



Wycliffe

How to Move Schools Successfully



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Moving Your Child's School

Many children move school at some point in their life; in fact, it is actually more common than you think. It's natural for children to change school when they reach a certain age whether that be going from Infant to Junior school or from Primary to Secondary school. However, children may have to change schools at other points too for a number of reasons – both emotionally and practically. Whatever the reason, moving school can be an emotional time for children and it's important that the transition to a new school is handled correctly to minimise stress and disruption. In order to help you, we have created this guide which explores exactly what steps to take in order to move your child successfully including the potential pitfalls of moving your child and how you can look after your child's well-being as they move to ensure a positive experience for all involved.





Reasons to Change School

There are a number of reasons you may have to move your child to a new school and the reasons largely fall into the following categories.

FAMILY LIFE

- Relocating for a job or to be closer to family and friends
- Moving so all your children can be at the same school or within the same area
- Changing schools as places have opened up at the preferred school you may have previously missed out on
- You're in the Forces and have been deployed to a new area
- Financial – your circumstances may have changed, and you may not be able to afford to send your child to their current school

**1 in 4
parents**

of school-age children buy or rent a property in the catchment area of their preferred school.

SCHOOL LIFE

- The current school does not fulfil your child's needs – this may be due to a lack of extra-curricular activities or lack of support with learning
- Your child is no longer developing or progressing
- Bullying at current school
- Safe-guarding issues
- Your child is generally unhappy



HAS COVID-19 MADE YOU THINK ABOUT RE-LOCATING?

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed people's needs, behaviours, habits and lifestyles. With increased working from home and this now being more normal, it's predicted that even when people can start returning to the workplace; less people will¹ with either a hybrid approach being taken (a blend between office and home working), or employees shifting to working from home permanently. Due to this shift, this has caused

people to think about where they will call 'home' in the future with less of need to be living as close to big cities such as London or Birmingham. In fact, in recent data from Rightmove, there was a 126% increase in people looking at properties in village locations compared to the previous year² while the desire for green space has been cited as one of the main reasons for moving; **escaping to the country seems more attractive than ever before.**

While re-locating may seem attractive, if you have children though; it's important to think about how a move which is likely to involve changing schools will affect them.

Important Considerations to Think About

Whatever the reason is that you are moving, there are some important considerations you have to think about before you make a decision.

Moving a child can be unsettling and while it may be unavoidable in some cases, from the emotional perspective it's important to think about how to minimise the worries your child or children may have.

- The timing of moving school - this may be out of your control, but it can be useful to move in the Summer Term to establish friendships before the long holiday and new academic year.
- What your child is leaving behind – friendships that have been formed and the clubs that he/she is involved in, both in and out of school.
- The academic curriculum, teaching styles and rules are likely to vary at a new school and your child may find it challenging to adapt.
- Getting to know new peers and teachers can take time.
- Is your child more introverted? It may be more difficult to new friendships if so.
- Consider how a move will work for your whole family; children of different ages will react to changes differently. Will a move mean all your children have to change schools? How will a move affect your work-life balance?

Consider how a
move will work for
your

family
life



¹ <https://theconversation.com/five-charts-that-reveal-how-remote-working-could-change-the-uk-154418>

² <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/sep/26/escape-country-covid-exodus-britain-cities-pandemic-urban-green-space>



How Does Changing Schools Affect Children?

Moving school can bring about a **range of emotions** – both positive and negative. If your child has been at the same school for some time, you are taking them out of a place where they are stable and comfortable and therefore, they are likely to be anxious when making the switch. Other emotions such as excitement, fear, happiness and sadness can be exhibited too.

POSITIVE BENEFITS OF MOVING SCHOOLS

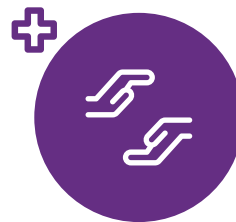
Remember, while there is likely to be consequences of moving schools; the positive benefits could outweigh the negatives.



Helps children to develop and progress



New relationships and friendships formed



Helps children adapt to change
– a skill that is beneficial in later life



Happier, more engaged children



A new school = new opportunities
– New opportunities for extra-curricular activities, pursuit of interests and subjects



A life-long enjoyment of learning



Better academic results



Making the Move Successfully

INVOLVE YOUR CHILDREN IN THE PROCESS

Whether for family or school-related reasons, if you are considering moving your child to a new school talk to them about it as soon as possible.

- **Be honest about the situation**
- **Highlight the positives**
- **Listen and address concerns your child or children may have**
- **Involve them in shortlisting potential new schools**

Moving can be both exciting and scary at the same time. Children can be ready for the adventure and also incredibly nervous about it. They could be happy to make new friends and yet sad to say goodbye to old ones. Moving can be a very abstract concept for children...as is time.

