



NOTTINGHAM CITY TRANSITION GUIDANCE TOOLKIT

Supporting Primary and Secondary Schools with
the Transition from Year 6 to Year 7

2026

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Introduction

What is this guidance based upon?

We conducted research exploring the current practice around Year 6 to 7 transition across Nottingham City. Perspectives were gained from Primary staff, Secondary staff, Year 6 and Year 7 parents and current Year 7 students. This research, alongside a systematic literature review of current research, was the foundation for the contents of this guidance toolkit.

01 INTRODUCTION

The transition from primary to secondary school is a critical educational milestone. Research consistently indicates that high-quality transition processes improve academic engagement, wellbeing, and attendance. This project aimed to identify strengths, challenges, and opportunities for enhancing transition practice across Nottingham City, ultimately informing guidance for schools.

02 OBJECTIVE

The research aimed to:

- Explore current transition practice across primary and secondary settings.
- Identify factors supporting or hindering successful transition.
- Gather views from pupils, parents, and staff.
- Produce evidence-based guidance for schools.

03 METHODOLOGY

A mixed-methods approach was used, including online surveys, thematic analysis, and focus groups. Surveys included quantitative items and open-ended qualitative responses. A total of 466 stakeholders responded across phases.

With thanks to our respondents: 28 Primary staff, 135 Year 6 Parents, 29 Secondary staff, 176 Year 7 Parents, 298 Year 7 Students



How to use the toolkit

- The toolkit is designed as an aid document to be used throughout the academic year. It hopes to be a practical guide to supporting transition and valid practice that is already happening.
- Example documents can be adapted or used as presented.
- Parent/carer documents can be shared accordingly
- Signposting is provided for additional documents and guidance.

Research Summary



Why is transition planning so important?

A well-managed transition from primary to secondary school is critical to ensuring that pupils experience continuity in their learning, wellbeing, and personal development.

This period represents one of the most significant changes in a child's educational journey, and the way it is handled can have long-term effects on academic attainment, engagement, and emotional resilience.

Challenges in Transition



- Children's anxieties: fear of bullying, getting lost, discipline systems, homework pressure, and losing friends.
- Parents' concerns: safety, independence, mobile phone rules, meals, and fear of their child's needs being overlooked.
- Systemic issues: fragmented school system, cross-borough transfers, late admissions, and information-sharing difficulties.
- Vulnerabilities: SEND, attendance, mental health, social care involvement, temporary housing, and more.

EFFECTIVE TRANSITION PLANNING IS KEY TO ENABLE :



Emotional wellbeing:

The move to a larger and more complex school environment can generate anxiety and uncertainty. Structured support helps to reduce stress, build confidence, and promote a positive attitude towards learning.

Safeguarding: Systemic approach to support safety, involving shared information between schools.

Continuity of learning:

Effective transition planning minimises the risk of learning loss, enabling pupils to build on prior knowledge rather than revisiting or repeating work. Ensuring that secondary teachers understand pupils' starting points supports progression

Equity and Inclusion Vulnerable groups.

Tailored transition support ensures equity of experience, prevents widening gaps in attainment or wellbeing.

Social integration:

Secondary school requires pupils to form new peer relationships and adapt to different teaching staff.

A supportive transition fosters social belonging, reduces feelings of isolation, and strengthens resilience in managing change

Long-term outcomes:

Research shows that pupils who experience a positive transition are more likely to sustain engagement, demonstrate higher motivation, and achieve better educational outcomes across their secondary years.



PRIMARY TRANSITION GUIDANCE



Key Principles of successful transition

PROFILE STRENGTHS AND NEED



Thorough identification and sharing of need was cited as the most important factor for our secondary schools

- Create a rich and thorough profile of student's strengths and needs using evidence-based assessments, (e.g. R2i).
- Evidence plan-do-review cycles - highlighting strategies that have been effective.
- Create a succinct pen profile summary

INFORMATION SHARING

- Share information about students as early as possible.
- Rich, honest account of needs
- Meet and share information face to face where possible



COMMUNICATION WITH SECONDARY



- Regular meetings with secondary colleagues to share student profiles.
- Close contact with secondary colleagues to arrange visits, assemblies etc

SUPPORT FAMILIES

- You have built strong relationships with families over years of supporting them. The transition can be anxiety provoking for families.
- Support access to secondary events and key contacts.

