



Activities and ideas for leavers' celebrations

The transition from primary to secondary school is a rite of passage in any young person's life. Exciting, scary and sad! With the current situation of some pupils at school and some at home planning for Leavers' celebrations is particularly tricky, requiring creativity and event organising skills extraordinaire.

We've created a playlist of songs and activities for pupils to use wherever they are plus ideas to create virtual Leavers' celebrations that bridge the gap between school and home. We hope you'll find them useful in ensuring you can mark this momentous moment together as a school community.

Pupil activities

Envelope of kindness

Teacher: Create a word document version of the class register leaving space for a typed comment to be added against everyone's name. Email everyone in the class a copy including the teaching assistant asking them to write a short, positive statement, a nice memory, some good wishes, or a message of thanks for every person in the class. Collect these in from all pupils then compile each student's comments onto one sheet and place in an envelope, perhaps with a copy of the most recent class photos. These can be posted out or presented to the children who are in school on the last day of school – an envelope of happy thoughts!

Pupil: Take some time to think about each person in your class and what you know about them. Write a short, positive statement about each one, this could be a good luck message, a memory, good wishes, an attribute (e.g. kind, funny etc). Remember that everyone in the class will be doing this for you too so it's important to be generous in your comment.

Create a poem, a piece of writing, a sketch, an artwork, a dance routine..... etc!

Use the theme of Leavers as the inspiration for a poem, speech, artwork etc. Think about

- Your friends
- Your teachers
- School lunches

- Trips you've been on
- What you've learnt
- What you're looking forward to in the future

Pick one, or several, to base your creation on.

You might do this on your own (if you're at home) or with friends (if you are at school). Then ask a teacher or parent to video record your work (it's important that **you** appear in the video). For example:

- Read your poem or piece of writing
- Talk about your picture and what it represents
- Perform your song, sketch or dance

Time capsule

Create a time capsule using a small box or container and a selection of mementos from your school year. What will you pick? Ideas: A photo of a school trip, pieces of work, a note from a friend, a handprint, a photo of you and your friends, some art work, a poem and a form with personal information on, like: My teacher is..., My friends are..., My favourite things are..., My best memory from school is..., When I grow up I want to be...

Write to the future you

Write a letter to your future self then seal it in an envelope and write a date in the future on it – maybe one year on, or perhaps longer – you decide. What have you learnt from your time at school that you would like to be lasting memories? Usually advice is given from an older person to a younger one, but in this case what advice would you give to an older you? Draw a quick sketch of what you think you'll look like in future years.

Celebration ideas

Staff music video/dance

School staff across the country have been providing amusement and entertainment for children during lockdown with video compilations of them singing, dancing, lip-syncing and dressing up. Why not do one of these for your leavers and upload it to a sharing platform for pupils to watch?

Make a music video

Choose one of the songs from the Leavers' playlist or any other song in the Sing Up At Home area and ask pupils to learn it using the tracks online. Make a live audio recording with pupils in school either singing along to the backing track if you've enough pupils to do so, or along with the performance track to boost the number of voices. If you have a video whizz on the staff team or budget to pay for professional video editing services, you could also have children at home video record themselves singing along to the backing track, mixing the audio and compiling all the videos into one home and school choir.

Alternatively compile a series of photos using video editing software* e.g. of pupils, school staff, the school building and grounds, the school lunches, the school gardens and any school pets, school sign etc. Organise the photos into a timeline and add the audio track of the recording to accompany the photo montage.

* Windows Movie Maker or iMovie are both free and there are user tutorials online.

Create a virtual leavers' celebration

Ask year 6 pupils to choose something to share with their class. It could be:

- A talk about their favourite thing about their primary school
- A poem they have written about going to a new school
- An artwork highlighting their happy memories, or of their friends
- A favourite song, or a school song

Each should make a short video of themselves talking, reading, singing, dancing, acting etc (you might want to cap it at 2 minutes length).

Additionally, record video messages from teachers, the Head and other school staff.

Using an app like iMovie import the videos and make a compilation. If you also host a virtual assembly, you can play it during the event.

Virtual assembly

Why not consider a virtual assembly so that *all* pupils are able to connect in some way. Using a conferencing app e.g. Zoom, the format might look a little like this:

- Open: Play [*Today my life begins*](#) by Bruno Mars or [*Proud*](#) by M People over a montage of leavers' photos that show how much they've grown and changed over the years. You could slip a few funny teacher snaps in too! This helps show the passage of time.

The photo montage can be shared on the video call and can also be emailed to pupils as a keepsake.

- Share: Ask a selection of children (in school and at home) to share their memories of school life, funny stories from the classroom or a message/poem of thanks to a friend or teacher. See pupil activities above.
- Sing: Maintaining social distancing, you could sing one of the leaver's songs, the school anthem or favourite song of that particular year group, with those at home joining in too (muted).
- Watch: Either live, or in a montage video, staff share their favourite moments and challenges over the year. This could also be the cue for a surprise performance/pre-recorded video (ideas above).
- Listen: Ask the Headteacher to share some words of wisdom or advice for the future, along with their best memories of that year group. They could read out the school motto, a poem, such as [*Let No One Steal Your Dreams by Paul Cookson*](#) or a Gaelic/Irish blessing like [*May the road rise to meet you.*](#)
- End: Finish by asking all pupils to hold up pieces of paper/whiteboards with what they want to be when they grow up, written on it. Take a picture, then make a class collage with all the leavers and their life goals on it.