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## Transition to secondary school

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Best practice guide for settings

This guidance was co-produced in collaboration with a number of organisations including:



Access Through Technology



Family Voice Norfolk

# Why is transition important?

This guide is designed to support settings in Norfolk in planning and delivering successful transitions for children moving from primary or junior to secondary schools. All children can be vulnerable at times of change. A successful start in a new setting requires careful planning and preparation for all children and young people (CYP).

All educational settings must adhere to the Equality Act 2010, which means that they have to make 'reasonable adjustments' so as not to place disabled learners at a disadvantage. Settings should anticipate needs and make any reasonable adjustments in advance.

## What does good transition look like?

When transition arrangements are effective, CYP should:

- ✓ Develop new friendships and improve self-esteem and confidence
- ✓ Show interest and engagement in school and school work
- ✓ Get used to new routines and school organisation quickly
- ✓ Experience curriculum continuity and an appropriate level of challenge in their learning

# How do we plan for success?

Effective transitions rely upon...

- ✓ Good planning
- ✓ Good communication

For those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), additional planning will be required to ensure that transition is successful.

Other groups may also require a higher level of support around transition, including:

- Families with English as an additional language (EAL)
- Gypsy, Roma and traveller (GRT) families
- Children in care (CiC)
- CYP known to social care (eg families at section 47/section 17/family support process)
- CYP with pastoral needs (eg parental separation, bereavement, friendship issues)
- CYP with mental health needs (eg anxiety)
- CYP with medical needs
- CYP with long-term absence from education

# What needs to happen?

Feeder and receiving settings need to work closely together CYP and their families to ensure a positive transition.

It is a good idea to have identified transition leads in both settings who will be responsible for coordinating the process. This may be the special educational needs and disabilities coordinator (SENDCo), year leader or another senior leader.

## Transition leads should:

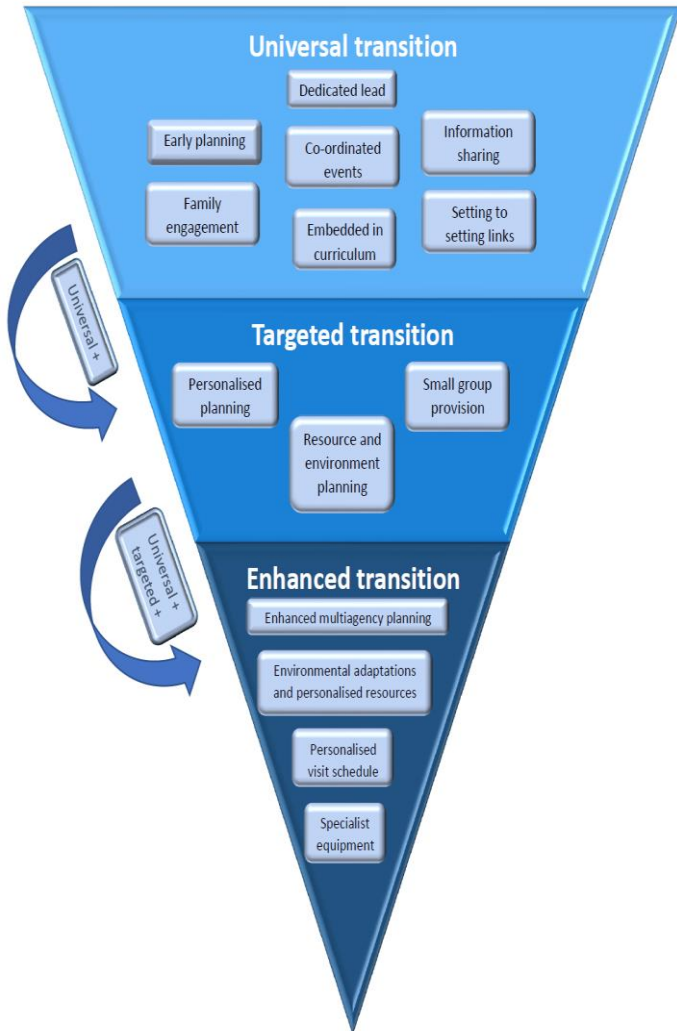
- ✓ Keep the CYP at the centre of transition planning
- ✓ Create a transition plan with clear actions and timescales
- ✓ Plan how to involve parent carers and ensure that they are provided with relevant information and have the opportunity to share their own views in good time and in accessible formats

