

# Preparing for School



Starting Year R



Ideas to support Children in Care



# Information, Guidance and Support

We all need a little information, support and advice from time to time.

Here are some helpful starting points for carers of children in care.

**Please remember your role as carer within the wider Team around child.**

**Please remember to seek support or approval for decisions relating to the child in your care from their social worker, as they may share legal parental responsibility.**

This guide is not a manual for all children, it is a starting point to help and assist with some common challenges. Not every child will need all of the suggestions / strategies listed.

Please remember, if you have any concerns you can seek advice from your child's pre-school, nursery, school, Social Worker, or the Virtual School.

Please be aware that the Early Years curriculum continues from pre-school / nursery into the reception year in school; so that much will be familiar and the same for children.



Starting school can be a very emotional time your child, remember to be positive in front of them.

Make sure you consider the needs of your child and what extra or additional support they may need.

You will want to make sure your child feels safe, secure and settled in the presence of new adults and other children.





# Summer Term

## before starting school

Find the photo gallery on the school website, have a good look at how the school works, who the staff are, and what your child might look forward to.

Attend any school preparation meetings to gather key information. Complete all forms, in consultation with the social worker, to share key information about your child.

School might ask you to contribute towards a Pupil Profile/Pupil Passport/This is Me.

Your child's social worker should include you in any multi professional meetings and you will have a valuable role within it communicating the day to day needs of your child.

Most schools have a short phased start to full time attendance. In some exceptional circumstances it might be appropriate that the child in your care has a longer phased start, this must be agreed between the school, social worker and Virtual school.

Consider asking for a photo card of all of the key adults who will keep your child safe. Make sure your child knows who to go to for help if they feel unwell, need reassurance or can't do something.

Consider asking school or pre-school to buddy with another appropriate peer / role model to establish a safe connection in advance of the transition.

Find out who the Designated Teacher (DT) for Children in Care is in the school, they will be the lead on the Personal Education Plans for your child.

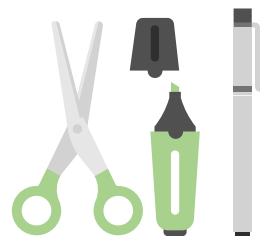


## Top Tips

*Support your child to feel safe, settled and secure by becoming familiar with school and surrounding environment.*

### Things that can help & assist:

- Arrange transition visits for your child to tour school site, meet key adults, meet peers, practice doing activities, practice lunch arrangements, use the toilets, be shown safe spaces, see coat peg, see lunch rack.
- Practise the route to school (using whatever method will be used i.e. walking, driving, bus). Making sure the arrangements are in place ready for any other transport if required.
- Become familiar with the environment around the school; walking around the school area so it feels safe and natural by the time they start (going to nearest shop / using the park nearby etc).
- Transition tasks/activities: endings at nursery/pre school, saying goodbye, sharing memory boxes and new beginnings at school.
- Transition plan to assess needs and plan for smooth transitions, including all relevant professionals involved with your child.
- Social Stories to prepare child for new adults, environments and situations.





# Summer Holidays

## before starting school

Rehearse and relay routine - 'I will be dropping you off every morning for school and picking you up after from this space'.

Prepare your child with messages that school is safe - being explicit 'this is your teacher, she will keep you safe'.

Buy uniform that is easy for the child to use independently i.e. Velcro and elasticated.

Encourage and support your child to tidy up after activities before moving on to another in readiness for doing this in school.

Establish a clear bedtime routine well in advance of your child starting school; be prepared for them to be very tired.

Having the child's name up around the house and encouraging name recognition (or initial) even if they can't write it.

All pupils in Reception, Year 1 and Year 2 in state-funded schools are eligible for the universal infant free school meals.

If your child will have packed lunches buy the box in advance and practise having these at home - only eating your own food, learning to open packets.

Find out what time the school lunch break is and try to have meals at around this time.

Build a positive relationship with books - visit libraries, share books regularly.

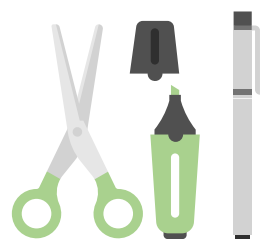


## Top Tips

*Support your child to feel safe, settled and secure by practising the many aspects of school life they will need to get used to.*

### Things that can help & assist:

- Practise using buttons, zips, doing up shoes etc before starting.
- Doing activities which develop pincer skills and hand/eye co-ordination - using tweezers to pick up objects, using pegs etc.
- Practise putting the school uniform on and off (day uniform and PE kit), allow your child to wear it so they start to feel comfortable.
- If they have one, share your child's social story regularly to allow them time to process, understand and be familiar with this.
- Practise toilet training, hand washing, wiping noses, and using cutlery.
- Practise putting coat on and off.
- Buy school water bottle in advance. Practise drinking water from this, especially if this isn't a usual thing in your house.
- Label uniform in advance with your child's name.
- Have a designated place for school shoes, uniform, bookbags and equipment make your kids stick to it! Then they are easy to find in the morning rush.
- Keep all letters and forms in the same place/drawer for easy access.





# Starting School

## First Term

Give your child a positive message at goodbye 'Have a great day, I'll be here waiting for you when you finish and you can tell me all about your day'.

