

SEND Newsletter

Summer Term 2 (2023)



Welcome

Welcome to the **final** Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) newsletter for 22-23 academic year. As we fast approach the start of a new academic year, I wanted to share some tips with you for **'Back to School Success'**.

The transition back to school after a break can often present challenges, especially for children with SEND. Adjusting to the routine and structure, coping with new environments, changes in staff, and interacting with peers can sometimes feel overwhelming. It's important to remember that these feelings are normal and there are several strategies we can put in place to support our children during these times.

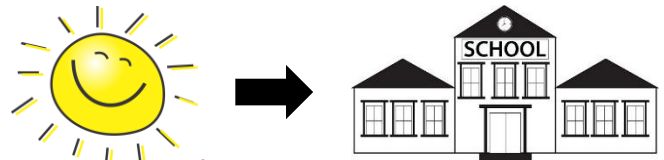
Emphasising the importance of preparation and routine is key. Clear expectations, structured routines, and a calm, supportive environment can go a long way in easing the transition. The school will provide the structure during the day, but a consistent morning and after-school routine at home can also significantly help children adjust.

In this newsletter, we will delve deeper into specific tips and strategies to ensure a successful transition back to school. This includes practical advice, resources, and strategies for overcoming common challenges.

Summer to School Transition

Gradual Adjustment of Sleep Schedules:

Summer often allows for more flexible sleep schedules, which can be challenging to shift back. It's important to start gradually adjusting bedtimes and wake-up times at in the days before school starts. This can be done by shifting the schedule in 15-minute increments each day until the desired school-year sleep schedule is reached. Regular and sufficient sleep is key to cognitive function and overall wellbeing, so helping your child get back into their school sleep routine can greatly aid their adjustment.



Reintroduction of Structured Routines:

Along with sleep schedules, daytime routines also need to shift back to the school year pattern. Gradually reintroduce structured activities into your child's day, such as set meal times, homework or reading time, and organised physical activities. Using visual schedules or charts can help children understand and anticipate the structure of their day.

Managing School-related Anxieties:

Anxiety about returning to school can be common among children (and adults!), especially those with SEND. It's important to acknowledge and validate your child's feelings and reassure them that it's normal to feel a bit nervous about starting a new school year. Use a positive and supportive tone when talking about school to create an optimistic view.

Preparing your child for what to expect can also ease their worries. Talk about their new timetable, where their classrooms will be, who their teachers will be and remind them of all the things familiar such as friends, routines etc. Reassure them about the support they will have at school, including reminding them of the support they will have from myself (Miss Rose – SENDCo) and our fabulous team of TAs.

Setting Routines

We recognise the significance of routine and consistency in providing a sense of security for all our pupils. As parents, you play a crucial role in establishing these routines. Here's a guide to help:

Morning Routines:

A well-planned morning can set the tone for the rest of the day. This can include waking up, getting dressed, brushing teeth, eating breakfast, and preparing for school. Depending on your child's needs, it might be beneficial to add in a short activity to help them wake up, such as a bit of light exercise or some quiet reading.

After-School Routines:

A consistent after-school routine is equally important. Allocate time for a snack, relaxation, homework, playtime, and organised activities. Be sure to incorporate breaks as well.

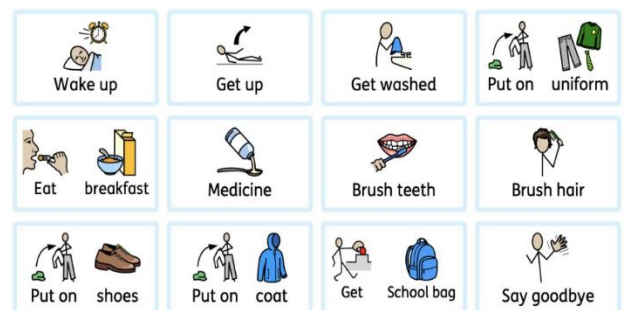
Bedtime Routines:

Establishing a calming bedtime routine can significantly help your child wind down and get a good night's sleep. This could include activities like taking a bath, brushing teeth, reading, or perhaps some relaxation exercises.

Visual Schedules:

Visual schedules can be particularly effective in helping children with SEND understand and follow routines. They provide a clear, visual representation of what to expect, reducing anxiety and improving independence.

Here is a basic template that you can customise according to your child's needs:



Creating a Supportive Learning Environment at Home

Establishing a conducive learning environment at home can significantly aid in your child's academic success and help instil a positive attitude towards learning and homework. We understand that this might be challenging if space is limited at home, but here are some suggestions that might help:

A Quiet and Organised Space:

Choose a quiet, well-lit area in your home that is dedicated to learning and homework. This area should be free from major distractions and should have all the necessary supplies, such as pencils, erasers, and paper. Organisation is key, so consider using trays or boxes to store materials. If your child prefers to work in different locations, create a portable homework kit that can move with them.

