

At MHST we know that transition from Y6 to Y7 can be a daunting time. You are often moving from a relatively small school to a much bigger environment. Added to that there are new routines to learn, new classrooms to find and new teachers to work with.

The aim of this guide is to help with the wellbeing side of this change. Within this pack you will find resources we have created or come across which discuss different sides of making this move.

Where to start?

The Mental Health Foundation has published some guides on overcoming the nuts and bolts of making the move to secondary school.

The parent guide can be found [here](#)

The top tips for pupils can be found [here](#)

More top tips for parents can be found [here](#)

In this guide:

- Managing Worried and Making Friends
- Find Out More About Your School
- Confident Building and Resilience
- Peer Pressure
- Bullying
- About Me sheet
- Signposts for support.

Managing Worries



It is **completely normal and understandable to worry**, especially when approaching upcoming change & uncertainty such as moving to secondary school! Everybody worries - it is a very natural process and prepares our body to face new challenges!

It is important to learn ways to manage worries, to feel less overwhelmed by difficult feelings and to ensure they do not prevent you from taking positive steps and decisions.

The following pages are aimed to help you manage your worries about starting secondary school – and it is important to remember that **everybody will have these - you are not alone!**

Step 1: Acknowledge Your Worries & Feelings

*Write or draw your worries and anxious thoughts about starting secondary school in the bubbles!
You can circle or star the biggest ones! E.g. “I am worried about getting lost” or “I am worried about making new friends”.*

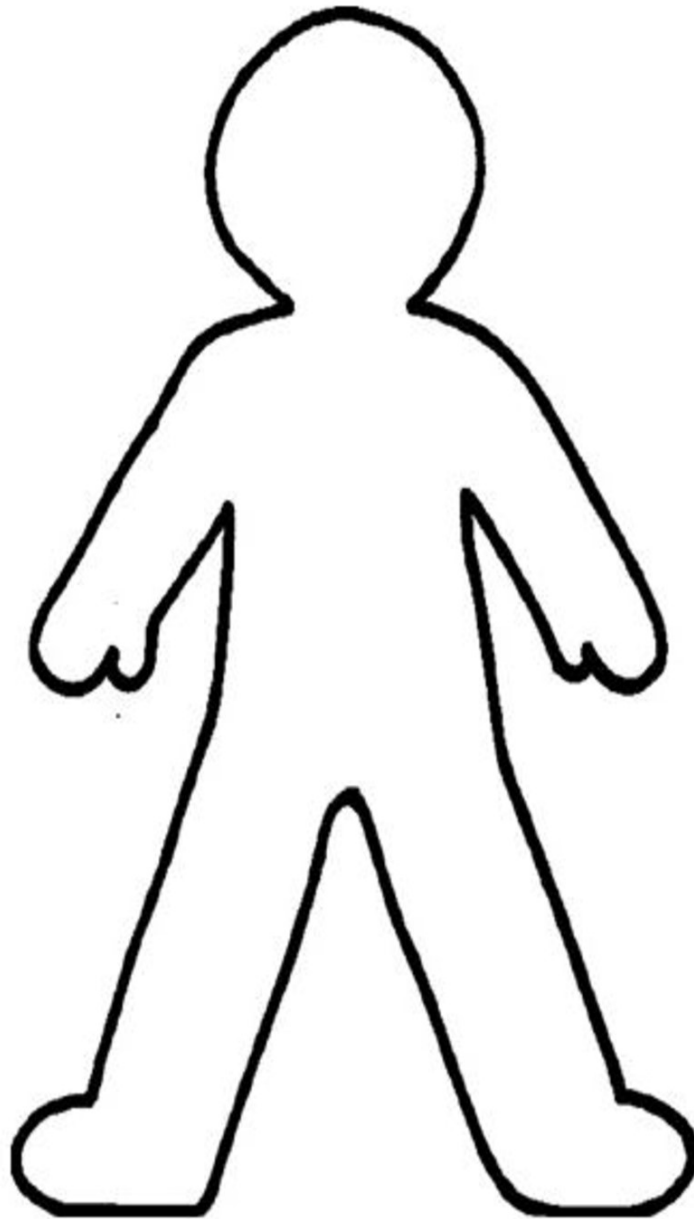


How Does Your Body Feel When You Worry?

In addition to being aware of your own specific worries, it is important to know how your body feels when you worry. This is so you can say “I am worrying” and respond in helpful ways to calm yourself and reduce anxiety. Everyone has a biological response to worry and anxiety, and this is perfectly normal.



Using the outline below, draw yourself, labelling any feelings/sensations you experience when you are worried. E.g. racing thoughts, butterflies in stomach, nauseous, sweating.



Step 2: Combat Worries and Difficult Feelings

It is important that we respond to our worries in a helpful way. Instead of trying to ignore or push worries and feelings away (which research says does not help), we identified and accepted we were experiencing them in Step 1. Step 2 is all about taking positive steps to help reduce them!

Helpful ways to Respond to Worries

Talk to someone you trust! Parents, teachers, siblings and friends will have useful advice and can provide support. Don't be afraid to ask for help!



Problem Solve! Are there any practical steps you can take to ease the worrying thought? E.g. if you are worried about getting lost, ask for and print out a map of the school.



NEGATIVE



POSITIVE

Challenge your worrying & sad thoughts as they are not reality!

- Is this thought helpful to me or not? How? Is it backed up by fact or is it fiction?
- What can I tell myself instead? What would I say to my best friend?

Ways to Respond to Difficult Emotions (e.g. feeling scared, nervous & anxious)

Relaxation & Mindfulness Exercises!

