



Organisational Strategies for Students

Being organised is about managing belongings and using time effectively to complete tasks. Organisational skills are an important component to be able to initiate and persist with classroom-based activities and can help reduce stress or anxiety in the classroom. Being organised is extremely important for tasks that place a high demand on working memory, mental flexibility and problem solving. There are many simple ways to help students become better organised to help with getting school work and other tasks completed and to help the day run more smoothly, efficiently and with less stress.

Keywords: *organisation, self-organisation, self-management, school*

Below are some ideas that might help students become more organised.

Daily Routines

- Implement a whole-class daily schedule (with both words and visuals) which all students can refer to. Provide students with organisation difficulties with a more specific daily schedule if required, or alternatively, provide the whole-class schedule as a copy they can place on their desk.
- Actively review a student's new timetable each time it changes. Make sure they have an accessible copy of their timetable, both in their diary and inside their locker door. Consider asking students to use the timetable to answer questions about where they go at certain times.

Organising Belongings

Schoolwork	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a folder or document wallet to keep all schoolwork and notes together. • Have a different book for each subject. • Use plastic sleeves for storing and protecting paperwork. • Use colours to help organise information and, in turn, organise learning (e.g. colour coded timetable, colour coded subject books, colour coded filing system). • Provide students with checklists to ensure that all steps or procedures are followed. Checklists can also be useful in incorporating what materials are needed for different assignments or tasks. • For longer assignments, break down steps and provide goals or examples of what is expected when each step is complete. Provide checkpoints and timeframes for additional guidance if required.
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Desk/ locker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicit teaching of how to organise a locker, pencil case and work area is recommended to assist students to know what is expected. Ensure they understand where items are supposed to be kept. • A checklist may be useful to assist in organisation, for example a checklist of what is needed for each lesson (e.g. diary, timetable, pencil case, textbook). • Identify a place or container for different belongings, so they are easy to find. • Arrange drawers so items are clearly separated (e.g. use dividers or baskets). • Keep only necessary items on top of the desk - remove items, especially mobile phones and electronic equipment, that are tempting or distracting. • Regularly clean out school bag and pencil case to remove unwanted items. • Take a photo of what an organised space should look like and use this as a visual cue
Homework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a diary to record or store things such as homework, due dates, required items to bring to school, or any notes or letters from the school. • Consider implementing individualised homework planners to explicitly guide students to plan out their homework. For example, the planner might contain columns for when students will complete different tasks, what they will need for each task, and/or where they can go if they need help. For some students, adding a spot for teachers to initial that students have filled in their planner can help parents to be sure of what homework their child does have. • Have a supply of spare stationery items at home – paper, pencils, ink, glue, plastic sleeves. • Positive home-school connections will support students in achieving organisational success, as organisational strategies may be used across settings.
Personal belongings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clearly label all belongings - this might be by name, or perhaps a coloured ribbon tied to the school bag so that it is easy to identify. • Have a school bag with different pockets or sections for different items. • Have a separate bag for sports clothes. • Have a separate bag for library books. • Take only the required books and belongings to school. • Put things away after use. • Provide written or visual lists of belongings that need to be brought home and keep this where the student packs up their belongings to return home



Time Management

- Promote students in wearing a watch or having a time telling device (e.g. computer, iPad) readily available to keep track of the timeset the alarm for important times throughout the day.
- Have a designated time to complete homework.

Written Information and Instructions

- Keep written information simple.
- Use a card or piece of paper to visually block out information that is not needed at the time.
- Use highlighters to mark key words and key pieces of information.
- Use visual/graphic organisers (e.g. Venn diagrams, word webs, flow charts, story webs to help organise and remember information).
- Use sticky notes to mark pages of books.
- Use visuals to support understanding (e.g. pictures of items or things that need to be done).

Promoting Independence

- Plan out and write a list of things that have to be completed - keep the list length realistic.
- Learn to prioritise appropriately (e.g. think about what item of work is due first and start there).
- Have a place to write down questions, especially if something has not been understood, and arrange a time with teachers to go through these questions.
- Keep personal details handy (e.g. phone number of parents, address).
- Know the name and location of any person at school who can assist (e.g. school counsellor, teacher).
- Keep lists of strategies for learning (e.g. repetition, grouping, visualisation) to refer to when learning new tasks.



Working with Students

- Students will respond differently to various strategies. For example, some students might respond well to decluttering and setting clear goals, whereas another student might benefit from taking regular breaks and focusing on prioritisation. Sit down with the student to discuss what they think will work best for them and introduce just two or three strategies at a time.
- Make time to review how strategies are working. Students should be able to reflect on how their organisation and performance has improved or stayed the same since employing the strategies. This reflection time can then be used to reinforce the strategies or to alter or introduce new strategies.
- Explain the reasons for, and benefits associated with, becoming more organised (e.g. more free time for leisure pursuits or sport!).
- Ask to see the student's completed homework and praise efforts.
- Praise and reward good organisational skills and strategies – reward effort as well as results.

Want to learn more?

To learn more about Language Disorder and how to support children and young people for whom language is their primary disorder, please **contact us**. Language Disorder Australia provides holistic, innovative and effective therapy, education and support services and has a transdisciplinary team of speech pathologists, occupational therapists, educators, psychologists and physiotherapists.

Contact: 1300 881 763 or hello@languagedisorder.org.au

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