

Making a successful start at Millais



Moving on to Secondary School can be as exciting and daunting for parents as it is for pupils. For the whole family it can mean a change in routine and as a parent you may have concerns about how your child will settle in at Millais.

Common concerns parents have include:

- Travelling to and from school
- Meeting and adjusting to a range of new teachers
- Studying new subjects
- The need for organisation and good time management
- Studying and homework
- Becoming more independent and having less direct supervision at school
- Making and maintaining friendships

Fortunately there are lots of things you can do to support your child and ease your own worries.



Getting to and from school

Many students will have a longer journey to Millais than they did in Primary School, or be travelling to school independently for the first time. If your child has a long or complicated journey, it might be an idea to practise this during the summer holidays so that they feel confident.

Before the first day of term, be sure your child knows:

- What time to leave the house and how to walk to school or the bus stop.
- The number of the bus to and from school.
- What to do if something goes wrong (e.g. they miss the bus).
- How to contact you or another adult during the journey – it's a good idea to write important phone numbers into their ELR.

Finding their way around

The Induction Day visit will begin to help your child to be more familiar with school. Prefects will help each class find their way from one lesson to the next until they feel confident.

You can support your child by:

- Talking through their timetable (which includes room numbers and teacher names) to help them feel familiar with the layout of the school. This timetable will be issued on their first day in September. It is a good idea for you to put a copy of the timetable and homework timetable somewhere visible.
- Reassuring them that while getting a little lost is not unusual in a big school like Millais, it is unlikely to be a disaster. Your child can ask any adult or other pupil for help –they will all have been new once!

Feeling prepared and organised

Your child will feel more confident about school if they know they are well organised and prepared. Knowing that they have the correct equipment will also help to put your mind at ease.

Before your child starts in September it will help to:

- Make sure they have the basic equipment of pens, rulers, maths kit etc – including a calculator, glue, scissors and rough book.
- Check the uniform and PE kit lists carefully.
- Label all uniform, kit and important possessions.
- Arrange a homework folder for homework sheets and letters to be stored to transport them to and from school safely.
- Talk through the evening routine of checking the timetable, homework timetable and packing their bag with everything they need



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Studying and homework

The transition to separate subject teachers and new subjects can be eased by feeling well prepared for lessons. In the first few weeks your child will also be establishing study habits that will benefit them during their entire school career.

From the first day, good routines will help to support your child:

- Have a designated place for school books and homework so they don't get lost around the house.
- Encourage your child to empty their bag each evening to sort out books, pass letters on, and generally de-clutter.
- Regularly check and sign their ELR each week.
- Discuss homework daily.
- Have a clear timeslot for homework, preferably early evening.
- Set up a clear work space for your child to study in, preferably calm and quiet. For the first few weeks, aim to sit alongside and support them.
- Expect your child to complete homework on the night it is set – leaving it until nearer the deadline often causes stress and worry.
- Remind them to check Teams if they are unclear about a homework task or deadline. They can also check with a friend, or speak with the teacher before the deadline.

Settling in

One of the most worrying things for many parents is whether their child will settle in and be happy at Millais. Try not to panic - the vast majority of students form good friendship bonds and enjoy their time at Millais.

Help your child to settle in by:

- Encouraging them to have realistic expectations – they may not have a new best friend by the end of day one!
- Supporting them to be themselves and not feel the need to change to 'fit in'.
- Take an interest in their friends, both new and old, and help your child to make 'good' friendship choices.

If your child seems to be having difficulties:

- Take their concerns seriously, but discourage them from worrying excessively.
- Be patient, it can take some students longer than others to settle in and make firm friends.
- Contact your child's tutor in the first instance, and then the Director of Year 7, if things do not improve or if you have a serious concern.

