



Welcome to The Priory School

Information for Parents and Carers

HELP YOUR CHILD BE ...



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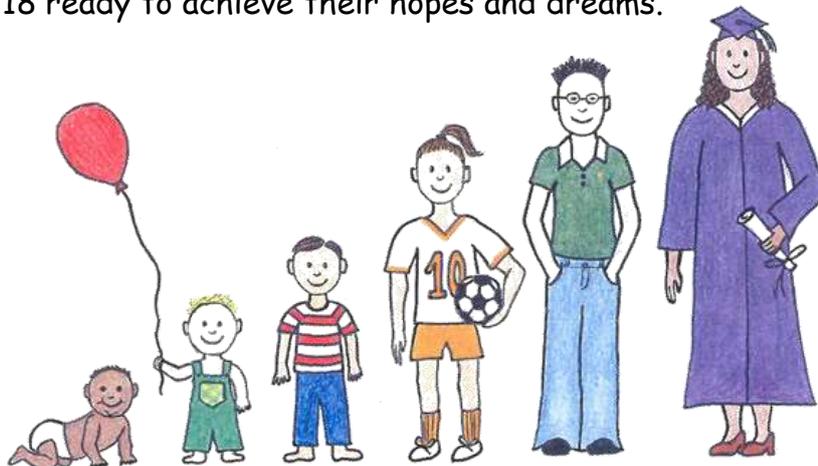
1. New Beginnings

Starting a secondary school is an exciting experience. Your child is now ready to embark on this new journey which will help them become happy, fulfilled, independent adults.

Your child is about to start a new chapter in their learning; it is now time for them to "fly the nest" of their primary school education.

In The Priory School, children:

- Will make new friends, often forming the best friendships of their lives.
- Will study a variety of subjects, opening their eyes to the wonders and challenges of our world.
- Will experience the world in a more mature and independent way: trips, extracurricular activities, exciting curriculum and others.
- Will learn how to deal with disappointments, disagreements and mistakes; and learn that mistakes are necessary for their development.
- Will develop the emotional and physical resilience needed for coping with tests, exams, job interviews and other challenges of life.
- Will experience the joy, happiness, pride when their hard work pays off!
- Will develop into well-rounded individuals who will leave the school at 16 or 18 ready to achieve their hopes and dreams.



2. New students might worry about...

- Not making friends
- Getting lost
- Homework
- Getting to school and back
- Not having the right books or equipment
- Not knowing what to do if there is a problem
- Not getting on with the teachers
- Getting into trouble
- Getting bullied



Your child will most likely stop feeling lost and overwhelmed with homework, travelling to and back from school and being new after about two weeks of school. They will soon begin to feel more at ease and become more independent, so don't worry if your child is not entirely happy at the very beginning of Year 7.

If they feel they are not making friends and they feel lonely, they can join clubs with students of similar interests which will give them a great start for making new friends for life. They can also go to the peer mentors assigned to each from form group who will help your child make friends. If the problems persist, please contact your child's form tutor so we can help find your child a friend 'buddy' and offer further support.

3. How can I help as a parent?

When starting a secondary school, your child is expected to cope with a whole variety of new experiences, expectations and changes. The skills needed to help them deal with these cannot develop on their own, but they have to be taught. Your child will need your and the school's support in their development.

If we all spend time to help your child develop independence, resilience and life skills early on, we will equip them with tools for their school and working lives. This booklet will take you through some of the concerns children have and how you can help your child develop essential skills for life.



RULE NUMBER ONE

for developing independence and resilience:

'Never do anything regularly for your child that they are capable of doing for themselves'.

4. Getting to and from school

Make sure to establish a morning routine with your child, so they know what is expected of them each day before and after school. To help them develop independence, insist on the same routine being adhered to every day - it will save you and your child hours in the long run.

You could buy an alarm clock which your child would be responsible for setting each night just before their regular bed time- this gives them the control of their own routine. Have a practice day before September: getting up on time, being washed, dressed, and fed - ready to catch a bus/lift to school. This will help them ease into the new routine.



