**Year 6 to Year 7 Secondary school transition**

**Ideas for schools**

The summer term is traditionally the time of year when schools plan a raft of activities and events to support pupils moving from one phase of their education to the next. This transition will inevitably look different and present a challenge on many levels.

Here are some specific ideas and tips to help support pupils in managing this time when the usual transition arrangements will not be in place. In addition to this, activities and suggestions targeted for the whole school will be relevant.

**All the ideas below can be easily incorporated into a ‘Transition booklet’ that pupils can keep as a record and take with them into Year 7.**

* ‘This is Me’ sheet – a one page profile which pupils fill in detailing their favourite subject, hobbies, about their family etc. See page below for an example.
* As Year 6 pupils may not be able to visit their new secondary school a video tour could be a useful alternative. This could involve the Head of KS3/staff responsible for transition, giving a ‘walkthrough’ of the school site showing the classrooms, spaces inside the building but also other areas of the site that pupils will be accessing. Accompanying this could be a Powerpoint or similar presentation with pictures of the school staff and a brief description of who they are and their role in school. A map of the school site along with photos could be available to get a perspective and idea of the site layout and where things are located.
* Current Year 7 tutor groups make a ‘Welcome to our school’ document/video – include the things they wish they’d known and information they found most useful in their first weeks.
* Verbal emotional ‘check-ins’ daily to help stay connected. These need to be for every child and not just those you feel worried about. Children can mask their feelings.
* Research website of school that pupils are going into. Set a quiz where the answers can only be found on the website.
* Map route from home to school and try it out as part of daily exercise. How long does it take? What time do you need to get up?
* Year 6 pupils write a letter/email to Head of Year 7 describing themselves, their likes, hobbies etc.
* Read through transition booklet and write/email questions that aren’t answered from the booklet.
* Year 6 pupils write down two things they’re looking forward to about moving to secondary and a ‘burning’ question or worry they have. Year 7’s could respond to these questions by either writing answers or videoing answers.
* Give each Year 6 pupil a postcard. They write down anything that is an issue or concern. These are then passed to the secondary school for the Year 7 pupil to respond back. These could be completed and shared electronically.
* Year 7 pupils give their ‘top tips’ for transition. This could be completed in a variety of ways: posters, fact files, leaflets etc.
* Use the secondary schools website to find out what the values of the school are:
  + pupils choose one of the values and explain why they think it is important;
  + pupils think of an example of how they could demonstrate this value at home or in school.
* Everyone feels differently about starting a new school. Some people feel excited, some nervous. How do you feel and why? Describe or draw about how you feel.

Even though the way in which transition will be approached will look very different this year, the skills to enhance and develop for secondary school will be the same.

When pupils arrive at secondary school they should be (as far as possible!):

* **Independent** – they will be required to make more decisions for themselves and do more things so providing opportunities within school or home is vital to help build these skills.
* **Organised** – In Year 7 pupils need to:
  + use a timetable to get to different lessons;
  + know where they are going around the school;
  + plan how to prioritise their homework;
  + get their appropriate equipment ready.
* **Responsible Citizens** – at primary, schools will have values pupils have to use in daily life, values that we expect them to show and that we model ourselves. To help this, in Year 6, encourage and plan in the discussion of issues that pupils can become passionate about and that they can help to positively affect later in life, eg recycling, plastic pollution, animal welfare, climate change and poverty. It’s not just understanding the impact pupils have on the world around them, it’s getting them to be proactive in making a change and a difference to their community and to their world. The pupils could do some research, mini projects, debates etc that develop their sense of wider responsibility.
* **Resilient** – pupils having a bank of strategies when faced with challenging situations needs to be developed. It’s also about helping pupils learn to manage mistakes, encouraging and teaching a Growth Mindset approach.
* **Self-sufficient and ‘ready to learn’** – skills that develop the teaching of problem solving and how they deal with more of the ‘emotional’ problems that they are more likely to face in secondary school.
* Year 6 Parent/Carer survey – this could be completed as a homework activity:
  + what were the three things you liked best about secondary school?
  + what were the three things you found most difficult at secondary school?
  + what are the three questions you would like answered about your child’s new school?
  + what do you think will be the biggest difference you will notice when your child goes to secondary school?

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**Useful websites/resources**

Advice for parents about starting secondary school: <https://www.familylives.org.uk/advice/secondary/learning-school/starting-secondary-school/?fbclid=IwAR0oTTAXJ92CUJMMj0BzIxDTI3q5yia8ETDVdhz7xCeQXPF_YZEqH0KIypk>

For teachers and parents: Video clips and advice for moving to secondary school: <https://youngminds.org.uk/resources/school-resources/find-your-feet-transitioning-to-secondary-school/?fbclid=IwAR0Kt_UiS3ns9ALX5xyqEgTflEBYgXoHO8RGtIXSQGiZhHtnfmp8oWG3zcc>

Lots of advice, hints and tips for teacher, parents and pupils: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/transitioning-to-secondary-school/zkc9pg8?fbclid=IwAR0oTTAXJ92CUJMMj0BzIxDTI3q5yia8ETDVdhz7xCeQXPF_YZEqH0KIypk>

Series of videos for parents and Y6 pupils: <https://www.schudio.tv/courses/supporting-primary-to-high-school-transition-for-parents-students>

Schools in Mind – information and resources that can be used by school staff to support the mental health and wellbeing of pupils and young people: <https://www.annafreud.org/schools-and-colleges/>

