



Transition Checklist: Starting Secondary School

Initial Steps

- ☐ Talk to your primary school about how they prepare for secondary transitions. Staff from the secondary school will likely visit primary schools to learn more about each child. There should be at least one induction day at the new school before the summer holidays.
- ☐ Find out who is the new school's *Designated Teacher for Previously Looked After children*
- ☐ You may wish to request a transition meeting involving: Current school, new school and family

Transition Meeting

- ☐ Find out what 'enhanced transition' school already offer-at some schools this includes events during the summer holidays or additional visits. There may be additional chances to visit the school coming up e.g. school fete, concerts open to the public etc
- ☐ Current school to share strategies that work and all to consider how these might be 'replicated' in a larger secondary setting
- ☐ Information sharing- what history would be helpful to share with new school and who should it be shared with eg SENCo, Head of Year, Designated Teacher etc. If you want the school to be able to claim Pupil Premium Plus, you will need to show them evidence that your child was previously in care.
- ☐ Share any SEND information and find out what interventions are available that child can access to meet needs
- ☐ Agree the best method of communication between school/ home- who will be main point of contact for you as parents/carers, and how often will communication happen?
- ☐ Ask for information on the behaviour and uniform policies (these can be found on the school website)
- ☐ Find out information to fill in any gaps e.g. timings of the school day, timetable, lunch plans, homework guidance, uniform requirements
- ☐ Arrange a review meeting for a few weeks into new term to discuss how the transition has gone and address any concerns in the new setting early
- ☐ Create a transition plan including calendar with dates for child to see (eg visits to new school, ending events at current school)

What could be included in a Transition Plan

- ☐ Identify key adults at new school and where child can obtain information or support when they start. Explore possibilities to build relationships prior to starting in September
- ☐ Additional visits to new school, including when no other students present. This could be supported by key staff at current school. Could involve taking photos of site etc and becoming familiar with surroundings
- ☐ Discuss how the child will get to school and the logistics of the journey
- ☐ Create a Pupil Passport or equivalent with school which is shared with the new setting so teaching staff can understand child's needs and strategies to support
- ☐ Child to be supported to ask/write questions. Are there opportunities for children currently at the school to answer some of these?
- ☐ Opportunities to meet identified key adults in relaxed setting and shared activity
Eg. lunch or a board game
- ☐ 'Holding in mind' – postcards from previous/new teachers during the school holiday
- ☐ Discuss menu and arrangements for lunch as this will be different to primary school and can be something children worry about

How parent/carers can support transition

- ☐ Ask child about any worries they have and what support they need for the transition. Validate any worries and respond with clear information and finding out answers to child's questions to alleviate uncertainty (eg. where will I eat?)
- ☐ Support child to attend all transition activities offered
- ☐ If your child doesn't know many people going to the same school, think how you could help them to know more faces beforehand e.g. a local tennis course, youth group.
- ☐ If your child doesn't have older siblings at the school, could they chat to any other children already at the school e.g. friends' older siblings. This could include questions like – what sort of bags/shoes do people have?
- ☐ Do some practice runs of the school journey. Talk about who they'll go with.
- ☐ Order uniform and equipment early so that child starts the new school feeling prepared
- ☐ Start to introduce conversations about school, prepare new bags and get back into school term sleep timings.
- ☐ Familiarise child with any new vocabulary they may hear in the new school, such as 'form tutor' or 'houses'

- ☐ Look at the school website with your child to find out more information e.g. what clubs are available?
- ☐ If your child will have a mobile phone with them, make sure they're clear if or when they can use it, and that they have the numbers they'll need.
- ☐ If your child finds organisation difficult, consider a list or a visual chart to stick on the wall e.g. what to check you've got in your bag.... pencil case, lunch, planner, homework
- ☐ Consider if there is a transition object that the child may find comforting or supportive
- ☐ Have answers prepared for the "What if? questions such as....
What if I forget my homework?
What if I hurt myself/feel sick?
What if I lose my lunch money?
What if I don't understand what to do?
What if someone is mean to me?
- ☐ Be as reassuring as possible. Schools know it'll take them a while to settle in and they'll be very forgiving of them getting lost or forgetting things.
- ☐ Supporting goodbyes- A specially made transition book, to include photos of both old and new settings, can be helpful.

Further resources

See *Parent and Carer Resources > Supporting Transitions* on the *Virtual School Website*
[Parent and Carer Resources | Virtual School](#)

This resource was created in partnership with:

