

Top tips for transition to high school for pupils with SEND



- Ask the young person what they are worried about. Use this as the basis for any support strategies.
- **Home-school communication** - Is there a person the family can contact about any issues and what is the best way to get in touch? Please remember this is daunting for all parents of first-time year 7 starters. There may be a few hiccups to start with but hopefully your young person should settle in fairly quickly. If there are any major concerns, try to find a solution and contact the school where necessary. Please be patient and provide solutions if possible as you know your young person best, school will have strategies ready to go but it's important that young people are given the opportunity to try for themselves first to build their confidence, self-esteem and independent skills.
- **New environment** - maps, locker, bells.
- **New uniform** – Check the school policy and don't leave it too late to buy what you need. School shoes are an issue for some, buy early if possible so they have time to try them on and get used to them. LABEL EVERYTHING! and show them where their name is on their clothes so they can check it's theirs. I guarantee they will lose at least one thing including coat, calculator, drinks bottle & PE socks!
- **Start & end of the day** – How are they going to get to and from school. If starting a new routine, practice, practice, practice. Is there someone they can meet at school, on the way? DO they take a mobile phone? There are lots of apps you can install to track their journey, with their consent, if you need that extra reassurance.
- **Mobile phone rules** – Schools have different policies around phones in school, please make sure to check these out before they start.
- **Lunchtimes** – What happens at lunch? If they have packed lunch vs school dinners. Where do they go? Where can they go if they get overwhelmed?
- **New expectations** - break/lunchtimes, transition between classes
- **New vocabulary** - 'tutor group', 'head of year', subject-specific vocabulary.
- **Forgotten items** - What to do if they forget their PE kit, pencil case, lunch. Who can they ask to help?
- **Lost items** - What to do if they leave their PE kit, coat, lunch box etc and can't find it. Does it get taken to a specific area? If so, where and how do they access it?
- **Key people** - mentor, form tutor, SENCO, who/how to ask for help. Who can they talk to if they need help or advice and where are they? Show them who they are, where they can find them and write it in their planner.
- **Quiet area** - library, allocated area for stress management, safe base.
- **The timetable** - how to use it, formatted for the individual's understanding
- **Systems for organization** - diary, checklists for materials and books. Using a paperclip/bulldog clip to mark the right week in their planner helps.
- **Homework** – expectations and explanations. Consider if the young person will need help recording homework details in their planner. Asking the teacher or LSA/TA to check they have the right info recorded saves a lot of stress and worry. Does the school offer homework support sessions? Some young people have a mental barrier with completing homework at home. Can they access the library after school or have access to support during the week to help with homework issues?
- **Transition workbook** – addresses differences between primary and secondary school, and new experiences with a step-by-step approach. Things to look forward to, sports clubs, lunchtime clubs, new subjects, technical lessons, new friends and old friends.
- **Personal Profile** – written by pupil (with LSA/parent/teacher support), includes all the information new staff should know about the pupil. Please include positives as well as areas of need.