Our research found that secondary schools really value your support with parent engagement

Transition Timeline

Have you considered applying for an EHCP for the highest profile students?

Year 5 Ensure needs are identified and plan-do-review cycles actioned. Begin assessments for those that may be vulnerable in the Year 6-7 transition.

Year 5 - Summer Term

Liaise with Secondary colleagues who may offer taster lessons, assemblies at this stage.

Consider a co-created transition wall display

Year 6 Autumn Term

- Identify pupils who may need additional transition support (SEND, attendance, SEMH, vulnerable families)
- Begin informal conversations with pupils about secondary school
- Share general transition information with parents/carers
- Ensure parents aware of the application process. Offer parent evening / support with applications where possible
- Encourage development of independence skills (organisation, routines, self-advocacy)
- Initial liaison between primary SENCO / DSL and secondary schools (where possible)
- Ensure applications made by parent / carers by October deadline (before October half term)

Year 6 January - March

- Attend Portal training
- Review SEND/EHCP transition arrangements
- Gather and update pupil information (strengths, triggers, successful strategies)
- Submit information to Portal
- Parent meetings/support sessions where needed
- Emotional preparation work (friendships, anxieties, change)
- Work on:
 - Time management
 - Following instructions from different adults
 - Asking for help

Year 6 April -May

- Secondary school visits / transition days
- Additional visits for SEND or anxious pupils
- Transfer of key records and support plans
- Meet form tutor / pastoral staff (where possible)
- Practical preparation:
 - Timetables
 - Equipment
 - Uniform routines
 - Travel planning

Consider a transition PHSE curriculum

Year 6 June - July

- Final transition meetings for high-need pupils
- Confirm support arrangements for September
- Provide families with clear points of contact
- Celebrate endings and achievements
- Acknowledge mixed emotions (excitement and worry)

Profiling



USING R2i

- Start the R2i process as early as possible – ideally Year 5.
- Focus on analysis and how the assessments have developed your theory of what is happening for the young person.

What strategies did you put in place and did they work?

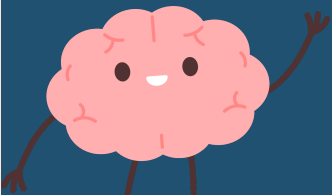
Which strategies could be supportive at secondary?

“
Include an hypothesis of need
”

Summarise strengths and areas of need/risk factors

★ EXAMPLE HYPOTHESIS

We hypothesise that James’s physical aggression occurs in response to feelings of threat and is maintained by a cycle of negative staff responses and limited opportunities to express himself safely. This may be linked to him witnessing domestic violence at a young age and is best understood in the context of ongoing family conflict and previous school suspensions.



Key Risk Factors

Several risk factors can increase the likelihood of difficulties (academic, emotional, social, or behavioural) during this transition.

Individual / personal factors

- Low self-esteem or poor confidence
- Anxiety, especially about change or new environments
- Poor social skills or difficulty making friends
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND)
- Previous behavioural difficulties
- Mental health concerns (e.g. anxiety, low mood)

Family factors

- Limited parental support or involvement in education
- Family stress (e.g. conflict, separation, financial hardship)
- Major life changes occurring at the same time (e.g. moving house)
- Low expectations around education

Academic factors

- Low attainment or falling behind in primary school
- Poor literacy/numeracy skills
- Lack of independent learning skills
- Poor organisational skills

Peer & social factors

- Friendship disruption (e.g. not moving with existing friends)
- Experiences of bullying or social isolation
- Difficulty adjusting to larger peer groups

School / systems factors

- Poor transition support (limited communication between schools)
- Lack of familiarity with the secondary environment
- Reduced individual attention from staff (larger classes)
- Inconsistent pastoral support
- Unclear expectations or routines

Environmental factors

- Moving to a much larger, more complex school
- Longer travel times to school
- Changes in community or neighbourhood
- Cultural or language barriers

Protective factors to help reduce risk :

- Strong relationships with a trusted adult
- Good transition programmes

- Good home-school communication

- Peer support or buddy systems
- Consistent routines and clear expectations

What about students that have SEMH needs that are managed within the Primary environment but may struggle in Secondary?

