



New beginnings

Naomi Bartholomew, HEADMISTRESS AT ST CATHERINE'S PREPARATORY SCHOOL, ON EASING THE PRESSURE FOR THAT FIRST TERM OR FIRST DAY BACK

The start of the new academic year is always an exciting one, and one that brings targets for the coming term and a great deal of anticipation. Rather like the build-up to a birthday, the children will have been playing out in their minds what their new class, teachers and classmates will be like ahead of the term starting.

Beginning at nursery or Reception can be a tiring time as the children learn to settle, negotiate new relationships and

understand new routines. It may also be a tiring time for you as parents, too, possibly trying to figure out a new route for the school run, dropping siblings off elsewhere, understanding new routines yourself and perhaps even returning to work now that your child has settled into a certain age or stage.

As a rule, preparation is key, so help your child to be organised for school the night before so that drop-off can be swift – signing forms and looking over

homework in the car in the mornings can put your child on the back foot.

Most importantly, keep communicating with your child, and let teachers or nursery staff know if you have any concerns or questions as your little one settles into the new academic year. Here, I have included some tips which might help you as the term beds in and your child adjusts.

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STUDENT HANDBOOK

Help prepare your child for the new school year

NEW STARTERS

For parents of children starting at nursery or Reception classes this September:

Talk positively about going to school. This can be an anxious time for parents, and children can sense this, so be as calm as possible. Get your son or daughter excited about their **new adventure** and avoid mentioning that you are missing them during the day.

Encourage good habits and help them feel comfortable by arriving in good time at the start of each school day.

Make sure your child gets a **good night's sleep** every night, and **expect her to be tired**. Even if she has been used to full week of activities, starting at nursery or Reception is different.

Let your child tell you about their day in their own time. You are likely to want to hear the ins and outs, but avoid putting too much pressure on your child to tell you. They will tell you in their own way and staff will be trained to share any concerns they may have with you.

THE RETURNERS

For those older siblings starting in other year groups or at a new school, forming and re-establishing friendships can be at the forefront of their mind as the new term approaches. Share this advice with your child to encourage a positive start to the year:

Be proud of your hobbies and interests and you will no doubt find others who enjoy them, too.

Take this new part of the term to get to know other people and let them get to know you **having a wide circle of friends is important**.

Don't be afraid to start a conversation. Just a small comment, such as, "Hi, how are you today?" can create the **impression of friendliness**, even if you are feeling really nervous inside!

Remember, the other children around you will be feeling just like you, so don't be afraid to talk to others and **share how you are feeling**.

Talk to your teachers if you feel uncertain or unsure about anything going on in class or on the playground.