If your child struggles with mornings use a check list, like the one below:

Sample Day Planner:

Task	Time	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thursday	Friday
Before School						
Breakfast						
Bathroom						
Dressing						
Lunch (money)						
Leave house						
Catch bus/lift						
After school						
Change/wash hands						
Prepare fresh uniform						
Check homework diary						
Sign homework diary						
Show parents						
Play						
Exercise						
Dinner						
Bed-time						

5. Uniform

You have already been informed about the uniform requirements in our school, which can be found in your 'Transition Booklet for Parents'. It is, however, essential that your child learns to be responsible for their own uniform as soon as possible.

Key responsibilities of your child:

- Know the rules.
- Make sure everything is ready for the next morning.
- Make sure that fresh PE kit is taken to school when needed.

What you could do together:

- Name every piece of uniform (even shoes) with a marker pen.
- Have spare essentials.
- Decide on responsibilities (who washes or irons clothes etc.).
- Colour PE days on the timetable for clarity.



6. The new timetable

Key responsibilities of your child:

- Understand how to read the timetable or ask for help with this.
- Pack all the equipment and books necessary the night/day before.
- Ask for help if they get lost in school.

What you could do together:

- Get a watch to encourage punctuality and independence .
- Display the timetable in key areas in the house (for example: your child's bedroom and kitchen) .
- Colour-code the timetable.
- Make a list of books and equipment needed for each day , for example:.=



My Daily Equipment Planner				
Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
1. English reading book 2. PE kit 3. calculator 4. food-tech ingredients				

How you can support your child:

- If your child is struggling with the routine or the homework, help them - your child will appreciate your time and effort, especially when they are just getting used to the routine.
- Do 'progress checks' every 10 minutes rather than taking the responsibility for their work away from them.
- Offer support but don't do the homework for your child.
- If your child has done their best within the 30 minutes and they feel stuck and overwhelmed, stop them and write a note to the teacher in their homework diary if the task has not been finished.
- Celebrate success.



9. When to contact the school

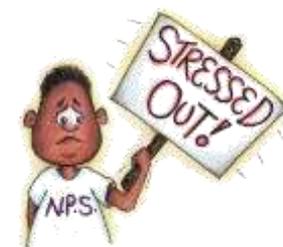
If you have any concerns, issues or causes for celebration etc., please contact your child's form tutor, teacher, Head of Year or Head of Department.

Although we encourage for you to allow your child independence and encourage their sense of responsibility, there are certain times when you will feel you would like to speak to a particular teacher, form tutor or the Head of Year 7. It is hard to know when to contact the school and many parents worry not to be seen as 'overprotective' or 'over-anxious'. However, you definitely would not like to leave problems to go on for too long, just because you don't want to interfere.

To strike a balance between 'over-protectiveness' and contacting the school on daily basis, keep talking to your child about how things are at school. If your child has a problem and you have advised them on how to solve their issues, but things have not improved, it is best to contact the school and speak honestly with a member of staff. Sometimes, however, things will improve and no intervention on your part will be required - daily ups and downs are a part of your child's physical, emotional and social development, so dealing with problems can develop skills for life.

10. "Teachers pick on me"

It is natural that your child will like some teachers over others; however, this should not affect their behaviour, effort and achievement in any subject. If your child finds the work too hard or too easy, tell them to speak to the specific teacher - they are there to help and make sure that your child is accessing all lessons and is receiving the support and challenge they need.



Remember!

If your child is trying their best in each lesson they will NOT get into trouble for discussing issues politely, respectfully and assertively!

If your child doesn't speak out, the teachers might not spot their needs straight away and your child's engagement, wellbeing and effort might suffer as a result. Open and honest communication is key in this situation!

Some teachers will even be surprised that your child doesn't get on with them or their subject, so speaking out is the best option. However, it is a life skill to learn that you won't get on with everyone you have to work with, so sometimes they will just have to put their dislikes behind and still try their best. Tell them to smile a lot - that works wonders!

If your child feels picked on speak to them and try to get to the bottom of it - teachers choose to work with children and most of them do it because they are passionate about equal provision and life chances for all children and teenagers. It might be that the teacher has a peculiar style or sense of humour; or it might be that they just had a really bad day. Try to reassure your child that as long as they are complying by the rules and trying their best, the teachers will appreciate it!



If they still feel unhappy, contact the school. You can speak to the form tutor, Head of Year or the teacher in question and, if necessary, arrange a meeting to resolve the situation.

