

Preparing for Secondary School



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What is Transition?

Transition describes the process of changing from one thing to another. You might have heard the term used in primary school for transition days from your old class to your new one.

Moving from primary school to secondary school is a big transition. Teachers in both schools do their best to prepare you for this step and support you through the change. You may have experienced friends or family members' transition to secondary school and seen them go through some of the following steps:

- Teachers from secondary school visiting children in their primary school.
- Primary school teachers helping children find out about their new school and how it is different.
- Transition days to the new school to meet tutor groups and experience the new school day.
- Completing a transition booklet with all the information children and young people might need to prepare for the move.

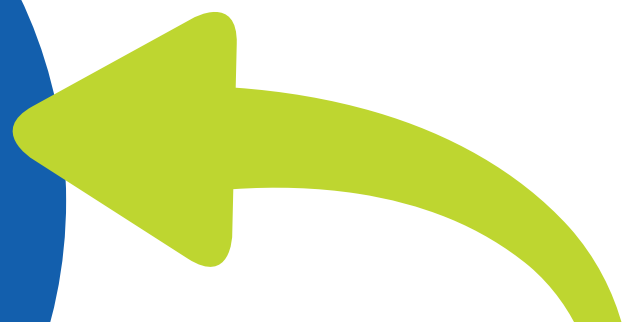




You might not know the details about your transition just yet but the teachers in both your primary school and your new secondary school are still working hard to make sure that everything goes well for you.

- Plans will vary from school to school but here are some things that might happen to help you with transition:
- You will still have some days in your new school that are aimed at helping you to transition into secondary. These might happen in the summer term or may not happen until September, but you won't miss out on the experience that you need.
- Your current class teacher might start to set activities to help you plan for your move. They might arrange to speak to you about any worries you have.
- Your primary school may plan leavers' hoodies and/or a leavers' party.
- You might get a letter through the post from your secondary school with information and activities to complete to help you prepare.
- Your new form tutor at secondary school might get in touch to introduce themselves and talk you through what will happen in your first few days at school.
- You might start secondary school on a different day to the other year groups.

This booklet covers some of the things you might be worried about and some activities to help you plan for your transition don't forget you can always talk to someone about any concerns you may have, this could be a member of FCA staff, your foster parent or a teacher.



Feelings about your Transition

You probably have lots of feelings about moving from primary school to secondary school. Take some time to record them below.

What am I looking forward to?

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What am I worried about?

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What goals do I have?

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How did other people feel?



A lot of your worries are probably similar to those that others had when they moved up to secondary school. Read some of the comments from our young people who are currently at secondary school.

“If you are ever worried about where you are going the teachers will help you.”

PD

“When I went to secondary school I didn’t have anyone I knew in my form which was a bit scary but also exciting as I got the chance to meet new people.

I made a friend on my first day by just being myself and talking a lot on the bus and surprisingly this led to me starting a conversation with someone who is now one of my best friends, so if you are feeling a little bit scared remember just be yourself no matter what.”

NK

“When I started secondary school I was really nervous about getting on the bus. Once I had done it on the first day it was absolutely fine, the bus driver was really nice and I made some really good friends who I sat with all the time.”

KS



How is Secondary School different?



At primary school, your teacher did most of the organising for you, making sure you got to assemblies and lessons on time and ensuring you had the equipment you needed for the tasks they set. At secondary school, all of this will be your responsibility. Don't worry; you will get the hang of things quickly.

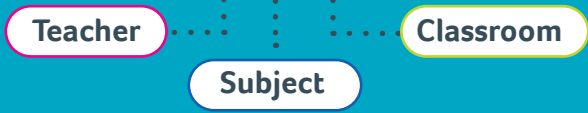
How Will I Know Where to Go, and When?

Bells in school will let you know when you need to make your way to the next lesson.

