



Transition to secondary school

A parent's guide

A Time of Change

The transition from Primary to Secondary school is a time of change and opportunities. Coping with change can be stressful for both children and parents but planning, preparation and understanding what to expect can give both you and your child the confidence to make transition from Year 6 to 7 a launchpad to a positive and exciting future at Secondary school.

In this leaflet, we will talk about how to build confidence and how to deal with any issues that may occur. We will also suggest some practical ways to plan and prepare for the start of Year 7, including things to do over the summer holiday.

As a parent of a Primary school pupil, you will feel confident that you know the daily routine, know staff and probably parents at the school, know the expectations of learning and behaviour – in short, you [and your child] know what to expect. As a parent of a future Secondary school pupil, you may feel daunted and unsettled by the amount that you don't yet know. Secondary school staff are, of course, aware of this and will use every opportunity - through Induction evenings and information booklets - to outline their expectations and their pastoral care / support systems to parents. Year 6 pupils will be invited into the Secondary schools for transition days to meet fellow pupils and staff, to familiarise themselves with the buildings, to introduce the new routines and expectations and to be welcomed into their new school. This 'sense of belonging' is most important - the quicker you and your child feel part of the new school community, the easier it will be for your child to settle in and make the most of every opportunity. Whenever possible, accept any invitations to go into the school and meet staff but if you are unable to attend these meetings and have not yet been into the school, ring the admin team to arrange an alternative time with your child's tutor / Learning Manager or Year Leader. School websites are also really useful for both you and your child – websites contain a lot of basic information [staff, routines, processes, curriculum etc] but they also show events, photos, school Twitter feed and school maps or virtual tours etc.

Increase in Independence

Attending Secondary school requires an increase in independence for your child. You can support this by encouraging your child to take more responsibility for themselves over the summer months by, for example, getting themselves up by using an alarm, gathering bits of information that they will need for September, writing lists to help organise themselves, going shopping for their lunch on a budget [this will help when choosing and buying their school lunch]. Build their confidence and self-esteem by praising them for what they are doing well, however small. This is particularly important in the first few weeks at Secondary school when children may focus on things that have gone wrong, things they have not known or have forgotten. Continue to encourage and support them but resist the urge to 'do it for them'. This particularly applies to homework but also applies to day-to-day practical tasks. Getting the balance between supporting your child and encouraging their independence is difficult but a useful rule of thumb might be "Never do anything regularly for your child that they are capable of doing for themselves". Work with them to find ways to solve problems and to know when to ask for help – don't just give them a solution. Try not to show frustration if they are struggling with, for example, a new subject. Concentrate on what they are doing well then work together on the subjects that perhaps don't come so naturally to them.

As the new term approaches and nerves start to creep in, it is a good idea to remind your child that everybody is in the same boat {new routine, new uniform, new people, new building] and that all new Year 7 pupils will have aspects of school life that they find difficult and things that they get wrong. Equally, everyone has things that they do really well and problems that they work through. No-one is perfect. Their school support network may have changed but they still have family and friends [old and new], together with key staff [tutors, Year Leaders, subject teachers etc] in their new school who they can talk to.

Smart Moves

Many of our Year 6 pupils have followed a programme called Smart Moves – a series of short sessions to develop life-long resilience skills with a particular focus on transition. The sessions cover practical topics such as travel, getting enough sleep and how to relax. They also cover problem-solving, thinking positively, making good friends and the importance of empathy. If your child has completed the Smart Moves programme, they will have been given a booklet – ask them to talk through what they have learned and what they think will be most useful. At the end of this leaflet there is a link to a Smart Moves webinar for parents which provides some useful tips for transition.

Growth Mindset

Many Year 6 have also been taught using a Growth Mindset model where pupils are encouraged to use the power of 'YET' [I can't do it yet, I don't understand it yet, I haven't made many new friends yet]. This encourages them to improve their skills through effort and practice, to keep working on a problem and to ask for help when they need it rather than giving up, to appreciate progress they have made and successes they have had, to see mistakes and failures as opportunities to learn and, most importantly, to believe that their intelligence and talents can be developed over time – they are not 'fixed'. At the end of this leaflet there is another link which provides parents with 30 Growth Mindset phrases to use with their children, such as "Well done – I noticed how well you worked on that project", "It's OK to make mistakes", "Aim for progress, not perfection", "Can we come up with a different strategy?", "You're on the right track".



