

UPDATED
TOP 10 TIPS
from
10 TOP
EDUCATORS

FOR PARENTS
St Margaret's



TIP 1

TOP 10 TIPS

for starting primary school

1. Talk to your child

Talk to your child regularly about attending Prep in the New Year. Talk about different aspects, being careful not to place too much emphasis on the academic expectations, such as learning to read and write or having to work hard to learn. Often children will come home disappointed on the first day because they have not learnt to read. It's not long before children learn they need to work hard – let it evolve!

2. Talk to the school about their expectations for students starting in Prep

for example: writing, counting and identifying shapes, colours

3. Visit the new school before the new year

- attend functions through the year such as open days, orientation days, parent information nights etc
- when you are there, point out important areas to your child, e.g. toilets, playground, eating areas, tuckshop
- try to meet the teacher and teacher assistants (be aware teachers may change year levels from one year to the next).

4. Knowing the new school

- refer to the school as the child's *new school*
- find out about the structure of the school day (morning tea, lunch), playtime area,
- drive past the school whenever you can and point it out and refer to the *new school*.

5. Eating at school

- if the child is not used to eating from lunch boxes, practise at home both opening the lunchbox and unwrapping food. Both these activities require refined fine motor skills.
- offer variety in the lunch boxes to ensure your child eats. This will help with their emotional wellbeing too.
- talk about the process for tuckshop.

6. Uniform

- find out if your child will need to change during school e.g. swimming, HPE
- practise changing, especially clothes with buttons
- for school or sports shoes – practise tying laces. At the beginning of the year, velcro sports shoes are handy, but encourage laces later in the year to develop tying laces skills.

7. Helping your child recognise their name

- encourage your child to recognise names, especially his or her own. Ideas include:
 - look at the letters
 - model writing the word at home
 - have the child's name up around the home
- label school bag with photo tag
- if stationery books are required they will need to be covered
- use name labels that are consistent in appearance (e.g. machine/computer generated) so your child recognises the 'sameness' of his or her name.

8. Pencil case and school bag

Practise using the new school bag and if your child is required to have his/her own pencil case, practise using it. A lot of planning and organisation is required to hold the case, find equipment, make decisions, take it out and close the bag.

9. Read stories to your child about starting school

This not only prepares the child for learning to read, but it also gives you the option of choosing books that deal with the topic of starting school. These books deal with the first day and what to expect:

- *Maddie's First Day* by Penny Matthews, illustrated by Liz Anelli
- *First Day* by Andrew Daddo, illustrated by Jonathan Bentley

These are about being separated and feeling anxious:

- *Love* by Corrinne Averiss, illustrated by Kirsti Beautyman
- *The Invisible String* by Patrice Karst, illustrated by Geoff Stevenson.

10. First day

- talk to your child beforehand about the procedure for the first day
- if you feel your child is going to be upset, arrive as close to starting time as possible
- talk to your child in the classroom and leave him/her with the teacher
- don't be upset if there are a few tears – this is quite natural. Children settle down quickly when their parents leave and they become involved in the activities in the classroom.
- ensure that your child knows exactly where you are going to meet him/her or his/her going home arrangements.

TIP 2

TOP 10 TIPS

supporting your daughter's transition to a new school

Starting at a new school is a significant milestone that can influence your daughter's confidence, social connections, and academic performance. Every child adjusts differently, but these updated tips can help ease the transition and set her up for a positive experience.

1. Normalise Mixed Emotions

Acknowledge that feeling excited, anxious, or even uncertain is perfectly normal when starting at a new school. Reassure your daughter that it's okay to have these feelings and that they often fade as she settles in.

2. Foster Responsibility and Positivity

Encourage your daughter to focus on being a kind friend and an engaged student from day one. A positive attitude, enthusiasm, and a smile can go a long way in building new connections. Your optimism about this new chapter will also help set the tone for her experience.

3. Participate in Orientation Events

Orientation days are designed to make students feel comfortable. Encourage your daughter to attend these events to meet her teachers, explore the school campus, and connect with peers. These activities can help her feel more prepared and confident.

4. Familiarise With Daily Routines

Help your daughter understand her school's schedule, including start and finish times, lunch breaks, and class timetables. Knowing what to expect can reduce uncertainty and help her feel more in control.

5. Get Organised Early

Involve your daughter in preparing for the school year by purchasing books, uniforms, and supplies ahead of time. Being organised will help her feel more confident and ready for her first day.

