

Things to consider as your son or daughter prepares for starting at Bensham Manor school.

At Bensham Manor School it is our aim to create adults ready for the 21st century and so we develop our young people in a number of ways:

- Academic skills
- Functional skills
- Personal and Independent Life skills
- Communication skills
- Developing self confidence

We know that for many of our young people change can be difficult and overwhelming so we have thought about what you can do to help prepare them for this next step.

What sort of skills will your son / daughter need to develop?

Organisation

- Packing their bag the night before going to school
- Remembering what they need to bring to school each day - coat / bag / equipment

Independence

- Helping when making simple snacks or drinks (doing part of the process if easier at this stage)
- Tidying away after themselves
- Explaining and involving the child in 'change' as a normal part of daily life - discussing when there is going to be a change to plans, but reassuring and giving visual support if needed.
- Helping your son / daughter realise that everyone makes mistakes and this is OK, helping them to correct these and reward attempts as much as outcomes
- Starting with tasks with quick success

Personal hygiene

- Reinforcing safe behaviour in toilets - respect and privacy
- Knowing that Bensham Manor has single person toilets as well as girls and boys toilets
- Think about the use of routines and the vocabulary needed
- Answer questions as your child heads towards puberty – be literal but pitched at their level
- Use Social Stories to support as needed
- Ensure that that your child transitions with an awareness of privacy and self/peer respect

Awareness in the community

- When you are out in the community, talk through road safety
- When you are out in the community, who are safe adults?
- Stepping back when in a shop and letting your son / daughter pay for an item

Communication

- If your son / daughter has difficulty expressing their needs or worries - can they learn and practise using a key phrase, e.g. - "I need help", " I need someone to help me"
- Using role play and modelling language in different social situations
- Reinforcing that your son or daughter can tell an adult if they feel worried, if something has happened and that they know they will be listened to.

Resources to help - Social Stories:

- Consistently use and evolve the level and use of Social Stories for: explaining and preparing for change, events, routines and key social skills/behaviours, ask your son or daughter's school for their help if there is a particular worry or area of concern for your son / daughter
- Preparing your child for school events using these stories and use Social Stories at home for family and personal situations
- Identify situations where Social Stories would build independence and resilience such as a trip, holiday or personal organisation
- Use Social Stories for reading personal space and body language/responses from peers including the impact others may have on them during lessons and break times

Remember social stories will need to be used regularly to be useful and have impact.

What can parents and carers do to help their child become an independent teen?

Year 7/8: Support: routines, visual organisation at home to support independence, teach social situations/ rehearse these skills, keep simple, clear social rules. Keep homework to a positive routine. Build up a sense of trust and independence. Support their interests as a way to building social skills and confidence – having a place

Year 8/9: Teach puberty/body awareness early– make hygiene routine teach as part of healthy living. Support independence: teach money skills, safe meeting up – keep clear boundaries. Teach personal space and privacy

Year 9-13: focus your child on their skills and interests in developing a route to a career. Use extended family to support life skills. Teach relationships – what is appropriate, reading signals and coping with rejection and interest. Extend independence with understanding.

Reassure your child when they have anxieties about transferring to Bensham Manor school. Listen carefully to their worries but reassure them that feeling worried is very normal when starting something new. There are lots of kind people in Bensham Manor who will be able to help them.

Your son or daughter will have a transition day and staff will try if possible to attend the Year 6 annual review or transition meeting. You are welcome to contact theoffice@benshammanor.com with any questions.

We will work together - school, home and Bensham Manor to give as smooth a transition as possible.