- Breathe! Simple breathing exercises relax your mind, body and calm any racing thoughts. E.g. *Breathe in for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds, breathe out for 4 seconds.*
[Calm Breathe Bubble](#) [Calm Toolbox by Childline](#)
- Practice living in the present moment. What can you do and appreciate today that will help how you are feeling? [What is Mindfulness Video](#) & [Everyday Mindfulness](#)
- Use your 5 senses to take notice of your environment when you are feeling overwhelmed. Find and describe 5 things you can see, 4 things you can feel, 3 things you can touch, 2 things you can hear and 1 thing you can taste!



Express your feelings!

- Voicing our concerns and feelings to a trusted person can really help. It's a great idea to chat with friends as they will be having the same sort of worries and you can support each other!
- Write down/Draw your thoughts and feelings on paper

Calm Your Emotions with Activities!

This could be going for a walk and exercising to release endorphins, reading a book, listening to music, playing a game with family, painting. Make your own [Stress Balls](#) & [Self Soothe Box!](#)

Brainstorm!

Write down some of the things that you can do to calm yourself down when you are feeling worried. Can you think of any strategies that would be particularly helpful for some of the worries you identified in Step 1?



Read my favourite book!



It is important to remember all the things you are excited about, so you are not just focussing on worries! Write down five things you are looking forward to!



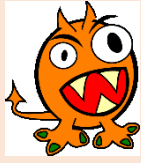
Things I am looking forward to...

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Step 3: Track & Manage Your Worries!

A great activity to identify your worries, feelings and helpful coping activities

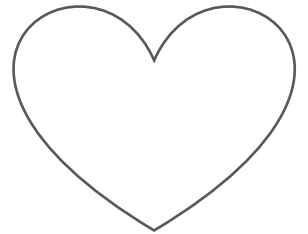
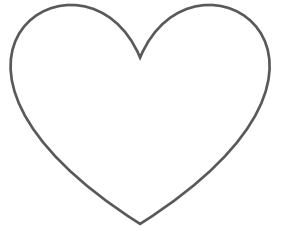
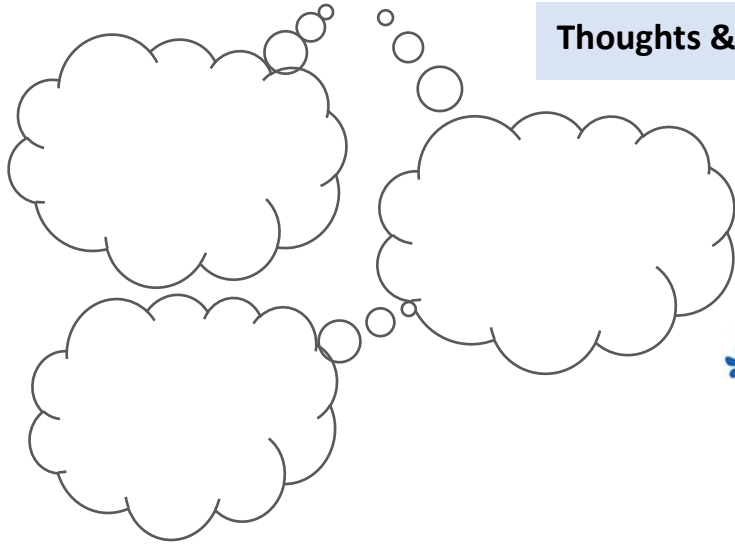
My Worry



Situation & Time



Thoughts & Feelings I am



How does My Body feel?



What Can I Do to Calm my Body Down?



Some Positive Thoughts to Help Calm Myself



Things within my control that I can do to prevent the worst outcome of my worry?



The things I did that helped me feel better



Making New Friends

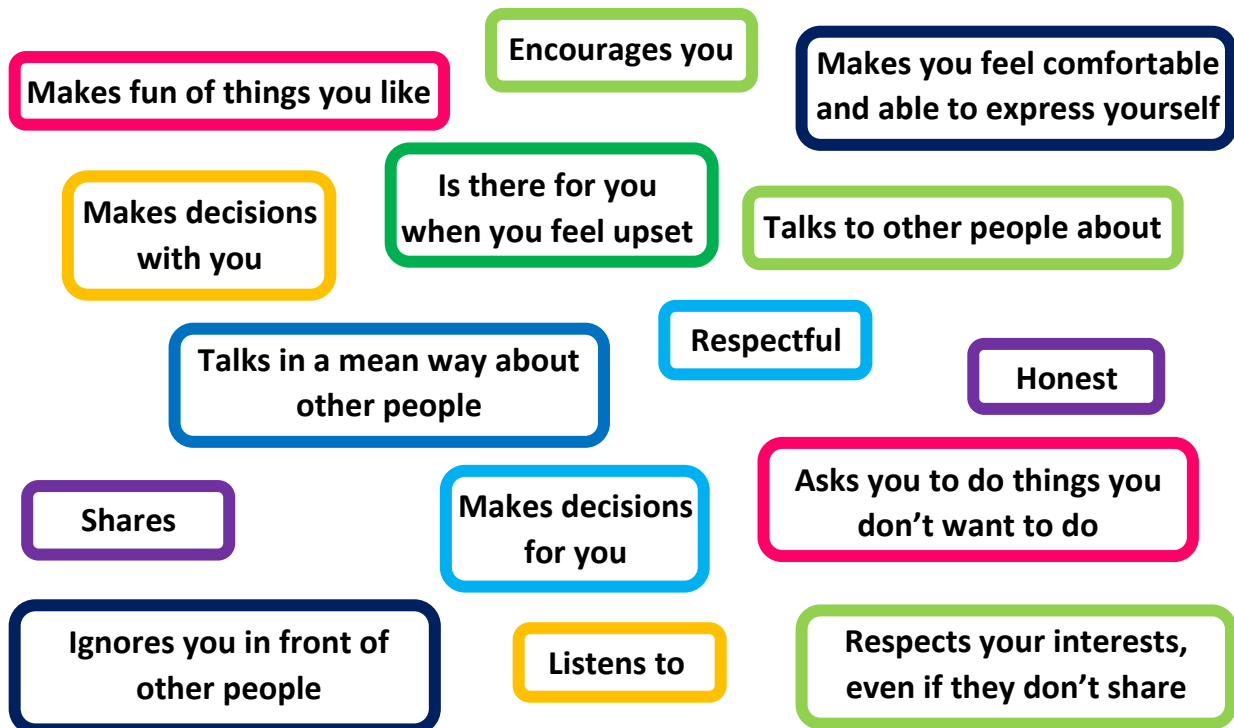
Starting secondary school can be an exciting but also scary time! Some may have friends going to the same school and others may know no one at all. However, whatever the situation, going to secondary school is a great opportunity to make or expand your friendship circle. Many of us struggle to talk to new people but meeting new people doesn't have to be scary. Have a look at some of our ideas to help you start building new friendships at school.

