

The background is white with various abstract, hand-drawn style elements. There are large, flowing blue shapes in the top-left and bottom-right corners. A large, textured orange shape is in the bottom-left corner. Scattered throughout are small, colorful, teardrop-like shapes in blue, yellow, red, and green. There are also small black circles and short, parallel green lines.

The Big School Bell

A small purple bell icon with a clapper, positioned above the letter 'i' in the word 'Moving'.

Moving on up

A guide for Year 11
& Year 13 students

(Years S4, S5 and S6 in Scotland)



Introduction

We certainly didn't see this coming!

You've had a lot to deal with – school shutting, uncertainty about exams, missing your friends and so much more. And, on top of all that, you've missed out on a lot of the activities that celebrate the end of this phase of school and prepare you for the next stage – like end of year shows and parties, hoodies and Open Days.

You've probably got some important decisions to make at a time when it's impossible to know what the next months will bring. The people you'd usually turn to for guidance cannot give you clear advice. You're having to live with a lot of uncertainty, and that can be uncomfortable.

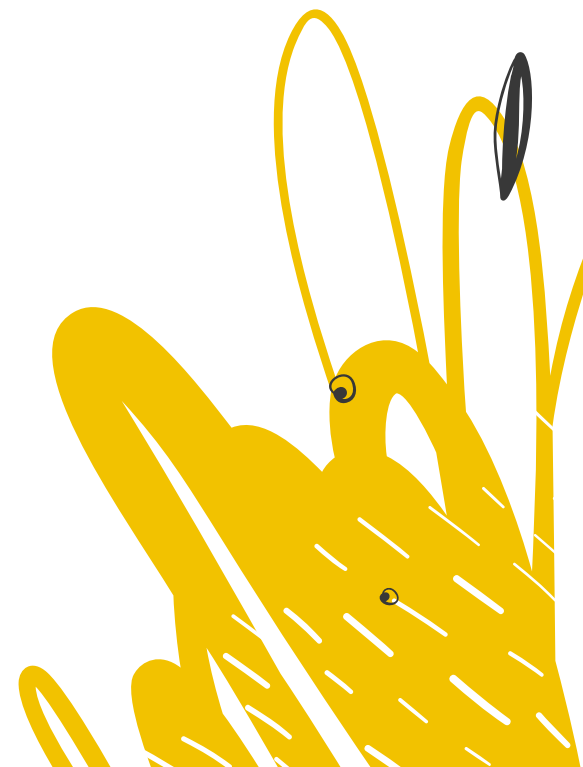
This guide is to help you make up for some of what you've missed and prepare for your next move.

Think of it like a journey, there's lots of different ways to travel to where you're heading. You're going to find your path one step at a time. Take the pressure off yourself to get it right because there is no single right way. Each person figures it out for themselves, often by trial and error. Sometimes you start out in one direction in order to find out that actually you want to veer off in a different direction. Adjusting your course is how you will steer yourself towards the life that's right for you.

We want you to know that however you're feeling about finishing this phase of your education and starting the next chapter of your life, here at Rites for Girls we are thinking of you. **Good luck.**

“In order to move joyfully into new stages of life, rather than fearfully, kids need to know that they are part of a great big community who care about and honour their growth and unfolding. We ourselves can help our young – as we always have, by acting together to celebrate them. The Big School Bell is an act of community parenting for all our children, may it be the start of many more.”

Steve Biddulph





How's it been?



The last months of Year 11 and Year 13 are usually pretty intense, with revision and exams, followed by all those things that make the end of this phase of school special. This year has been different though. Lessons came to an abrupt halt, exams were cancelled, and you will have missed the Leavers' parties, end of year shows and school celebrations. Perhaps you've been disappointed to miss the opportunity to put yourself to the test in exams – or relieved that you didn't have to. While you wait for your results, it can be hard to know how to prepare for whatever's next. Most students have had a mixture of feelings about all of this – and that's to be expected.

It helps to list all the things you have missed. What about all the things you have been able to do because school/college stopped? Write those down too.

10:45AM

What school/college experiences have you missed because of lockdown?

What have you enjoyed about this lockdown time?



Looking back... (before moving forward)

When we know a big change is coming, like starting a new phase in your life, it can be a really good time to reflect.

Looking back on memories, and thinking about what has been good and also what has been challenging, can help you feel ready to move on. What have you learned from your school experiences, teachers and friendships? What have your years at school been like?

Take some time to reflect on your school years. This isn't just about schoolwork but friendships and your experiences outside of school too – they're all important.



My first memory of school is...

My favourite memory from my time at school is...

My worst memory from my time at school is...

I am proud of...

School was hard because...

School was fun because...

What else do you want to remember?

