

# Moving Up↑

For **children** born with a cleft lip and/or palate

This booklet is for children born with a cleft lip, a cleft palate, or both, who are moving to secondary school.

Moving up to secondary school is exciting. You get to do new things, meet new friends and become a teenager!

Although it is exciting, lots of children feel a bit worried too. It is normal to worry about new things and places.

This booklet talks about things some children ask the Cleft Team about moving school. We hope it is helpful!



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## **Tell us about your secondary school**

My secondary school is called:

.....

Are there any people you know who will be at the school?

.....

.....

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Some things I am looking forward to are...

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Some things I am not looking forward to are...

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Some things I am worried about are...

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Most people have a mix of things they are looking forward to and things they are worried about when starting a new school.

In this booklet we talk about things some people ask the cleft team about when they are starting school. We hope it is helpful!

## 1. Making new friends

Some people will already know lots of people in their new school. Other people won't. All schools are different.

Even if you will know people in your new school, knowing how to meet new people (and make new friends) is really important.

Most of us feel a bit nervous about meeting new people. This is because we don't know what they are like, or if we will get on.

Our top tips for meeting new people are...

### 1. Look confident and friendly



Even if you feel like **this**...

... try to look like **this**!

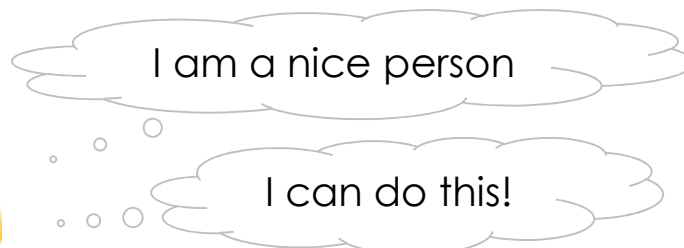
Even if you feel nervous, look confident and friendly by:

- Smiling
- Looking someone in the eyes
- Standing straight

### 2. Think confident and positive thoughts

When we worry, we can think worrying thoughts that make us more worried! When meeting someone new, we might have worries like "They won't like me" or "I can't do it". This doesn't help.

When meeting someone new, think positive things like:



### 3. Easy ways to get talking

It can feel hard to talk to people you don't know yet! However, some easy ways to get talking to someone new are:

- Give them a **compliment** (say something nice)
- Ask them a **question**
- Tell them **something interesting** about you



I like your pencil case!  
**(Compliment)**

What school did you come from?  
**(Question)**

I went to a football match yesterday  
**(Something interesting)**

### 4. Don't worry if you don't get on!

Not everyone we meet becomes our friend. And that's okay!

What's important is that you were friendly, and tried. The more you talk to new people, the easier it gets. And the more likely you are to find a new friend!

### 5. Think of places to meet new people

The people in your new classes may be the ones you see most, but they are not the only ones to meet!

Other good places to meet people are clubs or groups. These can be inside or outside school. They are a great way to do things you enjoy and meet others.

Are there any things you want to try, or groups you might like to join? Some ideas are sports, art, coding or prayer groups. If so, talk to your family about what you can do.



## **2. Talking about your cleft**

If you have been given this booklet, it is because you were born with something called a cleft lip, a cleft palate or both.

Some children know a lot about their cleft. Some don't know much. Some think about it lots. Some don't think about it at all.

As you get older, it's useful to know a bit about your cleft. Here are the **Cleft Team's Top Facts About Clefts!** Did you know...

### **1. "Cleft" just means "gap"**

So cleft lip just means "gap in the lip", and cleft palate just means "gap in the palate". Some people call the palate the 'roof of the mouth' instead, but they mean the same thing.

### **2. All babies start off with gaps in their lip and palate**

For most babies, these close up before they are born.

### **3. Clefts happen when these gaps don't close before birth**

### **4. Nobody knows why this happens!**

### **5. Over 1000 babies are born with a cleft each year in the UK**

### **6. Clefts are closed with surgery when a baby is very small**

Some people have more surgery later too, if they need it.

## **Facts about your cleft**

All clefts are different. Ask your family to help fill the facts about yours! If they're unsure, ask the Cleft Team when you see them.

My cleft was in my      Lip ☐      Palate ☐      Both ☐

If you had a cleft lip, which side was it on?

Left ☐      Right ☐      Both sides ☐

I have had this many surgeries for my cleft: .....