10. Parents' evenings



Key responsibilities of your child:

- tell parents about the evening taking place.
- Let you know what teachers teach which subject.
- Print off appointments sheet for the day to know who you will be seeing at which times.
- Have any questions, concerns and ideas ready for the parents' evening.

What you could do together:

- Attend the evening together.
- Be respectful and polite at all times even if you disagree with the teacher.

How you can support your child:

- Make an appointment via our booking system as soon as possible: <http://www.priory.herts.sch.uk/online-services/>.
- If you cannot access the website, phone the pastoral base to arrange appointments.
- Print off the appointment sheet.
- Have a notebook ready to take notes and write down any questions/concerns for each subject before the evening so you don't forget to get all the information you want.
- If you are late or need to cancel, please ring or email the school in plenty of time (but: better later than never).
- If your problem/issue cannot be resolved during the parents' evening ask to arrange a separate appointment.

11. Attendance

Key responsibilities of your child:

- Be on time to all lessons.
- Attend the school each day.



What you could do together:

- Establish a morning routine so your child is always on time.
- Talk to each other if your child is unwell - are they really ill or could they attend lessons? Maybe they can't do physical activities but can sit behind the desk?
- Discuss and understand the importance of attendance - the more days missed the lesser chance for progression and achievement.

How you can support your child:

- Ring the school as soon as you know that your child will not be able to come into school.
- Write a note explaining any absences.
- Arrange doctor and dental appointments outside of school time if possible.
- Arrange holidays in half-term breaks, winter and spring breaks, and summer holidays only.

Remember:

If your child misses a lot of school, they will:

- Find the work harder.
- Not feel part of the class group.
- Find it harder to make and keep friendships.
- Forget what they have learnt.



If your child is regularly late for school, they will:

- Find it harder to settle into the school day.
- Miss important notices.
- Disrupt the other children in their class.

If your child has good attendance at school, they may:

- Receive an attendance award.
- Find it easier to learn.
- Have closer friends.
- Feel happier about school.

ATTENDANCE = SUCCESS

EXCELLENT Attendance 96% attendance	GOOD Attendance 92% attendance	POOR Attendance 83% attendance
½ a day missed every 3 weeks = 2 months missed over 5 years	Just over 1 day missed every 3 weeks = 4 months missed over 5 years	3 days missed every month = a whole year missed over 5 years
3 out of 4 students will gain 5 A-C GCSE grades	2 out of 4 students will gain 5 A-C GCSE grades	1 out of 4 students will gain 5 A-C GCSE grades

12. Homework Diary

Key responsibilities of your child:

- Have the homework diary in school each day.
- Write all important information in their homework diaries.
- Write homework clearly every day with a clear due date and tick DONE when they have completed their homework.
- Keep their homework diary clean, tidy and doodle-free.
- Put any school notices in their homework diaries and hand them to parents/carers daily.

What you could do together:

- Check the homework diary daily.
- Review the use of the homework diary each month to ensure that it is used appropriately and effectively.

How you can support your child:

- Read and sign the homework diary each week ready for the check on Mondays (your child will receive a behavioural point if this is not done).
- Write any notices to teachers in the homework diary.
- Tick or initial all completed homework you have seen.



An example of a homework diary page:

Subject		Homework Details	Date due	✓ Done
Monday 3rd				
Tuesday 4th				
Wednesday 5th				
Thursday 6th				
Friday 7th				
reminders				
Parent's comments		Teacher/Tutor comments		
Parent's signature:		Teacher/Tutor signature:		

13. Falling out with friends



This is a very common occurrence in Year 7 as children form new friendships and establish themselves in a new environment. Friendship issues can happen sporadically; however, if your child keeps falling out with their friends, a serious chat with them could uncover any issues which cause your child to behave this way. It might be that they are getting bullied or feel that they haven't got real friends - open and honest communication will be key in resolving these issues. Contact the school if you feel that your child is being bullied (see point 14).

If your child is having problems with their friends they can ask for help from the peer mentors, who will be there to help resolve their issues.

What is more, even though it can be very difficult, see the friendship situation for what it is. Children make mistakes just like adults - keep this in mind when judging the actions of your own child.



14. Bullying

If your child is worried about being bullied, the first rule is to reassure them that talking about it will bring help. Talk to them and establish whether what they call 'bullying' was not, in fact, a friendship issue or a silly squabble with a friend. If this is the case, your child should be able to resolve the situation themselves - they will develop a life skill of problem solving, working with people they might not like and dealing with uncomfortable situations.



