

Transition tips (changing schools, key stages)

sendiass

It can be an anxious time for a child moving up to primary, secondary school or college and going into a new class. As a parent, you will want to help your child in any way you can.

Your child's current school will have experience of planning transitions and will likely have transition/taster days arranged with local Schools and Colleges.

Schools and colleges can offer additional transition support for a child with SEN or a disability, depending on the needs of the child. For example, you and your child may be able to visit the school or college when it is empty and quiet, when you may also be able to take photos to help your child prepare.

Some primary schools run transition courses for pupils with additional needs in the summer term of year 6 to help them prepare and give them a chance to explore any worries. You could ask your school if they offer this and if your child can take part.

If you have chosen a School/College in a different location these transition links will not be established so you may want to make contact directly.

Some schools have a member of staff solely for planning a new intake of students, you can find out who this is and speak with them directly. If your child has specialists working with them, they could also be part of the transition planning.

The most important thing is to think about what your child will find most difficult (e.g. changes to routine, environment, getting to know new people, homework and timetable expectations) and plan & discuss ways he or she can be supported with this. Many of the suggestions below will also help when your child is moving up to a new year group.



Some things to consider...

- Try to find out **what your child is worried about** and talk to them about what might make things better.
- Think about **what has worked well** in the past when you've helped your child prepare for a new experience.
- Your child will be **reassured by your calming responses** and a reminder that you and school or college can support them in managing the changes.
- You can **contact the SENCO/SEN lead** at the new school or college before your child starts, to discuss their needs and to explore and agree a plan of support. There may be opportunities for a joint meeting with the current school.
- Find out how and **who you can liaise with** at the new setting.
- **Let the new school or college know** about any signs to look out for that your child is anxious, and the best way to communicate with them.
- It may be helpful to ask if you can **take your child for a visit on a PD day** or at another quiet time so they can familiarise themselves with the school surroundings.
- An **opportunity to meet with their tutor** and have a copy of their timetable ahead of starting can be particularly helpful for anxious children.
- A **'scrapbook' or 'journal'** around changing schools can be very reassuring. This can include leaflets, maps, times of the school day, timetable if available, checklists and also photos of entrance, classrooms, lunch hall and key staff/'who to go to when...'

If your child is Autistic and/or suffers with high levels of anxiety – acknowledge that September is going to be challenging. The National Autistic Society has some useful strategies and information about transition:

<http://www.autism.org.uk/about/transition.aspx>

For post-16 young people you may find it useful to look at the [Suffolk 16+ Transitions Guide](#)