## Transition arrangements

- Most CYP will need universal transition arrangements
- Some CYP will need targeted transition arrangements
- A few CYP will need enhanced transition arrangements

This is the graduated response to transition.

## A graduated response to transition



## Start planning early

Although school places are not confirmed until national offer day in March, transition planning should begin as early as possible, involving any relevant agencies and specialists throughout the process.

Planning for transition is an ongoing process involving long-term work to build and maintain effective links between settings.

## Plan for curriculum continuity

Consider planning curriculum ‘bridging projects’ that begin in the last part of the summer term of year 6 and continue in the first part of year 7.

Reciprocal visits between year 6 and year 7 teachers, joint planning and joint moderation of work can all help to develop greater curriculum continuity.

Where appropriate, setting holiday ‘projects’ on a theme can help to engage CYP in learning and avoid the ‘dip’ that occurs after the summer break.

## Use the same transition dates

It is helpful if schools across the region all have the same transition dates.

Many settings have their 'moving up' days for all CYP in the same week that year 6s move up to year 7.

Settings within Norwich Opportunity Area (NOA) have developed a helpful common transfer form for the year 6 to 7 transfer, which they have kindly offered to make available for other settings to use. A link is provided on the transition webpage of the Norfolk SEND Local Offer.

[www.norfolk.gov.uk/children-and-families/send-local-offer/education-and-training-0-25/moving-on](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/children-and-families/send-local-offer/education-and-training-0-25/moving-on)

## Ensure efficient sharing of information

CYP often transfer from multiple feeder settings and approaches to information sharing can vary widely.

Settings need to ensure that the right information about the needs of CYP is shared, and that it is shared in a timely way to enable planning to take place.

Many settings now use an electronic system for recording safeguarding information (eg CPOMS). With common



systems, the transfer of confidential information between settings is quicker and easier to manage.

Boxall profiles can provide an additional source of information on mental health and wellbeing. Each CYP has a unique pupil code to facilitate the transfer of information.

[www.boxallprofile.org/](http://www.boxallprofile.org/)



The use of one-page profiles can help to capture the views of CYP, parent carers and the setting. They provide a clear and accurate picture of CYP, conveying their strengths, challenges and support needs to the new setting in an accessible way. Settings should adapt the form and content of profiles so that they are appropriate for CYP at different ages and stages.

Further information on one-pages is available on the Norfolk SEND Local Offer webpage:

[www.norfolk.gov.uk/children-and-families/send-local-offer/support-for-learning/special-educational-needs-sen-support/one-page-profiles](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/children-and-families/send-local-offer/support-for-learning/special-educational-needs-sen-support/one-page-profiles)

### Example of a one-page profile

**This is what you need to know about me**

**My name is:** John Smith

**I like people to call me:** Jonny

**My birthday is:** 6<sup>th</sup> November 2004

**People who are important to me:** Grandma, Dad, Sam (brother), Sarah (step mum).

**School staff:** Nicky and Mike

**I live with:** Dad, Sam and Sarah

**I stay with Grandma in the holidays.**

**Important things to know about me at home:**

I can be very social and enjoy playing games. I love to 'chat'. I like to play with my laptop. I really want to be independent.

I have a muslim square called my 'mosque' - this is my comforter.

**This is how to communicate with me:** talk to me, use signs for key words, gesture or point, use facial expression. I understand most of what is said to me if short and simple sentences are used.

