

LOOKING BACK LOOKING FORWARD



A practical workbook for
transferring to Secondary School

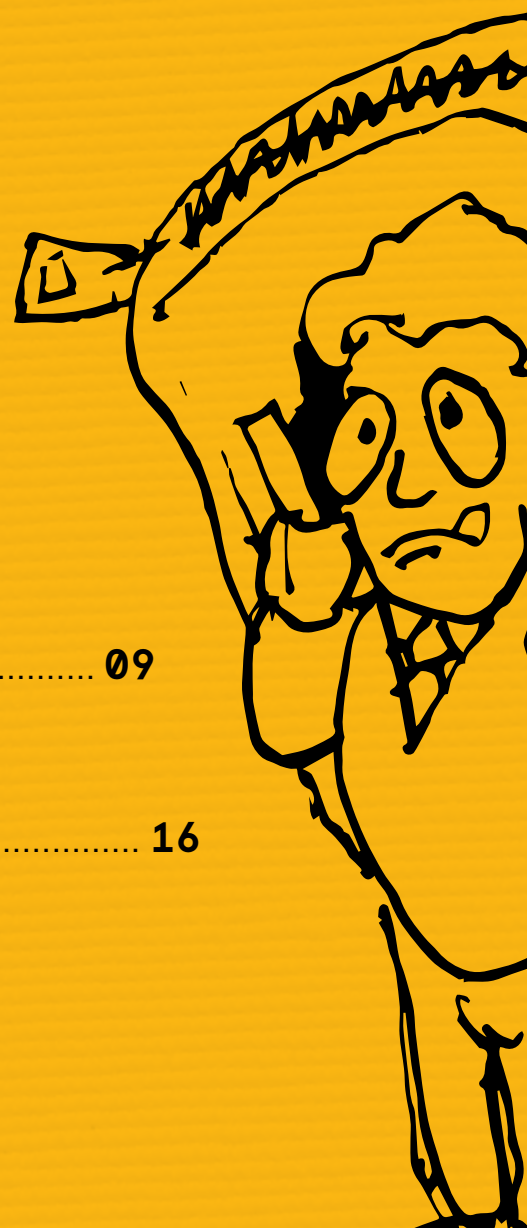
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INTRODUCTION

Moving to a new school comes with a great sense of excitement and is filled with new possibilities. Making new friends and getting help from the friends who are moving with us is very beneficial. It is all new - new uniforms, new books and a lot of new teachers. Where to go, when to go and how to get there are questions on everybody's mind. There is always going to be a helpful teacher or adult on hand to help you so don't panic.

Moving to a new school also brings with it plenty of mixed feelings. As well as excitement you might also be feeling a little bit worried and that is totally normal. You might be feeling sad at the thought of leaving your current school. It's been such a big part of your life! You might be upset about leaving some of your friends who are going to different schools. This workbook is designed for you to have a conversation with a parent or guardian about all of that. There are exercises and activities to help you explore your fondest memories of primary school as well as your expectations and feelings about the days of fun, new learning and exciting challenges that secondary school will bring.

This year has been very different because of the Coronavirus and we know that might have been especially hard for you. You may not have had the chance to say goodbye to your friends and teachers in person. You may be missing big events like religious ceremonies, graduations and other celebrations. It might feel unfair that you have missed out on these. This book has been put together to help with some of those feelings. It is best shared, with mams, dads, nans, granddads, siblings and other relatives. These are the people you can turn to now for your greatest help.

Fill out these details and let's get started!

Name:

My primary school is:

My secondary school will be:

LOOKING

MY PRIMARY SCHOOL MEMORY BANK

Primary school has provided you with a variety of experiences and special moments as well as some challenges. All of these are stored in your memory bank. It's important to cherish and celebrate these memories. They have helped you to become the unique individual you are today! The following pages of the workbook are about celebrating and reflecting on the important memories that you will carry with you as you move forward on your journey to secondary school.

