

SUPPORTING SUCCESSFUL TRANSITIONS

BRADFORD EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY TEAM

Positive transitions enable young people to develop, grow and make the most of their education.

This always requires careful planning and is even more important now following disruption due to coronavirus.

This information has been prepared to support schools review their transition arrangements and think about alternative ways of managing the process of transition during a period of school closure. It includes information on why transitions are important.

It provides both 'farewell' and 'welcome' ideas for sending and receiving settings to ensure the emotional well-being of all involved. Transition is a process that begins long before young people begin in their new setting. It involves saying goodbye to an old and familiar setting and being welcomed into a new one.

EARLY YEARS



Information for parents and preschool settings about how to prepare children for school
Advice for primary schools on remote transition into school activities for Nursery and Reception

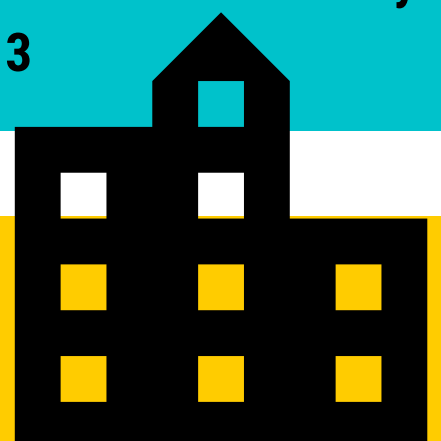
PRIMARY



Advice for primary schools on remote transition out of Year 6
Advice for secondary schools on supporting the transition into Year 7

SECONDARY

Advice for secondary schools on remote transition out of Year 11 and Year 13
Support for Post-16 providers on remote transition into tertiary settings for Year 11 and 13



HOW TO SUPPORT THE TRANSITION TO SCHOOL

Farewell Home/PVI

BEGINNINGS AND ENDINGS



Keep to regular routines and schedules as much as possible.

Where possible, consider safe doorstep goodbyes and/or a goodbye card with pieces of the work the child has completed.

This is an major moment in the child's life. It is important to celebrate what they have achieved and prepare them for what is ahead.

A child leaving a setting may not have been able to say goodbye to friends and staff.

Consider the importance of endings e.g. goodbye cards, virtual or delayed graduations, opportunities to arrange contact with other children they may no longer see).

New beginnings, promoting a child's sense of belonging in their new setting (e.g. pictures of new school uniform, link with other children attending the same setting).

STARTING A NEW SETTING



Support parents/carers with simple ways to maintain **positive mental health**, for their children and for themselves.

Prepare parents for potential stumbles in the first weeks back. It may not be smooth sailing in the first couple of weeks.

Reassure them that this is expected after such a challenging time.

Support parents with developing **structure** and **routine** in preparation for school. These skills will support a child's feeling of **safety** and **security** as they embark upon new experiences.

Talking to parents about practising self-care and independence, provide checklists and guidance.

Acknowledging any potential change in behaviour due to changes of routines.

Consider how a child may find separation a challenge after a prolonged period at home.

Building confidence and resilience skills at home.

Email parents and ask if they have any questions about the forthcoming transition you can help them with.



HOME-SETTING LINKS



With parents, co-produce information for the new setting looking at the positives and the challenges which have come out of this time.

Sharing child details with the receiving setting, pupil profiles and photos.

Additional information to be shared. This may include their experiences during coronavirus. These may be positive or challenging.

Acknowledge and supporting parental anxiety by giving them tools to share information about their child.

Underpinned by Ecological Systems Theory - importance of understanding a child in multiple environments

EXPERIENCES AND EMOTIONS

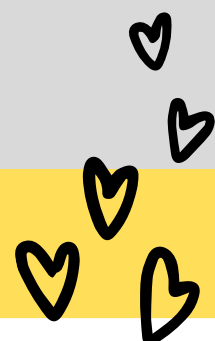


Children need adult love and attention during difficult times, give them extra time and attention.

Where possible, during this time, make opportunities for children to play and relax.

Children may have had different childcare experiences. Some children will have continued in provisions as children of key workers, some may be in PVI's and have opportunities to return before September.

Receiving settings may offer different packages of transition support (e.g. home visits, virtual tours, contact with staff).



HOW TO SUPPORT THE TRANSITION TO SCHOOL

Welcome to the Foundation Stage

DEVELOPING A SENSE OF BELONGING

Children will be coming to your setting from a variety of backgrounds and will have had a range of experiences.