EARLY IDENTIFICATION

- Identify those young people at the earliest opportunity (e.g. ideally Year 5). Identification could be through observation, teacher discussions, R2i data, family input.
- Reflect on transition vulnerability as the criteria, this may include:
 - Reliant upon very trusted adult relationships to emotionally regulate.
 - Needs high adult scaffolding for routines, organisation or relationships
 - Emotionally reactive under stress but settled in familiar environments
 - Masking behaviours (compliance, withdrawal, humour)
 - Increased anxiety around change or uncertainty

Please complete the following form for the pupils in your class.

Do you expect this child to settle in well at secondary school?

1 = Strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Not sure; 4 = Agree; 5 = Strongly agree

	Academically	Socially, with peers	Socially, with teachers	To the new routine
Example: John Smith	4	5	4	3
1.				
2.				

Consider using the Start scale as a register to monitor this cohort.

BUILD TRANSITION SKILLS

- Focus on transition preparation skills e.g. emotional literacy, help-seeking skills from a range of adults, repairing conflict, managing change and inconsistency.

INVOLVE FAMILIES

- Support families to engage with all universal transition offers from the secondary school.

PEN PROFILE EXAMPLE:

✦ **Transition Profile**     My previous setting and the key contact 

KEY THINGS ABOUT ME!


My language, culture, identity:

My hobbies/interests:

...

Things I'm looking forward to about secondary:

How to build a relationship with me:

 Vulnerabilities e.g. frequent moves, :

MY LEARNING

Strengths:

Areas I need support with:

Strategies that have worked:

MY FAMILY  I have _ siblings in school

My family context:

How best to communicate with my family:

KEY SAFEGUARDING INFORMATION 

MY PEER RELATIONSHIPS

Established relationships I have already:

In friendships, I need support with:

Other information..

Best Practice for Enhanced Transition

IDENTIFY VULNERABLE GROUP EARLY



- Early identification of pupils needing enhanced support (SEND, SEMH, attendance, family context)
- Clear transition profiles / pupil passports shared with all relevant secondary staff in meetings and on Portal

INFORMATION SHARING

- Share information about students as early as possible.
- Rich, honest account of needs



ADDITIONAL VISITS



- Tailored transition experiences (additional visits, quiet times, meeting key staff)

STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

- Strong primary-secondary partnership with honest, meaningful information sharing
- Relationship-led approach with a trusted key adult and pupil voice at the centre
- Family engagement to reduce anxiety and build shared confidence
- Multi-agency working where needed to ensure continuity of support

METHOD

Transition Portal

Add sufficient information that captures perspectives from relevant staff

Transition meetings

In person where possible or online meetings to share key information about the highest profile students

Our research suggests in person meetings work best in gaining contextual information

TRANSITION DOCUMENTS

Consider R2i summary profiles, Attendance, safeguarding, Attainment data.

SEND SPECIFIC SHARING

Additional steps:

- SENCO to SENCO discussions
- Review meetings where appropriate
- Share provision maps or plans

SAFEGUARDING

Shared separately from other information
Transferred securely (system or hand delivery)
Logged and receipt confirmed

FAMILY INPUT

Parents should have opportunity to:

- Share concerns
- Provide relevant information

PUPIL VOICE

- Questionnaires
- Transition booklets
- One-page pupil profiles
- Opportunities for Q&A

TIMEFRAME

Year 6	Action
Spring Term	Identify vulnerable pupils
Early Summer	Share initial information
Mid Summer	Hold transition meetings
Late Summer	Final updates (e.g. SATs)
Post-transfer	Respond to follow-up queries

STAFF RESPONSIBILITY



Year 6 Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete transition profiles • Ensure accuracy and clarity • Highlight key needs and strategies
SENCO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure SEND information is detailed and clear • Liaise with secondary SENCO • Support transition planning
DSL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transfer safeguarding records securely • Communicate directly with receiving DSL • Confirm receipt
SLT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure systems are in place • Monitor quality of information shared

CHECKLIST

- Transition summaries / profiles completed
- Detailed and specific SEND information
- Safeguarding transferred securely
- Portal information up to date
- Face to face meetings held for key pupils
- Pupil voice included
- Receipt of information confirmed

HOW TO SUPPORT WHEN

PARENT/CARERS ARE NOT ALLOCATED
FIRST CHOICE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL



GUIDANCE FOR PRIMARY SCHOOLS

ACKNOWLEDGE THE EMOTIONAL IMPACT



- Explicitly normalise disappointment, anger or anxiety in conversations and written communications.
- Provide reassurance whilst still validating parental concerns.