If you feel that your child is being bullied:

- talk to them calmly about the incident
- try to persuade them to tell their form tutor or Head of Year, but if this appears impossible, contact the school yourself, preferably with your child's knowledge
- do not encourage retaliation

Bullying is:

"Behaviour by an individual or group, usually repeated over time that intentionally hurts another individual or group, either physically or emotionally."

(NHS)

In The Priory School we are committed to dealing with bullying sensitively, quickly and to a great benefit for students. Your child will also have five Year 10 peer mentors who they can talk to about dealing with friendship/bullying issues.

Good communication and trust will help us make The Priory School bully-free!

15. Cyber-bullying!



All students of The Priory School and their parents/carers must be aware that social networking sites can cause disruption to students' learning and their relationships with their peers.

Any cases of cyber-bullying or friendship issues emerging from social networking sites which take place outside of school should be addressed by you as parents/carers as soon as they occur to minimise negative impact on your child's wellbeing, happiness and achievement.

If you or your child feel threatened or are being targeted by cyber-bullies, you should contact the police and inform the school of the incidents so we can support you in the process.

If you allow your child to hold social networking sites' accounts you must accept the responsibility for dealing with any friendship issues and problems arising from such decision and you must ensure that your child's school experience is not put in jeopardy.

As a school, and with the support of our Police Community Support Officers, we strongly advise you that your child does not open or hold any social networking site accounts which can lead to cyber-bullying or friendship issues. Most social networking sites do not allow for children under thirteen years old to open accounts with them; for instance, the Facebook policy states that: "if you are under age 13, please do not attempt to register for Facebook or provide any personal information about yourself to us. If we learn that we have collected personal information from a child under age 13, we will delete that information as quickly as possible. If you believe that we might have any information from a child under age 13 please contact us through this help page" (Facebook.com)

Protecting your child from cyber-bullying

As with other types of bullying it's important for you to listen to your child and react with sympathy. Your child should know that bullying is always wrong and that seeking help is the right thing to do.

It's important for them to learn to respect and look after their friends online and to think before they post or text. To keep them safe, make sure you:

- encourage them to talk to you or another adult about anything that's upsetting them
- watch out for them seeming upset after using the internet or their mobile phone
- try to understand the ways in which they are using their digital technologies
- ask them to think about how their actions affect other users
- suggest that they only use moderated chat rooms
- encourage them to show you any abusive or offensive emails or messages they've received and keep a record of them
- help them report any abuse to their school, the internet service provider, the website manager/moderator, the mobile phone company or the police
- tell them never to respond to any abusive messages or calls - this is frequently what the abuser wants
- discuss keeping their passwords safe and avoiding giving their name, email address or mobile phone number to people outside their circle of friends and family
- change email address or telephone number if the abuse continues
- turn on in-built internet safety features and install computer software to ensure that you only receive emails from people you have chosen and to block unwanted images
- tell them about places where they can go for help and support like, ChildLine and Childnet International (<http://www.childnet-int.org/>)

<http://www.childline.org.uk/Explore/Bullying/Pages/online-bullying.aspx>

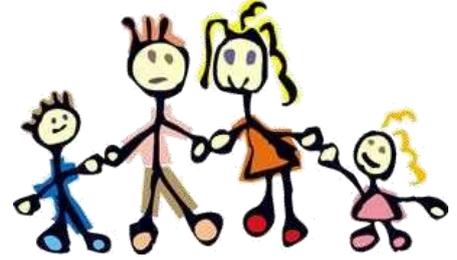


16. Getting involved in the school life

As a school in heart of the local community we would love for you to get actively involved in your child's education and the life of the school.

