



# Nice to Meet You: Making Friends at a New School

**This article contains mentions of the following: anxiety, isolation.**

The days are getting colder and the nights are getting darker, which can only mean one thing: summer is nearly over and a new school year beckons. Yep, September is upon us, and pencils will be getting sharpened, lessons prepared and uniforms put on for a brand-new term.

You may be a total newcomer to your school, however, and have got a very natural anxiety because of it. Perhaps you've moved with your parents, whether that's a couple of miles down the road or from another country completely. It may have been a difficult move for you, and you may have had many friends at your previous school. On the flip-side, this may mark the start of a new chapter in your life - one that you can seize with both hands. Hopefully, our tips may help to integrate you into a new friendship group and adjust into your surroundings.

## Worries

There will be lots of things on your mind as you start at a new school, but we hope to focus on the worry of making new friends. First of all, it is worth mentioning that it is totally normal to be worried about starting a new school. You may know one or two people already, but you may know no-one - either way, it can be a scary prospect. Loads of young people find themselves in a situation like yours every single day. Making friends is a natural part of life and is something you will most likely never stop doing! Don't let the worries overtake your mind - there are friends out there for everyone, even if the gems are sometimes hard to find.

## Introducing yourself

That first hello can be scary, and taking the first leap into what could be a new friendship - or not - can be an anxiety-provoking act. You could just jump in with a classic, "Nice to meet you, I'm...", or you may prefer to just ask a general question. Ask what their favourite film is, what music they like, what books they read - any easy going conversation starter.

Try your best, smile and always be polite when introducing yourself. Maybe **make a light-hearted joke** (never about someone), or maybe share an interesting or funny fact.



## Lesson chit-chats

Most of your day will be spent in lessons, so they are a natural space to meet new people and scope out those with similar interests to you. Of course, make sure you complete your work while doing this – we don't want you to be getting into trouble!

You could ask people you are sat with if they have any hobbies, play any specific games, or support a particular sporting club. It's great if they have similar interests but if they don't, fear not.

By conversing with someone, you may be able to find out more about them as a person – if you have nothing in common, but they are a kind person who makes you laugh or is fun to be with, who cares? The world is full of different people, and some of the best friendships are made up of people with very little in common.

Finding someone with a common interest can help get the fire of a friendship started, though, and the similarities can really help with the fuel.

Maybe you're taking part in a [creative writing assignment](#) and can bond over your love of fiction. Or maybe you're studying something in history and find you're both lovers of Victorian England. Or perhaps you both just love playing a particular sport. You may sit next to different people for different lessons, so you could meet a wide-range of interesting people.

Simply put, your seating neighbour could well turn out to be a new best friend – so give them a chance - but make sure you get that work done!

## School clubs

You can check with your teacher or school to see if they run any kind of extracurricular activities. This could give you a way of throwing yourself into a group of like-minded individuals. The club could be anything: a lunchtime movie club, an after-school Dungeons and Dragons group, or an arts and crafts club. It is well worth asking to see if anything is available that you are interested in.

## Looking in different places

If you feel comfortable, you could look for friends in different places. You might approach someone sat on their own at lunch or listen out in the yard for something which interests you. From there, you may be able to spark a conversation. You may also be allowed into certain rooms during different periods and find yourself becoming friends with someone who plays games in the library or helps teachers clear rooms at lunch.

## Asking for help

Not everyone has the ability to start a conversation from scratch, and that is totally fine! If you are struggling to fit in or make those initial approaches, it could be worth talking to a teacher. They may be able to help introduce you to pupils who can help you settle in or direct you to people they think are similar to you. You may be able to ask a teacher who you know well or feel comfortable with, or it may be a support teacher or head of year. Someone should be available and willing to help you out.

**Are you starting at a new school? What are the main worries that you have? How do you think you will meet new friends? Let us know in the comments below.**

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