



Dear Parents,



ELEVEN TIPS FOR STARTING SCHOOL

So he's off to school every morning now, like a big boy. But instead of the exuberance you expected, you find many days -- especially Monday -- starting with tears, or maybe a tummy-ache. He isn't faking. Anxiety affects the body, and can result in an actual upset stomach, especially in children. But don't worry, it's not unusual for children to need a little extra help adjusting to the start of school. Here are eleven tips that will help:

1. Facilitate your child's bonding with the teacher

Children need to feel connected to an adult they think will keep them safe. So when they aren't with their parents, they need to transfer their attachment focus to their teacher, or they're too anxious to settle down and learn. If you notice that your child doesn't feel good about school, contact the teacher immediately. Just explain that he doesn't seem to have settled in yet, and you hope she can make a special effort to reach out to him so he feels at home. Any experienced teacher will understand and pay extra attention to him for a bit. Many teachers assign the child a special job, so they feel connected and like that they have a role to play each day. At the same time talk positively to your child about his teacher so that he realises this is a person that you can trust.

2. Facilitate bonding with the other kids

Children need to feel bonded with at least one other child. Ask the teacher if she's noticed who your child is hanging with. Ask your child which boys he'd like to invite over to play. If he isn't comfortable with how the other child would respond to a playdate invitation, you can always invite the mom with her son for ice cream after school, or the entire family for Friday night dinner. You don't need anything fancier than pizza, and by the end of the meal, the children will be racing around the house like long lost buddies. And who knows? Maybe you and the parents will hit it off.

3. Give your child a way to hold onto you during the day

For many children the biggest challenge is saying goodbye to you. Develop a parting ritual, such as a hug and a saying: "I love you, you love fun, have a great day and I'll pick you up at 1!" Most children like a laminated picture of the family in their backpack. Many also like a token for their pocket, such as a paper heart with a love note, or a pebble you found on the beach together, that they can hold for reassurance if they feel alone.

4. Calm his fears

Most school anxiety is caused by worries that adults might find irrational, such as the fear that you'll die or disappear while he's at school. Explain that it is completely "normal" to be a bit anxious about a new situation, but he can trust that his teacher will take care of him. Point out that naturally people who love each other don't like parting, but he'll have fun, you'll be absolutely fine, the school can always contact you, and your love is always with him even when you aren't. End every conversation with the reassurance "You know we ALWAYS come back to each other" so he can repeat this mantra to himself if he worries.

5. Help your child laugh out his anxieties so he doesn't have to cry

Giggling is your child's way of venting anxiety, and any child who is having a tough school adjustment is feeling anxious -- fearful -- inside. Give him as many opportunities to giggle as possible. If you can spend some time every morning playing a chase game in your house, or whatever gets him giggling, you'll find that his separation from you at school goes more smoothly. The exception to this is tickling, since that seems to involve a different area of the brain and may even build up stress hormones. Instead, chase him around the house or have a pillow fight. And here are some games that specifically help kids with separation:

"Please Don't Leave Me." When you've been reading to him and he starts to get off your lap, pull him back to you and tell him how much you love holding him, and to please not go away from you EVER and you want to hold him always. Keep your voice light and playful rather than needy so he feels free to pull away, but keep scooping him back to you and begging him, dramatically, to stay. The point of this is to heal that fear inside him about how much he needs and wants you, by letting him be the one to "leave." As always, ham it up and go for giggles.

The Bye Bye Game. This is a simple version of Hide and Seek that triggers just enough separation anxiety to get him giggling. Say "Let's play Bye-bye." Start to leave -- but not through a door, as if you're really going, which would be too scary. Instead, open the cupboard door as if you're about to go into it, which already makes your child amused. Then act like you're the one who is scared to separate, and jump back to your child and cling. Say "I missed you! I never want to be apart from you!" Finally, recover your courage enough to

say "Ok, let me try that again! I will be brave!" and start to leave again. But again, come back and grab him before you are even out of sight, which should get him giggling, especially if you play-act being silly and excessively worried. Keep playing this, letting him yell or you yell, as long as he is giggling, to surface his anxieties about your leaving him.

6. Stay connected

Start your child's day with a five minute snuggle in bed or on the couch, just bringing 100% of your attention to loving him. Make sure that every day after school when you're reunited, you have special time with each child to hear all about his day. (Without any interruptions especially from technology). Make sure to schedule in a long snuggle after lights-out to increase his sense of security.