Part of transition will be to help them develop a sense of identity as an individual and as part of their new wider group.

Feeling a sense of belonging enables children to have the confidence to explore new ideas, to make friends and to learn.

Contribute to shared artwork, e.g make a colourful handprint at home to display in the new setting.

Send home a video or list of songs to learn at home, that will be sung in the setting.

Staff to send a letter welcoming the child to the new setting.

FEELING SAFE AND SECURE

Maslow's hierarchy of needs identifies feeling safe and secure as one of the basic human needs. Transitions will often cause feelings of anxiety and children may feel unsettled. Due to coronavirus these feelings may be heightened. Supporting children to feel safe contributes to emotional well-being, enabling children to form relationships and to settle in to a new environment.

Photo/ story book of new setting showing key parts of the day



Children send a picture or drawing into school telling school about them

Take a favourite toy



Make a video or virtual tour of new setting

LEARNING NEW SKILLS

Children will be coming to your setting with a variety of previous experience, skills and knowledge.

Not everyone has the same access to early learning experiences.

Suggesting opportunities for children to develop some of the useful skills required at school whilst still at home will enable them to quickly adjust to the demands of classroom life.

- Set some basic fun skills to practice at home (e.g. seeing how quickly you can put on shoes)
- Social stories for key skills
- Familiar, regular routines such as snack time/story time can begin at home

Starting in a new setting can often be unsettling for young children and their parents.

Due to coronavirus children may have spent more time at home with their families than usual.

Helping them to separate from their parents confidently will make the experience more manageable for both them and their families enabling them to flourish in their new setting.

Acknowledging, validating and normalising feelings, such as missing home, can help children to manage their emotions more effectively.

MANAGING EMOTIONS

- Acknowledge and validate feelings, e.g. missing family
- Opportunities for parents to share experiences in the new setting
- Encourage feelings of excitement about their new start by letting them know what to expect when they arrive

HOW TO SUPPORT THE TRANSITION TO SECONDARY SCHOOL

Farewell Year 6

MANAGING EMOTIONS



- Emphasise that transition is a journey: share therapeutic stories about going on a journey, followed by an activity for children to creatively draw or write about their journey through primary school.
- Create a virtual farewell page on the website where pupils can post messages - to be monitored by school.
- Host virtual question and answer session for class teacher to share worries etc.
- Ensure frequent contact with class teacher to give opportunities to check in.

IDEAS FOR END OF YEAR CELEBRATIONS & SAYING GOODBYE



A scheduled virtual end of year celebration assembly, where pupils can contribute
e.g. favourite memories, awards for teachers and children

End of year keepsakes to still be given

e.g. end of year-book with personalised pages with messages and photos, personalised hoodies, yearbook, awards, items to go in a Year 6 time capsule etc.

Saying good bye

A personalised letter for each pupil based on memories of their journey through school including pictures and accessible language (e.g. I remember when you first came into my classroom or when we went on the trip to)

Careful consideration for those with key workers to ensure their goodbyes are captured. Contributions from all the pupils' teachers through primary school, not just Year 6.

LOGISTICS

Schools to have various methods of how work can be returned to school e.g. email, post box outside the school gates (part of their daily exercise), to ensure equality of access

POST TRANSITION

- A revisiting day in the first half term to say goodbyes in person.
- Someone from the primary school to visit the secondary settings to check-in with the pupils in the first few weeks of September.
- For pupils to be able to access primary school website/e-portal beyond September 2020.



TRANSITION ACTIVITY

One page profile created about themselves to be sent to the secondary settings prior to September, with the expectation that this will be acknowledged by secondary schools.



IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Ensure children feel a part of the 'farewell' process incorporating aspects of **person-centered planning** (e.g. having input into the assembly).
- Risk/Resilience factors for children with regard to transition need to be taken into account, remembering resilience is not within child but develops through being part of, or connected to, functional systems in the environment and relationships. Children benefit from actively reflecting on their **own resiliency** and identifying that they have the skills to manage this part of their journey.
- According to self determination theory people need **competence, connection and autonomy** to achieve psychological growth. Therefore, some children may already possess the resources needed to adapt to the situation, however for others it may require adult support to acknowledge/ discover these and for others they may need more specific support (particularly when risks outweigh such feelings).
- Shared rituals are created through life transitions, which help give people a sense of meaning. Losing out on these rituals (such as end of year assembly, shirt signing and saying bye to staff/peers) can be difficult as this is an opportunity to share emotional experiences. Therefore, replacing these with **online experiences** may lack some of the in-person aspects but it will still have value for children and staff.
- It is important for staff to have **self-compassion** which entails key adults being warm and understanding towards themselves even during times when they feel that they are failing and not ruminating on self-criticism. Self-compassion is recognition that suffering and personal inadequacy is part of the shared human experience and is something we all go through.

