# Transitions: Principles for Practice

This checklist outlines 5 evidence-based principles to support successful transitions.

Some groups may need additional transition support including children and young people who are GRT, SEND, Young Carers, EAL, Children in Care, those transitioning to or from alternative provision, SRBs, SHIPs or those on a managed move. We have developed more specific [Welcome Packs](https://www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/article/61616/Transition-Principles-of-Practice-and-Welcome-Packs) for these groups.

Using this checklist can support you to feel confident that you have taken the appropriate steps in supporting your children and young people as effectively as possible through transitions.

These principles for practice are most effective when implemented alongside the [Transitions Toolkit](https://www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/article/61407/Transitions) which contains a Whole School / Setting Approach Guide and suggested Transition Timelines.

Key Principles for Practice:

1. Support children and young people to be ‘ready’ for school.
2. Support individual needs.
3. Create a welcoming, safe and engaging environment!
4. Develop safe and trusting relationships.
5. Reflect on transitions.

Whilst many children and young people will transition at the same time of year, it is important to recognise that children and young people may transition at any point during the year because of mid-year school moves, managed moves or due to bespoke packages which could include alternative provision. These transitions can be particularly challenging and need to be carefully managed. The principles outlined in this guidance can still be applied to these transitions although it’s important to note that these transitions can sometimes happen at short notice leaving less time to implement some of the actions below – further guidance and best practice will be provided on this.

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| Have you supported children and young people to be ‘ready’ for school? | | |
| **Action** | **RAG** | **Key considerations / Links / Resources** |
| Ensure families are aware of how to access information, advice and guidance around transitions and know how to access further support, enabling them to support their children well. |  | - See further, more detailed ways you can support families within these [Transition Timelines](https://www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/article/61408/Transition-timelines).  - Ensure information is shared in a variety of ways with families e.g. school website, letters sent home, meetings, etc and information is translated as needed. |
| Ensure you are aware of any barriers that you will need to overcome to ensure clear communication with families. |  | - Needs may include EAL, disability including mental health, GRT, young carers, etc |
| Explain new routines and expectations to children and young people including new timetables. |  | - Remember to support families to understand school routines, expectations, infrastructure etc this is especially important for families who are new to UK schools.  - If the family are EAL, take steps to understand what school life, experiences, background were like for the child or young person before they moved. |
| Discuss worries about the upcoming transition with the child or young person and the family. |  | - Understanding families’ worries or anxieties is important as it helps us to understand a child or young person’s needs more holistically.  - It is helpful to try to understand possible barriers to families’ engagement e.g. their own experiences with school.  - To engage all families with the transition process, consider hosting a range of transition events which will appeal to all, from formal to more informal e.g. coffee mornings, drop ins, etc to get to know families.  - Current settings to work alongside receiving settings to facilitate relationship building and support families to share concerns. |
| Consider what practical steps need to be taken to best prepare children and young people for the transition |  | - This may include visits to receiving school or setting, teaching of key skills through RSHE, adapting timetables, additional responsibilities, drama workshops to develop skills needed for transition and teaching of vocabulary. |
| Ensure you consider **curriculum continuity** e.g. through bridging projects. |  |  |

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| Have you provided additional support for children and young people at a higher risk of struggling with transition? | | |
| **Action** | **RAG** | **Key considerations / Links / Resources** |
| 1. Identify a key person / team who will lead on transitions and be the point of contact for other settings. |  | Ensure other staff in your school / setting including office staff are aware of who this person is so that any communication between settings is directed to the correct people. |
| 1. Work with previous schools and settings to begin to learn about your new children and young people |  | - This will be through a variety of means e.g. paperwork, hand over meetings, transfer of electronic files, etc  - Allow time for staff within the receiving school to read paperwork and talk to the current setting to fully understand children and young people’s previous experiences including previous involvement with any other services – documents such as One Page Profiles can support well to transfer this key information.  - If there is an Early Help Assessment Plan (EHAP) in place or other professionals involved, the named worker should invite the receiving school to handover meetings.  - Consider identifying an ‘Emotionally Available Adult’ (EAA) for individual children or young people who may need additional support during transition.  - Consider how you will support children and young people who transition part way through the year or on a managed move. There are often time constraints around these transitions so focus on quick and simple ways to share information e.g. One Page Profiles / Chronology of key information. |
| 1. Identify children and young people early who may need additional support e.g. groups including GRT, EAL, SEND, young carers, etc but also children who may be transitioning without their peer group. |  | - Plan in additional conversations with current settings around these groups including conversations with Designated Safeguarding Leads regarding children and young people open to social care as well as those who may be ‘on cusp’ of needing support. |
| 1. Plan additional support for these individuals, this may be before the transition, during or after. This may include approaches such as visual timetables or social stories.   **Ensure you also consider what support children or young people may need who transition part way through the year.** |  | **-** Information shared with families and CYP in advance, in first language where family are literate.  - Explore more specific strategies in relation to these groups within these [Welcome Packs](https://www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/article/61616/Transition-Principles-of-Practice-and-Welcome-Packs). |
| 1. Ensure relevant information about a child or young person’s transition plan is communicated to key staff. |  | In addition to communicating plans around transition, ensure individual needs including medical needs are communicated with key staff (on a need-to-know basis) to allow appropriate provision to be planned for. |