Often, people find it helpful to mark the end of something because it helps us to see it as finished and then feel ready to move on. There are many ways to make a good ending and you can do it with your family, with friends or by yourself. You can create a memory book with photos, pictures, drawings, words, a song, a poem – be as creative as you like. You might like to talk about your time up until now with someone you trust. How do you want to celebrate the end of this phase of your schooling?



Moving on

How do you feel about the next stage?

It's perfectly natural for thoughts and feelings to fill our heads, especially when we are facing the unknown. No matter how big or small the question or worry, once it's out it can feel less big and worrisome. You can do this by talking to someone – maybe an older friend, perhaps a parent, or another adult in your life who you trust. Or, you can write it all down.

Do a brain dump by filling the page with all your thoughts, feelings, worries, and dreams about the next stage of your life.



How do you feel now?

What can you do to take care of yourself? What do you need help with? Who can help you?



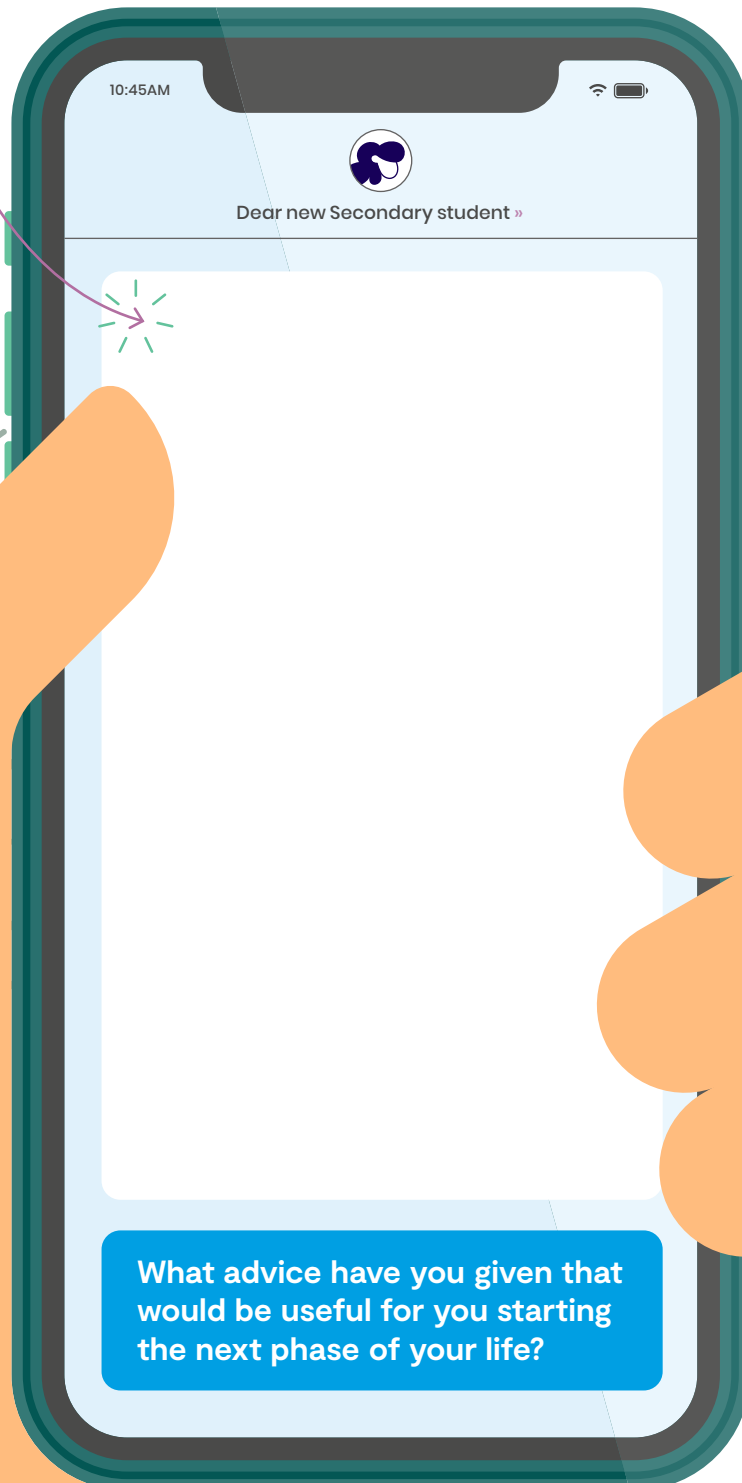
Next steps

What advice can you give someone starting Secondary?

You have come so far in the years you have been at school – more than you probably realise.

Knowing what you know now, what would you tell someone who is about to start secondary school? Imagine the conversation you would have or write a message to them.