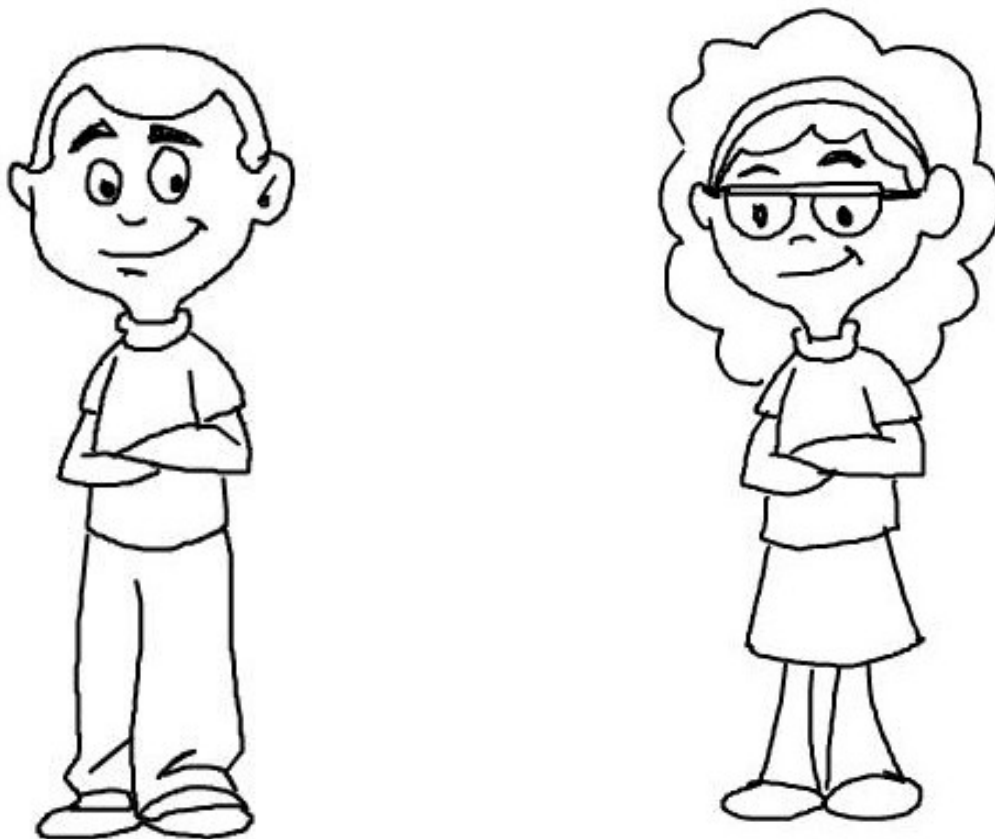
What makes a good friend?

The first step of making new friends at a new school is knowing what to look out for in a friend. The definition of a good friend varies from person to person, however there are some characteristics which many agree on that make a good friend; caring, respectful, honest. The main thing is to choose friends who make you feel comfortable and happy!

Activity

1. Look at the options below and label the pictures on the following page with what makes a good friend for you. See if you can add some things of your own.
2. Next, think about the options you haven't chosen – why wouldn't that quality make a good friend for you?





How to Make Friends

When it comes to introducing yourself and making new friends, asking people about themselves is a great way to start a conversation. It can be helpful to have some fun facts about yourself up your sleeve, just in case you are feeling nervous and forget what to say. You can also use these to start a conversation with someone else, for example, "I have four rabbits, do you have any pets?"

Write down three interesting facts about yourself:

1.

2.

3.

Top Ten Tips for Making Friends!



1. Be yourself!

You want to make friends who accept you just the way you are. Staying true to yourself will help you find people who appreciate you for who you are.

2. Ask questions

If you are not sure how to start a conversation with a new person, begin by asking them a question. You could try something like; “Did you understand this lesson?” or “How did you find the class?” or “Which school did you previously go to?”. Try and use open questions. These are questions which can’t be answered with “yes” or “no”. So, instead of “Did you have a good summer?”, ask “How was your summer?”.

3. Listen

Listening is an important part of any friendship whether it be a new or old friendship. Wait for others to finish speaking before you jump in and try and relate what you say to what they’ve just said. Make a mental note of things they’ve said so that you can follow up on the same topic the next time you see them.

