

Parent Information Sheet

Improving Independence And Responsibility

Independence is about learning to do things for oneself, which includes making decisions and taking on responsibility. These are hugely important skills for children to learn to cope with in adulthood. Responsibilities allow children to build character. Most importantly however, is the fact that a child who is given responsibilities develops self-confidence and learns that they are capable individuals at a young age. This can blossom into high self-esteem and the ability to make good decisions in their young lives.



General Hints & Tips For Encouraging Independence

- Set appropriate boundaries for your child but help them to try out new things.
- Try to guide your child rather than tell them what to do; this will encourage them to develop their own thoughts and ideas with your support.
- Give positive support when your child faces challenges.
- Praise effort rather than success and help them see we all learn from mistakes.
- Don't do everything for your child, even if that seems easier or quicker!
- Try to be positive when your child is demonstrating independence.

The Start of Independence - Age 3-7

- **Toileting** – Teach your child to use the toilet (and urinal when older) independently. This will improve their self-esteem when they are at school with their peers. It will also reduce any potential medical issues that arise from not using the toilets when at school because they can't do it for themselves. Talk to boys about sitting or standing when toileting. Most boys find it easier to toilet independently (and it's more hygienic when they are younger) by sitting down until they are older and have better control. Teach boys to put the toilet seat up when they learn to stand up. Teach your child how to wipe their own bottom before they start school. Talk them through how to do it when they are old enough and check at the end. Remember – schools don't have wet wipes available for use, so ensure your child is comfortable using toilet paper. Ensure that your child can flush the toilet and wash their hands independently without being reminded. We know little accidents happen at times (especially when younger children are busy at play), but remind your child to tell someone so that they can be cleaned up.
- **Getting Dressed** – Teach your child to take off shoes and socks and put them back on and ensure they can take off and put their own coat on before they start Nursery. Throughout the year and in to Reception, teach your child to undress and dress themselves. This will mean PE lessons are much

quicker in school. Encourage children to do buttons by themselves starting at the bottom (top buttons are trickier and teachers will always help here). During Year 1 or Year 2, you might like to teach your child to do laces on trainers – especially good for independence on Mufti days.

- **Reading Packets** – Insist that your child carries their own bag to and from school. This will not only help their independence, but will help your child gain a sense of pride. Before you leave the house in the morning check that your child has their bag with them (and anything else they need for the day).
- **Leaving Your Child** - Be confident when dropping them off at school; don't let them 'cling' to you at the school gate / playground. If your child is upset in the morning, be positive. If you feel upset yourself, don't let your child see it as this will only reinforce their emotions. Make your goodbyes swift and leave the playground quickly. Children who are upset are usually very happy within a few moments of seeing their friends.
- **Jobs In The House** – Give your child responsibilities within the house – setting the table, making their bed, helping drying the dishes, feeding the pet etc. This will help your child gain a sense of achievement that they can do things for themselves and gives them responsibilities.
- **Tidying Up** – Teach your child to tidy up their own toys before moving to another toy / game. Your child will be expected to do this at school.
- **Knives & Forks** - Teach your child to use a knife and fork before they start school and move away from eating with spoons or fingers. This will not only improve their independence, but will help their physical development. Teach your child to cut their own food.

Preparing for KS2 - Age 7-10:

- **Organisation** - Support your child to organise themselves. Help your child make lists of things they might need to get / do. Teach them how to be organised. Give them resources to help them stay organised.
- **Navigation** - Take turns in finding the way to the shops, playground etc.
- **Bedroom** – Encourage your child to make their own bed each morning and keep their room tidy. Teach them how to polish and vacuum too.
- **Homework** - Make your child responsible for organising their own homework activities and how they are going to be completed. Set up homework timetables and routines to help.
- **School Resources** - Teach your child pack their own school bag and ensure they do this in plenty of time (not when you're in a rush to get out of the door!). Make lists of what they need to take with them every day – put it by the door if needed.
- **School Monitors** - Encourage your child to take on responsibilities at school and join volunteer groups such as Mini-Vinnies and Eco Council.
- **Walking to School** – In Year 6, when your child is ready, teach your child the safe ways of walking to school. Try linking up with a small groups of friends for extra safety.

Preparing for Secondary School – Age 10+

- **Online Safety** - Ensure your child is aware of and is safe when online.
- **Money** – Give your child a small amount of pocket money and teach your child to manage a small budget. Consider opening a bank account for your child.

- **Homework** - Create a tidy and quiet space at home for your child to complete their homework. Show them how to create a study timetable and encourage your child to complete their homework without unnecessary help or intervention.
- **Equipment** - Explain the importance of packing the right equipment for school each day e.g. calculator, books, PE Kit. Remember that Secondary Schools will often give detentions for forgotten equipment.
- **Travelling** - Encourage your child to travel independently (with a group of friends for safety) by public transport, bike or foot
- **Mobile Phones** – Teach your child to be responsible for their phone. Ensure they know how to keep their mobile safe when out and about. Make them aware of the costs of using a mobile phone.
- **Food** - Teach your child how to prepare a simple meal by themselves.