

# TRANSITIONS

The term 'transition' is most often used to describe the phases of education that children or young people move through. Key Transition points include movement between:

- ▶ Classrooms or from classroom to other areas of the setting
- ▶ Year group (at the end of year)
- ▶ A change in school or setting
- ▶ Leaving school for post 16 provision, work, college or university
- ▶ Elective Home Education and school

Transition can also cover many other situations that your child or young person encounters in their day to day lives;

- ▶ Moving house
  - ▶ Death of a family member or pet
  - ▶ Parental separation
  - ▶ A new brother or sister
  - ▶ Travelling from their home to a friend or relatives house to visit
  - ▶ Starting work
- And many more...*

Children and young people may have difficulty understanding why the changes are occurring and what may happen next, which may significantly affect their levels of anxiety, confidence, and behaviours.

The majority of neurodiverse children and young people need a lot of time to prepare for any transitions in their life, and a lot of support and understanding whilst the transition is happening.

They need to feel secure, safe and have an element of control over the transition to mentally prepare themselves for both the transition itself and any outcome that may happen.



## What you can do to help support your child or young person prepare for and cope with day to day transitions

Preparations can include the use of many different tools and techniques, such as;

- ▶ Talking through the transition with them and any concerns or worries they may have about it
- ▶ Photos of the journey and destination that can be shown to them
- ▶ Asking your child or young person what they want and need to make the transition as comfortable as possible for them
- ▶ Assuring them that the transition plan is flexible if they do not feel comfortable moving onto the next step
- ▶ Give your child or young person a daily countdown to the transition
- ▶ Use a transition object – something that makes your child or young person feel safe or comforted, that they can bring with them
- ▶ The use of Social Stories as devised by Carol Grey (stories that show the transition step by step, in an easy to understand way) – to learn more about Social Stories, please visit the website [www.carolgraysocialstories.com/social-stories/what-is-it/](http://www.carolgraysocialstories.com/social-stories/what-is-it/)
- ▶ Allow plenty of time for them to make the transition
- ▶ Minimise changes to the transition plan.

## Education Transitions

If your child or young person is struggling with transitions between areas within the setting or a new setting, many strategies can be used to support this, such as;

- ▶ Using a visual timetable
- ▶ Providing a countdown to when they will be moving
- ▶ Show them a picture of where they will be moving to so that they understand where they are going and when
- ▶ Using a transition object – something that makes your child or young person feel safe or comforted that they can bring with them
- ▶ Create or use a Social Story that will show them each step in the process of transition – to learn more about Social Stories, please visit the website [www.carolgraysocialstories.com/social-stories/what-is-it/](http://www.carolgraysocialstories.com/social-stories/what-is-it/)
- ▶ Go through the transition documents or booklet that their new school has provided you several times over the holidays or period running up to when they will be starting their new year, school, or setting
- ▶ Show them their new uniform (if they have one) several times, encouraging them to try it on, feel the material, and see if they have any sensory difficulties with it. Make sure that you leave enough time that you can make adjustments or buy any new uniform
- ▶ Show them their new school bag, stationery, etc., so that they are familiar with it. If they help choose their new bag, etc., it may help them be more familiar and positive towards it
- ▶ Practice the journey to and from the new setting (if they are changing school or setting) so that they are familiar and comfortable with it.

- ▶ Use countdown clocks and calendars throughout the holiday or pre-transition period so that they can gradually prepare themselves
- ▶ Visit the new school or setting (if they are changing school or setting) so that you provide them with a sense of safety and security while they are looking around somewhere they are not familiar with. It will also make them feel more confident in asking questions, and you will also be able to ask questions about things that you think they or you will want or need to know
- ▶ Meet regularly with the team of staff responsible for the transition process so that you can express any concerns or anxieties that you or your child/young person may have and update them on any changes or developments at home
- ▶ When you have your child or young person's timetable, create a daily checklist to take correct items to and from school for each daily activity. This will help minimise anxiety, stress or overwhelm if they go to school/setting without the right things.