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| Have you created a welcoming, safe and engaging environment? | | |
| **Action** | **RAG** | **Key considerations / Links / Resources** |
| 1. Take time to get to know each child or young person |  | - Take time to learn names and use activities such as circle time to get to know individual children and young people.  - Receiving school to meet with child or young person, family and school to review any support plans, this helps to avoid delays in planning support.  - Learn about specific triggers e.g. sensory needs and take steps to avoid these or adapt provision to support the child or young person to stay regulated. Auditing your sensory / physical environment can be a helpful next step once triggers are identified. Plans already in place at the current settings e.g. Behaviour Support Plans / SEN Support Plans should include information around triggers although this may be different as the child has moved into a new environment.  - In addition to this, be mindful of any events that may trigger certain children and young people e.g. planned fire alarm practice or school bells and put support in place. |
| 1. Support children and young people to engage in learning in age and stage appropriate ways |  | - [IRC UK's Healing Classroom's](https://www.rescue.org/uk/irc-uks-healing-classrooms) programme supports schools to develop inclusive and nurturing learning spaces where refugee and asylum seeking children and young people can heal and flourish.  - Explore further guidance within the [Welcome Packs](https://www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/article/61616/Transition-Principles-of-Practice-and-Welcome-Packs). |
| 1. Provide clear and consistent boundaries and ground rules so that children know what behaviour is expected of them. |  |  |

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| Have you facilitated the development of safe and trusting relationships? | | |
| **Action** | **RAG** | **Key considerations / Links / Resources** |
| 1. Take steps to build relationships based on trust, safety and security. |  | - AET have produced a short template around [‘Building effective relationships’](https://www.autismeducationtrust.org.uk/resources/positive-relationships-between-home-and-school)  - Use a Trauma informed Approach, considering the language of PACE. Explore these padlets from Norfolk’s Virtual School for Children in Care – [padlet 1](https://padlet.com/VirtualSchoolAdviserCWSW/norfolk-virtual-school-trauma-awareness-in-education-guidanc-6ft15q0fex5o7v37) (password: vstrauma) / [padlet 2](https://padlet.com/norfolkvirtualschool/norfolk-virtual-school-for-children-in-care-previously-in-ca-4wsjfcrprcdjhnxt).  - Consider how approaches across the school create a welcoming environment e.g. friendly face to meet and greet on school gates, smile and greet children at classroom door, etc  - Plan safe spaces if needed  - Ensure teachers know when they have new children or young people joining their class, this means books and other resources can be prepared with names which supports children and young people to feel more welcome.  - Consider if any support is needed in building relationships with family e.g. use of a translator  - Find ways to reassure families that you are there to support and ways to support the child or young person to know that they are being ‘kept in mind’ e.g. post cards sent home over summer holidays. |
| 1. Support children to develop **healthy peer networks**. Be alert to any friendship concerns and address these as early as possible. |  | - Buddy systems  - Approaches such as Young Interpreters can be used to support children and young people who have EAL.  - Share information with children and young people about lunchtimes / afterschool clubs as this provides them with opportunities to meet other children and young people. |
| 1. Give children responsibilities for the classroom to boost their self-esteem and confidence within their new environment. |  |  |

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| Have you reflected on transitions? | | |
| **Action** | **RAG** | **Key considerations / Links / Resources** |
| 1. Take time to step back and reflect on the transition as a staff team but also with children and young people and their families. |  | - Make a note of children and young people who you feel may need additional support in future transitions. The transition lead / team should hold strategic oversight of this. |
| 1. Consider if support needs to be adapted for individuals and keep approaches flexible if needs change. |  | - Monitor children and young people who had enhanced transition support including those on EHCPs who may need their support adapted. Touch base with these children and their families a few weeks after transition. |

Evidence-based resources were drawn upon to develop this checklist including the [Education Endowment Fund’s blog ‘Supporting pupils through transitions – a trio of challenges’](https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/news/eef-blog-supporting-pupils-through-transitions-a-trio-of-challenges) and the Transition tips from [Mentally Healthy Schools](https://mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/media/1906/transitions-primary.pdf).

In addition, we have developed several [one-minute guides](https://www.schools.norfolk.gov.uk/article/59401/One-Minute-Guides) on a number of topics to help schools and settings access key information and signposting quickly and efficiently.