Key messages such as:
“It is completely understandable to feel upset or worried. We are here to help you think through next steps calmly and clearly.”

PROVIDE INFORMATION ON NEXT STEPS



- Support parents to understand the details or what is offered and why the preferred school was not allocated. (e.g. distance, oversubscription criteria)
- Explain the options to parents:
 1. Accept the offered school
 2. Join the waiting list(s) for higher-ranked schools
 3. Appeal for a place at a preferred school

Advise that parent/carers accept the place offered whilst they appeal/stay on the waiting list for the preferred school

SUPPORT TO UNDERSTAND APPEALS

Additional support for vulnerable families:

Offer of additional support

Early and regular check-ins

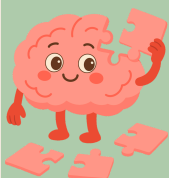
- Clarify that appeals are independent and based on a number of factors E.g. current intake of school etc.
- Appeals must be made within 20 days.
- Ensure that additional information can be provided if parent/carers are considering appealing (e.g. medical, SEND, professional reports)

HELP TO SEE POSITIVES

- Encourage parents to:
 - Attend transition events or induction days
 - Read the school's SEN and pastoral information
- Share balanced messages:
 - Many pupils settle well after an anxious start
 - Children's experience is shaped strongly by relationships
- Share anonymised examples of pupils who flourished in similar situations.
- Ensure all staff give a consistent message.



CONTINUE WITH STRONG TRANSITION



- Continue transition work as normal ensuring that all information is shared.
- Continue emotional-based transition support with students



SECONDARY TRANSITION GUIDANCE TOOLKIT

Key Principles of successful transition

EARLIER THE BETTER



- Engage with primary colleagues as early as possible.
- Consider events and activities for Year 5 students
- Identify those that are most vulnerable and needing enhanced support as early as possible.

Having reassurance that information has been widely shared was cited as important by our primary schools

INFORMATION LOOP

- Share information about students with all staff.
- Reassure primary staff and parents that information has been received and shared
- Use information to inform CPD planning and provision maps for upcoming cohort

RELATIONSHIPS ARE KEY



- Prioritise building relationships with students and families
- Ensure peer relationship building is a focus for transition and first term.
- Allocate key adults to those most vulnerable

PERSONALISE WHERE NEEDED

- Enhanced transition for vulnerable students
- Transition days and provision tailored according to primary information.

MONITOR AND REVIEW

- Closely monitor the Year 7 cohort in the first 6-8 weeks
 - Use Round-Robin assessments to identify any concerns at the earliest opportunity
 - Continue pastoral support for at least the first term

Transition Timeline

Early Preparation

September – October

- Identify feeder primary schools
- Assign transition lead / team
- Create transition calendar
- Website section for transition

November – December

- Primary school visits (introductory)
- Build relationships with Year 6 teachers and SENCOs
- Open evening invitations

Autumn term Y6

Y6 Spring term

January – February

- Hold Open Evening / School Tours
- Identify vulnerable students early
- Launch parent communication:
 - Welcome letters
 -

March – April

- Transfer of data: Portal
- Arrange face to face meetings with primaries

Year 6 Summer Term

May/ June

- Develop individual transition plans for high-need pupils
- Offer enhanced visits:
 - SEND pupils
 - High-anxiety students

June / July

- Transition Day(s):
 - Taster lessons
 - Meet tutors and peers
 - School tour
- Collect student voice:
- Parent information evening:
 - Uniform
 - Expectations
 - Behaviour systems
- Additional support:
 - Nurture groups / summer school invite
 - One-to-one meetings for key students
- Staff briefing:
 - Profiles for vulnerable pupils
 - Strategies to support

- Structured primary visits:
 - Meet pupils in their primary setting
 - Run Q&A sessions
- Small group transition workshops:
 - Anxiety support
 - Social skills
- Parent engagement sessions (especially for vulnerable groups)

