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Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol
Aneurin Bevan
University Health Board

Home strategies to help with independent planning and organisation for Secondary School

- Try to establish and keep to a routine during the week – the more structure your child has, the easier it will be for them to cope. Where possible, give as much warning as you can of any changes to this routine, as this will give your child time to mentally and physically prepare & plan for the change, which will in turn help to reduce anxiety and stress.



- Place a large storage box in a prominent place near the front door. Encourage a routine where your child unpacks his school bag on return from school each day, placing items in the box. This way both of you will know where to find things, avoiding a last minute search.



- Use a timetable with your child. Place this in a visible location e.g. on the wall next to the storage box. You may need to modify the standard school timetable to make things more explicit for your child. Examples may include: Colour coding corresponding items – colour maths red on the timetable and place a red sticky dot on the maths book to indicate the connection; use a different colour for each subject. Under each main subject heading on the timetable, list the items required for that lesson e.g. maths book, calculator. Keep this as visually clear and simple as possible.



- Keep subject-related items in plastic wallets, colour-coded to link with your child's timetable, to help locate things more easily. A transparent pencil case will also help your child to locate the items needed without having to pull everything out.



- Encourage your child to routinely check the timetable each evening and pack his bag for the following day. Initially you may need to give support with this but the aim should be for your child to quickly take responsibility for his own belongings, planning and preparing independently. The same principle can be applied to school uniform, ensuring that everything is put out ready the night before; this will save time in the morning and promote your child's independence. (If your child's uniform includes a button fronted shirt, encourage him to undo only the top few buttons and slip it on / off over his head, for speed.)

- Place a small checklist on the inside of your child's school bag, to help remind him of the key things that he needs to bring home each day e.g. blazer, pencil case, glasses etc.



- Hand responsibility to your child for checking and adjusting their own appearance in a mirror, as part of their routine before leaving the house, rather than making any final adjustments to their appearance yourself. Only prompt them if they have missed something obvious.

- If possible, establish a clutter-free, distraction-free space, with a table and chair, for completing homework. The fewer the distractions and the more organised the space, the more likely your child will be to concentrate on the task in hand.

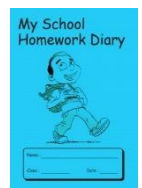


- Keep a spare pencil-case or desk-tidy at home, containing everything your child may need. That way, homework can still be completed even if he forgets to bring materials home. If using a desk-tidy, secure it to the work surface with 'blu-tac' to prevent it from being knocked over.

- Ask the school for assistance if your child is failing to write down homework tasks in time / legibly at the end of lessons. This will help to reduce stress-levels at home.



- Help your child to list and prioritise homework each evening, to space it out throughout the week, preventing 'melt-down'. Use a homework diary / planner and encourage your child to tick off each item as he completes it, so that he can take responsibility for his own work schedule.



- Always aim to promote your child's independence and reduce his dependence on adult support. Help to guide him to work through tasks himself, by asking questions rather than always providing an answer e.g. how do you think you could do that? What do you need to do first? How did you do that last time?