

Resource for Young People, Parents and Carers







# 'Essential for some, beneficial for all'











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### Introduction

This guide is here to help you get ready and prepare for secondary school. It's okay to feel lots of different emotions about school transitioning, for some it's exciting, for others stressful, either way, we're here to help you with lots of top tips and suggestions to make your school transition easier!

The guide also works alongside the 'Your Choice, Your Way' - Routes and Routines YR6 to YR7 School Transition video series and has been commissioned by West Yorkshire Health and Care Partnership. The evidence and suggestions within this guide have been researched, suggested, and coproduced by young people.



## **Understanding transitions**

Moving from primary to secondary school involves lots of new experiences, for some young people, small changes, for others big changes, if you are neurodiverse most likely a combination of the two, especially to your routine.

### What's new?

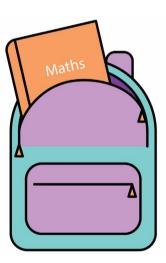
**New school:** Moving to a new school can feel strange. You'll meet lots of new teachers and classmates.

**Feelings are okay:** It's normal to feel worried or unsure. All your feelings are okay and important - be sure to communicate with everyone how you are feeling, likes and dislikes.



**Time:** You may have to get up a lot earlier - make sure you're well prepared the night before with your bag packed and your journey planned to prevent anxiety and stress in a morning.







## **Getting ready**

Your new school will be bigger than before, your journey may be a lot longer and yes, they'll be a lot more people and to start with mostly everyone will older than you; but don't

worry too much, there are lots of people to help and support you along the way; your choice, your way.



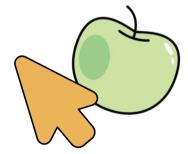


### Be prepared!

**What to pack:** Make a list of what you need for school. Don't forget your bag, books and packed lunch! If you eat at school make sure arrangements are taken care of ahead of time, parent pay etc...

**Visit your new school:** If you can, visit your new school before your first day. This can help you feel more comfortable, your primary school will help you to adjust in time.

**Research online:** Check the school's website, social media or subscribe to their news bulletin before you start school.





Meet the teachers: When you meet a new teacher, you can say 'hello' and introduce yourself, chances are they will probably introduce themselves on your first day in an assembly or tutorial, which

usually happens every morning with your form class.





## Your day at school

### What will my day be like at school?

**A typical day:** Your school day will have different classes and breaks. Each class has its own teacher and subject, you may go from just one teacher at primary to 9 or 10 at secondary.

**Reading your timetable:** Your timetable shows what classes you have, where and when. Your day will be split into periods and lessons, some lasting up to two hours.

**Breaks and lunchtime:** During breaks and lunch, you can eat, socialise, play, or relax. Find a place you like or ask for one; there's lots of places you can go if you just want to be quiet during these times.



## **Making friends**

Get your new friends' phone numbers, you may need to give them a call if you have a lastminute homework panic.

### How can I make new friends?

**Starting conversations:** You can say, "Hi, what's your name?" or "can I join you?" to start making friends and building your friendship circle - we recommend finding common ground to build secure friendships faster.

**Joining clubs:** Join school clubs to meet friends who like the same things you do; library or computer club, school counsel or sports teams etc...

**Finding a buddy:** It's nice to have a buddy. Look for people who seem kind and age appropriate. This may start as a friend from your primary school, area or a school prefect.



# **Doing schoolwork**

## What if I struggle with my work?

**Homework help:** Write down notes in class. Do a little each day so it's not too much at once. If you're struggling to keep up, speak to your teacher before it's too late. Some schools offer a homework club, where you can access books and computers to help you.

**Top tip:** the school library is usually a safe quiet space to get work done! **Study tips:** Find a quiet place at home or even at lunch in school. Some secondary schools offer a homework club in a quiet space to help you complete homework on time.



**Asking for help:** It's okay to ask teachers or friends for help. Just say, "can you help me, please?" Reasonable adjustments can be made to help you with your learning, this could be more time for tasks or overlays provided.

A reasonable adjustment is when your school make changes to help your daily routine in school, for example, this could be something to help sensory processing or allowing more time for homework and projects, they're usually low-cost and have a positive impact on your school day! If in doubt simply ask your secondary school about this and any changes that could be made to help you and your school life.

Can you help me, please?





# **Feeling better**

### What if I feel stressed?

**Stressed:** If you feel stressed, you could try taking deep breaths, count to ten, or squeeze a stress ball. Take something comforting from home that might help you in crisis - check with school first to see what is allowed.