4. Pay compliments

If you notice a classmate doing something well or wearing something you like, give them a quick compliment. People love to receive compliments and it will open the door to more conversations.

5. Join a club

One of the best ways to make new friends is joining a club or team. Try to find an activity or sport that you are interested in and see if your school has any clubs or teams you can join, this allows you to socialize.

6. Share a little about yourself

When meeting new friends its important you share a little about yourself. Try to balance out the conversation so you are each talking and listening about half the time.

7. Get together outside lessons

Once you've got to know a classmate, you might want to invite them to do something outside of class. See if they want to study with you or sit with you at lunch.

8. Speak to people who are on their own

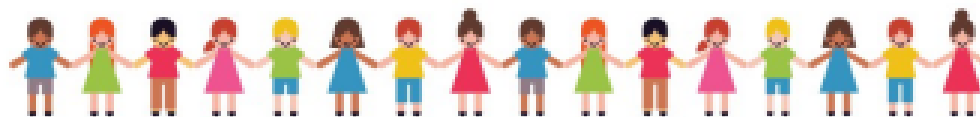
If you notice someone looks left out or is on their own, try and talk to them. They will probably appreciate your kindness, and you may even find you have things in common.

9. Use body language

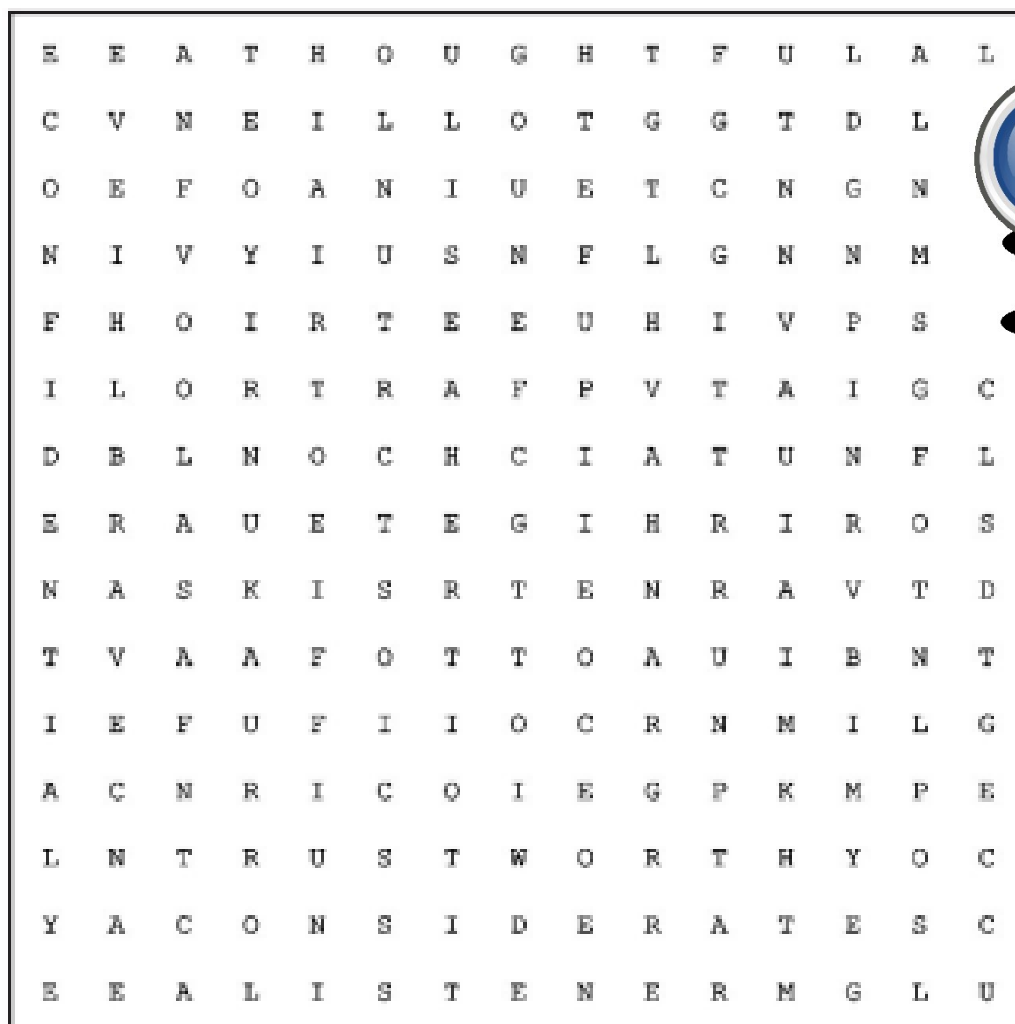
Body language is the way our body acts during a conversation and is an important communication tool that can tell people if you are interested in them. If you can, smile, nod and face towards the person you are talking to. People appreciate it when you are interested in them and this can help when making friends.

10. Stay positive!

Be friendly and be yourself but remember, making friends can take time! Try not to feel too downhearted if you find yourself feeling a bit lonely to start with. You will eventually find friends that make you happy.



FRIENDSHIP WORDSEARCH



WORDS TO FIND

brave
caring
communication
confidential
considerate

empathetic
faithful
forgiving
funny
generous

honest
inseparable
kind
listener
loving

loyal
protective
thoughtful
truthful
trustworthy

Find Out More!

What would you like to find out before starting secondary school? What do you think will help you prepare? *Think of 5 questions you would like to know the answer to!*

5 Things I Want to Find Out Are...

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.



Once You Have Found Out the Answers, Write Them Below!

1.

2.

3.

4.



Tips to Build Confidence!