- My closest friends in school were:

- List some words to describe them:

- A school tour that I will never forget was:

- The subject I enjoyed most was:

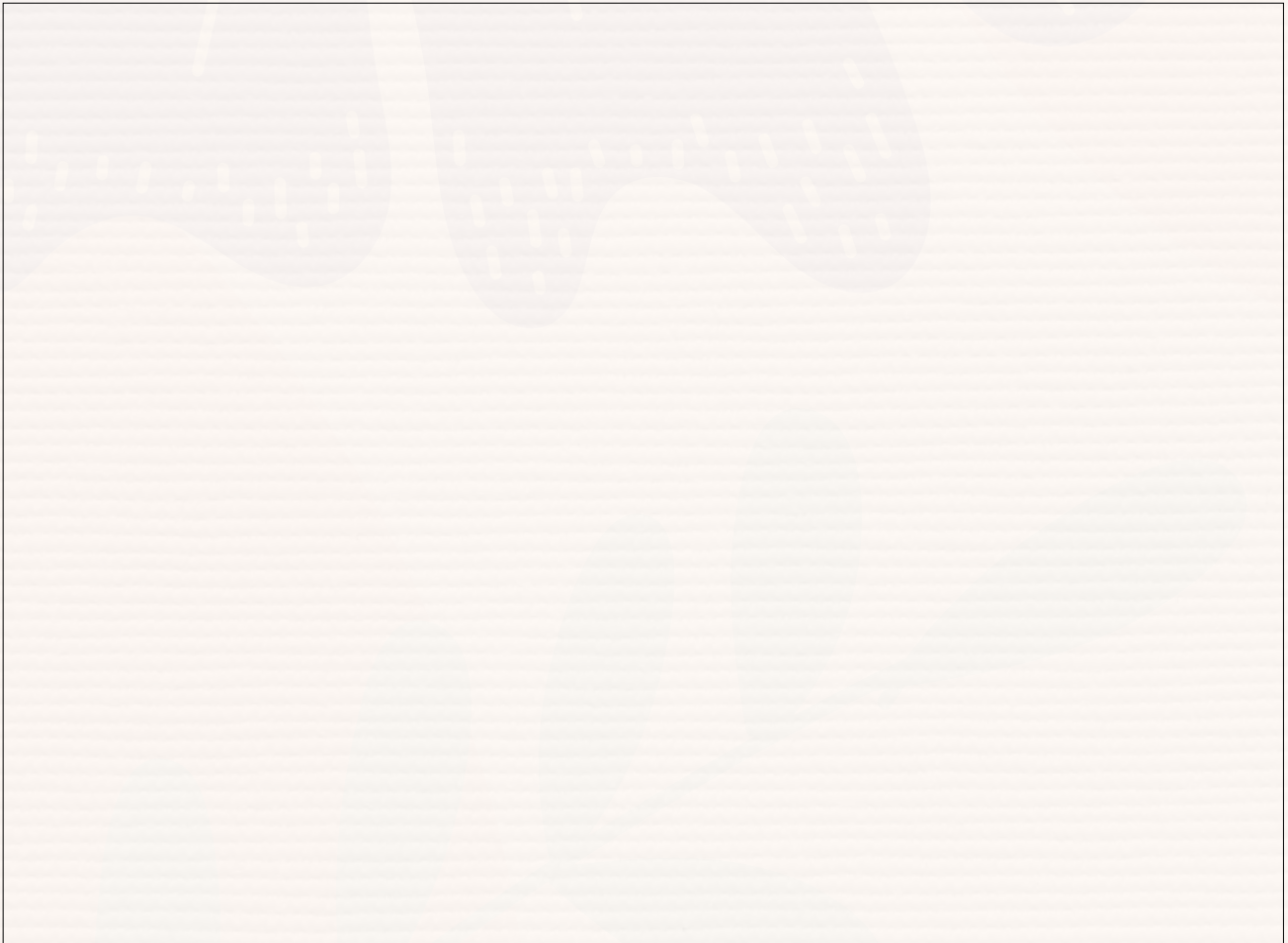
- My favourite sport or activity in school was:

- An important visitor to the school was:

- A person in school who was really good to me and whom I will always remember is (this could be a teacher, an SNA, the Principal, or anyone else who works in the school!):

GO BACK

DRAW OR WRITE ABOUT YOUR EARLIEST MEMORY OF STARTING SCHOOL



- School is often lots of fun but sometimes we can experience tough times. Write about a difficult time you had in primary school:

- Now describe the things you did to cope with it:

DRAW A PICTURE OR WRITE A FEW LINES ABOUT YOUR MOST TREASURED MEMORY OF PRIMARY SCHOOL



WORDS OF WISDOM

After all your years in primary school you are full of WISDOM! If you had one piece of advice or something you think it would be helpful for your primary school teachers and friends to know what would that be?

- A message to my primary school teachers:

- A message to my primary school friends:

A LETTER TO YOUNGER ME

Write a letter to yourself on your first day of primary school. Think about your thoughts and feelings that day. Think about all the adventures that lay ahead of you. What advice would you give to your younger self about starting school?

Dear younger me,

It is your first day of school and I know you are feeling
----- right now. Its ok to feel like this!

Three pieces of advice for starting Primary School that I want
to give you are:

1.

2.

3.

If I could start primary school all over again something I would
do differently or more often is:

From,

ME

Your future self

REFLECTION

Read over your letter and ask yourself is there any advice that would be helpful to tell yourself now starting secondary school?

CHALLENGES

FORWARD

COMMON WORRIES (and some suggestions to help!)

Many students share a lot of the worries you have mentioned in the challenges box. You are not alone in feeling like this! Below are some common worries students have about starting secondary.

There is some practical hints and techniques to help calm us down when our worries feel too big.

SITUATION 1

I'm going to be in a new class in a new school and I am worried about how to make friends"

Going to secondary school can be different because you won't know everyone and it may take a bit of time to feel like you 'belong' in your new class/ new school. The important thing to remember is that EVERYONE will feel the same way and that you're not alone.

HINTS AND TIPS:

- Smile!
- Tell other new students your name and ask what they're called
- Find out what they are interested in
- Talk about shared interests
- Ask them if they want to do something at break-time.

SITUATION 2

“My new secondary school is really big and I am worried I might not know the way around or get lost and be late for class”

Most 6th class students feel a little anxious about going to a school which is bigger than their primary school. They might feel worried about getting lost or being late for a lesson because they're not sure of where the room is. A lot of secondary schools give students maps they can keep in their journal that will help them find their way around.

HINTS AND TIPS:

- Ask teachers and staff members for directions - they are happy to help you!
- Don't feel shy or afraid to ask an older student. Remember they were a first year student once so they know what it is like.
- Don't stress if you are a little late for class in the first week or two. Apologise and explain when you arrive. The teacher will understand.

SITUATION 3

“I’m worried about getting bullied by older students in my secondary school”

Most kids go through school without bullying being a problem. Bullying is not acceptable anywhere in school or outside of school. Everyone has the right to be treated with respect and enjoy a positive experience in school. Your school will have bullying policies in place to ensure that everyone is kept safe. If you experience bullying the most important thing to do is to talk to someone about it. It’s also your job to keep an eye out for others too.

HINTS AND TIPS:

- **Act brave, walk away, and ignore the bully.** Firmly and clearly tell the bully to stop, then walk away. Take deep breaths. Bullies want to get a reaction and soon get bored when they don’t. By ignoring the bully you’re showing that you don’t care.
- **Tell an adult.** Teachers, principals, parents, or any adult at home or in school can help stop bullying.
- **Talk about it.** Talk to someone you trust, such as a guidance counselor, parent, teacher, sibling, or friend.
- **Remember:** If you experience bullying it is not your fault. Try to spend as much time as possible in the company of people who make you feel good about yourself. These are the ones who matter!