Remind them it's okay to feel all the feelings. They don't have to be just happy or just sad. They can be both. And it's also okay for their feelings to change and fluctuate.

Remind them it's
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Choosing the Right School

Finding the right school for your child is key to making sure the move is a positive one. Depending on the reasons why a move is being considered you may want to think about the following when choosing the right school:

- ✓ Location of school
- ✓ Is there support available for children with learning challenges?
Or a programme to challenge more academically able children?
- ✓ Subjects available to pupils – this is especially key if your child is moving during GCSE years from Year 9-11 as it's important that there is continuity. Not all schools offer the same choice of subjects.
- ✓ The extra-curricular activities provision – does the school offer a range of activities such as Sports, Music, Performing Arts and Art?
- ✓ Teaching Style
- ✓ What are the class sizes?
- ✓ Costs involved in moving your child to a new school
- ✓ What pastoral care and well-being programmes are in place
- ✓ Do you need a school that offers boarding?
- ✓ The academic results
- ✓ Look at previous years' Inspection reports (either by the ISC or OFSTED)
- ✓ Are there good reviews online and from other parents?
- ✓ Talk to other parents and children who have moved schools to find out about their experiences
- ✓ Do they offer wraparound care?
- ✓ The Uniform



Once you have weighed up all the options and what is important to you and your family, it is helpful to shortlist all the schools you are interested in to decide on the right one for your family. Visit your shortlisted schools with your child(ren) to get a good feel for them prior to applying.

WHEN TO MOVE SCHOOLS

There's no right time to move schools and all ages can be affected by change. However, you can choose to move at natural transition points that can help to minimise disruption to education.

Between Academic Years Between School Terms

While it's not always possible to move your child at these times, a good school should help to make the transition as smooth and stress-free as possible whether that be through offering 1-2-1 teaching or additional homework to catch up on teaching that may have been missed.

Don't forget that moving your child in their GCSE years can be problematic as schools can start coursework in Year 9 and Year 10 and, the subjects your child wants to study are not always available at every school. In addition, the new school may follow a different syllabus or have taught the subject topics in a different order so speak to your proposed new school right from the start about this.

HOW TO MAKE THE MOVE

The application process can vary depending on whether you opt for a state or independent school. If choosing an independent school, consult directly with the Admissions Manager (sometimes call the Registrar) as the process will differ between schools.

For state schools, application is classed as in-year admission. The process to change schools can vary between counties so it is best to check with your local council on the process. More information can be found on the [UK Government website](https://www.gov.uk).



BEFORE YOU MOVE

Your child may be anxious about leaving their old life behind especially if re-locating 100 miles from where they currently are! This could involve leaving behind best friends and next-door neighbours so here are some suggestions of things you can do to make the experience a positive and exciting one.



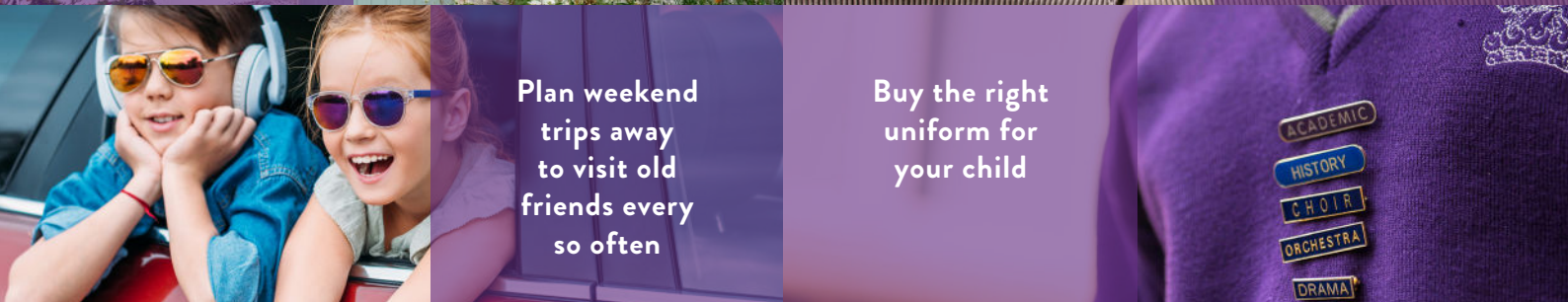
Make a journal highlighting good memories from your child's old school

Make a contact list so your child can stay in touch with old friends



Share your new home address with old friends

Plan a farewell gathering on Zoom or in person!



Plan weekend trips away to visit old friends every so often

Buy the right uniform for your child

In the age of digital and social media, remind your child that there will always be plenty of opportunity to stay in touch with old friends and that going to a new school doesn't mean forgetting about them – it just means an opportunity to make even more new friends!