Be Prepared

You may also have your own concerns or questions about how your child will cope with the move from Primary to Secondary. Be reassured that most 'teething problems' disappear within the first few weeks. Try not to let your child pick up on your concerns and try to plan ahead. For example:

- If you worry that, until they get used to the new routine, they might lose things, have spares ready [keys, copy of timetable, pens etc] or have a box where they can put all of their school equipment / books etc when they come in from school.
- If you need to drive your child to school because of the distance, you may worry about the amount of traffic around the school and where you should drop your child off. Consider finding a safe place slightly away from the school where you can drop off your child and arrange for one of their friends to meet them there so that they can walk in together – less stress for you and your child!
- If you are not sure how they would respond if they missed the bus or forgot their homework, for example, find an opportunity to talk through those scenarios [What would you do if.....who would you talk to.....where would you go....?]. Doing this on a walk or doing the washing up together – any activity where you are side by side rather than 'eye to eye' - can lead to a more relaxed, open conversation and may be a useful way of talking through issues in the future.

Checklist of information needed for September

- Times of the school day and dates for the school year, including PD days
- Dates for Induction days and Parents' Evening
- Details of uniform, including PE kit and suppliers
- School regulations for footwear and outdoor coats
- List of equipment needed e.g. bag, pencil case etc
- School rules for mobile phones, jewellery, hairstyles / colour, water bottles etc
- School bus timetables [where applicable], how to pay / where to get bus passes
- Facilities for storing bicycles, if the chosen mode of transport
- School meals – what is available and how to pay
- Information about lockers, if applicable
- Contact names and numbers for key staff e.g. Tutor / Learning Manager, Head of Year, SENDCo, Attendance Officer
- Website address
- Information about the school portal [for information sharing e.g. reward points]
- Homework policy [how much to expect, how is it accessed e.g. online]

You should be able to access this information through transition booklets, letters to parents, school websites and at the Induction Parents' Evening. If you have any urgent queries, contact school reception where the admin teams will be happy to help:

- Catcote Academy 01429 264036 admin@catcote.co.uk
- Dyke House Academy 01429 266377
dykehouse.enquiries@northerneducationtrust.org
- High Tunstall College of Science 01429 261446
htadmin@hightunstall.hartlepool.sch.uk
- Manor Community Academy 01429 288338
manor.enquiries@northerneducationtrust.org
- St Hilds Church of England School 01429 273041 admin@st-hilds.hartlepool.sch.uk
- The English Martyrs Catholic School and Sixth Form College 01429 273790
admin@ems.bhcet.org.uk

Ten things for you to encourage and support your child to do over the summer

- 1) Plan and practise their journey to and from school.
- 2) Do a dry run of getting equipment ready and packing their school bag, with and without PE kit.
- 3) Practise tying their tie [if applicable] and putting on the whole uniform [to aid quick changing in PE].
- 4) Wear in new shoes to prevent 'New School Year' blisters.
- 5) Find the safest place to keep important items e.g. money, keys, bus pass, phone.
- 6) Look at the school website and re-read any information.
- 7) Talk about things they are excited about and any concerns they may have then problem-solve with them or reassure them by talking through your own experiences and lessons learned.
- 8) Meet up with others going to the same school and talk about the new opportunities in Secondary school.
- 9) Working back from the start of the school day, plan their 'getting up' time, allowing for dressing etc, breakfast and travel.
- 10) Adjust bedtimes / wake-up times over the final week of the holiday to prepare for the new school routine.



Links for further support for Parents

‘Smart Moves’ [Eikon Charity].

Most Y6 pupils in Hartlepool schools will have followed the ‘Smart Moves’ Transition programme. The Eikon Charity, who created this programme, hold live webinars for the parents of Y6 pupils in Surrey as they were originally set up to support Surrey schools, The webinar attached to this link is a recording for parents of any pupils accessing the Smart Moves programme and references some of the resources that are used in the Y6 pupil booklet.

<https://vimeo.com/693950196/48c92dcc98>

‘Young Minds’ videos / webinars

https://www.youngminds.org.uk/professional/resources/supporting-school-transitions/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIweCFreO7-AIV54FQBh1k-AcWEAAYAiAAEgloffD_BwE

Anna Freud Centre resources / guide book

<https://www.annafreud.org/schools-and-colleges/resources/supporting-childrens-transition-to-secondary-school-guidance-for-parents-and-carers/>

BBC Bitesize guidance and video

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zbr7rj6> Parents’ Survival Guide

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/z4k8bdm> Giving Emotional and Practical Support

Netmums.com Top Tips

<https://www.netmums.com/child/starting-secondary-school>

Internet Matters

www.internetmatters.org Guidance for parents on internet issues

Develop Good Habits

<https://www.developgoodhabits.com/growth-mindset-phrases/>

30 Growth Mindset Phrases - for parents to use when working with and encouraging their children.