Moving to a new school can feel intimidating – but you’re **more than capable of handling it!** If you need a little help feeling more confident then **don’t worry.**

Confidence is something that can be **learned** and **practiced** like any other skill! Here are **some tips** for you to try over the summer and when you start your new school to give you a boost so you can face this challenge **head on!**

Try new things that are out of your comfort zone as often as possible – this is how we build confidence! Try learning a new skill or hobby or help around the house with something you usually wouldn’t – the more things you try, the more you’ll see that you’re able to handle new things!

Walk tall – science shows that if you look confident, you’re more likely to feel it! Stand up straight with your shoulders back and your chin up, you’ll notice the difference very quickly.

Figure out what helps you to feel confident and stick with it! – it could be wearing a great outfit, playing an instrument well, listening to powerful music or being kind. Whatever it is, try to do it on your first day and other days when you feel nervous.

Achieve small and easy goals whenever you can – in order to achieve a big goal, it helps to practise with little ones. Start with easy habits or making a list of things you want to get done at the start of the day and stick to it! This helps you to get used to a busier routine and you feel accomplished when you get everything done!

Remember what you’re grateful for – think of or write down 3 things you are grateful for at the end of the day before bed. Science shows that people who practice daily gratitude feel more positive emotions and feel more confident!

Declutter your living space and get organised – this helps to declutter your mind too! If your environment is tidy and organised, then you’ll feel that way.

Be kind to others – science shows that kindness can decrease anxiety in social situations and help you to feel good. Spread some joy and put a smile on their face and yours!

Be kind to yourself and be patient – you’re experiencing a lot of new and big things right now, and there may be some challenges and some failure – but that’s ok! Remember to not be too hard on yourself and give yourself time to figure it out.



My Strengths and Achievements!



When we're going to be taking on a **new challenge** it's important to remember everything we've already **accomplished** and **overcome**. When we keep our strengths and achievements in mind then it helps us **feel stronger**! Remember that achievements don't have to be just **life milestones**, they can be when you finally understood a difficult maths problem, or when you made a new friend.

Complete the sentences below, if you can think of more than one thing then **that's fantastic**, the **more the better**!

I am good at...

Something I like about myself is...

My favourite hobby/activity is...

Something kind someone has said about me is...

I've helped someone by...

Something I couldn't do 5 years ago but I can do now is...

A challenge I've overcome is...

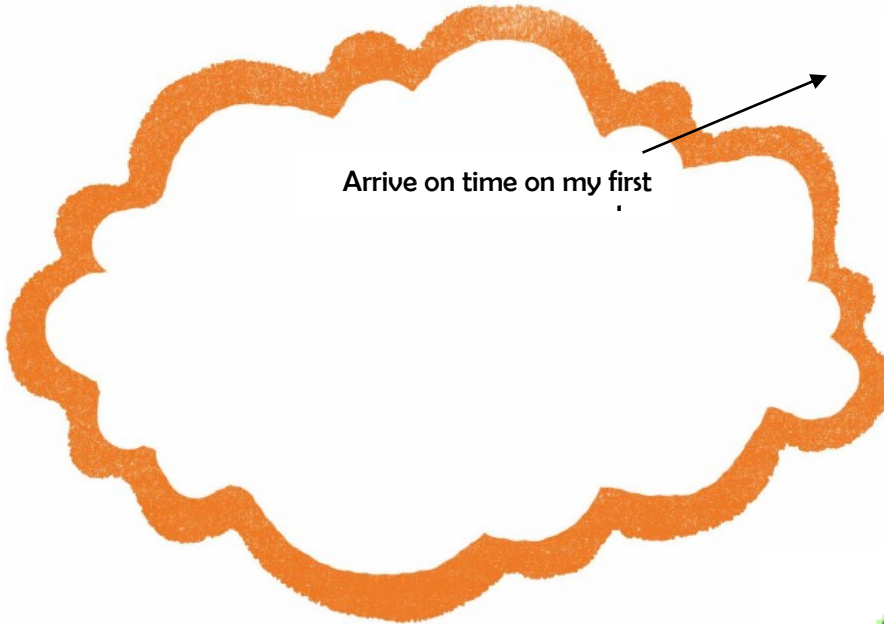
What makes me unique is...

I've also shown strength when...

Hope Clouds!