Add your thoughts here



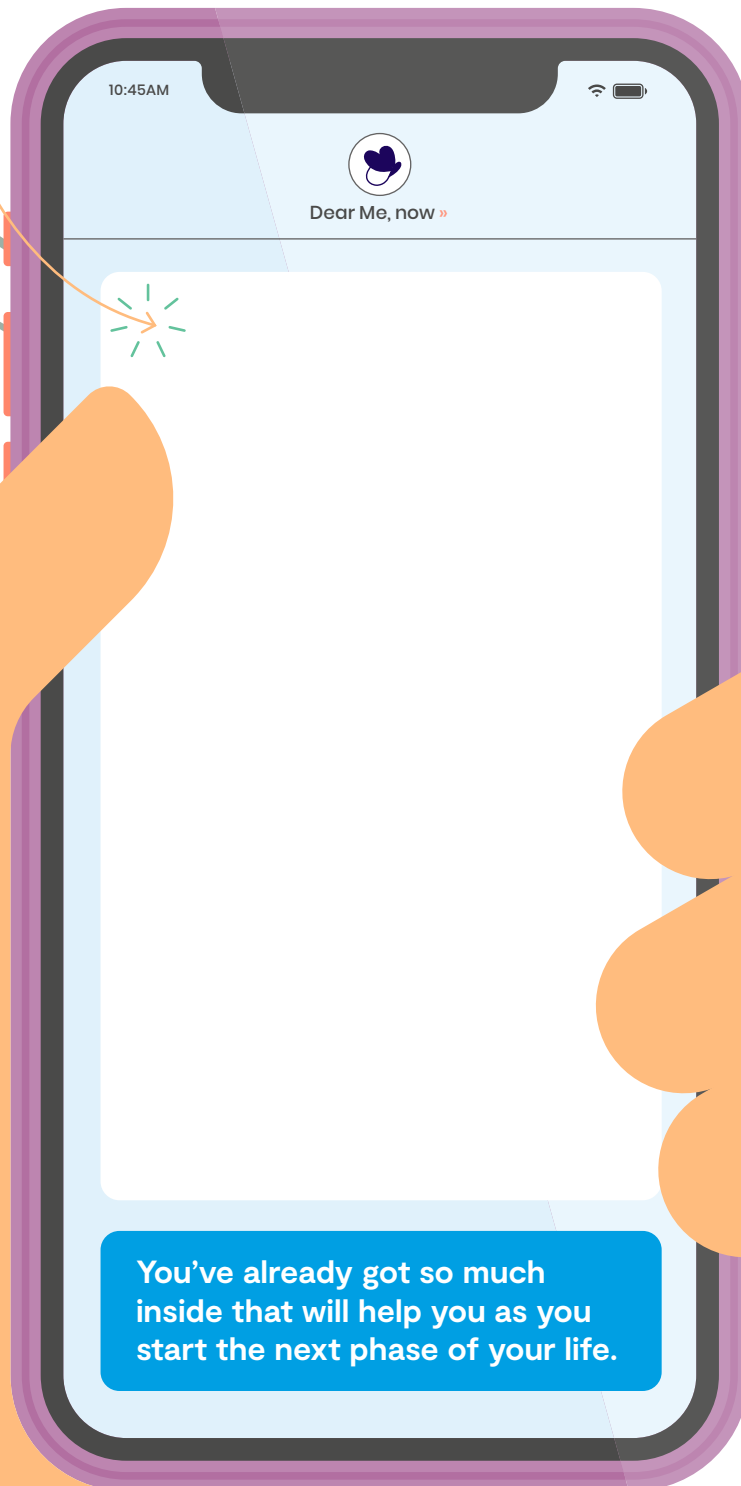
What advice have you given that would be useful for you starting the next phase of your life?



Next steps

What advice can you give yourself now?

Add your
thoughts here



You've already got so much
inside that will help you as you
start the next phase of your life.



Big feelings

In the past few months we've all had times when we've felt overwhelmed by big feelings even though we may not always show it.

When it feels like it's all too much, it's natural to just want the feelings to go away. But feelings are really useful, even the uncomfortable ones, because they give you valuable information about what you need.

When you don't know what to do with your feelings, remember that it always helps to name them. Instead of pushing them away, you let them be there. When you work out what the feeling is, that tells you what you might need. Try it.

Remember, feelings are like weather; they always pass.

If you like writing, keep a journal, scribble a poem or jot your feelings on bits of paper which you collect in a feelings jar.

If you prefer to say things out loud, you could speak your feelings privately in your room, on a walk or bike ride, or to someone who cares.

If you like to draw, demonstrate your feelings through art or find images to represent how you feel. Create your own emojis.