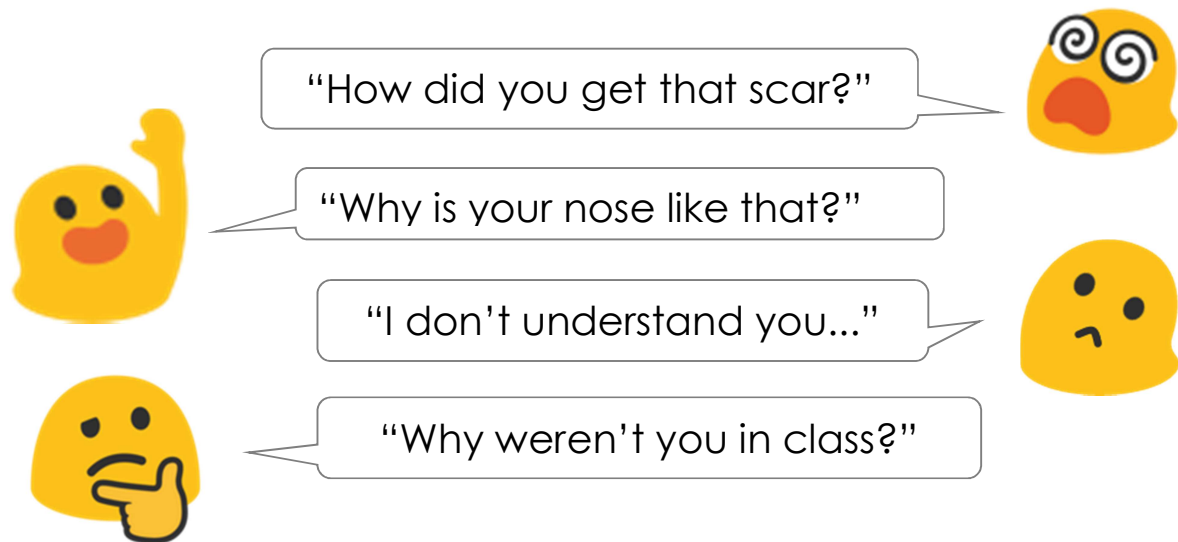
## Questions and comments

Everyone has something that makes them different. There is absolutely nothing wrong with something or someone being different. **'Different' does not mean 'bad' - it just means different!**

Some children may sound a bit different if they had a cleft palate, or look a bit different if they had a cleft lip.

All children born with a cleft go to appointments sometimes, to make sure it isn't causing any problems.

People who notice these differences might ask about them, or comment on them. This could be things like...



Most people who ask questions or make comments are just curious. Most don't know what a cleft is, or don't know much about them. We can all be nosy when we see something new!

People asking or saying these things might happen a lot, or not much at all. It might bother you a lot, or not much at all. You might find it:

- Fine
- Annoying
- Boring
- Upsetting

Either way, it can help to have easy responses ready if people do ask or comment about your cleft. Here are some ideas from our friends at Changing Faces (see back page for website).

## 1. If someone asks a question / makes a comment: **Explain!**

Most people who are curious about something that looks or sounds different just want to know *why*. **Explaining** can help. Other children have said things like this:

"I was born with something called a cleft \_\_. I had surgery"

"I was born with a gap in my lip and nose"

"I had surgery when I was a baby"

"There's a hole in my mouth. Some sounds are hard to say"

How would you like to explain? Use words you feel happy saying, that say what you think people need to know. It can be short or long. Ask your family to help if you're not sure!

**To explain my cleft, I can tell people...**

.....

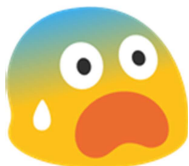
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## 2. If someone seems worried: **Reassure!**

If someone seems more worried about your cleft than they need to be, **reassure** them! For example:

If they say....      ...you could say

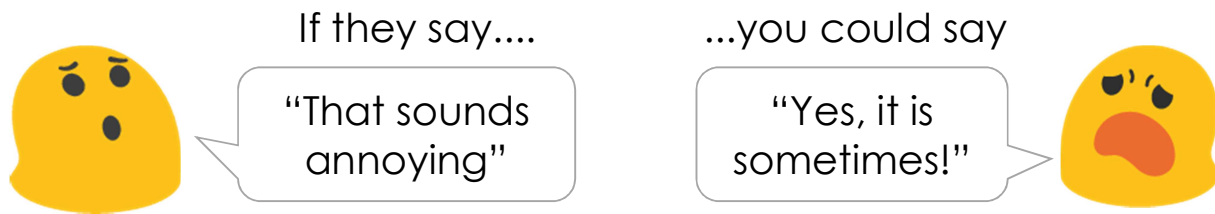


"That must be awful!"

"It doesn't bother me!"



However, if they are worried by something you think is a problem too, you might want to agree! For example:



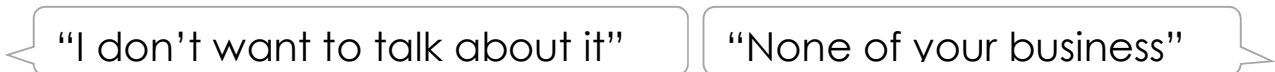
### 3. If you don't want to talk about it: **Divert** or **Assert!**

Sometimes, you might not feel like explaining. Maybe someone asks more than you want to answer. Maybe you don't like them very much, or some other reason. If you feel like this, you can:

**Divert** by changing the subject, like...



or **Assert** (say firmly) that you don't want to talk about it, like...



### 4. If someone stares: **Look back and smile!**

Some children tell us that they see some people looking or staring if they notice a difference. This can feel uncomfortable.

If you see someone staring at you, **look back at them and smile!**



If you see **this**...      ...do **this**!

