

Organising Myself

Organisation Skills Ages 11-18

Students who experience difficulty organising themselves throughout the day may benefit from utilising a variety of strategies. It is essential to discuss the options with both student and parents to ensure the strategies become automatic and useful for the student. They may initially need considerable adult support, but the level of support can be gradually reduced as the student's independence increases.

Preparation for the school day:

Using two week timetables:

- Use different colours to code Week 1 and Week 2 on a timetable and on a year planner at home

Reading timetable and remembering items:

- Transfer information, regarding e.g. sports kit, library book, musical instruments, onto a weekly planner
- Use pictures/symbols to remind the student to take specific items to school, e.g. sports kit, library book, and musical instruments
- Use a colour coded system to identify all information relevant to a subject e.g. Maths = red, English = blue. Book covers are available in different colours and will also help to protect books
- Use checklists or post-its on the bedroom wall
- Duplicate timetables, e.g. home/school/locker door

Packing school bag:

Students with poor self-organisation skills often carry everything with them to ease their anxiety:

- Encourage the student to empty the bag at the end of each day. Set up an organised storage system at home, e.g. filing trays, drawer/box file, colour coded to correspond with 'colour' of subjects; have storage space for large pieces of equipment, e.g. kit, musical instruments
- Encourage the student to pack the bag the night before to reduce stress and anxiety in the morning
- Use a checklist and cross-check with timetable/planner

- Purchase a school bag suitable for the student's requirements. Consider size, type, style, number and accessibility of pockets (enough to assist with organisation but remember, too many may cause confusion)

Organisation within the school day:

- Self and belongings – consider provision of a designated place (a box in learning support, locker) for the student to leave specific equipment, e.g. musical instrument, laptop, PE kit, books etc.
- Lockers or a designated place will be useful for students who prefer to carry everything everywhere. Carrying heavy bags will place excessive strain on the spine/joints of students who are already at risk due to physical disabilities or co-ordination difficulties
- When writing on loose sheets of paper, encourage the student to write name, subject, date and number on the top of each page
- Encourage the student to file sheets at the end of each lesson by using:
 1. Coloured plastic pocket files
 2. Exercise books covered in coloured plastic book covers
 3. A4 ring file with dividers coloured for each subject with triangular cardboard pocket inserted into the back of the exercise book to slot work in and keep in order
- Ensure workplace is uncluttered – return the equipment to the correct place after use
- Lunch breaks – raise staff awareness of the need to support the student with the management of money, tray, lunch box
- Use a rough book/small pocket-sized notebook to jot down important things to remember
- Make a list of things to do and cross things off when they are done
- Keep post-it notes in a bag/working file to write notes to yourself. Decide on a consistent place to stick/write messages
- Leave clear space on timetables for adding reminders
- Use transparent pencil cases for ease of visual checking
- Simple check lists in 'link book/planner' to remind the student of items they regularly need to take home e.g. blazer, laptop
- Encourage the student to read directions aloud **twice** to ensure they have understood them
- Highlight directions with a marker
- Check off each step as it is completed – Homework
- Use a wall calendar to record important dates or events
- Ensure regular homework and after-school activities are noted on a weekly timetable
- Use a 'plan' book to keep track of daily/weekly/monthly homework assignments
- Use a homework diary/folder/box file
- Dividers could be used in a ring binder/folder to identify days of the week and homework can be filed under the day it is due in
- Colour code homework for filing according to subject
- Ensure the student has understood and correctly recorded homework set. If necessary, provide adult/ peer support so that the student remembers homework
- The student may benefit from attending homework clubs