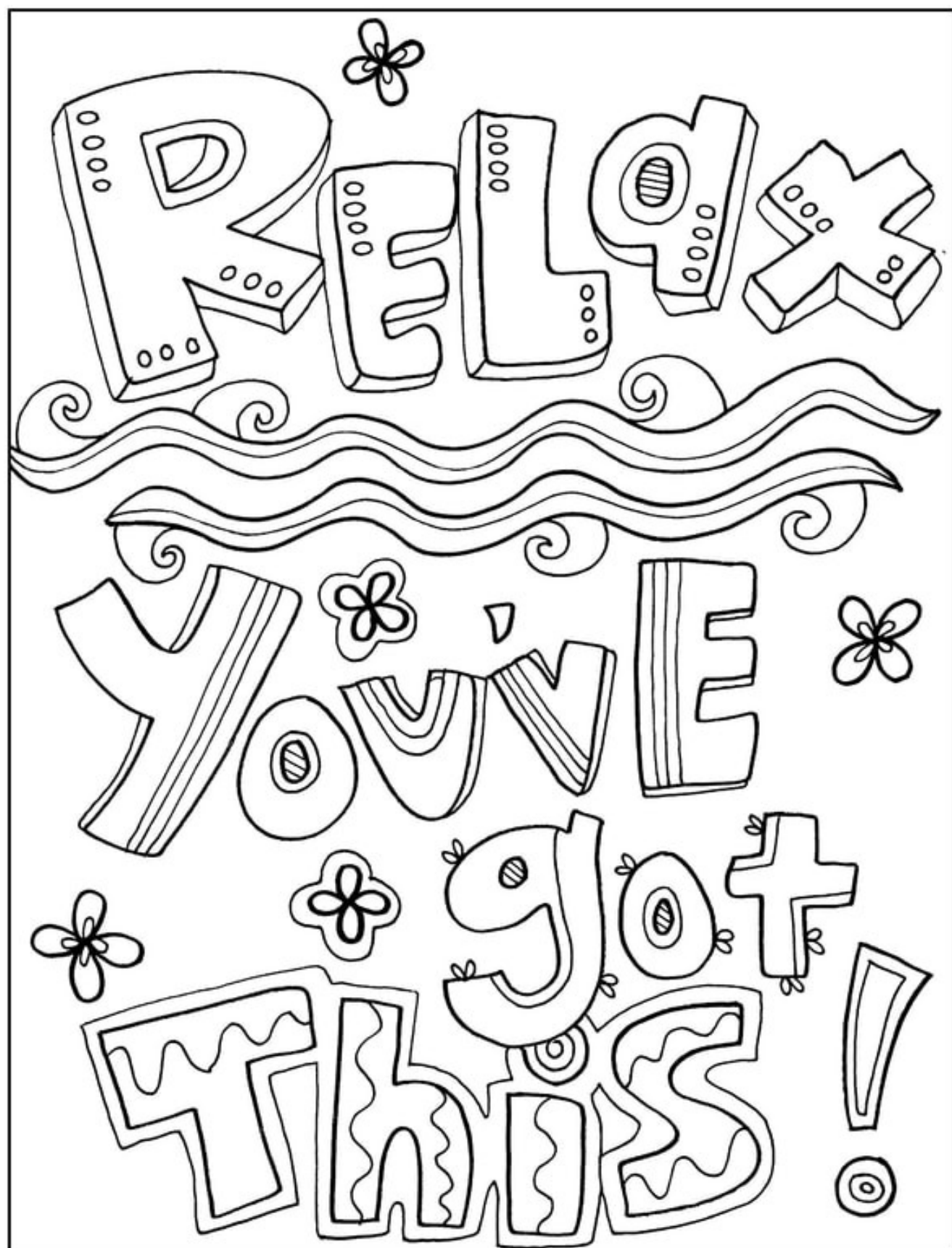
Think about your **dreams** and **hopes** for the next academic year. It might be something that you **want to change**, or something **new you want to try**. Write your hopes in the **clouds below** and try and write something that you can do to **get closer to your dream** outside the cloud! We've written an example for you:



Set my alarm so I have plenty of time and pack my bag the night before



Here is some colouring you can give a go!



DO Your
BEST and
Forget
THE Rest



My First Week!!

Here is a diary you can use to **keep track** of your first week at your new school. Coming home and writing about your day can help you **process everything** and to **relax** when your school day is over!

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
What happened					
What went well					
What I need help with					
How I'll get help					

Top Tips for Sleep!

Sleep is vital for us to feel **energized**, **capable** and **prepared** for the day ahead, as well as for keeping our **immune system healthy** and **reducing stress**. Going through a **big change** like attending a new school can take a lot out of us, so it's important to make sure we're **looking after ourselves**, so we have all the rest we need to **take on the day**! Here are some tips to help you get some **better sleep**!



Try to maintain a routine, if possible – keep normal wake and sleep times to reinforce your body's built-in sleep-wake cycle. Avoid long naps, especially in the afternoon, and limit lie-ins to the weekend. Try to stick to 7-9 hours of sleep for adults, 8-10 for teens and 9-11 for kids. A bedtime routine should begin one hour before your intended bedtime and could include: relaxing activities, reading a bedtime story, a warm bath and talking about your day and calming worries. Keeping up a nighttime ritual should influence your body-clock to learn a bedtime and for you to become sleepy in anticipation!

Get some sunlight – getting enough natural sunlight is so important for sleep. Opening all the curtains first thing and opening windows for 20 minutes will help you to get some fresh air and wake up in the morning. Try to spend at least 30 minutes each day in natural sunlight, particularly in the morning, to get a better night's sleep.

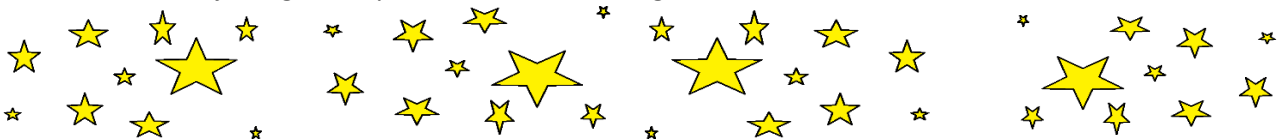
Look after your body – don't go to bed hungry or stuffed, and make sure to avoid heavy meals 2 hours before bed. Physical activity can also really benefit your sleep, and help to reduce stress and anxiety, although avoid exercise too close to bedtime!

Create a restful environment – the best conditions for sleep is a room that is cool, dark and quiet. Or you might benefit from a warm coloured nightlight. If you're struggling to create a suitable place for sleep then try using earplugs, a sleep mask, aromatherapy or playing relaxation/sleep sounds using a sleep app.

Put your day to bed before you go to bed – blue light from screens has been proven to disrupt sleep so switch them off one hour before bed. Do something that relaxes you to unwind before sleep, you could: dim the lights, have a warm bath, play calming music, read a book, or try some relaxation exercises! Avoid potential stressors before bed such as homework or arguments. If you don't fall asleep within 20 minutes then leave your room and do a relaxing activity until you're tired, tossing and turning for longer than this can increase stress and make you less likely to fall asleep!

