

The Big School Bell



Moving on up

A useful guide to
help you move on from
primary school





Introduction

What's this guide all about?

This Year 6 has not been at all how we expected, has it? You've had a lot to deal with, school shutting, lessons taught differently, 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 your primary school years and prepare you for secondary school – end of year shows and parties, hoodies and open days.

This guide is to help make up for some of what you've missed and prepare for your move to secondary school in a way that is special to the Year 6 girls and boys of 2020 – because this hasn't happened to any other year 6 group before!

This booklet is for you – no one else.

You do not have to hand it in or show it to anyone – unless you want to. There is no correct way to do the exercises, just a right way for you. If the suggestions below make you think of a different way to approach some of these topics, that is fine too. You can print the booklet out so you can write and draw on the pages, or you can read it online and write in a notebook.

Think of it like a journey, there's lots of different ways to get to where you're heading. We're giving you a map, but you can choose the route you want to take.

We want you to know that however you're feeling about leaving primary school and starting secondary school, here at The Big School Bell and 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 for you?

The last months of Year 6 are usually full of all sorts of things that make your last year at primary school special.

This year has been different. You may have missed shows, school outings, parties, even your SATs! We expect you've had a mixture of feelings about all this – **and that's ok.**

It helps to list all the things you feel you have missed. Have a think of what's on your list and write them down below. What about all the things you have been able to do instead? Write those down too.



What year 6 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 secondary school, it can be a really good time to reflect.

Reflecting means looking back on memories and thinking about what has been good, and also what has been challenging. What have you learned from your school experiences, teachers and friendships? What have your years at primary school been like?

Take some time to reflect on your primary 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 primary 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 feel ready to move on. There are lots of different ways to make a good

ending and you can do it with your family, with a friend or by yourself. You can create a memory book with photos, pictures, drawings, words, a song – whatever you want. You

could go through family photos, do a film, drawing, or poem. You might like to talk about your time up until now with someone you trust. You can do whatever you wish, this is just for you.



Moving on

How do you feel about starting secondary school?

We all have times when our head feels full of questions and worries. No matter how big or small the question or worry – once it is out it can feel less big and worrisome. You can do this by talking to someone – maybe a friend who has already started secondary school, perhaps a parent, or another adult in your life who you trust. **Or you can write it all down.**

Have a go at writing all your questions and concerns down here – in words or pictures, whatever works for you.

How do you feel now?

Which questions can you answer yourself?
Which ones do you need help with? Where
can you find answers? Who can help you?



Next steps

What advice could you give someone starting their Reception year?

You have come so far in the seven years you have been at primary school – more than you probably realise. You have become one of the big children that others look up to, just like you did when you were in Reception year.

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

Dear New Reception Year,

What advice have you given that would be useful for you starting secondary school?



Next steps

What advice can you give yourself now?

Dear Me Now,

You've already
got so much inside
that will help you
when you start
secondary
school.



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 we've got lots of different feelings all at once, it can seem like it's too much and we 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. **There's a list of feelings at the bottom of this page to give you ideas.**



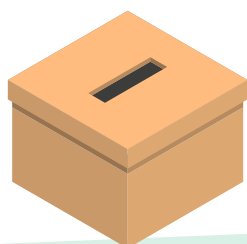
If you like writing, you can write your feelings down on pieces of paper and keep them safe in a feelings jar.



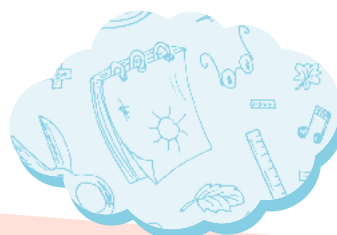
If you like to draw you could draw those feelings on faces, a bit like your own emojis. Draw something that demonstrates your feelings or cut out images that represent your feelings. Keep your drawings somewhere safe.



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



If you like to do craft activities, then you could make something that reminds you of your feeling, and make your own box to put your feelings in.



If you prefer to think about things, then you might like to visualise the feelings in words or images in your head and imagine yourself putting them in the jar or somewhere safe.

Think about what your feelings are telling you. For example, when you're angry, you might need to be heard, or maybe you need to 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 need 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. **Your feelings belong to you – 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 secondary school, 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, or 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. Ever had a favourite teddy that you cuddle, or something that helps 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 when we feel worried or unsure.

Now, here's the good news – you can create your own anchor! Everyone can do it. **Start by thinking about a time you felt confident, happy or safe.**

1 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.

2 With the memory as bright and clear and strong as possible, press your thumb and forefinger together. This anchors your memory of a time of feeling good to the action with your thumb and finger, so you can call it up whenever it would be useful to you to be reminded of feeling good.

3 Open your eyes and let go of your anchor and think of something else, like what's for dinner.

4 **Then test it** – when you think of something that worries you, use your anchor. See how it can change how you feel. This is your Superpower: at times when you're feeling wobbly, you can make yourself feel stronger by using your anchor to remind you 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 in primary school. We're sure you'll have an amazing time at your new school. If and when you do feel worried, remember that 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 Jessica Shaw and Kim McCabe.

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

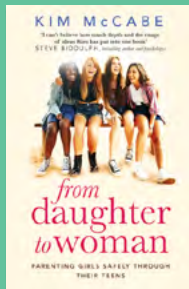
If you are ever in danger or need help, contact **Childline** on **0800 1111**.



This guide has been created by **Rites for Girls** as part of The Big School Bell campaign to help children come to terms with leaving their primary schools during a global pandemic. The aim of the guide is to support young people to identify and process their thoughts and feelings about leaving their old school and beginning the next chapter of their education in their new school. 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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