Summer Holidays

- Run Summer School / Transition Programme:
- Confidence-building activities
- Provide transition packs:
- Reading tasks
- "All About Me" booklet
- Maintain contact with key families if needed
- Send welcome letter / postcard to students

September

Focus on:

- Routines
- Expectations
- Relationships
- Tutor time transition programme:
 - Organisation skills
 - Friendship building
- Early check-ins for vulnerable students
- Parent communication

October

- Monitor:
 - Attendance
 - Behaviour
 - Engagement
- Run transition review meetings
- Intervene early:
 - Mentoring
 - Small group support

Year 7 Autumn Term

Consider Year 7 peer activities e.g. school disco

Year 7 Autumn Term

November – December

- Parent evening
- Evaluate transition effectiveness:
 - Student voice
 - Parent feedback
 - Staff input
- Adjust support plans

KEY ONGOING STRATEGIES

- ✓ Regular communication with families
- ✓ Pastoral tracking of vulnerable pupils
- ✓ Peer mentoring / buddy systems
- ✓ Close collaboration between pastoral, SEN, and teaching staff

Best Practice for Enhanced Transition

IDENTIFY VULNERABLE GROUP EARLY



- Engage with feeder primaries early (Year 5 or early Year 6) to identify pupils needing enhanced support (SEND, SEMH, attendance, family context)

INFORMATION SHARING

- Involve relevant staff (SENDSCO, DSL, HOY etc) in transition meetings.
- Attend relevant meetings throughout Year 6 (e.g. EHCP review, Social care meetings)
- Share information widely with school staff



ADDITIONAL VISITS



- Tailored transition experiences (additional visits, quiet times, meeting key staff).
- Provide additional visits and meetings with parent/carers.
- Consider transition booklets

STRONG PARTNERSHIPS

- Strong primary-secondary partnership with honest, meaningful information sharing
- Relationship-led approach with a trusted key adult and pupil voice at the centre
- Family engagement to reduce anxiety and build shared confidence
- Multi-agency working where needed to ensure continuity of support

METHOD

Transition Portal

Ensure cohort information is digested and organised in a manner that can be analysed

Transition meetings

Face-to-face is recommended, particularly for vulnerable students.

Our research suggests this is most effective

TRANSITION DOCUMENTS

See information sharing template examples

SEND SPECIFIC SHARING

Additional steps:

- SENCO to SENCO discussions
- Review meetings where appropriate
- Share provision maps or plans

SAFEGUARDING

DSL staff share information

Secondary DSL attend social care meetings in Year 6

FAMILY INPUT

Parent / carers should have opportunity to:

- Share concerns
- Provide relevant information

Provide parent / carers with a key contact

Our parent / carer surveys say this increases confidence

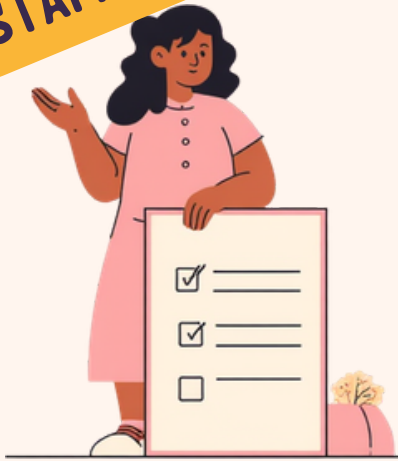
PUPIL VOICE

- Gain feedback from students following transition days and on additional visits

TIMEFRAME

Year 6	Action
Spring Term	Identify vulnerable pupils
Early Summer	Gain initial information
Mid Summer	Attend transition meetings
Late Summer	Enhanced transition
Post-transfer	Share all information widely Meet parent/carers

STAFF RESPONSIBILITY



Transition Lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend transition information meetings Visit primary settings Highlight key needs and strategies
SENCO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend SENDCo meetings to ensure SEND information is detailed and sufficient
DSL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate directly with receiving DSL Confirm receipt
SLT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure systems are in place Monitor information sharing amongst staff

CHECKLIST

- Portal information received
- Check SEND information is sufficient
- Safeguarding information received securely
- Face to face meetings held for key pupils
- Primary school visits
- Information shared widely with staff
- Parent/ carer meetings to gain updates from summer

