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Starting at Carrington School

Tips for Parents and Students



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Getting there and back again

Key tasks for students

- ✓ Getting up on time
- ✓ Getting dressed, washed and ready to walk out of the door with everything you need for the school day ahead
- ✓ Leaving the house to get to the bus-stop or to school on time
- ✓ Getting on and off the bus at the right time and place
- ✓ Being in the right place at the right time at the end of school
- ✓ Going straight home unless alternative plans have been agreed with your parents or carers
- ✓ Knowing what to do if you are delayed for any reason (including keeping your phone on at agreed times)

Tips for parents: Before your child starts

- Invest time and effort in finding the best parental control app for your child's phone. They each offer a range of options for keeping your child safe, for example:
 - ➔ Location tracking (you have to agree with your child that they will keep their phone on at set times, for example after school until they are home)
 - ➔ The blocking of inappropriate content websites
 - ➔ The facility for viewing their deleted history.
 - ➔ An alert to parents if there are suspicious text messages, photos, etc.
- The blocking of social media at specific times
- Be sure your child is clear about what time they are expected to be home and what to do if they are held up for any reason
- Agree a routine for the mornings and after school
- Agree a bedtime for school days with your child that will ensure they get enough sleep. Teenagers and pre-teens need between eight and a half to nine and a half hours sleep a night. The science is clear that electronic devices at night interfere with sleep. Use a parental control App to block social media after a particular time
- Build their confidence and independence through a couple of practice morning runs
- Go through the routine regularly with your child If necessary provide a tick-list to help them

Uniform Matters

Key tasks for students

- ✓ Knowing (and keeping to) the school rules regarding uniform (including jewelry, piercings and make-up).
- ✓ Making sure everything is ready to put on the evening before (including shoes, socks and clean underwear).
- ✓ Making sure a full PE kit is taken or worn to school on the days it is needed.

Tips for parents: Before your child starts

- Check the uniform requirements including rules regarding make-up, piercings and jewelry
- Buy uniform items early, shops tend to run out mid – August
- Make sure your child has suitable school shoes and not wear trainers (PE only)
- Name everything, even shoes – you would not believe what children can lose at school! A permanent marker pen is as good as labels. Use silver on dark fabrics
- Have spares of all essentials at home if possible, it prevents panic when things get mislaid at 8.30am

Tips for parents: When they start

- Have a system for making sure that clothes are clean and ready – the earlier children start to take responsibility the better, but whoever does it, both parties need to know the system
- If your child is very disorganised check items one by one, or give a checklist at first. Hanging shelves can be used with one shelf for every school day
- Encourage your child to put everything out (including shoes, socks or tights, and underwear) the night before. There's much more time in the evening for finding odd socks
- If you have a timetable displayed for your child, colour the days when your child has PE so they can see each other if they need to take their PE kit

The New Timetable

Being in the right place at the right time

Key tasks for students

- ✓ Knowing what lessons take place, at what time, on a particular day
- ✓ Knowing where the classroom for each lesson is
- ✓ Knowing who the teacher is
- ✓ Understanding the timetable
- ✓ Arriving to lessons on time – especially after breaks

Tips for parents: When they start

- Become familiar with your child's timetable (it will usually be written in their paper planner or available on the App). Keep a paper copy (often given out at the Y6 Open Evening) on display so that you and your child can refer to it and make sure you and your child have a picture of it on your phones (where this is in line with school's mobile phone policy). In addition to any information on the App.
- Encourage your child to learn what lessons they have on which days so that they can become independent. Test them to see what they can remember! Make sure that looking at the next day's lessons becomes part of their routine. Check that they are looking at the correct week if a two-week timetable is used.
- Make sure your child knows what to do if they are late for lessons or get lost. Remind them that they can go to Reception or any of the Year hubs if they are lost, or ask for help. You can help them with a script, to use to explain what has happened if they are worried about explaining themselves.

