

The Big School Bell



Moving on up

A guide for Years 7–10
and Year 12 students



Introduction

We certainly didn't see this coming!

The world has changed, and you probably have too. This guide gives you space to think about how it's been and what you want to remember.

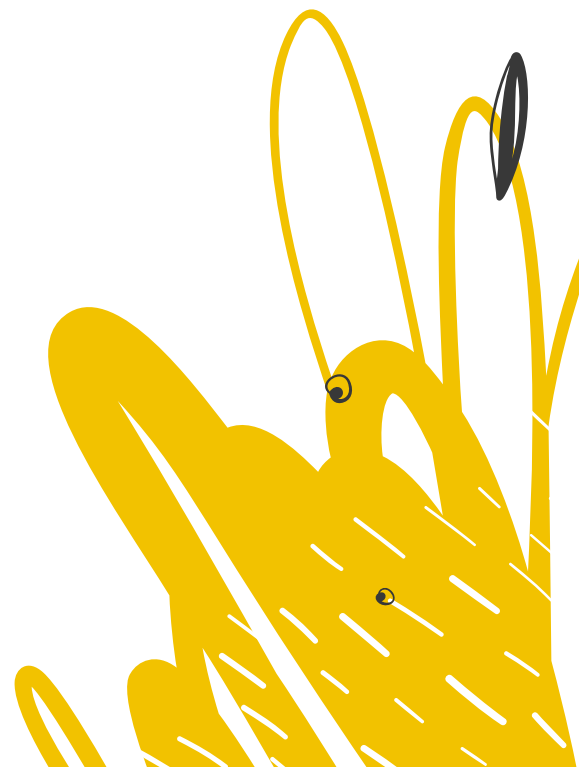
As we approach the end of this school year, you're missing out on a lot of the activities that help you celebrate what you've achieved and help you feel ready to move up after the summer holidays.

School students have had a lot to deal with: off school but still having to do schoolwork, missing friends and activities you would normally be able to do, doing schoolwork online and keeping friendships going online, too. You have probably had some disappointments along the way – holiday cancelled, parties postponed, things you've been looking forward to no longer happening. You might also have experienced the loss of loved ones. Some of your friendships might have shifted, leaving you feeling unsure and you might be nervous about what school will be like in September.

These feelings are natural but can feel overwhelming sometimes. Most students have a whole mixture of feelings. Perhaps you've quite enjoyed slowing down, learned something new, or had time for things that you're usually too busy for. For some young people things have been stressful at home and you're looking forward to going back to school. Everyone's different and we all cope as best we can. You might have noticed yourself behaving or feeling like you did when you were younger, that happens a lot in times of crisis, don't worry it won't stay like this. **You'll feel more in control when you find ways to express your feelings creatively.**

"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



The Pandemic Adventure



What have you found difficult and what have you enjoyed?

Reflecting can help us feel ready to move on to our next phase of education.

You can do this by writing down three good things and three challenging things you have experienced; write more if you want, but three is a good start. You could do a huge brainstorm of everything you can think of or organise your thoughts into a timeline of the last three months in words or pictures. Add in emojis to show how you felt. Keep this to look back on; your memories of this time are precious, all of them.

You can express your thoughts any way you want – in words, pictures, emojis or a list. The choice is yours!

10:45AM

Good things that happened during lockdown.

Things I found challenging during lockdown.



Friendships



**Friendships aren't easy when you can't see each other.
You're not the only one who will have found it difficult.**

Lots of young people have found this the hardest thing about lockdown. Quite suddenly and unexpectedly, you have not been able to see your friends right at the time when friendships have become really important. You're figuring out your values and your friendships can help you do that. So, don't be surprised if you are feeling unsure about lots of things, this is natural when we can't connect with our friends in the ways that we are used to.

Consider which of these sentences are true for you.

- ☐ I have missed my friends.
- ☐ I have made some new friends.
- ☐ I'm finding it difficult to connect with friends when we can't see each other.
- ☐ I feel unsure whether we are still good friends.
- ☐ I feel left out.
- ☐ I have been able to work out who my really trusted friends are.
- ☐ I think I am a good friend.
- ☐ I feel hurt when friends say mean things.
- ☐ I have said unkind things.
- ☐ On social media it looks like people are having a great time; and I'm not.
- ☐ I'm nervous about returning to school because I'm not sure where I'll fit in.
- ☐ I can't wait to go back to school to see my friends.
- ☐ I prefer a small group of friends.
- ☐ I like being a part of a big group of friends.
- ☐ I have been able to ask my friends for support over the last three months.
- ☐ I think some of the my friendships have grown stronger.

Do you think some of your friends might be feeling the same? How could you find out?

Talking to your friends about how this time has been for them might help you to reconnect with them. It will also show you that everyone's had their struggles, no matter how it might look on social media.

Keep these pages and see how your feelings about your friendships change over the next few weeks or after you start back at school.

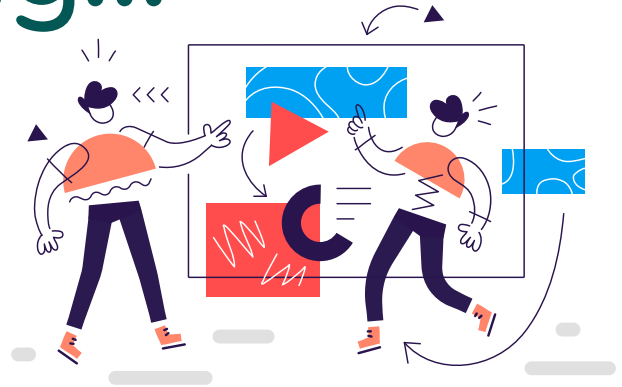


One last thing...

What do you need most?

Imagine that you have a best friend who is exactly like you. What piece of advice would you give them as they end this strange school year?

Stop! Close your eyes and actually see yourself giving this advice. Hear yourself saying it. How would it feel to follow your advice? **You can be your own best guide.**



My advice...

Now with the summer holidays ahead of you, we hope you have fun!

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**.

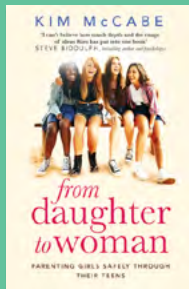
If you are ever in danger or need help, contact **Childline** on **0800 1111**.



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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