Some children and young people may have had difficulty at home during school holidays and may feel anxious about returning to an educational setting. They may also be experiencing challenges linked to separation anxiety or negative experiences during the holidays, making them more likely to want to stay in their 'safe place', usually their home.

If this is the case for your child or young person, ensure that you inform the new school/setting as these difficulties may lead to different or challenging behaviour and require a flexible, personalised approach by staff who will be working with them.

Everyone, irrespective of any additional or complex needs, can feel scared, nervous and excited about transitions. For SEND children and young people, some other difficulties and needs need to be taken into consideration. Their needs may not have been identified; they may have managed reasonably well until they reached a particular key transition point. It is essential to ensure that all relevant information is given to the teacher, school or setting as soon as possible so that they can make any adjustments that your child or young person may need when they start.

Colleagues from Southend Local Authority created a document called "Southend SEND: Transitions 2020", which details what education settings should be doing to prepare children and young people for transitions between year groups, settings, and between Elective Home Education and school.

You can find this document at the webpage:

[www.southendlearningnetwork.co.uk/Page/16105](http://www.southendlearningnetwork.co.uk/Page/16105)



## Preparation for a new setting

Transition paperwork is usually provided for your child or young person and their family to prepare them for moving to a new school environment. There is no current specified template that all schools use, but they can provide you with information that will help your child or young person, such as maps of the school, photos of new classroom, staff, and school, toilets, etc.

### Other information that may be included, or that may be useful to ask for;

- ▶ New expectations on the child or young person: i.e. uniform, break and lunchtimes, lining up, entry and exit, the transition between classes, stages, schools, settings, assembly/classroom routines
- ▶ New vocabulary used in the school: i.e. 'class', 'mentor', 'SENCO', 'tutor group', 'head of year', subject-specific vocabulary
- ▶ The key staff they will work with: i.e. teacher, form tutor, SENCo, mentor, 'buddy', support on who and how to ask for support
- ▶ Quiet or 'safe' areas they can access: classroom space, nurture area, allocated area for emotional regulation, library.
- ▶ Their timetable: i.e. how to use it, formatted for the pupil's understanding
- ▶ Systems for organisation: i.e. diary, checklists for materials and books, online
- ▶ Homework: i.e. expectations and explanations, support tools, written, online.

## Develop prompt cards for use in the new class/school/setting, such as;

### If I can't find my way to class:

- ▶ I will get out my map and try to work it out
- ▶ I will try to ask a friend or someone in my class
- ▶ I will ask a teacher/Mrs X, the Learning Mentor/my identified 'buddy'
- ▶ Specific pupil related strategies.

## People who can help me: list key staff names and roles (with photographs) and where they can find them.

As well as the new school providing transition documents or information, your child or young person's old school will have created a Pupil Profile or Passport for them. This document is sent to their new school to give them information on your child or young person's specific needs.

An example Pupil Passport is;



# PUPIL PASSPORT

Hello, this is XXXX

(If pupil premium put PP here)

2021-22

My medication and  
personal care:

INSERT TEXT HERE  
IN BOLD

My birthday is:  
DATE MONTH YEAR  
I am XX years old.

My parents, teachers and  
other people who know me  
well completed this profile on  
my behalf to the best of their  
knowledge.

Words that describe me  
best:

INSERT TEXT HERE  
IN BOLD

How you can help me:

INSERT TEXT HERE  
IN BOLD

Photo of  
your child  
or young  
person

HERE

My strengths and  
talents:

INSERT TEXT HERE  
IN BOLD

Things that can make  
my day bad:

INSERT TEXT HERE  
IN BOLD

People who are  
important to me:

INSERT TEXT HERE  
IN BOLD

Things that make my life  
good:

INSERT TEXT HERE  
IN BOLD