Example planning meeting template



Planning for Transition to Secondary School

Name D.O.B: Primary School Secondary School

Date of plan

Area of Need	Professional supporting / previous agency involvement	What do I have in place now? What needs putting in place prior to me starting?	Who by?	Date when completed	What can be put into place for Secondary
Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)	Eg. CAMHS, EPS, Include, Autism Team, LST,	e.g. Key adult, transition visits, nurture, pupil passport, ELSA,			E.g. Reasonable adjustments, regular check ins, review of passport, regular review meetings. Parent / carer involvement, identified safe space
Personal (Family needs, physical changes, placement of foster placement, bereavement, divorce, adoption)	Eg. Social care, Family Help, Counsellor	Eg. Key adult,			E.g. Staff awareness, review, check ins, regular contact with social worker, other professionals and parent / carer involvement, identified safe space
Physical	Eg. OT, Physiotherapist	Eg Specialist staff training, moving and handling, designated staff member, staff awareness			Eg. continued staff training, designated staff members, nurture, reasonable adjustments
Self Help (e.g. dressing, toileting)	Eg. OT	Eg. Specialist staff training, staff awareness, Changing area			Eg. Continued staff training, designated staff member, reasonable adjustments – toilet pass, uniform adjustment

Communication and Language	Eg, SALT, Autism Team, Sensory Team	Eg, Visual aids / timetable			Eg. Visual aids, staff to use Makaton signs, SALT programme, reasonable adjustments
Learning	Learning support team, SENCO, EP, teachers	Eg, Nurture, send support plans,			Eg, staff awareness, reasonable adjustments, interventions, learning breaks.
Medical	Eg GP, consultant, CAMHS	Eg Care plan, specific staff identified, specialist training			staff awareness,, follow care plan, share care plan, breaks, reasonable adjustments

Agreed by Primary SENCO: _____

Agreed by person with parental responsibility: _____

Agreed with CYP: _____

Agreed by Secondary SENCO: _____

HOW TO SUPPORT WHEN

PARENT/CARERS ARE NOT ALLOCATED FIRST CHOICE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL



GUIDANCE FOR SECONDARY SCHOOLS

SUPPORT THE EMOTIONAL IMPACT



- Liaise closely with primary settings to identify any families that may be concerned/
- Provide reassurance whilst still validating parental concerns.

Key messages such as:
"It is completely understandable to feel upset or worried. We are here to help you think through next steps calmly and clearly."

TARGETED OPEN EVENINGS



- Support parent/carers to understand more about the school and make an informed choice around what happens next.
- Provide focused open evenings and events for this group of parent/carers as soon as possible following national offer day.

PROVIDE A KEY CONTACT

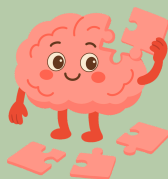
- Give families a key person to contact within the school that can respond to queries and worries directly throughout the transition process.

FOCUS ON CHILDS WELL BEING

- Encourage parent / carers to :
 - Speak positively (or neutrally) about the allocated school
 - Reassure their child that they will be supported
- Avoid discussing worries in front of them.
- Offer to speak with the child if appropriate
- Identify transition support (summer schools, pastoral teams)

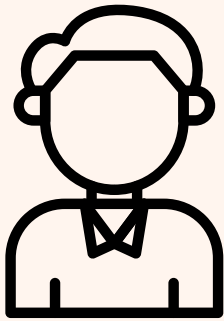


CONTINUE WITH STRONG TRANSITION



- Continue transition work as normal ensuring that all information is received and shared.
- Continue to invite students and families to all transition events

Case Study Examples



Child A (aged 11)

Needs

- SEMH needs, undergoing assessment for ASD/ADHD
- Parental mental health difficulties
- High levels of support required in primary

Key risks

- Anxiety around transition to secondary
- Behaviour and emotional regulation difficulties
- Family stress impacting wellbeing
- Risk of disengagement without continuity of support

Support Provided

- Early identification through Supporting Families and primary school
- Transition Family Support Worker allocated
- Key adult introduced pre-transition (continued post-transition)
- Additional tailored secondary school visits
- Transition day plan created and shared with all staff
- Multi-agency working: school SENCo, Supporting Families, MHST
- Summer holiday workshops focused on anxiety and friendships
- Strong parent and pupil voice gathered to shape provision