You might wish to:

- become a parent governor
- join the Parents' Voice Group
- join the Priory School Association
- support charity events



17. Events

During your child's time at The Priory School they will be involved in many extra-curricular activities: school clubs, trips, discos, charity fundraising events etc. If all goes according to the plan your child should experience the following events whilst in Year 7:

- Sponsored Read Week
- PSA Disco
- Natural History Museum Trip
- SEAL Day
- Enterprise Day
- Author's visit
- Maths in Motion
- RE Trip
- Careers' Morning
- English Writing Workshop
- STEM Day
- A residential trip
- Show Racism the Red Card Day
- English Masterclass
- Puzzle Day
- Summer Concert
- School Bank



18. Useful parenting contacts

Organisation	Telephone	Website
Hertfordshire's Family Information Service	01438 737502 / 0300 123 4052	www.hertsdirect.org/fsd
Oughton Children's Centre	01462666762	www.hertschildrenscentres.org.uk
Parent Line Plus	0808 800 2222	www.parentlineplus.org.uk ,
Advisory Centre for Education	0808 800 5793	www.ace-ed.org.uk
BBC Parent Support		www.bbc.co.uk/parenting/support_for_you
Hertsdirect		www.hertsdirect.org/caresupport/childfam
Direct Gov Parent		www.direct.gov.uk/en/Parents
Connexions Parent Support		www.connexions-direct.com/parentcarer
Practical Parenting		www.practicalparent.org.uk
Working Families		www.workingfamilies.org.uk
Parent Line Parent Courses	01462 707210	www.parentlineplus.org.uk
Protective Behaviours Course	01438 742742	www.protectivebehaviours.co.uk
ADD-vance Specialist Behavioural Coaching	01727 833963	www.add-vance.org
Home Start UK	0800 068 6368/ 01462 678 861	www.home-start.org.uk
Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)	08456 889897	www.citizensadvice.org.uk
North Herts Ethnic Minority Forum (NHEMF)	01462 440224	www.nhmf.org.uk



School Twitter: @TPS_Hitchin
Transition Twitter: @TPS_Transition



19. Literacy and Numeracy Guidance for Parents

If your child struggles with Literacy or Numeracy it is crucial that they get your support with developing their skills. Below are some suggestions for how you may support your child at home to help their learning and encourage their progress and boost their confidence.



Literacy



- Listen to your child read aloud and if they struggle with words, ask them to sound the word out
- Encourage your child to read aloud with expression to make the story come alive
- Listen to your child read aloud and ask them to explain to what they had read and select the best and worst parts. This helps to develop reading for meaning skills
- Encourage students to write a diary of their day and make sure they include capital letters and full stops in the correct places
- Read articles from the newspaper or magazines together and discuss the stories
- Look at images of different places that can be found on google images and ask them to suggest suitable words to describe the place. Encourage them to replace less interesting words with more exciting words
- Look through your child's exercise books and find the spellings they are frequently getting wrong. Encourage them to look at the spelling, spell it out loud, cover the word up and then write it out correctly. Do this three times for each word
- Take your child to the local library and let them choose their own reading material
- Write a letter to your child and expect a response - you could continue such correspondence for a while
- Organise an "in-house" competition for reading and writing a review
- Create a house newspaper with articles about each family member and include pictures
- Let your child write your shopping list or lists of tasks to do
- If you are going on holiday, celebrate birthdays, take part in religious festivities etc. ask your child to create a comic strip with the events of the day
- Create an alphabet for your child's room and display it
- If going on a family outing take a notepad and ask your child to write all new things they saw on that day and then check spellings at home



Numeracy

Here are some examples of how you can include mathematics at home:

Shopping

- Looking at prices
- Calculating change - which coins, different combinations.
- Weighing fruit and vegetables in the supermarket.
- Counting pocket money.
- Reading labels on bottles, packets, in order to discuss capacity, weight and shape.
- Estimating the final bill at the end of shopping while waiting at the check out.
- Calculating the cost of the family going to the cinema, swimming, holiday etc.



Calculator costs

- Use a calculator to find the cost of one sweet:

Clues:

Enter the cost of the packet of sweets on the calculator display, for example 35 (pence).

Press the divide \div button

Count the number of sweets in the packet, and enter this number on the calculator, for example 42 (sweets).

Press the equals = button

The answer is 0.833 (pence), which is less than 1p for each sweet.

- Now use your calculator to find the cost of:

One stick of chewing gum;

One finger of a chocolate bar;

One segment of a tangerine;

One mint; and so on.



Time

- Looking at the clock - identify the numbers telling the time using analogue and digital clocks.
- Calculating how long a journey will take looking at train/bus/airline timetables.
- Using TV guide to calculate the length of programmes.
- Programming the video or the microwave.
- Looking at the posting times on the post box.
- Discussing events in the day e.g. teatime, bed time, bath time.
- Setting an alarm clock.