You will be given a timetable that tells you where you need to be in each period. It will probably have the name of the lesson, the teacher you have and the room you need to be in. The teacher's initials are usually used on your timetable, but you will probably have a list of their full names underneath.



| | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday |
|-------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|
| Tutor | ADZ 101 | ADZ 101 | ADZ 101 | ADZ 101 | ADZ 101 |
| P1 | Science XTE 216 | English SAN 147 | Maths LSB 222 | Science MSA 236 | DT MES 137 |
| P2 | French ADH 202 | Ethics TOM 226 | English SGM 105 | Maths JMK 229 | DT MES 137 |
| P3 | English SAB 107 | French ADH 202 | History SHA 219 | Art ARS 141 | French ADH 202 |
| P4 | Computing EAH 212 | Music JLS 127 | Geography EGS 218 | Geography EGS 218 | Science KTN 234 |
| P5 | History SHA 219 | PE LPT | Science SLT 238 | Science KTN 234 | English SAN 147 |
| P6 | Science MSA 236 | PE LPT | Maths LSB 222 | English SAB 107 | Maths ADB 220 |



If this was your timetable...

Which day would you need to take your PE kit in?

.....

Which books would you need to take on Thursday?

.....



What Should I Take With Me?

Try and prepare your bag the evening before as you're more likely to forget things if you're rushing around in the morning.



You will probably need to take:

- Any books that you need for the day's lessons – check your timetable and make sure you've completed any homework that is due.
- Your planner or homework diary.
- A reading book if your school has time for quiet reading.
- You should always have a pen and a spare pen, pencil, ruler, sharpener, rubber and calculator with you. A pencil case will help you keep them together so they don't get lost in your bag.
- It is not always as easy to get water during the school day as it is at primary school so take a water bottle with you. Check the bottle doesn't leak and keep it upright or in a plastic bag to protect your books and homework.
- A packed lunch if you're not using the canteen.
- Your bus pass or bus fare, if needed.
- A bag to carry everything in.
- Your PE kit, including trainers, if you have PE that day.



In the space below, write or draw a shopping list for anything you don't have yet.

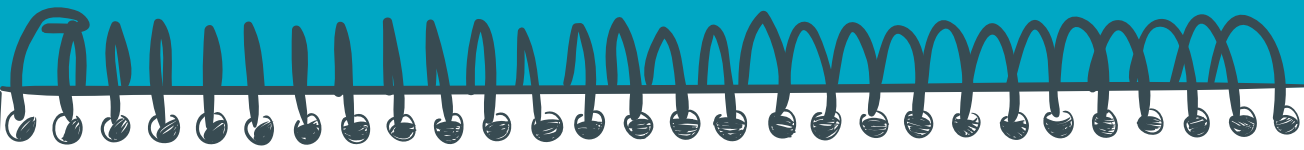
A spiral-bound notebook is shown with a blank page. The page is white with horizontal dotted lines for writing. The spiral binding is on the left side. A large blue arrow points to the top right corner of the page, and a large pink arrow points to the bottom left corner of the page.

Travelling to Secondary School

When you start secondary school, you might need to be able to get yourself to school for the first time. Perhaps you will have to walk farther than you did before, need to take a new route or get on the school bus. The first time you do a journey on your own can be a little scary, so it's a good idea to practise your route before your first day!

Before September, you could do the journey a few times with family or friends who can help you if you get stuck. If you're not able to get out to do the journey yet, then you could look at a map and plan the best route from your house to your new school. If you need to take the bus, look up the timetable and find out where your closest bus stop is. Work out when you will need to leave the house to catch the bus that will get you to school on time.

Use this space below to draw a map of your route or wrote down any buses details that you will need.



Lunch at Secondary School

Lunchtime at secondary school might be different to primary school. You will still be able to take a packed lunch with you if you prefer. There will be space in the dining hall to eat your lunch and in some schools you may be able to eat your lunch outdoors.

There is usually a canteen where you can buy hot or cold food for your lunch. The cost of lunch will vary depending on your options so you will need to make sure you have enough money to pay for them. Most schools now have a cashless system where you, your foster parents or the school will load money onto an account for you to pay for any food or drink from the canteen.