7. Be alert for signs about why your child is worried

Most of the time, children do fine after a few weeks. But occasionally, their unhappiness indicates a more serious issue: he's being bullied, or can't see the blackboard, or doesn't understand anything and is afraid to speak up. Ask calm questions about his day, listen deeply, and reflect what he tells you so he'll keep talking. Start conversations by reading books about school together; your librarian can be helpful. Offer your own positive school stories ("I was so nervous the first week I couldn't even use the bathroom at school but then I met my best friend Maria and I loved first grade") and the assurance that he'll feel right at home soon. Do a little pretend play with stuffed animals, acting out a "puppet show" of a little one who doesn't want to go to school, and ask your child "I wonder why he's scared? What should we tell him?" If you sense a bigger issue that you can't unearth, it's time to call the teacher.

8. Ease the transition

If your child gets teary when you say goodbye, use your goodbye routine and reassure him that he'll be fine and you'll be waiting at the end of the day. If he continues to have a hard time separating, see if the teacher can give him a special job every morning to ease the transition.

9. Make sure you're a few minutes early to pick your child up

This is crucial. Not seeing you immediately will exacerbate any anxieties. If you are not collecting your child remind him of the after school arrangements on your way to school every morning e.g. Today you will be going to Aftercare straight after school, you will have lunch, do your homework and play, I will collect you at 16:30.

10. Downplay the time younger kids spend with you at home

If a younger sibling is at home with you, be sure your older child knows how boring it is at home and how much the younger sib wishes he could go to big children's school. Taking your child back to visit his pre-school will also remind him that others have moved on and he is at "big school" now like his other friends from last year.

11. Create a calm household routine with early bedtimes and peaceful mornings

If you have to wake your children in the morning, they aren't getting enough sleep. Children who aren't well-rested don't have the internal resources to cope with goodbyes, much less the rigors of the school day. Complete as much prep as possible before bedtime like taking out school clothes, leaving the packed bag next to the exit door and setting up for breakfast. And get yourself to bed early too, so you can deal calmly with the morning rush and get everyone off to a happy start.

WELCOME

I would like to extend a warm welcome to all our Grade 0, 2018 boys and their families. My wish for you is that your years at St Peter's will be extremely happy and that many wonderful memories will be created during this time.

I would also like to welcome the following new boys to our school:

Grade 1: Luke Dickson, Caden Howell, Aganang Mashabela, Khotso Olifant, Daniel Scott and Alec van der Merwe.

Grade 2: Taonga Banda and Michael Strauss.

STAFF

Grade 2: Miss Lee-Ann Pickering has joined our JP teaching team. In a very short period of time she has endeared herself to boys, parents and staff. I am sure Lee-Ann will be adding to the educational value we offer.

Sport: With Craig Jooste's promotion the Sports Department has changed in structure and will be in the capable hands of Stephen Malema and Devon Everitt. A team of coaches will continue to assist and support them.

ST PETER'S INTERNS

Congratulation to our 2017 Interns who produced excellent results at the end of last year. Between them they wrote 91 exams and scored 40 distinctions.

The JP Boys Interns group for 2018 is as follows: Gugu Nkosi and Nash Rahube (Grade 0); Solly Sithole and Catherine Senyakanyaka (Grade 1); Jo Harmse, Chenepe Thage and Jacky Kotsi (Grade 2). I am sure you will join me in wishing them an awesome year both in class and with their studies.

EXTRA COST EXTRAMURALS GRADE 0-2

These timetables will be distributed at the various Parent Information Evenings. If you have queries please contact the coach directly (contact details are on the back of the timetable). These activities are outsourced and the school office has

no information on their day to day running. Should you need further assistance in this area please contact our Director of Sport: Barry Detert on bdetert@stpeters.co.za

INFORMATION EVENINGS

Thank you to the Grade 1 parents who attended their evening last night. These evenings are vitally important as they give you an overview of your son's year and allow you to meet the other parents in your 2018 class. The Grade 0 evening is on **Monday, 22 January** and Grade 2 on **Wednesday, 24 January** both at 18:30 in the Junior Prep Hall.

JUNIOR PREP BOYS TIMES 2018

Starting time in the morning is **7:30**. We encourage our boys to go outside from 7:00 each morning which allows them to "let off steam" and focus in class during the early morning timetable.