Helping Your Child Settle in at a New School

The first few days at a new school can be daunting for a child but they can be made much easier with a few simple tips...

- Visit the new school in the days before your child starts so they can become used to the new environment
- Book a Taster Day with your new school whereby your child can come in and spend the day with their new year group and 'be buddied' prior to starting properly
- Be actively involved in your child's education by talking to them about their day and the work they are doing
- Talk to their teachers about their progress and how they are settling in
- Encourage your child to talk about any worries or concerns as they get used to their new school
- Encourage your child to join in with the extra-curricular activities on offer as a way to make new friends

In addition to supporting your child in the ways you can, choosing a quality school where children are supported, and well-being is looked after can help to make the transition easier.

Talk to their teachers

about their
progress and how
they are settling
in



Starting a New School

- A CHECKLIST

Starting a new school or changing to a different school can be a daunting prospect for children. There are numerous reasons as to why a child may change schools from moving house to being unhappy with their current school. Whatever the reason, to ensure the change is a positive one, we have put together this helpful checklist with all the things you may want to think about doing when starting a new school.

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| Ask the school for the name of any Parent Reps for their year group | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Find out the name of your child's teachers and other staff prior to starting | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| See if the new school can offer a taster day/night so your child can meet their teachers and peers | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| If your child is boarding, request the name of the Housemaster/mistress/tutor prior starting | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| If you cannot attend the school directly in person, see if the School can provide a virtual tour | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Find out what IT is required by the school and if they can provide it or have it delivered to them prior to starting to upload any school specific software | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Look at the school's website for any extra-curricular activities you might like to find out about or try | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Work out how your child will travel to school each day. Do a trial run of the route they will take or find out if the school offers transport options such as minibuses | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Check the arrangements for the first day – both drop off and pick up | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Be aware of the mobile phone policy so your child knows what to do | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Review the uniform policy and make sure your child has enough of the correct uniform (including type of socks or tights, shoe options and what make-up/ jewellery/hair accessories are allowed) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Ask the school of the name of any sports/activity clubs that pupils from the school tend to go to outside school time. This is a great way for children to socialise and integrate with other peers | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Try not to get embroiled in large social media platforms before you start at the school | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| As your child starts at their new school, regularly talk to their teachers about their progress and how they are settling in | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Encourage conversation between your child and yourself to address any worries/ concerns they may have | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

Relocating & Moving Schools

- A CHECKLIST

Moving your life and your children to a new location can have further considerations you may want to think about. If moving to an entirely new place, your child is probably going to be leaving a lot more behind than maybe just moving down the road. Moving schools and area can be a great thing for children when done in the proper way. Use this checklist to tick off what steps you have taken to ensure you relocate and move schools the right way.

- | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Think about why you are considering changing your child's schools and the potential implications for the move | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Involve your child(ren) early on in the process by talking to them to highlight the positives and address the concerns they may have | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Explore options for a new school | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Shortlist your preferred schools taking into consideration what will suit your family life | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Visit your shortlisted schools | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Plan the 'right time' to move. If you're able to, plan the move at a good time for your family. If you're moving in between school years, moving in the middle of the summer is a great time | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Start a visual countdown - ideal for younger children. Make a countdown paper chain and a calendar for children to see how many days are left until the move. The days can be ripped off the paper chain to provide your child with an understanding of the timing of it all | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Inform your child's current Headteacher about the move | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Review and start the application process for your chosen school | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Visit their new home to help your children visualise where they will eat, sleep and play | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Have a day where you plan out their new room together. Let children help decorate their new rooms by picking out colours, lights and new bed linen | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Read books about moving. Reading books is a great way to help children deal with something big in their lives. It can help them to emphasise with the characters and verbalise anything on their minds | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Make a contact list of old friends so your child can stay in touch via social media or by phone | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| Host a farewell party with your child's old friends | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| If re-locating, get to know the area, the surroundings and your neighbours. This may include finding out about clubs/activities to transport links to joining local social media groups | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |



Wycliffe is an independent school for children from the age of 3-19; set in the heart of the Gloucestershire countryside. With excellent transport links to London, day and full boarding, exceptional facilities, pastoral care and a wide range of specialist subjects and extra-curricular activities, there is something for every pupil where individuality is encouraged.

If your family is looking for schools in the Gloucestershire area, Wycliffe could be the ideal fit.

HOW TO CONTACT WYCLIFFE

Wycliffe Prep School (7-13-year-olds)

Call: 01453 820470

Email: prep@wycliffe.co.uk

Wycliffe Senior School (13-19-year-olds)

Call: 01453 822432

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Wycliffe

How to Move Schools Successfully

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