6. Plan Travel Arrangements

Practise the route to school together if she'll be walking, cycling, or using public transport. If possible, accompany her or arrange for someone to do so until she feels comfortable traveling independently.

7. Build Relationships with School Staff

Introduce yourself to key staff, such as her Head of Year, who will likely be your first point of contact for any concerns. Open communication with teachers fosters a strong support network for your daughter.

8. Encourage Peer Support

Many schools assign new students a buddy to help them settle in. If your daughter's school doesn't have this system, consider connecting her with a student who lives nearby or knows the school well.

9. Join Extracurricular Activities

Encourage your daughter to participate in one or two school clubs, teams, or programs. Extracurricular activities are excellent for meeting peers with shared interests and strengthening her sense of belonging.

10. Set Clear Expectations

Discuss important topics like school policies, who to contact for help, and how to navigate challenges such as crossing busy roads or catching public transport. Preparing for various scenarios will help her feel confident and capable from the start.

With preparation, support, and a positive mindset, your daughter can thrive in her new school environment.

TIP 3

TOP 10 TIPS

for transitioning to boarding

1. **Spend time with your child** looking over written information sent from the boarding house.
2. **Make every effort to form a positive relationship with the boarding staff** caring for your child to ensure the lines of communication remain open.
3. **Develop a leave plan with your child** prior to the beginning of each term, detailing when you will visit or take your child out on leave.
4. **Develop a set of agreements regarding communication with your child**, including the use of mobile phones, and share this agreement with the boarding staff.
5. **Teach your child to make their bed every morning and tidy their room.** This will ensure they are into a routine before attending boarding school.
6. **Encourage your child to pack their school bags the night before** and to be responsible for any other sporting/musical equipment needed the next day.
7. **Encourage your child to be responsible for their own laundry**, putting away clean clothes and taking dirty clothes to the laundry.
8. **Prepare your child for prep (study).** Initially this is one hour for Year 7 boarders at St Margaret's. Encouraging your child to read or do extra homework for an hour each night will prepare them for prep.
9. **Personal hygiene can be one of the issues that young girls struggle with in boarding so don't take this for granted.** Speak to your child about showering once or twice a day, using deodorant, changing underwear, and not wearing the same uniform for more than two days.
10. **Physical changes may occur while your child is at boarding.** Speak to your child about what to expect.

TIP

4

TOP 10 TIPS

for good learning

Learning well requires the appropriate environment, attitude and behaviours. The following tips will assist you to create the right conditions for high quality learning.

1. Know you can learn – believe it because it's true

Learning begins with the understanding that it is possible.

2. Be curious – ask questions

Be interested in what is happening around you. Use your mind and think beyond what is your direct experience.

3. Be prepared to struggle and persevere

Learning should be difficult and good learning requires grit. You must keep going for longer than a week, longer than a month, even longer than a year to make real progress.

4. Be actively engaged in the classroom

Active engagement reduces the time you need to spend consolidating your understanding outside of the classroom. Ask and answer questions and try to do the thinking before your teacher or peer gives an answer.

5. Use your failures – they are your most powerful teachers

When you do not succeed you are given an opportunity for growth and progress. Think about what you might do differently to achieve a better outcome.

6. Talk to your teacher regularly

Use your teachers for guidance by asking them specific questions about the best way for you to make progress.

7. Reflect on the feedback you're given – use it

Think about what your teachers say. Process the information and make a plan for your future learning. Learning can only happen in your head.

8. Accept challenges – they are the fuel for good learning

Learning can only happen when you engage in an activity that is unfamiliar or difficult or new. Push yourself and do not be scared of difficulty.

9. Follow a schedule

Making a plan helps you to feel in control of what you need to do. Always make sure you leave time for rest and recreation. Change your plan regularly – this will help you to stick to it.

10. Read, read, read

Reading helps you to deepen your understanding of almost any topic. Read information from different sources and make sure you ask yourself about the reliability of what you are reading.

TIP 5

TOP 10 TIPS

to help your
child stay safe
online

We live in a technological world and technology is a wonderful thing that should not be feared. Simple safety tips can help ensure that you and your child get the most when using such devices.

1. Have Open Conversations About Online Safety

Talk regularly about the risks and benefits of the internet. Encourage your child to share their online experiences, concerns, and questions with you.

2. Set Clear Boundaries and Rules

Establish guidelines for screen time, age-appropriate apps, and websites. Make sure your child understands these rules and the reasons behind them.