Distract yourself – this can help to quiet your mind if you're feeling restless. Techniques you can try while in bed include: pick a category (e.g. blue things) and think of all the things you can for it, you can change category, or try thinking about good things that have happened or things you are grateful for during the past day or week. You could also try accepting your thoughts instead of fighting them, or by mouthing a meaningless word like "the" over and over to block out unwanted thoughts.

Quiet your mind – everyone does this differently, so find what works for you. Set your priorities and tackle tasks one step at a time. You could manage your worries before bed by chatting to a family member about what is on your mind before bed or jotting down your worries and setting them aside for tomorrow.



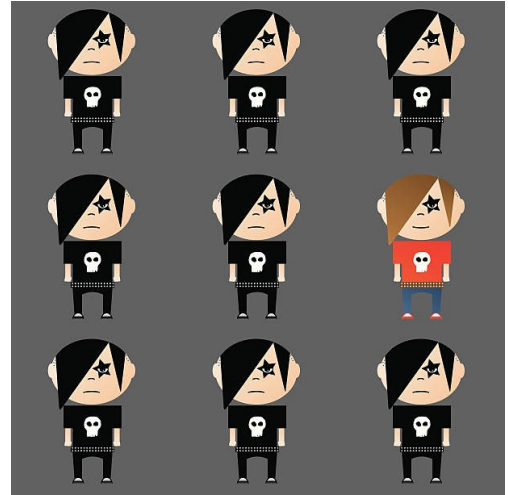
Peer Pressure

What is it?

Has a friend ever asked or expected you to do something, or influenced your decisions? **This is peer pressure.** Everyone faces peer pressure sometimes – this can be to do something, to be something, or to act in a certain way. Sometimes people will ask you to do something that makes you uncomfortable, and makes you act against your beliefs.

Peer pressure can also be less obvious. If you turn up to an event and you know everyone will be wearing the same clothes, you may well be tempted to do the same, even if no one has told you that you have to.

You might feel like you don't want to do something but you're afraid to say no because you're worried about being left out if you do. It's okay to feel like this, it's natural.



It's important to try to make friends as you go through life, to stay happy and healthy, but remember that good friends don't try to make you do things you don't feel comfortable doing - good friends help you to be the best you that you can be.

You might experience peer pressure to do something like...



Bullying someone

Acting or behaving differently

Missing lessons or homework

Looking a certain way

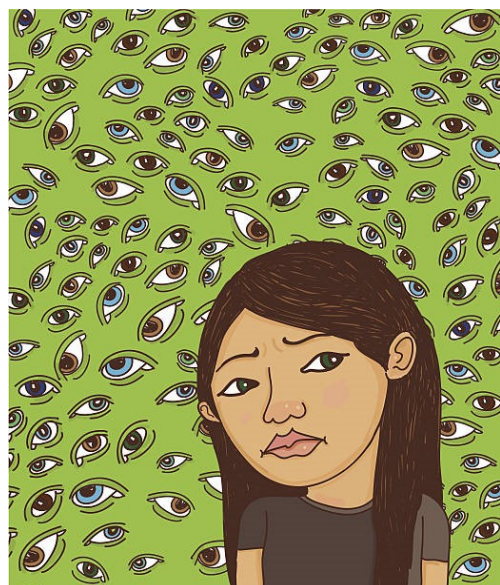
Getting into trouble at school

Sending messages online

Drinking alcohol or smoking

Stealing or shoplifting

Teasing or gossiping



Activity

Pick one of the examples of peer pressure from the blue box on the last page or think of one of your own. How would you feel and how would you respond if somebody tried to pressure you into doing one of these?

My example:

.....

How I would feel:

.....

How I would respond:

.....

.....

Ways to Respond to Peer Pressure

It can be difficult to say no to people sometimes, especially if you are with your friends and want to fit in, or if you feel scared, but it's okay to say it. In every situation there are different ways you can react, and these can help you take control of a situation and make you feel more comfortable.

Aggressive Communication

Being aggressive means intimidating or controlling others, becoming angry, speaking loudly, expressing your feelings only. When someone acts aggressively, they often interrupt others, do not listen, and make fun of, or criticise other people.

Passive Communication

Being passive means allowing others to get their way, not expressing your own opinions and needs, and going along with others even if you do not always feel comfortable.

Assertive Communication

Being assertive means being able to calmly and respectfully express what you need from somebody or how you are feeling while also considering others.

Example:

You've let your friend borrow your bike in the past and now they keep asking. They want to use it to meet another friend, but you really need your bike to get home.

Passive

response:

Sure... I'll just walk home...

Assertive response: I need my bike to get home so you can't borrow it today. Maybe you could meet your friend somewhere closer.

Aggressive

response: No way! I'm sick and tired of lending it to you! Besides, it's MINE!