SITUATION 4

“I’ll get too much homework and I won’t be able to manage”

Homework - ugh! No one likes too much of it but it’s just one of those things that you have to do. In first year you may start to get more homework however your sixth class teacher will have been preparing you for this by gradually increasing your homework this year.”

HINTS AND TIPS:

- The more organised you are, the less amount of time you’ll have to spend doing it
- Record all the homework you have to do clearly in your journal
- Make sure you have all the books and equipment that you need to complete your homework at home with you
- Join a homework club. Schools often run these after school once or twice a week. Here you can get support with your homework from a facilitator and also from other classmates.

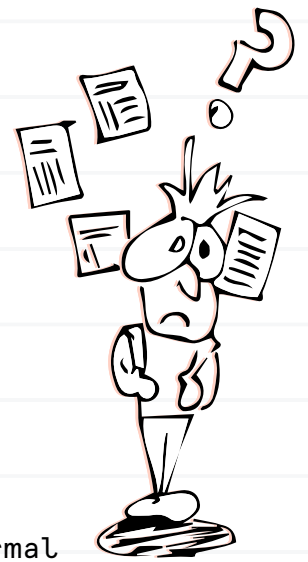
SITUATION 5: OVER TO YOU:

Come up with your own situation here:

SITUATION 5

What hints and tips would you give a friend in this situation?

COPING WITH WORRY...



Feeling worried about starting secondary is completely normal and every student will feel it to some extent. However for some students these worries can sometimes feel too big or too difficult to handle. Here are some practical tips and tricks you can try to help you feel more calm and relaxed.

Remember if you are having a lot of worries it is really important to talk to a family member or a supportive friend. Often talking things through with someone can make our worries feel smaller and easier to manage.

Below are different techniques to help you calm down and feel more grounded. Different techniques work for different people so you can try out a few of these and see which works best.

FIND YOUR BREATH!

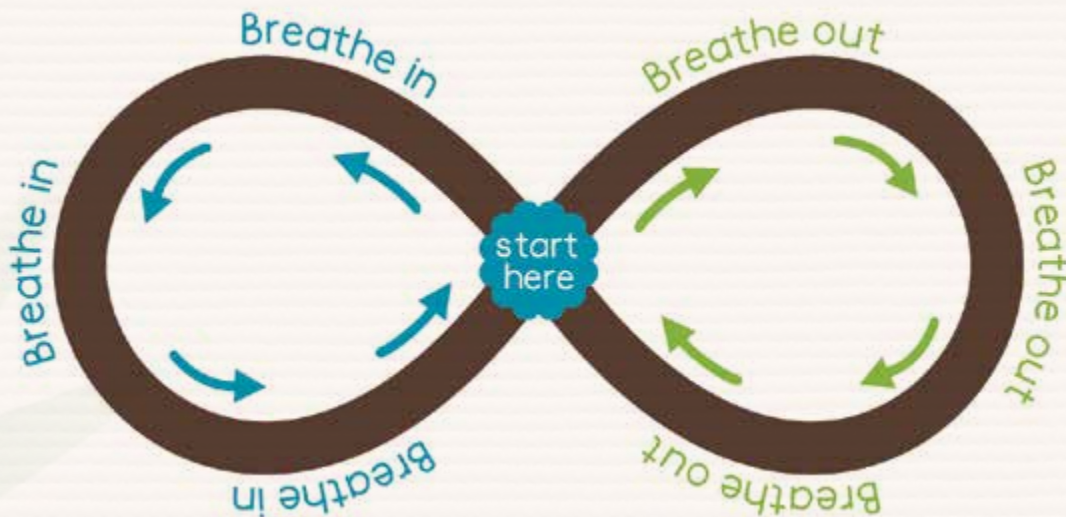
Did you know that breathing is one of the best tools we have to help us feel better?