3. Educate About Privacy

Teach your child not to share personal information online, such as their full name, address, school, or phone number. Discuss the importance of strong passwords and keeping them private.

4. Know Their Apps and Platforms

Stay informed about the social media platforms, apps, and games your child uses. Review their privacy settings and ensure they understand how to block or report inappropriate behaviour.

5. Encourage Critical Thinking

Help your child recognise scams, fake news, and phishing attempts. Teach them to question suspicious links, emails, or messages and to verify information before believing it.

6. Foster Respectful Online Behaviour

Discuss the importance of treating others with respect online and avoiding cyberbullying. Encourage empathy and responsible use of social media.

7. Be a Role Model

Demonstrate good online habits yourself, such as putting devices away during family time and respecting others' privacy online.

8. Use Parental Controls

Utilise parental control tools and settings to restrict access to inappropriate content, monitor usage, and set time limits on devices.

9. Teach Them to Protect Their Digital Footprint

Explain how online actions can have long-term consequences. Encourage them to think before posting or commenting and to avoid oversharing on public platforms.

10. Build Their Confidence to Ask for Help

Assure your child that they can come to you or another trusted adult if they feel uncomfortable, worried, or threatened online. Reassure them that they won't get in trouble for seeking help.

TIP 6

TOP 10 TIPS

**fostering
resilient, kind,
and confident
children:
updated
parenting tips**

Good parenting helps nurture children who are resilient, kind, and confident contributors to society.

1. Listen Actively

Children need to feel heard. Sometimes they aren't seeking solutions but simply want someone to validate their feelings. Be a patient sounding board and let them express themselves freely.

2. Prioritise Quality Family Time

Spend meaningful time together as a family. Shared meals without screens offer a chance to connect, discuss daily experiences, and explore broader topics like community events or global issues.

3. Encourage Independence

Set clear boundaries while allowing your child to make decisions and take manageable risks. Let them handle challenges in school and friendships, stepping in only when truly necessary.

4. Embrace Failure as Growth

Teach your child that failure is part of learning. Normalise setbacks and emphasise the lessons they bring, fostering a mindset of resilience over perfectionism.

5. Support Without Overstepping

Be a steady presence in your child's life. Offer guidance and a safe space to navigate consequences rather than stepping in to resolve every issue for them.

6. Be a Source of Encouragement

When your child faces difficulties, consistent encouragement can make all the difference. Even if they seem dismissive, your support often resonates more deeply than it appears.

7. Praise Thoughtfully

Offer genuine and specific compliments. Acknowledge effort, perseverance, and acts of kindness rather than focusing on generic attributes like beauty or intelligence.

8. Create One-on-One Moments

Spend dedicated time with each child individually. This focused attention fosters strong bonds, allows for open communication, and makes them feel valued.

9. Pick Your Battles Wisely

Not every disagreement needs to escalate. Decide which issues matter most and let smaller ones slide when appropriate, ensuring your energy is spent on what truly shapes your child's development.

10. Show Unconditional Love

Love your child for who they are, not just for what they achieve. Balance this with clear boundaries to ensure they grow with confidence and accountability.

TIP 7

TOP 10 TIPS

to help your
child navigate
disappointment
at school

Schools are inherently group-focused environments where the needs of the majority may sometimes take precedence over individual needs. While the sense of belonging to a group offers many benefits, there are occasions when your child may feel disappointed or that their needs have not been fully met. As a parent, here's how you can effectively respond while maintaining a strong partnership with the school.

1. Listen and Gather Facts

Encourage your child to explain the situation calmly and in detail. Focus on gathering factual information, rather than an emotional response, to understand the full context.

2. Encourage Perspective-Taking

Ask your child reflective questions like, "What might the teacher or others involved say about this incident?" Helping them consider different perspectives can foster empathy and critical thinking.

3. Discuss Next Steps

Ask your child if they would like you to contact the school. Emphasise the importance of ensuring their account aligns with the full story so that any communication with the school is constructive and not based on incomplete information.

4. Be Transparent with Your Child

If you decide to reach out to the school, make it clear to your child that this won't be done in secrecy. Transparency helps build trust and ensures that the issue can be investigated thoroughly.

5. Follow the Right Channels

Begin by contacting the relevant pastoral or academic staff member rather than going directly to the Principal. This approach fosters collaboration and avoids bypassing the individuals best positioned to address the matter.

