



Supporting Transitions for Trauma-Experienced Young People

Virtual School Kent Advisory Team's Suggested Activities to Support Transitions

Welcome to the Virtual School Kent Advisory Team Transition Guide. This guide aims to equip education professionals with the tools and information they need to support children to have successful transitions and to help parents, social workers and all other professionals in thinking about what support their children will need to make successful transitions. We hope you will find useful resources for all types of changes and transitions including:

- Starting education
- Transitions between key phases of education
- Moving up to new classes and new teachers
- Transitions to new education settings
- A new teacher or TA joining the class
- Return to school after a prolonged absence

Virtual School Kent is a Local Authority Champion for four cohorts of children and young people, Children in Care (CIC), Previously Looked After Children (PLAC), Ever6 Children with a Social Worker (ever6CWSW) and Children living in Kinship Care. These cohorts are more likely to have faced Adverse Childhood Experiences, and have difficulties associated with trauma and attachment. While we hope you will use the resources, activities and suggestions in this guide to provide additional support to children and young people in these cohorts you will likely find many of the approaches listed here useful for other vulnerable groups.

This document has been produced by the VSK Advisory Team. If you have any Kent children in care who you would like advice for, please speak to your VSK Lead Officer



Suggested Activities to Support Transition <i>These are suggestions only and should be adapted according to the stage and age of the young person. For example, some suggestions will be more relevant for younger children or require a more visual or kinaesthetic adaption to the activity and others may be less relevant for older young people. By working with the young person, their family, new provision or teacher you will be able to decide on the best transition plan applicable for the individual's needs.</i>	In year transition to a new school	New year transition to the next year group	New school transition
Pupil passport – all about me, likes and dislikes, what I want to do when I leave school, what makes me happy, favourites (food, music, films)	✓	✓	✓
New school fact finding sheet – travel, timings of the day, homework, rewards, school rules, key staff names. Use the school website or transition sessions to fill out information	✓		✓
Visit review – what I liked, what I didn't like, what's different about my new school, what's the same, do I have any questions following my visit.	✓		✓
Sorting worries – Supply or generate a list of all the things students could be worried about and sort them into "worried" and "not worried" or rate them on a scale. You could then discuss solutions, how to manage or how likely these worries are.	✓	✓	✓
Three tours <i>Visit one:</i> Student visits new school with parent/carer, key adult at new school shows them around together out of school hours to ensure a quiet environment. <i>Visit two:</i> Student visits new school and has another tour with their key adult, their parents have a cup of tea with another adult while this is happening. During lesson time to ensure a calm environment. <i>Visit three:</i> Student shows their parent/carer around to demonstrate how they are now an expert at finding their way around.	✓		✓
Schedule planning: Plan the new school/college/sixth form day. Include the morning and evening routine, e.g. study/homework, clubs and activities, exercise, meals, showering/bathing, sleep, skin care/hair styling.	✓	✓ - moving into GCSE years or Sixth form	✓

Journey to and from school planning and practice	✓		✓
New timetable – ask the new setting for an example timetable. Devise a list of questions – e.g. which room do art lessons take place in? How many English lessons are there each week?	✓		✓
Healthy eating and budgeting – ask the new school for an example menu from their canteen or create one. Give a weekly budget and plan meals ensuring the money will last all week			✓
Fact or Fiction – Students may talk about things that aren't quite true. Collect some of these thoughts and statements. Discuss the difference between truth and opinion, ask students to re-write the statements to something more truthful and helpful. E.g. "you will have to do three hours of difficult homework every night" – "you are likely to get more homework, but there will be clubs/library, teachers, peers and people at home to help you".			✓
Problem solving Present children with common problems they may worry about with their new school or teacher, for example falling out with friends. Explore and discuss the emotions they may feel in this situation and how they might show those emotions, move on to planning what they could do to solve the situation and who they could ask for help with solving the situation.	✓	✓	✓
Saying goodbye It's important to acknowledge endings. Talk about how you all feel to say goodbye – it's normal to feel sad. Mark goodbyes with special events or activities. For children who have more than one key or special adult in school, try and have separate events or activities for each adult and space these out across the last few weeks of term to give time to process!	✓	✓	✓

Recommended Free Online Resources



We have collated some useful resources and information from a number of sources. Please explore these websites further for further information on trauma and attachment informed practice in education.

