

Supporting Transitions



Why do children and young people find some changes difficult?



Some changes can be exciting. But others can be stressful, worrying and upsetting. Change can be more difficult when a young person:

- does not want it to happen
- does not feel ready for it
- feels worried about what is happening next, because it is new or unknown
- needs time to let go of something that has ended
- feels like what is happening to them is out of their control

A child may also find change more difficult if they are already struggling with other things, such as anxiety, low-mood, problems at school or self-esteem issues.

- Children who suffer from anxiety, trouble with transitions might come from a place of fear.
- Children who have experienced trauma can find transitions particularly difficult.
- Relationships and sadness at leaving trusted adults and their safe base in school.



Signs a child maybe struggling with Transitions



- Reserved /subdued
- Talking about life changes
- Separation anxiety- clingy
- Emotional outbursts
- Withdrawn
- Difficulty sleeping
- Increased general anxiety
- Difficulty coping with their usual routines

- Friendship difficulties
- Reduced self-esteem
- Regression -Baby behaviour
- Lack of resilience
- Distraction or avoidance
- Defiance
- Looking for ways to take control
- Loss of interest in schoolwork
- School Refusal
- Clinging to objects



Common Worries Around Transitions



- Friendships
- Changes to the environment
- Not being able to do the work
- New adults
- Using different toilets/playground
- Expectations
- Different timings
- Fear of the unknown
- Staff not knowing what they need
- Feeling overwhelmed because everything is changing

What if I
get lost?

My new teacher
won't know what
I need?

What if I make
a mistake?

Will I be able to
use the toilet?

The work will be
too hard –who
will help me?



How can I support my child?



Check in with your child regularly and remind them:

- it's normal to feel both excited and scared – nerves help us prepare for challenges
- it may take time for them to feel settled, and that's okay
- they might get things wrong as they get used to a new situation
- they've coped with changes in the past and can do it again
- not everything is going to change – some routines will stay the same
- they can talk to you or someone at school if they're worried.
- of their strengths and past successes
- Encourage age appropriate resilience and independence skills.
- Developing healthy, positive strategies for managing mental and emotional wellbeing.



How can I support my child?



- Secondary school – walk the route, keep in touch with friends
 - Find out information together – look at websites
 - Compile a list of questions to ask. Make a plan together
 - Friendship strategies; practice conversation starters, also, talk to them about how friendships can change a lot in the first few weeks
 - Top tips for making friends | Childline
- Listen, validate feelings and remain calm
 - Try not to project your worries
 - Talk about change
 - Keep routines and consistency as much as possible
 - Model positive talk around new experiences
 - Make a Reunion Plan to ease separation anxiety
 - Transitional objects
 - Create a memory jar/book



Additional support for children and young people could include:



- Extra visits for children and young people –school setting, Key Stage, new teachers
- Using social stories to help prepare the children and young people for change
- Using a ‘My new school / Class’ booklet or transition pack to introduce key changes and give information about the new setting
- Taking photos of the new setting and looking at them with your child to keep the new setting fresh and familiar in their mind
- Introducing prompt cards or checklists to help them remember what to do/where to go
- Giving out a clear map of the site and/or timetables
- Identifying a ‘go to’ person for children and young people and families to contact
- Completing a ‘my usual week looks like this’ timetable to provide additional background information to pass on to the new setting



Choose health



Know what affects your child,
what makes them grumpy, hyper, disconnected...

- Do they need snacks throughout the day?
- Do they need lots of sleep?
- Do they need to get out and about and do exercise?
- Do they need time alone?

Trust that you know your child and give them the basics
that they need to cope with difficult days

Be calm

Try to stay calm whilst your child is feeling distressed.

Your child may show:

- highs and lows
- blame
- melodrama
- self-centredness
- anger



Be wise

As they discover new things, try to:

- be interested
- listen to their point of view
- be non-judgemental
- choose your words carefully
- guide
- act on warning bells
- give boundaries
- see it from all sides



Be the anchor

In times of change you are:

- constant
- family
- familiar
- routine
- in-jokers
- irritating
- comforting
- home



Work together

Share ideas about how to:

- create action plans
- be forward-looking
- have a problem-solving approach
- show them that we can all get things wrong
- enjoy achievements



Communicate

The small things you do make all the difference:

Keep talking, texting, listening, hearing,
hugging, sympathising, smiling, reassuring,
checking, sharing, suggesting, encouraging,
respecting

Move on up

Encourage independence:

- help them to move positively from child identity towards teen identity
- increase their responsibilities
- be positive whenever they act maturely



Be aware of your child's changing needs. Sometimes it might
feel like one step forwards, two steps back.

Get learning

Be involved, find out more and talk about:

- social media
- current affairs
- internet benefits and dangers
- what it's like to be young in the current world
- new music
- language and slang



Look after yourself

Support yourself, to best support your child:

- lean on friends
- relax, exercise, sleep well, eat well
- offload on other family
- remember tomorrow is a new day
- find 'me time'
- see the GP



Ten Ways for parents to help children cope with change

Transition at BVP



- 1 full day and 2 half-day transition sessions
- General class transition booklets for all students
- Personalised transition booklets for identified pupils
- Group pastoral support for identified children
- Additional transition support for our vulnerable children

- Concise handover involving existing teacher, SENDCo and Pastoral Team.



After the long summer holiday I will be in year 2 class 20



I will come into school through the Year 2 door.



At playtime and home time I will go out of the year 2 door.



This is where I will hang my bag and coat up.

My new teacher will be Mrs Owen.
Mrs O'Conner will be in class to help me too.



I will have 3 opportunities to visit my new classroom and teachers on:

- The morning of Monday 1st July
- All day on Wednesday 3rd July
- The morning of Thursday 4th July





What does successful transition look like?



How can you tell whether your child is settling in well at secondary school?

Research shows that the signs of a successful transition are:

- developing new friendships
- maintaining good self-esteem and confidence
- showing an increasing interest in school and school work
- getting used to new routines without major disruption
- experiencing continuity in learning.



Useful Websites:

- [Dealing with Changes and Transitions - Social Story](#)
- [Transitions : Mentally Healthy Schools](#)
- [Place2Be: Parenting Smart: Help your child manage separations and goodbyes](#)
- [New School Year | Transitioning Up | Explore Learning](#)
- [Young Minds: Transitions and Times of Change](#)
- [Moving Up! The transition to secondary school](#)
- [Childline.org: How to make Friends](#)