6. Stay Objective and Constructive

When speaking with school staff, remain calm and avoid emotional or accusatory language. Focus on asking questions and collaborating to find a solution rather than making personal criticisms.

7. Model Problem Solving

Work with the school staff to develop a plan for resolving the situation. Whether or not a mistake or injustice occurred, modelling respectful collaboration with authority figures teaches your child valuable life skills.

8. Support Resilient Strategies

Encourage your child to use appropriate strategies to cope with the situation. Seek advice from school staff to help your child build resilience and manage disappointment constructively.

Once the issue has been addressed and resolved, avoid holding onto resentment. Leave past events in the past to maintain positive future interactions with the school.

9. Turn Disappointments into Learning Opportunities

Use every disappointment, no matter how small, as a chance to teach your child valuable life skills like resilience, empathy, and a broader perspective. These attributes will help them thrive in both school and life.

TIP 8

TOP 10 TIPS

to be aware
of when
approaching
the school
about an issue

It has been said that “a perfect school is no preparation for life.” Of course, there is no perfect school, just as there is no perfect parent, teacher, or student.

Everyone in a school community has the obligation to preserve the psychological safety of all its members. The key to a positive culture at our school is a commitment to the St Margaret's Way. When things don't seem right or feel wrong and you need to contact the school, please remember the following top tips.

So, you need to contact the school:

- 1. Remember, there are two sides to every story.**
- 2. In the first instance, contact the correct person:** e.g. Teacher, Head of Year, Head of Faculty or Dean. Schools are hierarchical places and have appropriate structures to manage issues at the correct level.
- 3. Be aware of tone and language,** particularly in email communications. Please be polite and respectful. All staff want the best outcomes for your child.
- 4. Avoid sending emails late at night or early in the morning when you can't sleep.**
- 5. It's best to be curious about the issue** and ask questions of the staff member you contact, rather than accuse. Understand that your child may not have told you the complete story.
- 6. Staff will investigate the matter and get back to you.** Please know that schools are bound by privacy and sometimes cannot give you information about other students or staff or the consequences of their actions.
- 7. Let us know what the school needs to do to help your child feel more connected to the school.**
- 8. The school cannot do its job if parents indicate that their child cannot be spoken to by a member of staff without the parent present or at all.** This is not acceptable to any school and it will not be agreed to.
- 9. Please have patience,** understanding that staff have a 48-hour rule to get back to you. This is because they may be occupied all day with classes, grounds duties, meetings, and extracurricular activities.
- 10. Remember two very important questions of the St Margaret's Way, which apply to all members of the community:**
 - How do I want to feel every day when I come to school?
 - What am I doing to ensure others can feel this way?

Please get involved:

- Attend events and get notifications from the POD.
- Consider joining an extracurricular parent support group or the P&F.
- Support school rules, including uniform policy.
- Attend parent/teacher interviews and information nights.

TIP 9

TOP 10 TIPS

**to help your
child manage
conflict and
build lasting
friendships**

Conflict is a natural part of relationships, and learning to navigate it effectively helps children develop stronger connections with their peers based on compassion and respect. These skills are essential for improving social experiences at school and beyond. Since conflict resolution develops with age and experience, here are some updated tips to help your child grow into a confident and empathetic problem solver:

1. Teach Positive Communication

Help your child understand that how they speak during a conflict can greatly influence the outcome. Encourage calm, respectful language and offer examples like:

“Can we talk about this and work together to solve the problem?”

Modelling this behaviour yourself can reinforce the lesson.

2. Practise Through Role-Playing

Role-play different friendship scenarios with your child to build their confidence. Practise common situations they might encounter and model effective conflict resolution strategies. When conflicts arise in your life, demonstrate the behaviour you want them to adopt.

3. Encourage Social Opportunities

Arrange playdates or group activities to help your child build friendships in a relaxed setting. These interactions outside school can strengthen bonds and provide opportunities to practise social skills.

4. Teach Emotional Regulation

Help your child understand the importance of controlling emotions during conflicts. Acknowledge that feeling angry or frustrated is natural, but aggression is not acceptable. Teach simple techniques like deep breathing or counting to ten to help them stay calm.

5. Foster Empathy and Fairness

Reinforce the principle of treating others as they would want to be treated. Encourage them to consider the feelings and needs of others during conflicts, promoting resolutions that benefit everyone involved.

6. Be a Trustworthy Listener

When your child faces friendship challenges, create a safe space for them to share their feelings without fear of judgement. Regular open conversations about school life build trust and ensure they feel supported.