BELLY BREATHING:

Place your hand on your belly and take 10 slow mindful breaths. As your belly rises count 1 and as it falls count 2 and so on to 10. You can do this anytime you need to feel a little calmer.

LAZY 8 BREATHING:

Draw a large figure of 8 lying on its side like the one below. Slowly continue to trace over it with a pencil or marker. As you trace the left side breathe in and as you trace the right side breathe out. Try to go as slow as you can. Keep going until you feel more relaxed.



MINDFUL LISTENING

Next time you have racing thoughts try this- sit down for a minute and close your eyes. Listen very carefully and be still. At first you might think there are no noises. But maybe you can hear the sound of a place, a car outside, a clock ticking, a bird or your ears buzzing. Count how many noises you notice in a minute.

KEEP A JOURNAL

Write down any thoughts, worries or feelings you may be having in a journal and keep it somewhere safe. This helps because when we have somewhere to put down our worries and keep them then they don't take up so much space in our minds.

PRACTICE GRATITUDE.

Next time you feel overly worried or sad take a moment to think of five things you are grateful for. These could be things like a good friend, a pet, the warm sun on your face, a supportive family member, some nice food or a time you felt really happy. Close your eyes and bring these things into your mind. Did they make you laugh or smile? Notice how your mood changes.

CREATE A "CHILLOUT IDEAS JAR"!

What are the best ways for you to calm down and relax? Write these down on pieces of paper and fill a jar. Maybe yoga stretches help calm you down? Perhaps drawing is soothing for you? Whenever your feelings become too big to handle pay a visit to the "Chillout Ideas Jar"

Here are ideas that you could include in your chillout ideas jar. Circle the ones you like to do and add more of your own. Include your favourites in your ideas jar.

RIDE A BIKE / SKATEBOARD / BLOW BUBBLES / COLOUR PAINT DRAW
TALK TO SOMEONE / LISTEN TO MUSIC / DRINK WATER / PLAY WITH A PET
PLAY WITH SLIME / WEAVE OR KNIT / PICTURE A PEACEFUL PLACE /
DO SOMETHING KIND FOR SOMEONE ELSE / KICK OR THROW A BALL / GO ON A
WALK OR HIKE / EXERCISE / WRITE IN A JOURNAL / BUILD SOMETHING
DO STRETCHES / DANCE OR SING / CLIMB A TREE / BAKE OR COOK
SOMETHING / DO SOME GARDENING / TAKE PHOTOGRAPHS / TAKE A BREAK
GO TO BED EARLY / GET UP EARLY / GET OR GIVE A HUG / DO A PUZZLE
SOAK IN THE BATH / PLAY SPORTS / READ A BOOK / GIVE YOURSELF A
MAKEOVER / WATCH YOUR FAVOURITE FILM / DRINK A WARM MUG OF TEA
COCOA / HANGOUT WITH A FRIEND / WRITE A STORY

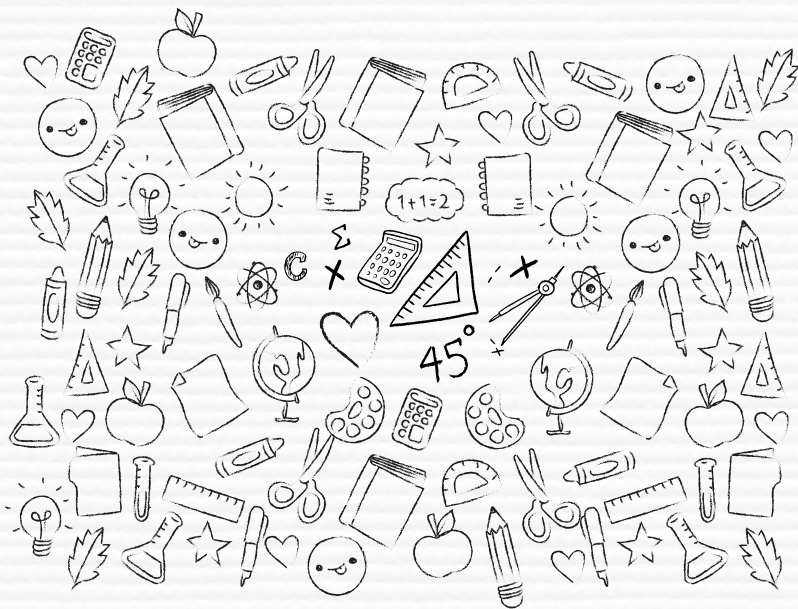


PRACTICAL ADVICE ON STARTING SECONDARY

EQUIPMENT:

In primary school, most of the equipment you need is kept in the classroom. In secondary school you will be expected to have your own pencils and pens and you will have to carry them all around with you. There are lots of other things you might need too. It might seem like a lot but you may be given a locker to store your extra books and equipment in.

Circle the equipment you will probably need and draw in any more you can think of:



SCHOOL RULES

Why do we have them?

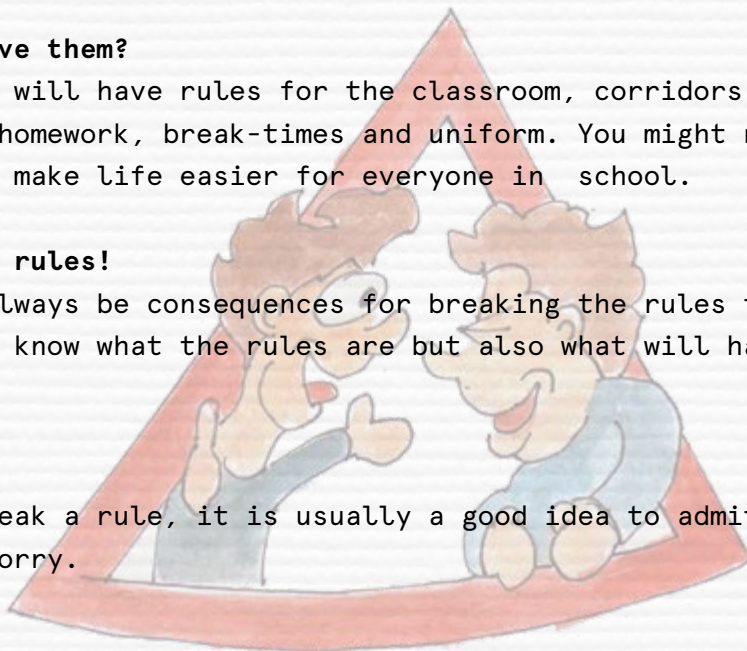
Every school will have rules for the classroom, corridors and assembly as well as rules about homework, break-times and uniform. You might not like them but they are there to make life easier for everyone in school.

Breaking the rules!

There will always be consequences for breaking the rules too. So it's not only important to know what the rules are but also what will happen if you don't follow them.

Apologising

If you do break a rule, it is usually a good idea to admit that you got it wrong and to say sorry.



AFTERSCHOOL CLUBS / EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

Secondary school isn't just about homework and exams! There are loads of afterschool clubs and extracurricular activities that provide great opportunities for you to learn new skills and enjoy some downtime. They are a great way to socialise, make friends and get to know people outside of the classroom. Examples of extracurricular activities include:

Athletics/ GAA / Running Club / Cross Country / Football / Hockey / Basketball / Badminton / Swimming / Debating / Animation / Student Council / Mentoring / Art Club / Drama Club / Photography / Woodwork.



Write down some of the activities you might be interested in trying:

THE TIME TABLE

One of the first pieces of information you will be given in September will be your timetable. It's very important because it not only tells you which lessons you will have that day but it also gives you a clue about the equipment you will need to pack in your bag the night before. It also tells you what time each lesson starts and finishes and in which room they will take place.



The timetable will also let you know which teacher you will have for each subject. Instead of just one teacher, you're going to have to get used to ten or more different people being in charge of your class! Often, the timetable will have the teacher's initials next to the name of the lesson.