HOW TO SUPPORT THE TRANSITION TO SECONDARY SCHOOL

Welcome to Year 7 - Part 1

TRANSITIONS



Transition to secondary school is a key milestone for children and young people and coincides with significant developmental changes. It is a time of excitement, but also anxiety, for children, parents, carers and staff. It is a process that begins long before children begin their new setting. It involves saying goodbye to the old and familiar setting and being welcomed into a new one.

BEFORE STARTING



Arrange a phone call or video calls from form tutors

Identify vulnerable pupils and alert form tutor/ Mental Health Champion

Create teacher passports, videos of school and teachers introducing themselves, share maps of school etc.

Consider principles of Emotion Coaching, Self-determination theory

Share the daily structure/routines before starting new term

Give students a named key adult so they know who they can go to

Communicate the importance of good sleep routines

IN THE FIRST FEW DAYS



Implement a staggered start so pupils get used to a new setting/school

Have realistic expectations considering start points and priorities

Encourage students to practice new routes to school (e.g. bus route)

Use social stories to communicate new routines

Share weekly menus so lunchtime is less stressful

Have realistic expectations considering start points and priorities

Building new routines may be difficult and take time. Routines will create a sense of safety and security

Create opportunities for form group bonding/cohesion activities

Create a shared set of rules/values within form group

Create a buddy system with pupils in own year/ the year above

Make YP aware of extra-curricular clubs etc

LONGER TERM



Bear in mind YP will have missed learning and may have different starting points

Plan for additional safeguarding issues (e.g. staffing, time allocation and safe spaces)

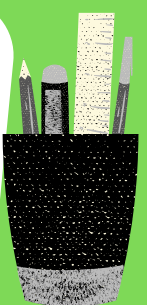
Some children may be anxious about the academic demands of secondary school

Clearly address homework expectations and reduce anxiety related to this

Ensure good communication & links with parents (e.g. introduction, welcome, key contacts)



Ensure supportive structure for managing pupils with longer term difficulties (e.g. refer to mental health champion)



Manage anxiety around baseline assessments. Avoid formal assessment straight away

Give YP more time with form tutor in 1st term to practise socialisation/build strong relationships

Consider whether additional catch up classes are required for some pupils

HOW TO SUPPORT THE TRANSITION TO SECONDARY SCHOOL

Welcome to Year 7 - Part 2

IMPORTANT THINGS TO REMEMBER

Managing Change

Change is a normal part of life; a time of excitement (hope) and anxiety (fears). Pupils usually settle into secondary school after the first term. However, at this time more pupils than usual might show a greater level of anxiety and need further reassurance. For some pupils having spent a long time with parents and immediate family, separating could be a potential source of anxiety. Separation anxiety, even at this stage of development and especially if there has been illness and bereavement in the family and close friends might be an issue. Take additional time on settling in activities, establishing new routines and peer relationships. Ensure support systems are in place to identify pupils who might need individual support.

Developmental implications

The transition to high school coincides with a rapid period of physical, biological, neurological, cognitive and emotional changes in young people. They are striving towards independence and becoming more influenced by peers.



Psychological Growth

Resilience is 'Normal Development under difficult conditions' (Fonagy et al. 1994). Children and young pupil are particularly at risk and vulnerable at this time. Foster and build resilience by providing the building blocks: a secure base; promoting self esteem and self efficacy (Gilligan 1997)

Resilience

According to Self Determination Theory (Ryan and Deci 2000) people need competence, connection and autonomy to achieve psychological growth. Some children may already possess the resources needed to adapt to the situation, however for others it may require adult support to acknowledge/ discover these and for others they may need more specific support (particularly when risks outweigh such feelings).

Learning

There will be differences in what pupils have been learning ; some will continue to have attended schools but their experiences will have been considerably different to the usual school day. For children learning at home their experiences will differ. It is important to share and value 'different' experiences of learning, to understand what they know and what they have forgotten. Don't undertake formal assessment straight away and consider other types of assessment such as curriculum based assessment. Pupils need to build confidence in their skills.



Building relationships

It is important to focus on building and re-establishing relationships across the whole school community in order that staff pupils and parents feel a sense of belonging, security and trust. The use of approaches such as Emotion Coaching (Gottman) and PACE (Dan Hughes) supports development of relationships.