If music is your way then make music, write lyrics, or listen to music that matches your mood. Some people use music that evokes calm or happiness to shift their mood.

If you prefer to think about things, then visualise your feelings in words or images and imagine yourself putting them safely in a cloud.

If you like to do crafts, then you could make something that evokes your feelings.

Now, think about what your feelings are telling you. For example, when you're angry, you might need to be heard, or maybe you shout to find out that underneath you feel hurt; or when you're sad, you might need to cry and be held, or you might want to curl up with a pet and listen to music. There is no right or wrong way to do this, it just needs to work for you. All your feelings belong to you, they're valuable, you need to listen to them all.

FEELINGS

ANGRY • SAD • HAPPY • ANXIOUS • FRUSTRATED • WORRIED
FEELING LEFT OUT • TEARY • UNSURE • ANNOYED • LONELY • EXCITED
NERVOUS • JEALOUS • STRESSED • CONFUSED • UPSET • FRIGHTENED
HOPEFUL • SCARED • CHEERFUL • CROSS • PLEASED • LOVED • CALM
WILD • TORN • SILLY • LOVING • EMBARRASSED • LOST

Use your very own Superpower!

First day nerves? Everyone feels a mixture of nerves and excitement on the first day of A-levels, college, work or university – even if they don't show it.

This last page is about something called **anchoring** and it's your superpower. Believe it or not, it is something you already do! Do you ever cross your fingers, pull your ear lobe, fiddle with a piece of jewellery or play with your hair? Sometimes a smell can take you back to a good memory, or you might find a particular food soothing.

Maybe you have a favourite book you read again and again, or piece of music you return to. Did you have a favourite teddy that you cuddled when you were younger or something that helped you fall asleep?

These anchors happen naturally and can help us feel soothed and safe or happy and confident when we find ourselves in a situation where we feel worried or unsure. **Now here's the good news – you can create your own anchor!**

Everyone can do this. Start by thinking of a time you felt confident, happy and safe. Close your eyes and really let that memory fill your mind. See how you looked, tune into what you said to yourself and sense how you felt. Feel those feelings as if it were happening right now. With the memory as bright and clear and strong as possible, press the tip of your thumb and forefinger together. This anchors your memory of a time you felt good, to the action with your thumb and finger, so you can call that feeling back whenever it would be useful to you. Open your eyes and let go of your anchor and think of something else, like what's for dinner.

Then test it. When you think of something that worries you, use your anchor, press your thumb and forefinger together. See how it can change how you feel.

This is your superpower: at times when you're feeling unsure, you can make yourself feel stronger by using your anchor to remind yourself of feeling good. Practising using your anchor makes it stronger, so give it a go!

Congratulations! You deserve to be extremely proud of everything you have achieved during your time at this school. You have a future filled with possibilities ahead of you. Whenever you feel worried, remember there are lots of people who can help. In the meantime, we hope you have a brilliant summer holiday!



The Big School Bell

Written by Kim McCabe and Jessica Shaw.

If you are feeling worried or upset there are always people who will listen and help you at **Young Minds**.

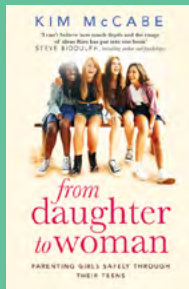
If you are ever in danger or need help, contact **Childline** on **0800 1111**.



This guide has been created by **Rites for Girls** as part of The Big School Bell campaign to help children come to terms with the end of a strange year during a global pandemic. The aim of the guide is to support young people to identify and process their thoughts and feelings about completing this phase of their education and beginning the next chapter. For more resources, information, advice and support, or to learn more about The Big School Bell campaign, head to our **website**, or follow us on social media.



We have also published a **Guide for Parents** which you can find on our website, along with information about our **Girls Journeying Together** groups to support Year 6 and Year 7 girls.



Kim McCabe is the founder director of Rites for Girls CIC which, since 2011, has offered year-long Girls Journeying Together groups, support for mothers and training for women wanting to support girls. Author of *From Daughter to Woman* ([available here](#)) and a series of online parenting courses, she guides parents through the preteen and teen years. A passionate believer in the transformative power of creating rites of passage for girls, Kim's on a mission to make the lives of girls kinder, safer and better supported.



This guide has also been endorsed by Steve Biddulph

Steve Biddulph is one of the world's best known parent educators. A psychologist for 30 years, he is now retired but continues to write and teach. His books, including *The Secret of Happy Children*, *Raising Boys*, *The New Manhood* and now *10 Things Girls Need Most* are in four million homes and in 31 languages. They have influenced the way we look at childhood and especially the development of boys and men. Today though, the mental health of girls and young women globally is also a major focus.



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