You will probably have 5 or 6 different subjects every day and some will be in special rooms. For example science will usually take place in a laboratory. Here are some examples of what to expect:

English / Mathematics / Home Economics / Business / French, German / Engineering / Woodwork / Spanish / Science / History / Geography / Music / Art.

INTERVIEW

FAMILY MEMBERS!



Interview a parent or other older relatives about what they remember of their first day of secondary school.

ASK THEM QUESTIONS LIKE:

- What secondary school did they go to?
- What do they remember about their first day, and how did they feel?
- What were they most looking forward to/worried about?
- What activities did the school organise to help them to settle in?
- What advice do they have for you starting out in secondary?

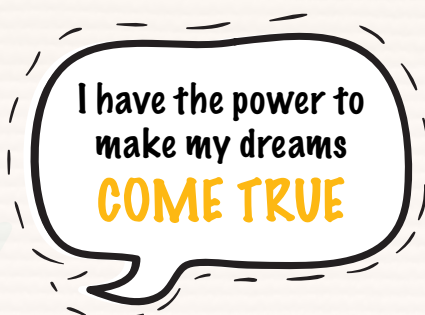
FAMILY MEMBER 1:

FAMILY MEMBER 2:

FAMILY MEMBER 2:

POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS

Read the positive affirmations below and choose the ones that are most helpful or meaningful. There are spaces for you to write your own affirmations as well. Cut them out and stick them on your bedroom mirror or else inside your new journal you'll get in secondary school as daily important reminder of your strength and potential!





POSITIVE AFFIRMATIONS

**I embrace
my new
challenges**

*I am proud
of myself*

**I AM
KIND TO
OTHERS**

I AM
I am brave
enough to
try

**WHEN I DON'T
SUCCEED
RIGHT AWAY
I TRY AGAIN.**

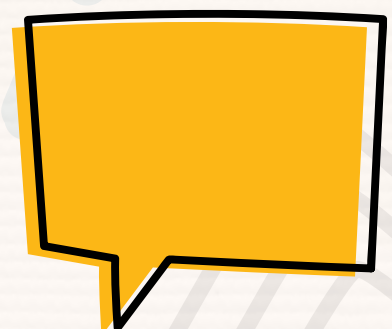
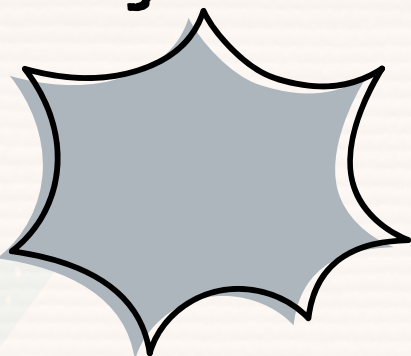
I focus
on my own
results

When I fail I say
"I can't do it YET"
and try again

**I believe
in myself**

**I ASK FOR
HELP WHEN
I NEED IT**

Write your own!!!





FOR THE GROWN UPS

The EOP (Educational Opportunities Programme) School Completion Programme funded under TESS (TUSLA Education Support Service) serves seven schools in the Blanchardstown area. Each year, beginning in April the programme offers weekly support to young people transitioning to second level. The work continues through to August with two interagency induction days held in the second level school. This booklet is an attempt to pull together a number of elements of what we would normally provide to students in small group and large group settings.

This year is a very different year from any other and what you hold in your hands is our attempt to acknowledge that and congratulate the young people and their parents and families on the great resilience that have shown over the past number of months. Never before have young people had to take this journey without the physical presence and support of their peers and teachers.

Conor Coady EOP Co-ordinator and EOP Project Worker Aimee O' Neill have co-created this workbook specifically for the primary school graduates of 2020. It draws on their combined knowledge and expertise of delivering supports to young people in schools. The support of Fingal CYPSC has been very welcome in the production of this booklet as has the support encouragement and feedback from schools in the Blanchardstown area.

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