Transition Top Tips

Relationships – trusting relationships form a big part of positive transitions but some of our vulnerable young people may find it difficult to trust new adults. Adults will need to invest time and effort into building a relationship. Positive relationships between new and known adults can be a powerful tool in demonstrating that the new adults are trustworthy.

Preparation – we know children respond well to predictability. Transitions disrupt this as there are lots of unknowns. Share information as soon you can. Help children manage their anxiety by focusing on the things they do know and the things they can control themselves.

Endings – trauma and attachment difficulties can make endings more difficult to process. Acknowledge and validate your young person's emotions, allow them time to say goodbye and time to process these goodbyes by spacing them out. A planned visit or way to stay in contact can make goodbyes easier.

<p><u>Beacon House:</u></p> <p>Supporting-Transitions-2.pdf (beaconhouse.org.uk)</p> <p>Have you seen me? (beaconhouse.org.uk)</p> <p>Survival In Secondary School (beaconhouse.org.uk)</p>	<p><u>Anna Freud</u></p> <p>Talking mental health: animation & teacher toolkit Anna Freud</p> <p>Supporting children's transition to secondary school: guidance for parents and carers Anna Freud</p>
<p><u>PAC-UK:</u></p> <p>Key-Questions-for-Secondary-Schools-V1.2-1.pdf (pac-uk.org)</p> <p>Key-Questions-for-Primary-Schools-V1.2-1.pdf (pac-uk.org)</p> <p>Example transition plan: Free Training for Schools* (pac-uk.org)</p> <p>Goodbyes-and-Transitions-V1.1-1.pdf (pac-uk.org)</p>	<p><u>Other free resources:</u></p> <p>Resources for UKS2 to KS3 transition (teachit.co.uk)</p> <p>Emotional wellbeing support for transition</p> <p>Barnardos-Year-6-Transition-Guide_v5-FINAL-PDF-VERSION.pdf</p> <p>The Kissing Hand read by Barbara Bain - YouTube (For young children starting school or nursery for the first time)</p> <p>inourplace Solihull Approach – Moving up</p> <p>Supporting school transitions Resources YoungMinds</p> <p><u>Parents:</u> Starting primary school - BBC Parents' Toolkit - BBC Bitesize</p> <p>Starting secondary school - BBC Parents' Toolkit - BBC Bitesize</p> <p>top-ten-tips-for-parents.pdf</p> <p><u>Early Years resources:</u> Transitions in the early years - KELSI , My-Unique-Transition-Leaflet.pdf</p> <p>SEN: 13-Transfer-to-next-phase-of-education-v3.pdf</p> <p>Sensory: EmphaSize September 2024: Transitions and Routines</p>
<p><u>Primary to Secondary Lesson Plans:</u></p> <p>Free PSHE transition to Secondary school materials for Year 6 pupils - KELSI</p> <p>Transition to secondary school PHE School Zone</p> <p>Eve-ry Mind Matters Transition to secondary school Y6 and Y7.pptx (live.com)</p>	

Further resources:

The Transition Tool Box – Dr Tina Rae - [Transition Tool Box - NurtureUK](#)

Boxall Profile NurtureUK and Transition—[A guide to transitions and the Boxall Profile® Online](#)

Transition Checklist

When thinking about your child/the children you support have you organised and planned for the following:

- ☐ Hold transition meeting
- ☐ Share all key information with new teacher/setting
- ☐ Organise travel passes/plan travel arrangements
- ☐ Practice the new journey to school
- ☐ Organise involvement in any additional transition activities or days organised by the onward destination
- ☐ Arrange additional tours to new setting
- ☐ Create a Social Story, transition booklet for the child containing all information they need
- ☐ Check uniform and equipment requirements
- ☐ Lunches

Guide to Transition Meetings

What is the purpose of transition meeting?

There are three key aspects of a successful transition meeting:

- Sharing information
- Asking questions and getting answers
- Building relationships

Who needs a transition meeting?