Outcomes and Impact

- ✓ Successful and supported transition to secondary
- ✓ Reduced anxiety and improved emotional wellbeing
- ✓ SEND needs met with pupil passport and tailored support
- ✓ Parents more confident and engaged
- ✓ Stronger family relationships and home stability
- ✓ Sustainable support embedded in school



Signposting for schools

Additional Toolkits:

Barnardo's Support – transition booklet

<https://educators-barnardos.org.uk/uploads/transition-guide-stepping-into-secondary-school.pdf>

Gloucestershire Belonging Toolkit: <https://sites.southglos.gov.uk/safeguarding/wp-content/uploads/sites/221/2015/05/South-Gloucestershire-Schools-Belonging-Toolkit-January-2025.pdf>

Camden Learning. (n.d.). Say hello, wave goodbye: Good practice guide for schools. Camden Council. <https://camdenlearning.org.uk/transition/>

Transition resources:

<https://www.annafreud.org/schools-and-colleges/resources/moving-up-the-transition-to-secondary-school-animation-teacher-toolkit/>

<https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/resources/> <https://www.annafreud.org/schools-and-colleges/>

Transition Support Video created by Young Minds

Assessment resources:

UCL Start Scale: <https://www.ucl.ac.uk/brain-sciences/pals/research/clinical-educational-and-health-psychology/research-groups/school-transition-and-adjustment-research-study-stars>

R2i: <https://www.nottinghamschools.org.uk/send-inclusion/routes-to-inclusion-r2i/>

Student resources:

<https://www.teenhealth.org.uk/stories/moving-to-a-secondary-school/>

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-a-z-mental-health-guide/transitions-and-times-of-change/>

Enhanced transition resources:

<https://www.scope.org.uk/advice-and-support/storybooks-featuring-disabled-children>

Nottingham City Autism Team: <https://padlet.com/grotesquewondermotors/transition-support-school-resources-2a6krdg061b7yl1z>

Local Authority Services

- MHST / MIAT
- Autism Team
- SEN support teams - training / CPD
- NPST
- EPS
- INclude Service
- Admissions

<https://nottalone.org.uk/>



PARENT / CARER

TRANSITION

GUIDANCE

TOOLKIT



Parent/Carer Guidance

STRUCTURE

- Multiple teachers instead of one main teacher
- Moving between classrooms
- A larger, busier environment

LEARNING

- More subjects (e.g. science split into biology, chemistry, physics)
- Homework becomes more regular
- Greater expectation of independence

ORGANISATION

- Following a timetable
- Packing and keeping correct equipment and books
- Managing time between lessons

SOCIAL CHANGES

- New friendships and larger peer groups
- Mixing with older students
- More independence at break and lunchtime

**WHAT MIGHT
CHANGE FOR MY
CHILD AT
SECONDARY
SCHOOL**

CONTACT

- Less direct communication with teachers
- You may need to contact subject teachers via email or school systems

INDEPENDANCE

- Your child will need to take more responsibility
- You move from "doing for" to "supporting and guiding"

WHAT MIGHT CHANGE FOR ME AT SECONDARY SCHOOL

MONITORING FROM A DISTANCE

- Checking homework (not managing it fully)
- Talking regularly about school rather than relying on teacher updates

NEW COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

- Apps or online portals for:
- Homework
- Behaviour updates
- Attendance

STAFF & PASTORAL STAFF

- Who will be my child's main point of contact (form tutor / Head of Year)?
- How often do tutors check in with students?
- What wellbeing and mental health support is available?
- How are friendships and social issues supported?
- How do staff build relationships with children early on?

SEND

- How are SEND needs identified and shared when students start?
- How do you support anxiety, behaviour, or emotional needs?
- Is there a safe space or support available when needed?
- How do you keep parents updated and involved?
- How do you help SEND students become independent?

WHAT SHOULD I ASK AT OPEN EVENINGS ?

BEHAVIOUR AND SCHOOL CULTURE

- What are your behaviour expectations?
- How do you manage low-level disruption or bigger issues?
- How do you recognise positive behaviour?
- How inclusive is the school for all learners?