Organising Books and Equipment

Key tasks for students

- ✓ Having a good system for keeping books and equipment
- ✓ Knowing what lessons there are on a particular day
- ✓ Knowing what equipment is needed for each lesson (e.g. ruler, highlighters, calculator, PE kit)
- ✓ Using the paper planner or App to record important notes and messages and to set reminders
- ✓ Having a bag packed with everything needed the night before, including snacks, drink etc.

Tips for parents: Before your child starts

- Help your child organize their living space so that they have a place for everything to do with school. Try to make sure they have access to a space for homework with good light and storage space for their school files and resources.
- Equip them with the tools they will need at home. A useful home @tool kit@ consists of:
 - Pens, pencils (blue, black, red, green) rubber, sharpener, felt tip pens, high lighters, ruler, math's equipment (protractor, calculator) glue stick, scissors.
- Have more than one item in pencil case

Tips for parents: When they start

- Teach a routine for making sure the school bag is emptied and checked each day
- Supervise the packing of the bag for the following day to begin with. Encourage the habit of having everything ready to walk out the door the next morning.
- If you know your child has D & T Food, Cooking and Nutrition on a certain day, and the school ask children to bring in ingredients, check what they need in plenty of time – searching through cupboards in the morning, ten minutes before the bus leaves is not be recommended!

Homework

Key tasks for students

- ✓ Knowing your “homework timetable” what homework you get and on which days
- ✓ Understanding how your planner (if you have one) and the homework App work and using them each day
- ✓ Making sure you double check the date which homework is due to be handed in
- ✓ Understanding exactly what you have to do and asking the teacher to explain or give more details if you are not sure what the task means
- ✓ Making sure you bring home everything you need to do the homework
- ✓ Working by yourself to complete tasks and spending the correct amount of time on each. Doing your best without someone standing over you!
- ✓ Asking for help if it is difficult, or you don't understand something
- ✓ Making sure your completed homework is submitted on the correct day

TIP: Try to do homework on the night it is set – not the night before it is due in (you may get three other homework tasks on that night)

Tips for parents: Before your child starts

- Agree a routine for homework with your child. Life can become a constant nag, if you don't start this from the beginning. Homework becomes an increasingly important part of the curriculum as your child goes through school – what he or she starts off doing is what they will do until they leave!
- A good time for homework is after a short break when your child returns from school.
- It is a good idea to agree with child from beginning that TV, phone time etc. will only be possible after homework is done. A social media blocker installed on your child's phone can be very useful for homework time. (see getting there and back again)
- If your child finds it tricky to motivate themselves, get them off to a good start by setting up a reward system. Use stickers or points which build up to a "menu" of rewards which are agreed with them.
- Never take stickers or points away – they have been earned even if your child has done something dreadful since! And remember, rewards don't have to be material things – staying up late or special time with mum or dad or shopping with friends can be just as motivating.

Tips for parents: When they start

- Spend time with your child in the first few weeks, establishing the routine.
- Help your child structure their time and use it usefully – encourage them to set an alarm or timer and agree the tasks that should be done in each e.g. half-hour period.
- If neither of you understands the task set, encourage your child to ring a friend in the same group, or use the App or email where appropriate to ask the teacher setting the task for clarification.
- Be very wary of excuses your child may use (see the list overleaf) They will accumulate many new ideas for excuses from their peers over the first few weeks and only will be genuine!
- Always ensure that your child still does the homework set as soon as the problem is sorted out. If you do this the first few times, the excuses will lessen but if they are successful in getting out of homework in this way to start with.

Excuses for not being able to do homework

"I don't need to do that, we did it in class"

"We had a supply teacher"

"My little sister poured her drink over the keyboard"

"The WI-FI went down"

"The electric went so I couldn't use the computer"

"I lost my password and couldn't log into the server"

"My mum had to use my computer for work"

"I left the stuff I need to do it at school"

"I'm going to do it with my friend on the bus/at break"

"I need to do it in the library – I'll do it lunchtime tomorrow"

Common problems and what to do about them

Falling out with friends

This is very common, as children from new friendships and new 'pecking orders' are established. Listen (endlessly) validate their feelings and give advice if it's asked for – but don't overreact – the tears and anger are normal and most friendship issues sort themselves out without adults getting involved. Contact the school if your child becomes anxious, miserable or severely withdrawn over this for more than a couple of weeks, or if you suspect that what is happening may be bullying.

