

Morning routines that reduce friction

Small, predictable changes can reduce decision-load and conflict on difficult school mornings.

Your role

Keep school informed, report absence using the school's process, share relevant barriers early and work with the school on agreed actions. Legal rules differ across the UK, so use the official guidance for your nation.

The night before

- Prepare clothes, bag, medication, lunch and transport where possible.
- Keep bedtime and wake time broadly consistent.
- Agree the first three morning steps so there are fewer decisions under pressure.

In the morning

- Use short, calm prompts rather than repeated explanations.
- Reduce choices when your child is overwhelmed.
- Build in a small buffer for predictable sticking points.
- Keep adult conversations about attendance away from the child when they become heated or repetitive.

If the morning breaks down

- Use the pre-agreed school contact route.
- Record what happened briefly: trigger, time, symptom/distress, what helped.
- Return to the plan later when everyone is calmer and look for the pattern, not blame.

One-week experiment

- Change one thing only, test it for several mornings, and review whether it reduced friction.

Use this leaflet as a conversation starter. It is general information, not legal, medical or safeguarding advice. If you are worried about immediate safety, use the appropriate local emergency or safeguarding route.