Generally primary schools and secondary schools meet up in the summer term to discuss all children who are moving up, they may spend some time focusing on those children with additional vulnerabilities such as those with Special Educational Needs, those who are in care or receive pupil premium funding. Many young people will not need the adults around them to have an individual transition meeting, as the transition arrangements, discussions, and activities that the teachers organise for all pupils will meet their needs and ensure a successful transition. However, some children, for whatever reason, may feel increased levels of anxiety, find it more difficult to manage changes or new relationships, or have traumatic memories related to transitions, and therefore will need their adults to come together in a transition meeting to plan how to support them through this challenging period.

Primary school staff usually complete nursery visits and/or home visits to children starting in reception, there is no reason to not have a transition meeting in addition to this, but it may be helpful to combine these.

Who should be invited to a transition meeting?

The young person's current setting or teacher and their onward setting will need to be included. It's also so important that the young person's views are central in the meeting, they may feel comfortable attending, fully or partially, or may prefer their teacher or parent/carer to bring a list of questions or points to raise on their behalf. Their parents, guardians or carers should attend too. For young people with a Social Worker, Early Help worker, Adoption Support worker or any other professional working with the child and family, it may be helpful to invite them too. Having all of the key adults around the child and the child themselves involved in the discussion and planning will mean that everyone has an opportunity to ask questions, find out about the new setting and share any information they would like the new setting to know.



How many meetings are needed?

This depends on the young person and their needs, you may find meeting once is sufficient, or you may like to meet to review how well the transition activities have gone and if your child or young person needs any further individual support to settle in either just before they start or early in the first term at their new setting.

What should the meeting include?

A transition meeting is an opportunity for the young person, their parent/carer, current teachers and any others who are involved to find out what they need to know about the new setting/school, assuage any worries and come up with a plan to help the young person prepare for their new setting but also for the new setting to be prepared for their new student and equipped with all the information and strategies that they may need to ensure they reach their full potential. It's useful to allow questions to be asked, as well as information to be "handed over". It's important to decide who will take notes and for the parent to agree who will receive copies of the notes.

How to prepare for a transition meeting:

Current settingteacher: details and explanations of how the student is best supported by you; their strengths and difficulties; any language and specific strategies that work, or do not work well for them; any tips about what they will need support with and how to motivate and engage them. Any provision plans, personalised plans etc.

New setting/teacher: details of the standard transition arrangements plus any additional summer schools or days that the young person may benefit from joining, the school's daily routines, information about how pupils are supported (e.g. nurture rooms, pastoral staff and how these are accessed), clubs, intervention groups, behaviour policy and expectations of the school, arrangements for how parents make contact and who with if they have concerns.

Parent/carer: information about your child you would like the new setting to be aware of (e.g. early life experiences, adverse childhood experience) N.B. – you only have to share what you and your child feel comfortable sharing and what you feel is necessary for them to know, you can also decide who knows this information and how much they know, whether it will be all key staff, such as form tutor, head of year etc, or whether you would prefer only one key member of staff to know. This should be noted in the minutes of the transition meeting so that staff are clear on your expectations about how information about your child is shared.

Young person: information you want your new school/teacher to know about you. For example, what you like and don't like and what you think you'll need help with. Any questions you have about your new school or class. You can talk about this directly in the meeting, or if you would not like to go to the meeting you could ask your parent, carer or teacher to help you write a list that they can take with them on your behalf.



Further Advice from the Virtual School Kent Advisory Team

VSKAT are a source of advice and information for schools, social workers and professionals and we also provide advice to parents and guardians of Previously Looked After Children and Children in Formal Kinship Arrangements (with a Special Guardianship Order or Child Arrangements Order). Please use the chart below to see the level of advice we can provide.

Please refer to our website to find out how to contact us [VSKAT Introduction:Virtual School Kent \(lea.kent.sch.uk\)](https://lea.kent.sch.uk/VSKAT-Introduction:Virtual-School-Kent).

	Email/Telephone advice - Schools and Settings *	Email/Telephone advice - Parents or Guardians	Email/Telephone advice - Social Workers
Previously Looked After Children	Yes	Yes	Yes
Ever6 Children with a Social Worker*	Yes	No	Yes
Children in Formal Kinship Care (SGO or CAO)	Yes	Yes	Yes

Please contact your Virtual School Kent Area Team for advice regarding current Children in Care (also known as Looked After Children).

*please note, in order to discuss and provide advice to education settings regarding individuals, we require parent/guardian consent. We can advise schools generally about supporting the cohorts without consent.