

# SAFEGUARDING NEWSLETTER

MAY 2024



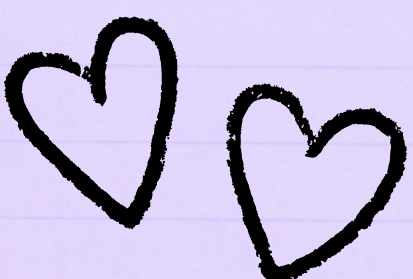
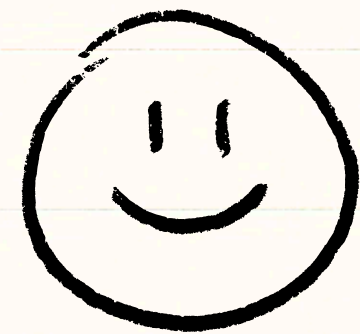
Lets talk about

## TRANSITION



■ Moving from primary to secondary school is exciting – a rite of passage. But it can also be a daunting or anxious time. For children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or mental health difficulties, the change may be particularly challenging. For some children the transition between classes can also be a worry and they may need a bit of support.

■ As a parent there is much you can do to help your child manage the transition and minimise anxiety, whatever their situation.





## TOP TIPS TO GIVE THEM A HEAD START !

Chat about how they are feeling and how it will be different from primary – for instance bigger site, new people, changing teachers and rooms for subjects, more homework.

Reassure them that nerves about starting something new are normal, as is some sadness at leaving familiar things, and that these feelings usually subside

Familiarise your child with their new school

Most secondary schools organise Year 6 transition days. These are a great opportunity to meet teachers, other starters and find out about the school layout and day. If possible print a school map to look at with your child too. Minimising unknowns for day one can reduce anxiety.

Schools often provide extra familiarisation days for vulnerable children – a chance to meet the SENCO and support staff and look around in a quieter environment.

Some parents share tips on helping a child get to know their new school:

Ensure key information is shared with the secondary school

This is really important for children with SEND or anxiety. Check your primary has shared paperwork and spoken with the new school, so they are aware of your child's needs. You can also request a meeting with secondary staff yourself, to discuss support, particularly if your child has an education, health and care (EHC) plan. Familiarise yourself with the school's SEN policy (on the website) too.

Prepare in advance

Try to get organised over the summer rather than leaving it to the last minute, which can be stressful for parent and child. A trip to buy uniform, get a haircut or choose new stationery is an opportunity to spend time together, chat and boost confidence too.

Secondary students often travel independently for the first time. Do some trial runs – with you, then perhaps solo or with a friend. Work out the first day plan. Your child may prefer to go with you to start, or to meet a friend on the way.

Help develop independence and organisation

Secondary school demands are greater, so preparation should help build their own skills and confidence. This will help them settle quicker. Don't do it all for them. Could they arrange to meet friends, do shopping errands (good lunchtime practice) or organise their bag for a day out? Be guided by what feels manageable for your child though. It's fine if they need more support than some others. Once school starts, try developing independent organisation with post-it notes listing what's needed each day; boxes to store other books and worksheets; and an evening habit of checking their school planner and preparing uniform and bag.

Give it time – and keep some reassuring routines

Trusted old friends and habits are comforting, particularly in the exhausting early weeks, if a child doesn't know anyone, or if they are finding it hard to settle. Seeing primary classmates or enjoying familiar activities may be a welcome relief from the effort of starting a new school.

Too much change at once can feel overwhelming too. So while it's great if they throw themselves into everything, don't worry if they don't. They need to adjust and relax. So resist the urge to quiz them too heavily as well.

Finally, give it time. Settling in may take longer than you expected and it may not be a linear process, particularly for children with additional needs. If you are concerned it is a good idea to check in with your child's form tutor or SENCO.





# Moving up to a new class

The process of transition - moving from one class to another, such as from year one to year two, or from primary to secondary school - can have a significant impact on children. Your child may feel a little apprehensive about the new school year. Some will have a change of teaching staff in their classroom and this can cause anxiety for some of our young people. These feelings are normal. Talk in a positive way to your child about getting to know their new class teacher. Let school know if you think your child may struggle with the change, we can start to work on building relationships with new teachers and staff so your child gets to know them before the new school year.

## Supporting children

For any transition, whether starting school for the first time or moving from one school year to another, good communication and understanding the needs of everyone involved is very important. Teachers should talk to parents and caregivers about the move into a new class, as this means parents can reinforce positive messages to children about their new school environment. Parents need to listen to their children, giving them opportunities to discuss the return to school - what they are looking forward to as well as what they might be concerned about. This will be particularly important and children should feel confident to express thoughts and feelings about school with their teacher and parents.

This should be an ongoing conversation after the school year has started so that if any issues arise during the first days and weeks, they can be discussed openly and any persistent problems can be discussed with the school. School staff need to listen to parents and pupils during the transition process. Before returning to school it is important that children are prepared. Parents can ensure this in practical ways, such as by buying and labelling school uniform, shoes and stationery so that their children have all the right equipment before they start.

IF YOU HAVE ANY CONCERNS PLEASE CONTACT MRS QUINN  
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