

Supporting Children to Make a Successful Transition to the 2017 School Year



Children who have a positive start in their new class are likely to engage well and to experience academic and social success. A positive start is made possible when school and families work together.

A change of school can present opportunities as well as challenges for our children and we know that with supportive adults, the challenges can be effectively managed.

We all have a part to play in supporting children to manage this process well. We can do this by reminding them of their previous successful transitions both at school and at home.

We can also reassure children that their teacher will support them to be successful and confident through:

- ★ Creating the safe conditions for learning
- ★ The explicit teaching of routines, roles and expectations in this new environment
- ★ Activities that support and develop positive relationships and provide strategies for when 'mean on purpose' behaviour occurs.
- ★ Collaborative development of class rules and grievance procedures
- ★ Development of class identity and how the group looks when operating at its best (group norms)
- ★ Sharing of personal character strengths and intentional teaching of strategies to build wellbeing and to be flourishing

We can also remind children that what will be different in the new class at MPS will be small in comparison to what will be the same. We can support them to be realistic about the new class and to look for new opportunities. We can challenge their unhelpful thinking by focusing on what is present as opposed to what is absent.

We can encourage a growth mindset by modelling curiosity and wonder in preparing for the new class. Questions such as those below can activate children's existing problem solving skills and direct their attention towards a positive future:

- ☺ What do you already know about other class mates?
- ☺ What questions could you ask of your new teacher?

- ☺ What opportunities might there be to share your passion and be at your best?
- ☺ What might surprise you?
- ☺ What character strengths would be useful in getting to know others?
- ☺ What transitions have you already successfully made?
- ☺ What questions could you have and who do you need to ask?
- ☺ What new friends might you make?
- ☺ What strengths will you learn about others?
- ☺ What opportunities for new learning might there be in this new class?
- ☺ How could you bring your best self to day one?
- ☺ What would you like others to know about you?

We also know that transition is not a one off or even one week event. At MPS we support children to have a great start, to build a strong foundation in their new class and to continue as a powerful learner by building on prior learning and knowledge.

We know that all children are capable and competent and can make positive transitions. We work to provide them with the support and scaffolds to develop personal resilience skills that can be called upon when needed. These skills are best taught in the calm times so that when they are in a flurry or stressed, they have a bank of skills to call upon. These include asking questions, practising mindfulness and recalling prior accomplishments in making positive transitions and so knowing they can do it again.

If children are feeling uncomfortable, we can model the positive belief that the discomfort will be temporary and that they will experience the good feelings that come with learning new names, skills and routines and making a successful transition.

*Angela Falkenberg
Principal*

