

Transitions: Moving up and moving on

Starting a new school year, or moving on to a new school altogether, is one of childhood's biggest milestones. It is exciting, sometimes a little nerve-wracking, and always full of possibility. These transitions are moments to celebrate growth while offering steady reassurance.

Children thrive on a sense of belonging, and the first few weeks of a new school year are all about building that feeling. Whether your child is returning to familiar corridors or stepping into a brand-new environment, the most powerful message they can hear at home is that change is normal and they are ready for it. A simple routine, talking about the day over dinner, laying out clothes the night before, or cycling the route to school together, helps anchor them during a time when everything else feels new.

For pupils moving into Year 5, the shift can feel especially significant. They are navigating buildings, new teachers, and a timetable that looks like a puzzle. Yet this is also the age when independence begins to bloom. Encouraging your child to take small steps - organising their own bag, checking their timetable, or arranging to meet a friend at the gate - builds confidence and reduces the overwhelm. Our Move-Up morning enables children to meet their new tutor, get a feel for what the new year will offer them, and ask questions of their new teachers.

Friendships play a huge role in how children experience transitions. Younger pupils may worry about whether they will be in the same class as their friends, while older ones might wonder how they will fit into new social groups. Remind them that friendships evolve, and that every new school year brings opportunities to meet people who share their interests - after-school activities are great places to start. If your child is unsure, you can explore options together and encourage them to try one new activity in the first month.

Emotions during transitions can be a mixture of excitement, nerves, curiosity and even frustration - all of these are normal, and giving children space to talk about these emotions is especially important. Open-ended prompts - "Tell me about the part you're most curious about" or "What felt tricky today?" - invite conversation without pressure. For older pupils, acknowledging their growing maturity, "You handled that really thoughtfully", reinforces their sense of capability.

Families can also support transitions by staying connected with school life. Reading the newsletter, attending Introduction to the School Year meetings, engaging with the SFPA and getting to know your Year Group Rep, help build a partnership that benefits your child. If concerns arise, early communication makes a world of difference. We want to work with families, and children feel more secure when they know the adults in their lives are on the same team.

Above all, transitions remind us that children are constantly growing. Each new school year is a fresh chapter; a chance to discover new interests, deepen friendships, and develop resilience. With encouragement at home and support at school, pupils of all ages can step forward with confidence, curiosity, and pride in how far they have already come.

If you would like to investigate ways to support your child further, you might find it helpful to explore how to support their emotional resilience.

Supporting your child's emotional resilience means helping them develop the inner strength to cope with challenges, recover from setbacks, and feel confident in who they are. The core idea is simple: resilience is not something children either have or do not have, it is a skill they build through everyday experiences, with steady support from the adults around them.

- **Strong relationships** — Children feel braver when they know they have a dependable base. Regular check-ins, shared routines, and moments of warmth help them feel secure enough to take risks and try new things.

- **Healthy coping strategies** — Naming feelings (“I can see you’re frustrated”) and modelling calm responses teaches children that emotions are manageable, not overwhelming.
- **Opportunities for independence** — Letting children solve small problems, make age-appropriate choices, or take responsibility for simple tasks builds confidence and a sense of capability.
- **Positive self-talk** — Encouraging phrases like “I can try again” or “I haven’t got it yet” help children shift from self-criticism to growth.
- **Predictable routines** — Structure reduces stress. When children know what to expect, they have more emotional energy to handle challenges.

Practical ways to support resilience at home

1. Normalise feelings: Let your child know that all emotions, excitement, worry, anger, disappointment, are part of being human. When you respond with calm curiosity rather than judgement, they learn that feelings aren’t dangerous.

2. Encourage problem-solving: Instead of fixing everything for them, guide them with prompts like: “What do you think might help?” or “What’s one small step you could take?” This builds a sense of agency.

3. Celebrate effort, not perfection: Praise persistence, creativity, kindness, and courage. When children believe success comes from effort, they are more willing to try again after setbacks.

4. Model resilience yourself: Children watch how adults handle stress. Saying things like, “I’m feeling overwhelmed, so I’m going to take a short break,” shows them what healthy coping looks like.

5. Build in rest and joy: Resilience isn’t only about bouncing back, it’s also about having enough emotional fuel. Time outdoors, unstructured play, hobbies, and sleep all strengthen wellbeing.

If your child is struggling

If your child seems unusually withdrawn, overwhelmed, or anxious for a prolonged period, it is important to stay connected and seek support from your child’s Tutor and the Pastoral team. Our School Counsellor, Amy, works to support children throughout their time at St Faith’s and can help to guide children who are finding transitions challenging. You are not expected to handle everything alone, and early conversations often make challenges easier to navigate.