



Moving to a new school

Having ADHD at school can be one of your biggest hurdles. And moving to a new or bigger school can make this even more difficult, because there are more demands and responsibilities – but there are also more opportunities and new friends.

Being organised

As someone with ADHD, you might find it hard to get organised at school – and if you're moving to another school, the routines will almost certainly be different. The result might be some or all of the following:

- You get lost and arrive late for lessons
- You get distracted between lessons
- You arrive for lessons feeling too lively, talkative or over-active
- You forget to write down what homework to do, or you forget to do it, or you do it but forget to take it back to school and hand it in
- You don't take the right books and equipment to school, or home for homework

To make life easier, try these tips:

- Use a planner and write things down to stay organised – maybe tape a copy of your timetable to your locker as well as having one at home and in your school bag
- Keep a second set of pencils and pens in your locker in case you leave them at home
- Ask your teacher if it is OK to have something to fiddle with in class, like a small 'squeezy ball' or a 'fidget spinner' that you hold in your hand*
- If you can, keep a second set of sports kit at school in case you forget to bring it in
- For homework, ask if you can finish some of it at school before you go home, or if you can keep a second set of books at home in case you leave them at school
- Try not to butt in on conversations
- Don't let anyone wind you up so much you get into trouble
- Try to sit near people who won't distract or annoy you
- Ask for a time-out card if a break would help you to calm down when you get frustrated
- Do some sport at school or after school – this will help you release energy and will probably help you sleep better
- Agree a sensible time that you will go to bed on school nights, so you don't get too tired
- Have fun – a new school can mean loads of great opportunities, school trips and lots of new friends

* if allowed in your school

Medication

A move to a new school might mean you have to change your medications routine. If you need to take medication in school hours, get your parent or carer to check with the school about whether you need to leave your medication in the school office, or if you are allowed to keep it with you. If you're worried about this, speak with your parent or carer and/or your teacher.

Things that might mean you avoid or forget your medicine:

- New routines
- Class teachers may not remind you to take your medicine
- Pressure from friends to do other things at break times
- Lack of time

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If you think any of this is a problem, think about ways to remember to take your medicine wherever you are. You could keep a reminder in your phone calendar or a note in your school planner or inside your locker. Think about what would work for you, but don't forget your medication – it's there to help you.

Learning

Secondary school is more demanding, and you may find that your ADHD causes you to do things like:

- Leaving work unfinished, or finishing in a rush
- Poor handwriting, especially at the end of longer pieces of work
- Not listening to instructions
- Failing to note down homework

To help, ask your teacher to help create a work plan for you, with targets you can work on. These can include:

- Putting your hand up to answer questions
- Waiting until it's your turn to speak
- Asking your teacher to check your homework diary or school planner at the end of each lesson

Homework

Moving to secondary school probably means getting used to regular homework, and you may need time to adjust to this.

There are ways you can avoid some of the challenges you might face in moving to a new or bigger school. Some ideas that might help:

- Write down your homework instructions properly
- Check that you can read what you noted down earlier
- Ask your teacher if you can record homework instructions on a smart phone or similar device
- Try to find a quiet, calm space to complete your homework, without any distractions like TV or radio
- Use a computer to type up schoolwork rather than handwriting
- Get into a routine of 'homework first/play second'
- Let your teacher know if homework is taking you longer than expected
- Go to after-school homework sessions if available: people with ADHD often need three times longer to complete homework at home rather than at school

Remember!

Many school difficulties can be helped by good communication between you and those who care for you. Always let your parent or carer know how things are going – don't keep things to yourself. If there is a teacher you really like, who you can talk to if things are getting tough, this can really help. Why not ask your school about this?

If you have not settled down into the new routine of your school after a few weeks, be sure to tell someone. Your teacher may suggest a meeting to make plans to help you become more organised and make school an easier place.

And finally,...

There's always a way to thrive with ADHD – you can do it! Try to follow these tips and solutions and you'll be on your way!