



THE AMERICAN SCHOOL IN ENGLAND



HELPING CHILDREN MEET THE CHALLENGES OF CHANGE

Moving abroad can be exciting and enriching for every member of your family. After the initial exhilaration, however, many people experience a dip in enthusiasm as they face the realities of adjustment.

FOR FAMILIES, HELPING CHILDREN TO COPE WITH THE TRANSITION IS OFTEN A PRIORITY.

Changing schools under any circumstances entails challenges, and parents are often anxious to see that their children are settled and forming new friendships.

Navigating the sea of change can be especially daunting for expatriate families. There are several reliable strategies to mitigate the challenge and help your children get off to a good start in the midst of change.



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Really listen

Your child will more readily confide in you if you try not to react until you have really heard what they are saying. Although it is tempting to try to provide quick fixes, or list all the “good things” you are experiencing, this sometimes sends the message that you just don’t understand.

Acknowledge their emotions

All children, but particularly adolescents, want to be heard and have their feelings acknowledged. Accept the strong emotions that accompany the difficulty of leaving friends, school, teams, and activities.

Empathize and find ways to discuss that you share their concern and miss your friends too, and that you understand that change can be hard.

Don’t get stuck in the past

While technology provides many ways to stay in contact with the people you miss, it is essential to look forward as well as back.

If your child is young and natural friendships are not developing at school, ask the class teacher to recommend a child who might be a good fit with yours. While you can’t make “play dates” for adolescents, you can research new opportunities for them to pursue a sport or activity they enjoy, so that they can meet other teens with similar interests.

Look for support

If you feel you need it, schools often have counselors who can assist your family. Don’t be afraid to take the initiative—you are your child’s best advocate. Children will often follow their parents’ example. If you are patient, maintain a sense of humor, and make discovering your new home an adventure, they too are more likely to become open and enthusiastic about the new life that awaits them.

“Asking for support does not mean that you cannot deal with the situation yourself.
It is the recognition that you don’t have to.”



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TASIS The American School in England offers a challenging American curriculum with Advanced Placement (AP) courses and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme to day (ages 3-18) and boarding (ages 13-18) students. On its beautiful Surrey campus, students from more than 50 nations are emboldened to flourish as principled, open-minded, and compassionate members of a global community.

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