**I will communicate with you using...** gesture and points, facial expressions, I can say some words that sound like names, I can use PECs to make requests for my key motivators ('pop', 'dog', computer)

PHOTO

**Other people that work with me and know my needs:** Mike, Sophie, Nicky, Jane (EP)

**People who are important to me at my setting:** Nicky

**The person / people I can go to:** Nicky or Mike

**Important things for you to know about me at my setting:**

I need clear routine and structure for my school day. I need to be around those who understand me with patience and tolerance. I can hit out; I need firm reminding of expectations. I can be demanding of staff attention.

**People who live with me and look after me, want you to know:**

Jonny will always need adult support.

He can demonstrate some challenging behaviour but this is improving.

Jonny is very loving.

**My future – aspirations:**

- To be as independent as I can
- To communicate effectively
- To build good relationships with those around me

in:

My SEN Support Plan
My EHCP
My Risk Management Plan
My Care Plan
My Boxall Profile
My PEP

SEND files, risk managements plans, learning support plans, one-page profiles and other professional reports should also be transferred securely to the new setting.

# Timescales for transition

Settings will develop their own bespoke transition programmes, but should reflect on the following to ensure best practice:

## In year 5

- ✓ Many secondary settings offer taster experience/ enrichment days to help CYP prepare for school choices
- ✓ Some settings host public open days with themed events which CYP can attend

## In the autumn term

### Communication

- ✓ Settings hold open days for prospective new entrants and their parent carers
- ✓ Initial discussions between SENDCo/transition leads regarding CYP with high levels of need who are likely to be transferring to the setting

### Evaluation

- ✓ Secondary schools evaluate the impact of transition arrangements from the previous year and provide feedback to the junior/primary schools

- ✓ Invite SENDCo/transition lead from the primary/junior school to come and visit CYP in the secondary school and see how they are getting on

## Review

- ✓ Primary/junior and secondary settings work together to adapt transition arrangements for the coming year, considering feedback on what worked well and what did not

## In the spring term

### Planning

- ✓ Placement for CYP with education, health and care plans (EHCPs) is confirmed in February, so planning for these CYP can begin at an early stage
- ✓ Consider the need for parallel planning. Placement at special schools may not be confirmed until much later in the academic year. It is better to be well prepared and have to change things if a place is offered, rather than not be prepared
- ✓ Review accessibility and make plans for any reasonable adjustments to the physical environment that may be required
- ✓ Find out how to access any specialist equipment that will need to be provided (eg hoist, communication aids, technology)
- ✓ Invite parent carers and any professionals involved

with CYP with EHCPs to a transition meeting, where a plan can be recorded and actions agreed

- ✓ Ensure that the curriculum develops communication skills, teamwork, independence and resilience
- ✓ Organise visits and events to increase familiarity with the new setting (eg invite to plays, assemblies, concerts)

### Sharing information

- ✓ The SENDCo from the secondary school should be invited to attend annual review meetings or other professionals' meetings for CYP with EHCPs who will be transferring next year
- ✓ The SENDCo from the secondary school should contact professionals (eg physiotherapist, occupational therapist, school nursing team, Virtual School for Sensory Support, Access Through Technology team) to begin to plan provision

### Training

- ✓ Organise any specialist staff training required to meet specific needs (eg cerebral palsy, ASD, moving and handling training, British Sign Language)

## Transition planning meetings

### Parent carers should leave the meeting:

- ✓ Feeling reassured
- ✓ With a clear idea of what the plan is
- ✓ Feeling that their voice has been heard and listened to

### The setting should:

- ✓ Gather as much information as possible about the child
- ✓ This includes not only what the child is like in the existing setting but also at home

There is no substitute for a robust action plan which anticipates the learner's needs and is able to detail the reasonable adjustments to ensure curriculum entitlement is met, as well as acting as a reassurance for parent carers.

