
Supporting Transitions

Advice for parents and carers

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Supporting Transitions - Advice for parents and carers

Transition

Transitions for children and young people are part of the process of moving through education and provide opportunities for growth and development. Many may be looking forward to the opportunity to connect with friends and establish new routines, however, some may have some worries about the transitioning between schools or year groups.

The concerns may be about:

- being able to establish friendships and relationships in the class / school.
- settling into a new class, new arrangements, or for some, a new school.
- any enduring emotional impact of recent events, including experiences of loss and bereavement (either their own or their peers').
- any lasting impact of the disruption to the learning and progress.
- the child/young person's safety, particularly if they have any existing health concerns

It is important to recognise feelings of worry are understandable and normal, and that most young people will successfully manage the transition.

This brief guide aims to support parents and carers in planning for their child's transitions within school/education. It recognises the skills and experience that parents and carers have in supporting their children through changes, and aims to supplement this based on information from key literature. It also provides some useful links for further information.

Ideas and considerations from research

Supporting transition:

- **Provide clear information about the situation** - One of the best ways to reassure children and young people is by talking openly about what is happening and to provide honest, age-appropriate answers to any questions they have. Referring to communication from school and explaining what is being done to help them is important.
- **Be aware of your own reactions** - Children and young people often take their emotional cues from the important adults in their lives, so how we respond to the situation is also important. It is helpful to try to remain calm, and to listen to and acknowledge children and young people's concerns.
- **Opportunities to talk:** Speak with your child about how they are feeling. Speak with them about any concerns and consider wondering aloud, e.g. "I wonder if you are



feeling a little worried about going to a new school? That is understandable, I felt the same when I started my new job. Would it help to talk about it some more?"

- **Letting them know its ok to feel a range of emotions** - this is likely to reduce anxiety for many children. Reassure them that lots of adults (including their teachers) and children are in the same situation and it is normal to feel mixed emotions.
- **Preparation for the change to routine** - plan to adjust sleep patterns prior to the transition (especially important for adolescents); build up to more structure, e.g. trying our new uniform, prepare your child for the change by talking about what they will be doing; encourage them to think about the things they are looking forward to.
- **Keeping informed** - Access information about new routines and procedures from your child's school; ask for further information if anything is unclear. Speaking to other parents and sharing anything useful can be helpful.
- **Be prepared for a "settling-in" period** - the transition may cause a few wobbles
- **Plan in enjoyable activities and a time to connect with each other**

At home:



Transitions will vary for different age groups, with some children just moving into a new year group, whilst others move to new schools. The following considerations re-iterate key guidance to support families and children during such times.

- **Help children to stay connected to their friends** - Friendships are a key resiliency factor for children and young people.
- **Have a routine and structure** - Having a plan and a predicable routine for the day can be very reassuring. As adults we like to know what is going to happen, and children like this too. A consistent routine lets everyone be secure about the plans for the day. It can be helpful to go through what your child's new routine might look like, and practise some of this at home so they are prepared.
- **Don't worry if the routine isn't perfect** - Allow some time to adapt and work things out as you go. Remember that a settling-in period is important and normal.
- **Avoid putting too much pressure on academic work** - To begin with, try to focus on building relationships, settling in and enjoying activities.
- **Play** - play is fundamental to children's wellbeing and development - children of all ages! It can be a great way to reduced stress in adults too.
- **Looking after you own health** - as well as thinking about the children and young people in our care, it is important to take care of our own wellbeing too, by staying connected to friends and family, being kind to yourself, and taking part in enjoyable activities.

Useful links

- **MindEd** is a free online educational resource on children and young people's mental health which can support parents and carers. Find more information using this link: <https://www.minded.org.uk/>
- **Every Mind Matters** gives advice and actions to take care of your own wellbeing. [Click here for the Every Mind Matters website.](#)
- **The STARS Team** has some good transition resources and information for children with a diagnosis of Autism. [Click here to access the Transitions section of their website.](#)
- **Anna Freud** has created an animation around the transition to secondary school. [Click here to watch it and access the resources.](#)
- The **ELSA** website contains some transition resources that you might find useful. [Click here for some free ELSA Resources to support with transitions](#)

Information in this guidance has been taken from a number of available resources.
Special thanks and acknowledgement to:

- **Bi-Borough Educational Psychology Consultation Service.** Transition, recovery and learning in the aftermath of a pandemic. Resources for nursery, primary and secondary schools.
- **Birmingham City Council.** Practical tools, tips and resources for parents for returning to school.
- **British Psychological Society.** Division of Educational and Child Psychology. Coronavirus and UK schools closures: support and advice for schools and parents/carers. A Resource Paper.
- **GOV.UK.** Guidance for parents and carers on supporting children and young people's wellbeing during the coronavirus pandemic.
- **Hull City Council.** Parent & carer Transition guidance
- **Sheffield City Council.** A guide for parents and carers to prepare their child to return to school after lockdown.
- **Wakefield Council.** Covid-19 - Advice for schools. Transition and back to school .

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