Finishing time is as follows:

Grade 0: 13:00 Monday, Tuesday and Thursday and 12:45 Wednesday and Friday.

Grade 1: 13:15 Monday, Tuesday and Thursday and 13:00 Wednesday and Friday

Grade 2: 13:30 Monday, Tuesday and Thursday and 13:00 Wednesday and Friday

The staggered finish is to allow for better car park flow throughout the school.

There is a supervised Waiting Class between 12:45 and 14:00 daily. Any child not collected by 14:00 will be taken to Aftercare. This is to ensure every JP boy is supervised at all times. The Aftercare facility runs until 17:30 and the children are provided with a hot lunch and refreshments. This facility can be used full time, part time or on an ad hoc basis. Details are available from the school office.

CHAPEL

Our first Chapel Service will be at 8:00 on **Wednesday, 24 January**. We will be celebrating all boys who have had a birthday between 01 and 28 January. Parents are reminded that they are always welcome to join us for this service, especially if it is their son's birthday.

JUNIOR PREP PICNIC

The annual JP picnic will take place on **Friday, 26 January** on Newlands Field starting at 17:00. Braais will be provided, should you wish to braai. This is a joint event with the JP Girls School and provides a wonderful opportunity for our parents to socialise and get to know one another.

MUSIC

Grade 2 Choir starts on Wednesday, 24 January from 13:00 to 13:30. If there are boys who want to join the choir but are unable to attend on a Wednesday, I will repeat the work each Thursday during second break, from 12:00 to 12:30. Our first performance will be on Ash Wednesday during Chapel. I would love to have all the Grade 2 boys in the choir this year

Individual music instrument lessons

Here is the link to follow for the application form for Grades 0-2

<https://goo.gl/forms/FgwK1jastLKinPcE3>

Sandra van Wyk: JP Music

GOLDEN MOMENT

Whilst praying at our morning prayers this week one of our Grade 0 boys asked his teacher why she was going to sleep (she had her eyes closed for the prayer)!

I would like to use this opportunity to wish our JP families a happy, peaceful and fun-filled 2018.

Warm regards,

Kenda Melvill-Smith

FORTHCOMING EVENTS 2018

<p>Monday 22 January Grade 2 Clubs commence (during the Integrated Day Programme) Finishing times: 13:00 Grade 0; 13:15 Grade 1; 13:30 Grade 2 18:30 Grade 0 Information Evening & Class Social</p>
<p>Tuesday 23 January Grade 1 Clubs commence (during the Integrated Day Programme) Finishing times: 13:00 Grade 0; 13:15 Grade 1; 13:30 Grade 2</p>
<p>Wednesday 24 January Planned water outage – please send extra water bottles 8:00 Chapel (birthdays 01-28 January) Finishing times: 12:45 Grade 0; 13:00 Grade 1 & 2 13:00 Grade 2 Choir 18:30 Grade 2 Information Evening & Class Social</p>
<p>Thursday 25 January Finishing times: 13:00 Grade 0; 13:15 Grade 1; 13:30 Grade 2</p>
<p>Friday 26 January Finishing times: 12:45 Grade 0; 13:00 Grade 1 & 2 17:00 JP Picnic on Newlands Field</p>

COMMUNICATOR ST PETER'S

Please remember to re-personalise your channels for new grade and sports age groups.

If you do not have the Communicator yet, here is how:

There is a link below to a **Google Form** – which you are required to complete, please. These details are needed in order to set up the once-off verification step.

LINK:

<http://goo.gl/forms/kvMdLCEq0G>

PLEASE ALLOW **1 WORKING DAY** ONCE YOU HAVE COMPLETED THE GOOGLE FORM BEFORE YOU DOWNLOAD THE COMMUNICATOR TO ENABLE YOUR DETAILS TO BE VERIFIED.

You can then download the app, via Appstore or Playstore.

PHOTOGRAPH USAGE

From time to time, we like to use photos that we have taken of the boys. They may be published in the newspaper, in a magazine, on Facebook, on the d6 Communicator Gallery or on our website/on-line. If you DO NOT wish us to use photos of you or your son in the media, please inform **Diane Fraser** in writing at dfraser@stpeters.co.za

Diane Fraser (Marketer)