Practice what you want to say ahead of time. Try writing it down to prepare yourself

Act calm and confident by standing up straight and not fidgeting

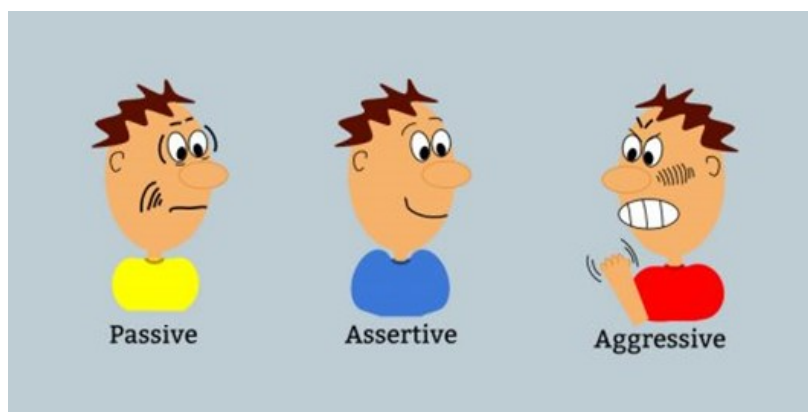
How to Say "No"

Say what you want, clearly and politely

Suggest something else to do

Walk away

Spend time with friends who have similar values and interests, and who will support you to stand up for yourself.



Activity

Look at the scenarios below, and try to think for each one:

- *What would you say/do if this was you?*
- *How would you feel?*
- *Can you give an example of a response that would be...*

Passive

Aggressive

Assertive

Scenario 1

Two of your friends have had an argument, and one of them tells you that you must not to talk to the other one. They say if you don't do what they say and exclude them, they will stop talking to you.

Scenario 2

You are walking to class when an older pupil tries to give you a mobile phone and tells you to put it in your bag because they don't want to get caught with it. They say if you don't, they will beat you up after school.


Scenario 3

One of your friends tells you they have stolen some cigarettes from a family member and asks you to try one. They say no one will find out if you do.


Scenario 4

You are with a group of friends and they start gossiping about someone outside your friendship group.


Remember...




**it's okay to say
no to things if
you don't feel
comfortable**



**you can make
your own
choices**



**there are lots of
ways to feel
more confident
about saying
how you feel**



**you can say no to
something and
still be accepted
and have friends**

Always think about keeping yourself safe – sometimes you might need to ask a trusted adult like a parent or teacher for help or advice.

- When you start a new school, you will have a lot of new experiences and meet a lot of new people.
- Remember that you've got to be your own person – your own boss!
- Try not to let people pressure you into doing things you don't think are right, or things you know aren't good for you.
- It's a cool life skill to be able to make difficult decisions for yourself, and to stick by them..

- The older you get, the more decisions you will have to make for yourself about the life you would like to have and the person you would like to be.
- This is great, because it makes you you – a unique individual.

For more information and support about peer pressure:

Childline

Call for free any time between 9am and midnight on 0800 1111 or use their online platform:

<https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/contacting-childline/>

...and take a look at their resources on peer pressure and being assertive. They're really useful!

<https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/feelings-emotions/being-assertive/>

YoungMinds

This is a great guide on coping with different pressures at school:

<https://youngminds.org.uk/media/1513/young-minds-coping-with-school.pdf>

SafetyNetKids

This short guide has some super helpful ways to stay cool when you face peer pressure:

<http://www.safetynetkids.org.uk/personal-safety/peer-pressure/>

BULLYING

When moving to secondary school, one of the main topics of worry is bullying. This does not mean it is going to happen, but it may be something that comes up in discussion.

Below are some suggested links to resources if you need them

Bullying Advice from Bullying.co.uk:

[Is Your Child Being Bullied?](#)

[How to Talk To Your Child About Bullying](#)

Some suggested resources on bullying support from Therapist Aid.

[How to deal with bullies:](#)

[What is bullying](#)



[Heads Together Anti Bullying Toolkit.](#)

My name is.....

.....

About Me!

I am years old

My Self Portrait:

Four words that describe me...

1.

2.

3.

4.

Some of my favourite things are...

•

•

•

•

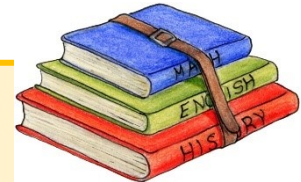
My Family & Friends Include:

My Primary School Is....



My Secondary School Is....

My Favourite subject(s)...



My Hobbies & Interests are...

My Hopes & Dreams are....



My best memories and highlights of primary school are...

What am I looking forward to at secondary school? *Starting secondary school is an exciting time. There will be new things to learn, new experiences and places to go, and new people to meet!*



Helplines and support

The move to secondary school can be daunting and challenging for everyone. It's almost certain your friends will feel the same and you can all support each other. Grown-ups and older pupils will remember how it felt too so there should be lots of people available to give you advice and support.

If you feel like you need additional support or would rather not tell your family/friends; here is a list of websites and helplines you can contact.

Anxiety UK: Support for those suffering with anxiety.

Helpline – 03444 775 774 / text service – 07537 416905/ Email – support@anxietyuk.org.uk

Bullying UK (part of family lives)

Helpline – 0808 800 2222/ Online forum – www.familylives.org.uk

Childline: Any issue children/ young people are facing

Helpline – 0800 1111 / www.childline.org.uk 1-2-1 counsellor chat

National Bullying Helpline: Advice and support for parents and young people

0845 2255 787

No Panic: Support for those who have panic attacks

Youth Helpline - 0330 606 1174 / Email - info@nopanic.org.uk

Young minds: Mental health and wellbeing support

Crisis messenger – Text YM to 85258

In addition to this the Mental Health Foundation also has a guide for transition to secondary school, you can find it here: <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/learning-disabilities/our-work/employment-education/moving-on-to-secondary-school>

There will always be staff available at school to support you too, the best people to speak to will be your form tutor, head of year, pastoral lead or school nurse. Your school might have a school counsellor available for you to talk to and they might have links to a Mental Health Support Team (MHST) who can provide additional support for transition. If the MHST works in your school, the designated mental health lead will be able to refer you to them or you can refer yourself <https://secureforms.oxfordhealth.nhs.uk/mhst>