## In the summer term

### Planning

- ✓ Order any other equipment that may be required (eg pencil grips, fiddle toys, sensory toys)
- ✓ Plan further reciprocal visits between settings
- ✓ Begin to plan provision and staffing for the Autumn Term
- ✓ Year 7 leads could take part in a year 6 assemblies
- ✓ Some settings invite staff from secondary schools to come along to Y6 parent consultation evenings
- ✓ Ensure curriculum prepares CYP for transition

### Sharing information

- ✓ Hold an information evening for year 6 parent carers
- ✓ Ensure that key information is provided in an accessible format and that parent carers have a chance to talk to key staff, including the SENDCo
- ✓ Primary/junior school should complete a transfer form with key information and send to the receiving setting
- ✓ Continue to hold transition meetings with parent carers and professionals
- ✓ Organise opportunities for year 7 teachers and support staff to meet CYP and observe year 6 classes in the primary/junior school

### **Consider the needs of parent carers with EAL.**

- ✓ Will they need a translator to be provided for meetings?
- ✓ Can information be provided in different languages?

### **Consider the needs of parent carers with disabilities.**

- ✓ Will a signer be needed?
- ✓ Can information be provided in different formats?

- ✓ Allow time for year 6 teachers to observe lessons in year 7
- ✓ Provide time for year 6 and the year 7 lead to 'hand over' and share information
- ✓ Organise opportunities for joint moderation of work
- ✓ Provide time for any keyworkers in the primary/junior school to meet and share information with keyworkers in the secondary school
- ✓ Provide opportunities for any key pastoral support staff to share information and meet CYP in year 6
- ✓ Ask year 7 CYP to write a letter to year 6 children, welcoming them to the school



- ✓ Arrange for CYP from year 7 to meet year 6s for 'question and answer' sessions to enable 'myth busting'

## Training

- ✓ Organise any further staff training required

## Family interviews

In addition to school transition meetings, some settings conduct 'family interviews' in the summer term, where each family has the opportunity to book a meeting with a member of the senior leadership team. CYP can attend if they wish. This provides an opportunity to:

- ✓ Reassure families and CYP and address any worries
- ✓ Reinforce the expectations of the new setting
- ✓ Listen to the voice of the CYP
- ✓ Continue to build positive relationships



## Preparing for change

Kidscape run training sessions for settings around transition, including bullying awareness, assertiveness and resilience workshops.

There are also free resources to celebrate difference and promote inclusion on their website.

[www.kidscape.org.uk/](http://www.kidscape.org.uk/)

## Prior to transition days

### Visits

- ✓ Arrange additional visits to the secondary school with family or with staff from the current setting
- ✓ Some children will need lots of visits and some will be very unsettled by additional visits - knowing the child and getting the balance right is key
- ✓ Plan some visits when the school is empty
- ✓ Arrange for CYP with high needs to spend some additional time with their new class teacher and/or key support staff

## Visual prompts

- ✓ Enable CYP to take videos or photos of the physical environment and key staff, to help them remember their visit
- ✓ Ensure key places in the school (eg toilets, office) are clearly labelled with visual signs
- ✓ This could be presented as a booklet for CYP to take home and refer to with parent carers during the summer break

## Developing independence

- ✓ Work with parent carers to support CYP to develop greater independence and planning skills (eg provide checklists of things to do to get ready for school or what to pack in their bag each day)
- ✓ Support the CYP to develop an awareness of their needs and enable them to explain their needs to new adults, for example by using visual prompt cards or scripts

## Sharing information

- ✓ Ensure that the secondary school has copies of all relevant documents (eg risk management, learning support plans or individual health care plans) and that these have been shared
- ✓ Arrange an informal coffee morning or other event for parent carers where they can ask questions and raise any concerns

## During the transition days

### Activities

- ✓ Introduce new school routines and expectations 'step-by step'
- ✓ Include a tour of the school site and provide a colour-coded map of the school highlighting important places (eg school entrance, classrooms, office, lunch/assembly hall, accessible toilets)
- ✓ Provide 'getting to know you' activities to give CYP joining from other settings a chance to find out about one another and build relationships
- ✓ Create checklists or provide planners so that the correct items are taken to and from school for each day's activities (eg PE kit, homework)