Distraction-Free:

In today's digital age, distractions are just a click away. It's important to establish rules around the use of electronics during homework time. For instance, devices like tablets and mobile phones can be put on silent or kept in another room. If a computer is needed for homework, make sure only the necessary tabs are open.

Consistent Rules about Homework Time:

Consistency is key when it comes to homework. Establishing a regular homework time can help your child develop a routine. This might be right after school, after a short break, or perhaps after dinner, depending on what works best for your child. During this time, ensure your child has your support if needed, but also encourage independent work as much as possible.

And finally...

Breaks:

Remember, everyone's concentration wanes after a while. Schedule in short breaks for your child during their homework time. A quick physical activity or a moment of relaxation can help rejuvenate the mind.



By creating a supportive learning environment at home, you're setting your child up for academic success and helping them build skills that will benefit them throughout their education.

Homework Strategies

Effective communication between home and school is crucial in supporting your homework can sometimes present a challenge! The strategies below aim to make this task more manageable and less stressful:

- ✓ **Breaking Tasks Down** – large tasks can be overwhelming. Break the task down into smaller, manageable parts. This can make the task seem less daunting and can also provide a clear roadmap to completion.
- ✓ **Use of timers** - Timers can be an excellent tool for managing homework time. For instance, your child could work for a set amount of time (like 5, 10 or 20 minutes), then take a short break before starting again. This can improve focus and productivity while ensuring that your child also gets essential breaks.
- ✓ **Reinforcing study skills** - Help your child develop key study skills. This might include note-taking, highlighting important information, using flashcards, or creating mind maps. Show them how to use their planner or a calendar.
- ✓ **Establish a regular homework routine** - this helps your child know what to expect and reduces resistance to starting homework. Make sure there is a quiet, comfortable, and well-lit place for your child to work.
- ✓ **Be available to help** - Let your child know that you are available for help if needed. However, encourage them to work independently as much as possible. Your role is to guide and support, not to do the homework for them.
- ✓ **Praise effort, not just achievement** - Praise your child for their effort, not just the end result. This fosters a growth mindset and motivates your child to keep trying, even when tasks are challenging.

Remember, the purpose of homework is to reinforce learning and develop independent study skills. If your child consistently struggles with homework, it may be worth discussing with their teacher. The school is here to support you and your child, and together we can find the best strategies to support their learning journey.

Communication with School

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Effective communication between home and school is crucial in supporting your child's educational journey, particularly for children with SEND. We are supportive, not only of your child's needs, but yours too.

The following are important:

- Keep communication open – we are not here to judge, we are here to support.
- Where possible, attend parents evenings and events.
- Share essential information – you know your child better than anyone and if you feel there is something that can inform our practice please do let us know.
- Regularly update the school about any changes at home that might affect your child's behaviour or learning at school. This can include changes in sleep patterns, medication, or family circumstances. This allows us to understand any changes in behaviour and adjust our approach accordingly.



Please remember that we are partners in this journey. Our shared goal is to ensure your child feels safe, supported, and capable of achieving their best at school. Let's keep talking, sharing, and working together for the benefit of our children.

Don't hesitate to reach out to me, as the SENCo, if you have any concerns or questions. Remember, no concern is too small if it impacts your child's wellbeing or ability to learn.

You can contact me via the school office (01384 818445) or by email: jrose@ridgewood.dudley.sch.uk

Building Resilience

Effective communication between home and school is crucial in supporting Resilience, the ability to cope with life's ups and downs, is an essential skill for all children.

Here are some ways you can help your child build resilience:

- **Model Resilience** - Model how to handle stress in a healthy way. Show them that it's okay to experience disappointment or frustration, and then demonstrate positive ways to manage these emotions.
- **Teach Problem-Solving Skills** - Encourage your child to come up with solutions when they face a challenge. You can guide them through the process at first, helping them identify the problem, brainstorm potential solutions, decide on a course of action, and then reflect on the results. Over time, they'll start to use these skills independently.
- **Foster a Positive Self-Concept** - Help your child recognise their strengths and abilities. Regularly remind them of their successes, no matter how small, and encourage them to take pride in these achievements.
- **Encourage Healthy Risk-Taking** - Encourage your child take on manageable challenges. This might mean trying out for a team, joining a club, or taking on a difficult project. These challenges can build strength and resilience, even if they don't always result in success.
- **Teach Coping Strategies** - Equip your child with a range of coping strategies they can use when they're feeling overwhelmed. This could include calming techniques, like deep breathing or mindfulness exercises, physical activities, or talking things out.
- **Maintain Open Communication** - Keep the lines of communication open with your child. Encourage them to share their feelings and concerns, and validate their emotions. Let them know it's okay to ask for help when they need it.

Building resilience is a lifelong process, but by teaching these skills early, you can set your child up for a stronger, more resilient future.