

## **Photobooks- the why, the how, and the when?**

**Children on the first day of school can be excited.** They remember their transition before the summer, they have family or friends in the same school, they understood their teacher's smile, and they like their new school uniform.



**For some children, the transition to school can feel traumatic.** They may not have the understanding, processing, or memory skills to use their summer term experience. They may find the sensory experience of new clothes painful. They may not have the language to share their anxiety, which can prevent key adults from intervening effectively. For some it may even be the first time they have left their family. It may even be just one in a long line of transitions, each one unsettling the child more.

**Some children will need a photobook for their transition times in the summer term, so it is ready for visit days.**

The best photobooks are completed using InPrint so that pictures with short phrases are easily accessible. Some key phrases and pictures might be:

- I am going to visit school to see my new teacher.
- Sarah is coming with me / Mummy is coming with me.
- We will go into the classroom.
- I can stay in the classroom with my teacher Mrs. Smith while Mummy goes for a cup of tea.
- Mrs. Smith will read us a story.
- After the story, I can play in the sand / with the trains.
- Mummy will get me, and we will go home.
- Tomorrow I will go back to nursery.

**The visit photobook is more like a social story.** It prepares children and reassures them that a trusted adult will be with them, and it is just a visit; they do not have to stay. Of course, some children really struggle once they have been to 'big school' for a visit because they think that is it and they never have to go back to nursery!

## For September, the photobook should show:

- A picture of the school uniform to remind children of the clothes they wear on a school day.
- The entrance the child will use to enter the school grounds.
- The entrance to the school building that they will use.
- Where they hang their coat and bag.
- The adults they will see first in the morning.
- Where they say goodbye to the adult bringing them.
- The carpet where they will sit.
- The classroom inside where they will work.
- The classroom outside where they will work.
- Where they keep their drink.
- Where they have assembly (take a photo of the room empty and full—it looks very different!).
- Where they have PE (again, show it with apparatus as it will look very different).
- Where they have their lunch and who will help them.
- Where they get their lunch bag/school dinner from (what the plates look like).
- Where they play outside, if different from the outside workspace.
- Which door they leave, or where they greet their home adult, if it is different.
- If children are using before or after school, include that too.



**Many schools have photobooks ready to be used.** For some children, the act of taking the pictures themselves with a trusted adult is of huge benefit. The ownership of making the book helps them feel a little more in control. The best way to give the child their book, if they don't make it themselves is to share it during the last weeks of term and then for them to take it home in August. It is then ready to be left on the sofa or at a table, to be used over the summer as a steady, but not overwhelming, reminder of the excitement to come

## Photobook Do's and Don'ts

DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make it positive</li> <li>• Make it personal</li> <li>• Use Communicate in Print</li> <li>• Make sure the adult photos are smiley and up to date</li> <li>• Get the right photos- if they will come in through a different door don't use a photo of the main entrance</li> <li>• Share it with the parent</li> <li>• Explain how to use it over the summer- for gentle fun sharing, like a story book, preparation not dire warning!</li> <li>• Make the language accessible to the child</li> <li>• It is expensive but make it in colour- the world is colour, and it also gives value to the book.</li> <li>• If there are choices, for example plates at lunchtime, photo of all the colours and then 'You can choose' <u>or</u> "You will be given' a plate for your lunch.</li> <li>• If there are pictures of children in it make sure you have permission</li> <li>• Think about what you could gain. It is a nice job for Year 2 or Year 6 to do rather than simply take an adult's time. It can also help them reflect on their history in the school and the change that they face.</li> <li>• Perhaps a child receiving a photobook for juniors or secondary might like to make a photobook for a child coming into Reception.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set rules you will not keep 'On Monday we have PE.' Is that every Monday even in the holidays, even on a Bank Holiday, even if the Queen is coming.... Start the book with 'On days you come to school' and for specific activities 'Usually on Monday we have PE.'</li> <li>• Take a picture of the yellow door if it is being painted blue over the summer. If the child has the language to understand it could be a talking point but other than that try Google or co-pilot images for the closest match possible.</li> <li>• Bind it as a book- make it individual pages ring bound or simply thread ribbon through. If something changes you can make a quick substitution without having to do the whole thing again</li> <li>• Presume that taking one off the computer from last year is the best way of getting the job done.</li> <li>• Don't have the wrong child's name ...it has been done and only spotted after it was laminated and bound!</li> <li>• Forget to check people's names. Don't forget staff may change their name at some points.</li> <li>• Forget to check spellings. It is really embarrassing to spell teacher wrong, and very easy!</li> </ul>