### Support

- ✓ Children with disabilities may need adults from the current setting to accompany them for moving and handling or to support medical needs
- ✓ Use buddy systems so that CYP have a friendly face who they can go to for help
- ✓ Ensure that there is an identified keyworker or adult that CYP can go to for help
- ✓ Plan support for those CYP who will need more structured support at break or lunch times

## Communication

- ✓ Ensure all staff, including midday supervisors, are aware of the needs of CYP and know how to support
- ✓ Think about how to communicate proactively with parent carers. They are likely to be feeling anxious about their child's first few days

### **Be responsive to concerns about transition**

Worries around the move to high school include:

- ✓ Getting lost
- ✓ Being bullied
- ✓ Discipline and detentions
- ✓ Homework
- ✓ Losing old friends
- ✓ Older children

Listen and respond to the voice of the child (eg use circle time, worry boxes, one-to-one conversations or feelings and wishes templates).

[www.norfolk.gov.uk/children-and-families/early-help-and-family-support/support-for-professionals/useful-resources](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/children-and-families/early-help-and-family-support/support-for-professionals/useful-resources)

## More resources to prepare for change

### **‘My New School’...**

Norfolk Educational Psychology and Specialist Support (EPSS), in collaboration with NOA, have developed evidence-based intervention materials. The ‘My New School’ materials help to prepare children with special educational needs (SEN) to successfully manage the move to high school. Training around the use of the materials is available. For further information contact EPSS.

[www.norfolkepss.org.uk/my-new-school-transition-intervention/](http://www.norfolkepss.org.uk/my-new-school-transition-intervention/)

### **The Prince’s Trust ‘Achieve Programme’...**

includes a ‘skills for school’ module for CYP aged 11-19 which contains topics such as building confidence, managing feelings, peer pressure and building friendships. The module also contains a qualification unit called ‘planning for personal development’.

### **Nurture UK transition toolbox...**

This resource box supports parent carers and professionals working with young people in year 6-7 prepare for transition. [www.norfolknurturehub.org/](http://www.norfolknurturehub.org/)

### **Cafés for all...**

These events support settings in building positive relationships with families.

[www.cafesforall.org.uk/training/](http://www.cafesforall.org.uk/training/)

## During the summer break

- ✓ Some settings organise summer sport or activity camps, using pupil premium or sport premium funding, for CYP who will be transferring in September
- ✓ These can help CYP to become more familiar with the new setting and build positive relationships
- ✓ Send a postcard to all new children, saying how excited you are that they will be joining you soon
- ✓ Set 'challenges' for CYP to develop key skills they will need in year 7 (eg pack your own school bag, set your alarm clock, catch the bus)

## At the start of year 7

- ✓ Some settings have a staggered or adapted start to year 7, to enable new entrants to settle in and experience the site without other CYP around
- ✓ Some settings also run team-building activities and/or cross-curricular projects in the early part of year 7 to help develop key skills and build relationships
- ✓ Use mentoring and peer support systems
- ✓ Use pastoral and form/tutor groups to monitor friendships and wellbeing closely

# Things to think about...

## Behaviour policy

The policy should ensure that there is an inseparable link between learning and behaviour.

Approaches for managing behaviour must align with structures for supporting CYP with SEND, including:

- ✓ Consistent application of the policy throughout the setting
- ✓ A focus on positive behaviour, building self-esteem and developing strategies to help CYP overcome challenges and work towards independence
- ✓ Staff with the skills and awareness of strategies that allow them to be responsive to the needs of all CYPs
- ✓ Staffing structures that meet need, including provision of strong pastoral support and appropriate deployment of learning support staff
- ✓ Provision of targeted or specialist support to enable CYP to develop the skills needed
- ✓ If things start to 'go wrong', talk to parent carers and the CYP at an early stage and come up with a plan to improve things



## Uniform

Changes to school uniform can be challenging for CYP with SEND. For those with autism or sensory sensitivities the itchy fabric, annoying seams, irritating tags or the feel of socks can be a trigger. For those with dyspraxia or physical disabilities, the buttons, zips, laces and fiddly hooks can make them frustrated and angry when they can't dress themselves or change quickly for PE like other children of their age.