COMMUNICATION

- How will I be kept informed (apps, email, meetings)?
- How often will I receive progress updates?
- Who do I contact if I have concerns?
- How quickly should I expect a response?

TRANSITION SUPPORT

- What transition support is in place (visits, induction days)?
- How do you support children who are anxious about the move?
- Is there extra transition support for SEND students?
- Do staff visit primary schools before September?

PRACTICAL QUESTIONS

- What are class sizes in Year 7?
- How is movement between lessons managed?
- What support is available at unstructured times (break/lunch)?
- What are expectations for uniform and equipment?

TALK ABOUT CHANGE

- Have open, positive conversations about what secondary school will be like
- Acknowledge worries (getting lost, making friends, homework)
- Reassure them: everyone else is new too

BUILD FAMILIARITY

- Attend open evenings and transition days
- Look at maps/photos of the school together
- Practise the journey if possible

This reduces the “unknown,” which is often the biggest worry.

BUILD INDEPENDENCE

- Practice the journey
- Packing their own school bag
- Organising homework
- Getting ready in the morning
- Keeping track of belongings (PE kit, planner, etc.)
- Small steps now = big confidence boost later

SUPPORT SOCIAL SKILLS

- Talk about making new friends and keeping old ones
- Practise simple social strategies:
 - Joining conversations
 - Asking to sit with someone
 - Handling disagreements

BUILD CONFIDENCE

Encourage your child to:

- Ask for help when needed
- Speak to teachers if unsure
- Understand their own needs (especially important for SEND)

EXTRA SUPPORT

- Talk through routines step by step (e.g., moving between lessons)
- Use visual supports or checklists if helpful
- Practise “what to do if...” scenarios:
 - “What if I feel overwhelmed?”
 - “What if I don’t understand something?”

PREPARE FOR LEARNING

CHANGE

- Talk about having different teachers and classrooms
- Encourage resilience if work feels harder
- Build simple study habits (reading daily, completing tasks independently)

ONLINE & SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS

- Discuss phones, social media, group chats
- Set clear, realistic boundaries early
- Talk about kindness and staying safe online

HOW CAN I HELP TO PREPARE MY CHILD FOR SECONDARY?

Year 6-7

Home Preparation Checklist



Practical

- Buy and label uniform and equipment
- Check school rules and expectations
- Set up school apps/logins
- Know the timetable (when available)

Organisation skills

- Practise packing school bag
- Create a homework routine/space
- Order an alarm clock
- Checklist for belongings

Travel and Safety

- Practise the journey
- Discuss road safety and safe behaviour
- Create a plan for if something goes wrong



Emotional Preparation

- Visit the school (if possible)
- Find family/friends that have experienced transition recently
- Discuss who they can talk to if worried

Independence Skills



- Give time organisation tasks to build skill
- Let them solve small problems themselves



Health and Wellbeing

- Ensure good sleep routine before term starts
- Talk about friendships and peer pressure
- Take steps in balancing screen time



Signposting for families

Signposting for families :

- <https://nottalone.org.uk/>
- Nottingham City Autism Team: <https://padlet.com/grotesquewondermotors/transition-support-family-resources-coy1gbq0myi96yod>
- Barnardo's Support – transition booklet <https://educators-barnardos.org.uk/uploads/transition-guide-stepping-into-secondary-school.pdf>
- Young Minds Transition Support
<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/blog/helping-your-child-manage-the-move-from-primary-to-secondary-school/>
- <https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/resources/>
<https://www.teenhealth.org.uk/stories/moving-to-a-secondary-school/>
- <https://www.annafreud.org/schools-and-colleges/>
- <https://www.scope.org.uk/advice-and-support/storybooks-featuring-disabled-children>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ACJln68IUjE> - Young Minds Parent Support
- <https://www.annafreud.org/schools-and-colleges/resources/moving-up-the-transition-to-secondary-school-animation-teacher-toolkit/>
- Early Help Parenting Offer
- Early Help Family Support

References

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The School Transition and Adjustment Research Study (STARS) UCL :

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/brain-sciences/pals/research/clinical-educational-and-health-psychology/research-groups/school-transition-and-adjustment-research-study-stars>

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