HOW TO SUPPORT THE TRANSITION TO FURTHER EDUCATION

Farewell Year 11 & 13

UNCERTAINTY

Accepting the loss of familiarity and uncertainty with practical aspects of moving (e.g. travel).

What next? Q&A with staff who are familiar to them to ensure they are not missing out on post 16 options support.

CHANGE IN PROTOCOL

Do the young person's predicted grades allow them to access the course that they had hoped for? Is there opportunity to challenge predicted grades? Is there the possibility for resitting exams? Is there the possibility of providers relaxing their entry grades?

MENTAL HEALTH/ PSYCHOSOCIAL ADJUSTMENT

Ensuring provision in the new setting for regular support

Virtual farewell event or video with creative ways of including those that do not have free access to technology

Virtual tours of school buildings and staff to say goodbye

New staff to ensure that they have the most recent information on the young person's home and academic background

To explore ways of overcoming feelings of isolation with relation to friends and family (e.g. missed experiences)

LONGER TERM

School to identify the key person who will be working with the young person and how the young person would like to be helped

Year 11
for the key person to identify groups of young people with similar needs who will be transitioning together.

Year 13
for the key person to find creative ways of making links with at least one other person on their future course/apprenticeship.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER

For staff to consider the **macrosystems** supporting young people Bronfenbrenner, 1979.

Key document: 'The importance of key person support'. (Longobardi et al, 2019 Students psychological adjustment in normative school transitions investigating the role of teacher-student relationship quality).

For the setting to consider microsystems around **mental health and psychosocial adjustment** (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Uncertainties: One page profile to plan for the young person's wishes for future opportunities supported by key worker ensuring that the young person is at the heart of the document (Restorative practice, Hopkins 2001, 2003).

For young people to be aware that key adults are there to **support** them e.g. weekly check in (Bomber, 2007).

Longobardi et al, 2019, using 'Conversations that matter talking with children and teenagers in ways that help' (Sunderland, 2015).

HOW TO SUPPORT THE TRANSITION TO FURTHER EDUCATION

Supporting transition into tertiary education and/or the world of work.

BEFORE TRANSITION

College staff to produce an online video tour of the campus, facilities, teaching rooms with 360 degree camera.

Staff to prepare short video talks introducing themselves and talking through the courses.

Current students to prepare short face to camera presentations about how they find student life, how college differs from school, what they were worried or puzzled about before starting and how it worked out.

Staff to suggest activities or reading that students might like to do prior to enrolment. Offer webchat facility for prospective students.

IN THE FIRST FEW DAYS

Timetable daily tutorials for tutor groups to meet and do work on Connection, Competence and Autonomy:

Connection: Share lock down experiences - What was easy/hard? Mix tutor groups so Y12 can be supported by a Y13 student.

Competence: Implement activities that help to identify strengths students showed during lock down and discuss how they can be generalised.

Autonomy: Ask students to come up with their own suggestions for what they need to ensure a smooth transition. Identify vulnerable students and meet and greet them in the first week or two. Provide a quiet, safe place where they can drop in and talk to a key member of staff.



IN THE LONGER TERM

1

Consistent involvement from designated tutor

Buddy networks for (tutor-tutor) (tutor-student)

2

Flexibility from staff in adapting to gaps in learning, knowledge or attention skills

4

Clear protocols for monitoring mental health & wellbeing factors

3

Increased psychological first aid measures and resources for students and staff

5

WHY WE HAVE SUGGESTED THESE APPROACHES

Self Determination Theory (Ryan and Deci, 2000)

Highlights the importance of 3 factors needed for psychological growth, motivation and general well-being:

- 1. Competence:** The need to be effective in dealing with the environment.
- 2. Autonomy:** The need to control course of their lives.
- 3. Relatedness:** The need to have close, affectionate relationships with others.

As humans we demonstrate resilience on a daily basis and harnessing these inherent strengths can be empowering.

IMPORTANT POINTS TO REMEMBER

Most students, will be able to manage the transition, through harnessing the natural resources within the student's life including family, community and relationships.

Resilience can be defined as overcoming adversity and being able to cope with challenging situations. It is a process as opposed to an individual trait.

Some students will need additional support but it is important to allow for a period of adjustment.

Of course resilience can change over time depending on situations and contexts and there are times when we all need help from our friends, family, tutors and other students.

Clear communication between tutors, student support services and seek specialist advice where necessary.