- ✓ Be flexible and prepared to make reasonable adjustments to your uniform requirements, in discussion with parent carers.
- ✓ Consider providing extra time to change for PE if needed.

# Links and resources...

## Examples of current transition practice

[www.norwichopportunityarea.co.uk/transition/sharing-good-practice-and-information-about-each-phase-of-a-childs-educational-journey/](http://www.norwichopportunityarea.co.uk/transition/sharing-good-practice-and-information-about-each-phase-of-a-childs-educational-journey/)

## Examples of social stories

[www.autism.org.uk/about/strategies/social-stories-comic-strips.aspx](http://www.autism.org.uk/about/strategies/social-stories-comic-strips.aspx)

## INTRAN interpreting and translations services

[www.intran.org](http://www.intran.org)

## Language Line interpreting and translations services

[www.languageline.com/uk](http://www.languageline.com/uk)

## One-page profiles

[www.norfolk.gov.uk/children-and-families/send-local-offer/support-for-learning/special-educational-needs-sen-support/one-page-profiles](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/children-and-families/send-local-offer/support-for-learning/special-educational-needs-sen-support/one-page-profiles)

## Template for recording meetings (SENDIASS)

[www.norfolksendpartnershiass.org.uk/assets/booklets/downloads/Leaflet-ParentSENDPlanner160115.pdf](http://www.norfolksendpartnershiass.org.uk/assets/booklets/downloads/Leaflet-ParentSENDPlanner160115.pdf)

## Transition tips for pupils with SEND (Young Minds)

[www.youngminds.org.uk/resources/school-resources/transition-tips-for-pupils-with-send/](http://www.youngminds.org.uk/resources/school-resources/transition-tips-for-pupils-with-send/)

## Transition toolkit (Autism Education Trust)

<https://councilfordisabledchildren.org.uk/sites/default/files/field/attachemnt/transitiontoolkit.pdf>

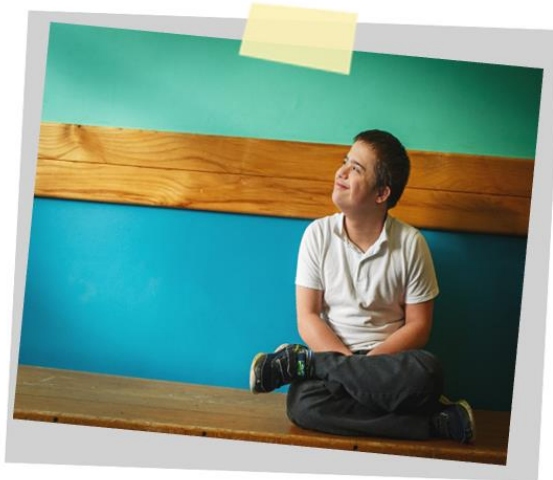
## What to include in a 'My New School' / transition booklet

[www.norfolk.gov.uk/children-and-families/send-local-offer/education-and-training-0-25/moving-on](http://www.norfolk.gov.uk/children-and-families/send-local-offer/education-and-training-0-25/moving-on)

## Other publications

Dr Tina Rae has published a range of resources including:

- ✓ Supporting Successful Transition from Primary to Secondary School
- ✓ Developing Emotional Literacy with Teenagers: Building Confidence, Self-Esteem and Self-Awareness
- ✓ Emotional Resilience and Problem Solving for Young People



This leaflet is part of a series designed to support and enhance transitions in all Norfolk settings. The guidance has been co-produced with input from education and Norfolk County Council professionals including SENDIASS and representatives from family groups including Family Voice Norfolk and SEN Network.