It may sound silly, and you may feel nervous, but most people feel embarrassed if they realise they are staring, and will stop.

### Finally, If someone is nasty: **Read about bullying**

Most people who notice a cleft don't mean to hurt your feelings (even if it feels rude). But if someone is nasty about your cleft or anything else on purpose, read our page on bullying.



### 3. Ways to manage school worries

We all worry sometimes. Common things children say they worry about in secondary school are...

- Work and homework
- Falling out with friends
- Social media
- Getting lost
- Detentions
- Bullying



If anything happens at school (or home) that makes you worried or upset, good steps you can take for any problem are:

#### 1. STOP

If you notice you are worrying, **take deep, slow breaths and tell your mind to slow down.** Worrying can make your thoughts go really fast, which can make you feel more worried!

#### 2. THINK

**Ask yourself: what can I do?** What are the different options you have? Is there someone who can help you? For example, if you fall out with friends, will it help to talk to them, or someone else?

#### 3. DECIDE

**Ask yourself: what do I choose to do?** Out of the options you thought of, what do you want to do? When should you do it?

#### 4. DO

**Do it!**

#### 5. UNWIND

Once you're out of the deciding and doing part, **take time to feel better and relax.** Read our 'feeling good' section for ideas.

## **Bullying**

Some children worry about bullying when they move to secondary school. It might be because they have been bullied before, or have heard about it happening to someone else.



**Bullying is when someone does something to hurt someone else on purpose.** This could be:

- Physically hurting them (i.e. hitting)
- Saying, doing or showing hurtful things to or about them
- Leaving them out
- It could happen in person, or on social media

Bullying is not the same as friends or family teasing for fun. However, if their teasing upsets you, the below might help too.

### **What to do if you are being bullied**

As well as following the steps for managing worries on the last page, particularly helpful things to do if you are bullied are:

- **Tell an adult**: It might feel hard, but it can really help to tell an adult you trust (i.e. parent, teacher). They can help you think through what you want to do, and/or help you do it.
- **Tell a friend**: If others are unkind, spend time with people who care about you. Sharing feelings can help you feel less lonely.
- **Consider your options carefully**: Responses to bullying may include ignoring it, talking to them, or moving class. Only you can decide the best thing to do. Think of as many options as you can (with an adult if possible), then the good and bad things about each. This can help you to decide what to do.
- **Look after yourself**: Bullying can make you feel really bad. Read the next section for tips to help you feel better.

## 4. Ways to feel good

Whether at school, home or anywhere else, it's really important to know ways to feel good. These ideas might help most when you're having a bad day, but can help on normal days too!



### Good thoughts

**Positive self statements:** Think of or write down good things about yourself- things you are good at or proud of. Like:

**I am kind   or   I am good at football**

Thinking good things about yourself is not vain. It's important!

**Suit of armour:** If you're worried about something, imagine putting on or wearing a suit of armour. Picture it around you when you are doing something you find scary.

### Good feelings

Here are some things you can try to help you feel calmer:

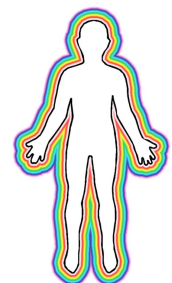
**Breathing relaxation:** Sitting or lying down comfortably:

1. Breathe in slowly and deeply for 7 seconds
  2. Breathe out slowly for 11 seconds.
- Repeat 10 times or more.



**Body relaxation:** Sitting or lying down comfortably:

1. Scrunch your hands as tight as you can,
  2. Hold for 5 seconds
  3. Totally relax your hands for 10 seconds.
- Repeat for arms, shoulders, face, middle, legs and feet.



**Apps:** There are free apps with feel good activities on them, like **Calm** and **Smiling Mind**. Ask your family before downloading!

## Good things to do

**Things you enjoy:** Make time for things you enjoy doing. For example: drawing, reading baking, a sport, playing games, talking to friends, listening to music that makes you feel good...



**Good eating:** Eat regular meals through the day (with fruit and vegetables if you can!), and drink lots of water. Try not to rely on caffeine or sugar for energy- good sleep and eating are better!

**Good sleeping:** You need 9 - 9½ hours sleep a night! Have a set time for going to bed and waking. If you have a phone or tablet, stop using it 30 minutes before bed to wind down. Don't keep it next to you at night to avoid distraction- just turn the alarm up if you use it!



## 5, More help (if you need it)

**We hope you found this booklet helpful, and that you have a great time at your new secondary school!**



However, if you are ever worried or upset about something, don't be afraid to ask for help. Here is a list of people who can help with worries about...



**School:** Family, friends, teachers

**Cleft:** Family, friends teachers, Cleft Team  
We also recommend visiting [clapa.com](https://www.clapa.com) and [bethscleft.com](https://www.bethscleft.com) if you want to find out more about cleft, or meet others who have one.

**Looking different:** Family, friends, teachers, Cleft Team.  
We also recommend visiting [clapa.com](https://www.clapa.com) and [changingfaces.org.uk](https://www.changingfaces.org.uk) to find out more or get support around looking different.

**Anything else:** Family, friends, teachers