BACK TO SCHOOL

Starting school for the first time (Reception)

The first term is mostly about settling in. Nobody expects a four year old to arrive able to read, and the school will tell you what it actually needs.

UNIFORM AND KIT

- [ ] Try on last year's uniform before buying anything
- [ ] Check the uniform policy for any changes
- [ ] School shoes fitted, with a little growing room
- [ ] Name everything, including shoes and water bottle
- [ ] PE kit, indoor and outdoor
- [ ] Coat, and a spare jumper or cardigan
- [ ] Book bag or rucksack checked for holes
- [ ] Water bottle and lunch box
- [ ] A full change of clothes for the bag
- [ ] Wellies if the school has an outdoor area
- [ ] Sun hat, and a warm hat for later in the term
- [ ] Nappies or pull ups if they are still needed, and tell the school

BAG AND EQUIPMENT

- [ ] Book bag, not a big rucksack
- [ ] Named water bottle they can open themselves
- [ ] Lunch box with packaging they can manage alone
- [ ] Comforter or photo if the school allows it
- [ ] No stationery needed yet unless asked for
- [ ] Spare bag for wet or muddy clothes

PARENT ADMIN

- [ ] Check term dates and INSET days
- [ ] Confirm start and finish times
- [ ] Put term dates in the family calendar
- [ ] Update contact and emergency contact details
- [ ] Medical form updated, inhalers and EpiPens in date
- [ ] Check free school meals eligibility
- [ ] Top up the school payment app
- [ ] Book breakfast club or after school care
- [ ] Return photo and trip consent forms
- [ ] Save the absence reporting number
- [ ] Check the school app or portal login works
- [ ] Check whether you qualify for a uniform grant
- [ ] Complete the starting school forms
- [ ] Tell the school about any additional needs
- [ ] Ask about the settling in arrangements for the first week

BACK TO SCHOOL

Starting school for the first time (Reception)

THE ROUTINE RESET

- [ ] Move bedtime earlier by fifteen minutes every few nights
- [ ] Bring the morning wake up time back a week before
- [ ] Practise the whole morning routine once, start to finish
- [ ] Wind screens down in the hour before bed
- [ ] Get back to a proper sit down breakfast
- [ ] Walk or drive the school route at the right time of day

SKILLS TO PRACTISE

- [ ] Using the toilet and wiping independently
- [ ] Washing and drying hands
- [ ] Putting on and taking off a coat
- [ ] Doing up velcro shoes
- [ ] Opening everything in their lunch box
- [ ] Recognising their own name in writing
- [ ] Asking a grown up for help out loud
- [ ] Sitting still for a whole story

TALKING ABOUT IT

- [ ] Ask what they are looking forward to
- [ ] Ask what they are worried about, and name it rather than brushing it off
- [ ] Arrange to see a classmate before term starts
- [ ] Agree exactly what happens at drop off
- [ ] Agree who is collecting them, and when
- [ ] Talk about which adult to go to for help
- [ ] Read a story about starting school together
- [ ] Keep your own nerves out of the conversation

THE NIGHT BEFORE AND FIRST MORNING

- [ ] Uniform out and named
- [ ] Bag packed by them, not by you
- [ ] Lunch made or lunch money ready
- [ ] Shoes by the door
- [ ] Alarm set
- [ ] An early night for everyone
- [ ] Photo at the door if you want one
- [ ] Say goodbye once, then go

Notes and anything else to remember:

Tick as you go. Not everything applies to every school, so skip what does not fit.