After a busy day at school don't be surprised if you see an increase in unwanted behaviour when you get home.

Your child will likely be physically, mentally and emotionally exhausted from the day at school. Have a snack and drink ready for their return.

It maybe your child needs to just rest on the sofa and have a little nap when they get home. Or they might need to run around the garden and bounce on the trampoline.

Share information with the class teacher about when your child has contact with their birth family as this can affect their behaviour in school the next day.

You will be invited to a termly Personal Education Plan (PEP) meeting to review your child's needs and explore how there are getting on.

You will be asked to complete the carers section to contribute to the PEP.

Please ensure you plan your holidays in the school breaks, term-time holidays are not authorised absences.

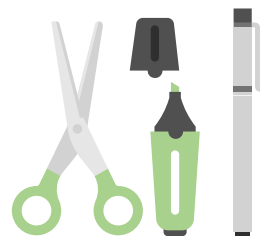


## Top Tips

*Support your child to feel safe, settled and secure by having established methods of regular communication with school*

### Things that can help & assist:

- Agree a communication method with school to share key information and updates at appropriate times and with the right people e.g. not in front of your child or other parents.
- Take time to build a relationship with school staff. A new school will bring new routines and expectations; it will take time for staff to get to know you and your child.
- Take photos of school letters and key info such as logins / homework to avoid losing key information.
- If there are significant issues or concerns these should be passed on to the child's social worker.
- Be prepared for the first day; have all uniform and equipment out and ready to go in advance.
- Don't forget to plan/prepare your goodbyes, drop off routine to ensure you leave as settled a child as possible.





# Suggested Reading & Resources



**Say Goodbye Say Hello** by Cori Doerrfeld

**Super Milly and the Super School Day** by Stephanie Clarkson

**Will You Be My Friend** by Sam McBratney & Anita Jerram

**A Little Bit Brave** by Nicola Kinnear

**Let's Get Ready for School** by Jane Porter

**Don't Worry Little Crab** by Chris Haughton

**Starting School** by Alan Ahlberg

**Topsy and Tim go to school** by Jean and Gareth Adamson

**I am too absolutely small for school** by Lauren Childs (Charlie and Lola)

**The Colour monster Starts School** by Anna Llenas

**Harry and the Dinosaurs Go to School** by Ian Whybrow

[Boris Starts School](#) by Carrie Weston & Tim Warnes

**Come to School too, Blue Kangaroo!** By Emma Chichester Clarke

[Hampshire County Council Ready for School](#)

[Portsmouth 10 Top Tips for Starting School](#)

**Comprehensive information on BBC Bite Size**

[Starting primary school - BBC Bitesize](#)

**TV Programmes found on YouTube and BBC iplayer**

Charlie and Lola – starting school

Topsy and Tim – starting school

[Lucy's First Day at School | Time for School Full Episode](#)

[Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom | Lucy's School | Cartoon for Kids](#)

**Read aloud stories on Youtube**

[Starting School By Janet Ahlberg and Allan Ahlberg](#)

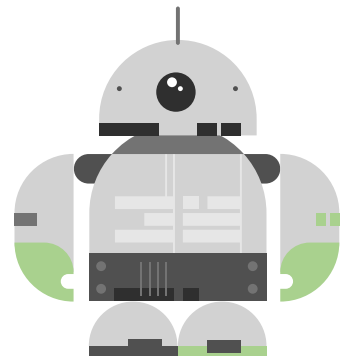
[AMELIA BEDILIA FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL | Amelia Bedelia Books for Kids | Children's Books Read Aloud](#)

[The First Day at School: Story Time - In The Book](#)

Please be aware some books and stories will use Mum/Dad, please check in advance any books/stories you might use.

**Have you tried this?**

Use read aloud stories / you tube stories as an alternative and positive way to introduce books and stories.





# Contact Details

For further support, advice and guidance please contact the virtual school from the child's placing Local Authority

## Southampton Virtual School



Virtual School Head: Maria Anderson  
Phone: 07721109951  
Email: [thevirtualschool@southampton.gov.uk](mailto:thevirtualschool@southampton.gov.uk)

Termly E-PEPs for all children in care and Local Authority Transition planning tool available.

## Portsmouth Virtual School



Virtual School Head: Tina Henley  
Phone: 02392 688641  
Email: [virtualschoolforlookedafterchildren@portsmouthcc.gov.uk](mailto:virtualschoolforlookedafterchildren@portsmouthcc.gov.uk)

[Portsmouth Virtual School and College - Portsmouth Education Partnership](#)

Termly E-PEPs for all children in care and transition planning completed for all school moves.

## Hampshire & Isle of Wight Virtual School



Virtual School Head: Nicola Blake  
Phone: 01962 835227  
Email: [virtualschool@hants.gov.uk](mailto:virtualschool@hants.gov.uk)



Virtual School Head: Nicola Blake  
Phone: 01983 814680  
Email: [virtual.school@iow.gov.uk](mailto:virtual.school@iow.gov.uk)

<https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/virtual-school>

Hants and IOW: Termly PEPs for all children in care and use the Hampshire Transition Partnership Agreement for transitions for children in care:  
<https://www.hants.gov.uk/educationandlearning/educationalpsychology/Transition>