7. Avoid Criticism or Judgement

When discussing conflicts, focus on guiding your child rather than criticising them. Constructive conversations help them feel empowered to resolve future issues independently.

8. Let Them Solve Their Own Problems

Resist the urge to step in and confront others on your child's behalf. Instead, teach them conflict-resolution strategies and allow them to practise handling disagreements. This builds resilience and independence.

9. Monitor Technology Use Responsibly

Encourage safe and respectful online interactions by keeping devices in shared spaces and monitoring usage without being intrusive. Discuss cyber etiquette and guide your child in making positive choices online.

10. Support Group Activities and Hobbies

Encourage participation in extracurricular activities or community events where your child can meet peers with shared interests. These environments foster meaningful friendships and help develop teamwork and social skills.

By teaching your child these strategies and supporting their efforts, you'll equip them with the tools they need to manage conflict effectively and form lasting, respectful relationships.

TIP 10

TOP 10 TIPS

for adjusting to university life

(to pass onto your daughter when she graduates from secondary school)

Graduating from school and transitioning to university is an exciting and significant milestone. With new academic expectations, increased independence, and a wealth of opportunities to explore, it's important to be prepared for the challenges and changes ahead. To help make the transition smoother, we've compiled the top ten tips to support you in adjusting to university life. Whether you are moving away from home or studying locally, these insights will help you navigate your first year with confidence and success.

1. Adjusting to the new environment – build social networks

Get involved! Attend O-Week orientation activities, explore student clubs and societies, join a sports team, and introduce yourself to your classmates. Universities also have online communities – consider joining course-specific forums or group chats to stay connected and informed.

2. Manage risky behaviour – make informed choices

University life is full of new experiences, including social events where alcohol may be present. If you choose to drink, do so responsibly – know your limits, stay with trusted friends, and always have a plan to get home safely. Be mindful of online safety and consent in social situations, both in person and digitally.

3. Take advantage of your university support services

Universities offer a range of support services, including academic skills workshops, career advice, wellbeing programs, and mental health resources. Many universities now provide 24/7 online support and digital counselling – don't hesitate to reach out if you need guidance or assistance.

4. Independent study is key – develop strong habits

University requires more self-directed learning than school. Follow course outlines, keep up with readings, review notes regularly, and stay ahead of assessments. Use productivity apps or digital planners to stay organised and manage your workload efficiently.

5. Know your limits – balance study, work, and social life

If you're feeling overwhelmed, consider adjusting your workload, cutting back on work hours, or prioritising study over social events when necessary. Equally, remember to schedule breaks and downtime to maintain your wellbeing.

6. Avoid procrastination – stay organised and in control

Planning ahead is crucial, especially around assessment periods. Map out due dates, work commitments, and personal time at the start of each semester. Consider using time-blocking techniques or study apps to track progress and maintain focus.

7. First year can feel frustrating – embrace the process

Many first-year courses focus on foundational knowledge, which may feel broad or less engaging at times. Trust the process – these courses build the essential skills you'll need for later years, where you can explore more specialised topics.

8. Prioritise mental health and stress management

University life can be demanding, so it's important to build strong coping strategies. Balance your studies with activities that help you recharge – exercise, music, creative hobbies, or mindfulness. If stress becomes overwhelming, seek support from university services or trusted mentors.

9. Reach out if you need help – you're not alone

Adjusting to university life can be challenging, especially if you're living away from home. If you're feeling isolated or struggling with coursework, talk to a friend, lecturer, or student support service. Many universities offer peer mentoring programs – consider signing up to gain additional guidance.

10. Look after yourself – health is a priority

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle is key to academic success. Eat nutritious meals, get enough sleep, and exercise regularly. Even small habits, like walking to class, can help you stay active, improve focus, and support overall wellbeing.

If you would like to know more about a St Margaret's education for your daughter (Pre-Prep to Year 12) or son (Pre-Prep), please contact our admissions team:
Tel: +61 7 3862 0777
Email: admissions@stmargarets.qld.edu.au

St Margaret's Anglican Girls School
ABN: 93492310839
11 Petrie Street Ascot QLD 4007 Australia
Telephone: +61 7 3862 0777
reception@stmargarets.qld.edu.au
www.stmargarets.qld.edu.au



St Margaret's School Council Ltd
ABN: 69069684019 CRICOS Code: 00511K
A School of the Society of the Sacred Advent

