

Secondary School Transition

Some tips for parents



Moving to The McAuley Catholic High School is not only a big moment for your child. It is also a milestone in the lives of parents too. The anxiety felt by children is often felt even more acutely by their loved ones. I want to reassure you that we will take care of and nurture your child during their time at McAuley.

Listed below are a number of ideas that will help give your child confidence and encourage them to be more independent. This will help to make the transition to secondary school as smooth as possible

1) **Plan and run through the journey to school**, this might even include locking up the house before they leave if there is a chance she/he will be the last one to leave! I suggest doing this in stages.

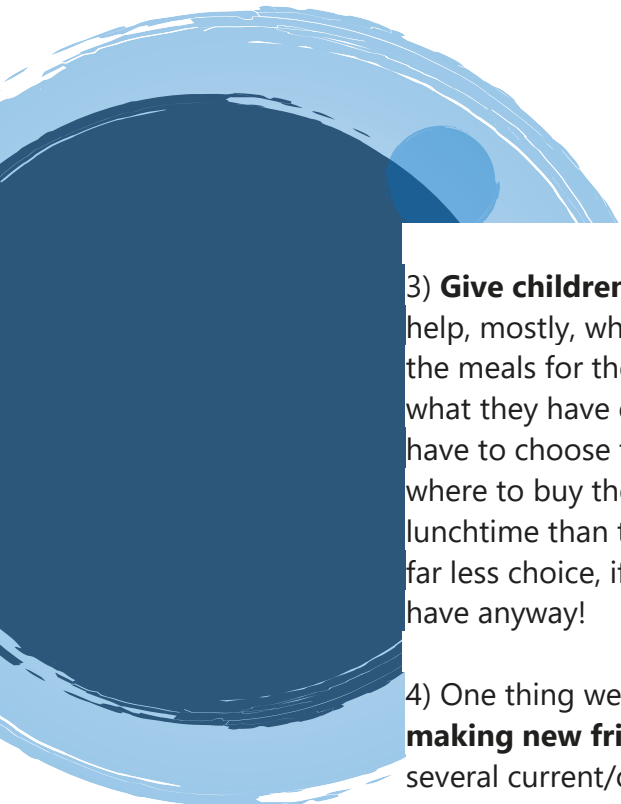
- It is also worth doing this journey backwards too, so travelling from school to home as well as home to school.

2) **Help with timekeeping.** Set little challenges.

- You have 30 mins to complete/partake in an activity (make this something they love to do), then you have to stop and move onto something new. This helps the children get used to being in the middle of an activity they love (replacing break time) and having to stop to move onto another activity (lessons)

- Time the journey to school. Ask the child to work out what time they need to leave the house, and then have them work out what time they need to wake up. This will help them be a little more aware of how long everyday activities take.

- In my experience, many pupils have always taken time for granted as they have never been in control of it themselves. By giving them the opportunity to take control early, this will help them with one of the many things they will have to get used to when starting secondary school



3) **Give children the opportunity to make choices**, but to make them fast! This will help, mostly, when it comes to lunchtimes. Many primary schools have systems where the meals for the week are decided before school even starts and the pupils collect what they have ordered. By the time they are at secondary school they will not only have to choose their food there and then, they may possibly need to even decide where to buy the food from and where to eat it, all of this in a much shorter lunchtime than they are used to! I understand that during Covid times there may be far less choice, if any, but making decisions at all, let alone fast is a good life skill to have anyway!

4) One thing we all fail to consider when it comes the changing schools is that **making new friends** is hard! Even for those children who are moving along with several current/old classmates, there may still be a period of time when they don't know anyone. Here are a couple of ways we can help children have the confidence to make new friends.

- If out in public, shopping, on public transport, at the library, in a cafe etc. Ask the child to be the one to do the talking. Let them deal with the shopkeeper when buying goods etc. We have spent years training children not to talk to strangers, now we need to show them how to talk to the appropriate ones!
 - Encourage them to play with other children in play areas. They don't have to stay long with them, but approaching a new child for the first time can be a challenge. If they are encouraged to do this the first few times with the safety net of their adults nearby, it will be easier to do it without once they get to school.
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