**Talking about feelings:** Talk to someone for additional help. This could be your form tutor, a member of the pastoral team, SLT (Senior Leadership Team) or the SENDCo. Some schools have a mental health support team too. All of these people are approachable to ask for additional help.

**Mindfulness exercises:** Try sitting still and focusing on your breathing. This can help you feel calm. The school library can be a quiet and safe space.



# Dealing with feelings during transition

### Identifying emotions

Recognising when you feel excited, nervous, or unsure.

Using calming techniques like deep breathing or listening to music, ear loops or ear defenders in noisy environments to alleviate stress and anxiety. Keep a diary of your emotions, some days may be better than others, this will help you recognise a pattern as to better prepare.

## Talking about it:

Sharing your feelings with someone you trust. Knowing it's okay to feel different emotions at any given time. **You're Ready for Anything!**Relax and try to enjoy it! In no time at all, it will seem like you've been there forever. This time next year, you'll be showing the new students around the school.



## **Celebrating success**

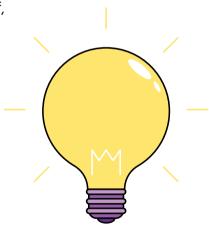
Remembering times when you handled a situation well - remember how you felt in that moment.

Appreciate yourself and what you're capable of, don't stretch yourself too much.

## **Encouragement**

Knowing that you can adapt to new places and situations with time and practice.

Encourage others around you, if you spread kindness and positivity, others will do the same to you.





# Transitions extended: Moving to new places or situations

This extended transition booklet can help you with transitions in any situation, not just school transitioning.

What is a transition?
Why can transitions feel hard
sometimes?
What can I do to make it easier?



## **Understanding transitions**

**Definition:** A transition is a change from one place, activity, or situation to another.

**Examples:** Moving to a new home, starting a new school year, learning to swim, starting a new club or visiting a new doctor's surgery.

Activity: Draw or write about a time you had to go somewhere new or complete a new task.

Discuss with a friend or family member how you felt and how you adapted to the new experience.





## **Getting ready for a transition**

### **Planning ahead**

Making a list of things you might need (like toys, comfort items).

Talking with parents or teachers about what to expect.

**Resources:** There's lots of videos and activities online that could really help you ahead of any transition.

## Talking about feelings

Sharing how you feel about the upcoming change.

Asking questions to understand more about what's going to happen.





## Exploring the new place or situation

### Learning about it

Looking at pictures or maps of the new place.

Going on a virtual tour if possible.

Arrange a pre-visit to that new place or environment.

On request, some schools can provide accessibility information before you start.

You can have additional transition visits if you feel you would benefit from it - make a booklet which includes pictures/information/videos of key buildings, rooms, staff etc. you can keep reading/watching this over the summer.





### Meeting new people

Practicing saying hello and introducing yourself.

Find out who can help if you need it.

Aways be vigilant in new surroundings, if you don't feel safe, talk to a trusted adult or safe person who can help or stay with for support.





# Handling changes in routine

### Creating a new routine

Setting up a schedule for the new place or situation. A digital or physical diary/calendar can help with this.

Include familiar activities or breaks to help you feel comfortable - choose things that are fun and help you to feel comfortable in your new environment. This could also include a 'movement' break.

## **Being flexible**

Knowing that sometimes plans might change.

Being okay with trying new things.





## Finding comfort in familiar things

## **Bringing comfort items**

Taking along things that make you feel safe and happy.

Keeping a special toy or blanket with you - think about your clothing items too, do you have a favourite scarf, jacket or bag?

### Remembering home

Bringing pictures or memories of your old place with you.

Making a scrapbook of your favourite things from your old home or school, then take things from your new journey and include them so that there's a clear timeline of changes, likes and/or dislikes.

## You're Ready for Anything!



## **Celebrating success:**

Remembering times when you handled transitions well.

Give yourself a break!

Accept and appreciate when you've done well.

Share your successes with friends and family - tell them if you've had a good day, week or month. Some secondary schools share positive behaviour codes with parents and carers.





## **Co-production information**

This booklet was co-produced with autistic people and people with lived experience of ADHD, their parents and carers, and healthcare sector clinicians; consultation and reviews have taken place to ensure this booklet is especially relevant to neurodivergent young people.

Terminology within the booklets has been used at the advice and guidance of those who have kindly lent their time during the consultation phase.

Have you seen our other episodes in the series? Check out School Transitions and the Sleep and Rest series.

Essential for some, beneficial for all.



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Born In Bradford

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www.wypartnership.co.uk/routes-and-routines/school-transitions

For further help and resources please visit your SEND local Offer website