Worrying about particular lessons or feeling picked on or disliked by certain teachers

Try to find out what it is exactly that your child is worried about or why they dislike a certain teacher or subject. If it is because the work is too hard (or too easy) try to spend some time working with them on the subject to check this out. It does take time for new teachers to find out an individual's strengths and weaknesses. Contact the school if your child continues to find the work too easy or too hard after half a term or so, or raise the issue at parents evening.

If it is because they feel 'picked on' it may be the teacher's individual style which your child is taking personally. It is a life-skill to learn that you won't get on with everyone you have to work with and a pragmatic approach is to be recommended.

Advise them to smile a lot at this teacher and see if it makes a difference! Make sure homework is done well for this subject. Do try not to run down the teacher in front of your child – this invariably makes the problem worse.

Contact your child's Tutor if the problem continues. Ask to meet with the teacher concerned if necessary and talk to them about the problem. Teachers are often not even aware there is a problem. You do not have to let your child know you have done this – they are often amazed by how 'nice' Mr X has suddenly become...

Strategies for dealing with anxiety

A degree of anxiety and stress is normal at a time of change. If you or your child feel that they are becoming too stressed, or that their anxiety is impacting on significant aspects of their life, you encourage them to talk about the underlying issues.

Pre-teens and teenagers often become prone to 'all or nothing' thinking, leading them to exaggerate the importance of incidents. This is because their emotions are so strong at this age, and their strategies for dealing with them so limited.

Try to find out exactly what is causing the problem by encouraging your child to talk about what happens in the class, what is it that someone has actually done or said that your child finds difficult. Don't minimize the feelings that your child is experiencing as this leads to the 'you just don't understand' response – accept that the feelings are real and that the problem to be resolved is one of finding a strategy they are happy with.

Some of the symptoms of stress are listed below. However, you know your child best so any marked changes in behavior are worth checking out, whether these involve uncharacteristic aggression, risk-taking or withdrawal and tearfulness.

Symptoms of Stress

- Difficulty getting to sleep or waking up
- Tiredness
- Poor appetite
- Loss of interest in things they used to enjoy
- Headaches and other unexplained aches and pains
- Irritability and frequent angry episodes

Talking to your child about anxiety might help. You could explain that anxiety might impact our bodies, our feelings, our thoughts and even our behaviors. Some of the ways that anxiety impacts on us are listed here.

Body/physical reactions

fast heartbeat, shallow quick breathing, chest pain, feeling sick, feeling fidgety, shaking, tense muscles, sweating, light-headedness.

Feelings

nervous, frightened, a sense of dread, panic, embarrassment, confusion, restlessness.

Thoughts

racing thoughts, constant worries, difficulty concentrating, imagining the worst.

Behaviors

avoidance of situations, people or places, unable to sit still, changes in appetite.

It might be helpful to tell your child

- ✓ **Anxiety is normal emotion** that we all experience from time to time.
- ✓ **Anxiety is an adaptive response** triggering the primitive fight, flight or freeze response which protects us from harm.
- ✓ **Anxiety is not harmful to you;** the physical symptoms are there to protect you.
- ✓ **Anxiety won't last forever,** it is temporary and will pass.

If your child is stressed or clearly very anxious, try to encourage them to notice and label their feelings, accept that they will pass and take time out away from work, doing something that they enjoy. Exercise promotes hormones that actively counter stress, so try to encourage this. Ensure your child eats well, and let them know that you are always there to li

Sample Day Planner

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
Before School					
Breakfast					
Bathroom					
Dressing					
Lunch (if packed)/drink/snack					
Check timetable and equipment needed in bag					
Leave house @ am					
Catch bus @ am					
After school					
Get changed Sort school uniform out					
Snack/drink (15 mins)					
Check planner/App for homework/notes					
Share messages/notifications with parents					
Do homework 1..... 2..... 3.....					
Check timetable for next day and pack resources needed					