

Mr Blissenden's Top Tips for a successful 2016

As we start the year I'd like to share some tips on setting yourself and your child up for a successful year...

1. Ask about your child's day. Stay involved in your child's education, beyond helping with homework. Even small things, like asking a child what happened at school, can be the difference between a child who unplugs at the end of the day and one who continues thinking about what they learned. Give them the kind of feedback that acknowledges and respects their feelings so they know you are really hearing them.
2. Let your child see you making mistakes. Parents are their child's first teacher and their lifetime teacher. Part of being a teacher is teaching your child how to deal with making mistakes. Let them see that you can make mistakes and deal with it so they will understand it's not a big deal and they can cope when they trip up.
3. Keep up to date with what is happening at school. Check for the Newsletter each fortnight and read through all the information, note important dates on your family calendar or in your electronic calendar. You can also follow what is happening on our website and by using the SkoolBag app. Show your child you value education and they will too.
4. Don't tell your child that you weren't good at school ("I was never a good speller" or "I couldn't do maths"). Some parents might feel intimidated by the thought of talking with their children about maths, especially in the upper grades, but maths is here to serve you, not to trip you up. Maths should make life easier, and mastery can start at home with parents showing that they're not frightened by numbers. Make learning fun!
5. Get organised with a colour-coded system and a checklist. Older students are expected to be more independent and manage their assignments themselves, but as they transition from primary school to high school, they might find it hard to keep track of everything. Try using colour-coordinated folders and notebooks to help children keep their material for different subjects organised. Keep a written checklist by their school bags so they can make sure they have packed everything they need.
6. Don't compare your child with others. Don't put pressure on children to be just like others. There's no such thing as the child that's like every other child. They are all different. They all have strengths and weaknesses, they all have talents and challenges.
7. Help your child make connections to literature. To help your child get the most out of books, focus on problem-solving, social skills and life experience. Take your child to the zoo (life experience). Teach them to ask an adult for help if they lose something (problem-solving) or to hold the door for others (social skills). With skills like these, children will be able to relate their own life experiences to those of book characters, improving their comprehension. If they don't have these life experiences, when they are asked to make deeper connections to reading material, it's hard for them.
8. Don't do everything for your child. Sometimes it's faster to do things yourself than wait for your children to complete a task. But having everything done for them means they don't learn take care of themselves. Empower your children to think for themselves and be more responsible for themselves.