, you can contact the FLO or FSA who will be able to support you.

SENCo (Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator)

If your child has a special educational need or disability (SEND) or you think they may have you can contact the school's SENCo. Most schools offer a range of support depending on the needs of the child. All primary schools in Canterbury also have access to LIFT (Local Inclusion Forum Team) where children's needs are discussed and schools are supported to help meet these needs. This may be with additional support from the STLS (Specialist Teaching & Learning Service) or through advice or recommendations. Sometimes it is necessary for schools to apply for Higher Needs Funding (HNF). This would be discussed with parents/carers in advance, as there are strict KCC criteria. Likewise, a very small number of children may require an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP). However, the process to apply for this requires three terms of assess-plan-do-review – again schools can support most children with SEND without the need for an EHCP.

Medical/Health Needs

If your child has any particular health needs then speak to your school in advance of them starting. This is especially important if they need any adaptive support, personal care or medication administered at school.

Lunchtime

Whether having a school dinner or a packed lunch, helping your child prepare for lunchtime is vital. Useful lunchtime skills include; being able to use a knife and fork, opening their own lunchbox and being able to open everything in it – some yoghurt tubes and drink cartons can be quite tricky so checking at home beforehand is a good idea. Most schools have a healthy lunch policy and you will need to check if there are items they are not allowed to eat at school which may include, for example, nuts if other pupils have allergies.

Who can help me?

If you have any concerns about your child you can speak to the school or your GP.

Early Help – speak to your primary FLO or SENCo for a referral. They can help support your child if you know the transition will be difficult for them.

Kent Young Carers – if your child cares for a parent or sibling with a long term condition or has a sibling with a long term condition then contact info@kentyoungcarers.org.uk

<https://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/childrens-therapies-the-pod/> this is the website for all children's therapies in Kent such as speech and language, occupational therapy and physiotherapy – school/GP generally make referrals for these services

Kent Autistic Trust <https://www.kentautistictrust.org/> This website offers support and information if your child has (or is on the pathway for) an ASC diagnosis

Young Minds <https://youngminds.org.uk/> This website gives information regarding mental wellbeing and health such as anxiety

Information, Advice and Support Kent <https://www.iask.org.uk/> This website offers lots of support for parents of children with SEND needs

Care for the Family <https://www.careforthefamily.org.uk/family-life/parent-support>
This website offers support to parents.