Canteens are not always open at break time, so you may need to take a snack with you if you want to have one.



Managing Change

Can you remember how you felt when you started primary school? How do you manage the change between a school term and holidays? Have you ever had a new teacher start during the school year?

Write down any changes you have already managed below. You might find your Foster parents can help you think of some that you've forgotten!



A spiral-bound notebook with a white page and horizontal dotted lines for writing. The spiral binding is on the left side. The page is blank and ready for text.

Here are some tips to help you manage this change:



You're not alone.

Sometimes the change might feel too much, or you might feel like you don't know what is happening or what you're supposed to do. Talking to other people in your classes can help you realise that you're not alone and that any feelings you have are normal. Talking to other people about how you feel is an important way to cope with change.



It is always okay to ask for help.

It is okay to find change like this worrying or stressful at times. If you find yourself feeling overwhelmed, you can ask for help from someone in school or from your foster family and friends at home.

Sleep, eat and exercise well.

Any kind of change, worry or stress is harder to cope with if you are overtired or hungry. Try to keep to a good sleep routine and eat healthily. Exercise releases hormones that can help to reduce any feelings of stress or anxiety.





Be prepared.

You might be faced with lots of new situations and these can seem daunting. Thinking about what you might do beforehand can make you feel more prepared to deal with them if these situations arise. Talk through the following situations with a trusted adult or a friend and write down what you will do if they arise.

What will you do if...

You miss the bus?

.....

You feel unwell?

.....

You lose your lunch money or find you have no money on your school account?

.....

You forget your PE Kit or Homework?

.....

You get lost?

.....

Use this space to write down any other worries or concerns you may have.

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Forming Friendships

Starting secondary school brings lots of opportunities to make new friends, but meeting so many new people can be overwhelming. So, how do you get to know people and build new friendships?

Meeting new people:

You will have a tutor group that you will probably see at least once a day. Some tutor groups have students from just your year group, others have a mix of students from every year group – this is called vertical tutoring. Your tutor will help you to get to know everyone in your form.

You will be sitting and working with different people in different subjects. This gives you lots of opportunities to meet new people.

Joining a club or after school activity will help you to meet people that have the same interests as you.



What are your interests?

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.....

.....



Starting a conversation:

- Smile.
- Ask questions to find out what you have in common.
- Listen to what other people are saying to you.
- Most of all, remember to be yourself.



Write down something about yourself
that you might share with someone new.

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Keeping in touch with old friends:

- It's okay to spend time with new people; it doesn't mean you like your other friends less.
- Arrange to meet friends in different classes at break or lunchtime, or go to after school activity with them.
- Some friends might not have moved to the same school as you, but that doesn't mean you can't keep in touch.



Quiz

Use your school's website or social media channels to find the answer to the following questions.



What time does the school day start and end?

.....

What date do the Christmas holidays begin this year?

.....

Does the school have houses? If so, what are they called?

.....

.....

What is the name of the headteacher or principal at the school?

.....

Find the uniform policy.

What are the expectations around uniform and PE kit at your new school?

.....

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What extracurricular or enrichment activities are available?

Are there any that you would like to join?

.....

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Use this space to write down anything else you find out about your new school or any other questions you have about starting secondary school.

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Final Tips...

Here, some current year 7s give you their thoughts and tips for starting secondary school.

'Remember that everyone in your year is going through the same thing as you.'

You're not alone.

Don't be afraid to ask for help.

It's not that different to primary, once you get used to having different teachers.'

'Stay in touch with your primary school friends.'

Year 7 is so much better than primary. After the first few days, you don't worry anymore as it will feel like you've always been there.'

'Try not to lose your timetable. Take a photo of it so you have a backup on your phone and give your parents a copy to stick up at home too.'

Never underestimate the value of a routine – it helps to have set times of the week when you get your homework done.'

'Get the bus to school a few times before your first day. It will be one less thing to worry about.'

Make sure you pack everything you need the night before so you're not rushing in the morning.'



Created by FCA Midlands Participation team in consultation with foster parents and young people.



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