



Star

GUIDANCE FOR TRANSITION ARRANGEMENTS

CHECKS AND BALANCES: RESPONDING TO COVID-19

A toolkit to support leaders
as they reopen schools



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Managing transition in Summer 2020

This guidance should be considered in the context of the Toolkit for reopening schools.

The guidance is intended for primary schools who will be admitting children into Reception Year and secondary schools who will be admitting pupils into Year 7 in September 2020.

Making the transition to primary or secondary school evokes mixed emotions in children and parents during any 'normal' summer; excitement about new challenges, friendships and opportunities combined with trepidation about practicalities. In 2020, we need to ensure that families do not feel overwhelmed by anxiety and look forward to the 'first day at school' as a positive event on their child's learning journey.

Clearly, the usual induction activities that are characterised by close social contact will not be possible this year. The following considerations show how transition might be managed so that parents' and children's questions are answered.

Consideration 1: Online transition

Leaders may wish to consider setting up a dedicated portal, or a section on the school's website or virtual learning environment (VLE), specifically for communication with parents and children about the transition process. This would have the advantage - for leaders and families - of keeping all relevant information in one accessible place.

A video tour of the school could be made using a mobile device and uploaded for viewing. The tour should include places that parents and pupils will find interesting: classrooms, dining hall, library, outdoor spaces, sports hall and so on. A voice-over by the Principal or other staff will make this more friendly and engaging. Leaders might also show how social distancing arrangements have been worked out at school to provide further reassurance.

A slide presentation could be made of the Principal's planned induction speech, with a voice-over. Introductory speeches from other relevant staff, such as the Head of Year 7 and SENDCO could also be recorded. Sometimes the head boy/head girl also contribute to induction speeches as part of their leadership role. These contributions are often highly valued by pupils and could be included.

A set of key information about the practicalities of school life is essential for all parents. This includes the home-school agreement, code of conduct, school rules, school uniform, lunch arrangements, travel arrangements, term dates and so on. Again, these could be introduced through a slide presentation with voice-over. Any documents referenced in the presentation could be linked electronically to the slides for ease of reference. An online document library may be helpful, including the handbook for EYFS or Year 7 for families to access. When constructing the site, it would be useful to enlist the support of parent governors to check on ease of navigation.

The job of updating the website should be included as a weekly task in the management calendar over the summer period. Parents will need to be informed of its existence, and of any updates as they are made. The text-messaging service is most efficient, but it is important to check carefully that this covers all parents. E-mail or postal addresses may need to be used. Leaders will also need to be sensitive to those families who may not have internet access. In the case of secondary schools, feeder primary colleagues may be able to help leaders to make decisions about the best form of communication in individual cases. In

all cases, asking parents to acknowledge receipt of an initial communication, and following up if no response is received, will help to ensure that nobody is missed.

Consideration 2: School visits for children with SEND or requiring special support

In addition to providing online transition, leaders might wish to invite pupils with SEND and those who are known to need special consideration for other reasons (such as family trauma or bereavement) to visit the school with their parents or carers. These visits should be undertaken on an individual basis, by appointment. They might be an opportunity for the family to meet the Head of Year / SENDCO/ class teacher as appropriate.

Consideration 3: Face-to-face visits on request

In addition to providing online transition, leaders may wish to offer any family the opportunity to request a visit to the school. Visits would need to be made on an individual basis and would need to be carefully co-ordinated. It may be necessary for them to be undertaken during the evening or at a weekend to fit in with parents' work, and to enable social distancing to be maintained.

Consideration 4: Visits by 'home groups' from nurseries or Year 6

Dependent on ongoing scientific advice, children attending nursery and pupils in Year 6 may be back at school in the second half of the summer term. It may be possible for groups (never larger than 15 in size) to undertake transition visits. The visitor groups would need to be 'home groups' so that only children who are spending time together in their own setting or school would make the visit together to their new primary or secondary school. If this model is pursued, it is essential that children do not come into contact with any pupils who are not members of their 'home group.' This would mean avoiding bringing pupils from two different settings/schools on to the site at the same time. Transport arrangements would need to be carefully considered, in line with guidance in the Toolkit.

Uniform

Ensuring that sufficient stocks of uniform are in place for new cohorts of pupils is likely to be problematic for many schools this year due to disruptions in the supply chain. Leaders may consider relaxing uniform requirements in the first half of the autumn term and providing parents with information as to the type of clothing that will be acceptable for pupils to wear to school. It is advisable that any clothes worn to school can be washed regularly. Where possible, pupils should wear clean clothes each day.

Parents will need to be updated on the situation regarding retailers' stock availability for school uniform.

Some schools will be selling uniform in their own schools or accommodating 'pop-up' shops. Where this is the case, proper arrangements will need to be made to enable social distancing during sizing/fitting. Visits to school for this purpose will need to be arranged by appointment.

Data: Year 6 to 7 transition

Pupils who are making the transition to Year 7 will not have taken SATs in Year 6. There will be a heavy burden on primary school leaders if all secondary schools contact them individually to request information about pupils' achievement based on teachers' assessments. Some local authorities are asking all their primary schools for predicted end of Key Stage 2 scores, collating the information, and providing it to the receiving secondary schools. Leaders should check with their local authority data teams to find out whether they are undertaking this task for their maintained schools and academies. If this service is not available locally, secondary schools should send a spreadsheet populated with the names of pupils who have accepted places at their schools to their respective primary feeder schools. They should request primary leaders to send them the scores they anticipated these pupils would have achieved in reading and mathematics tests, along with a teacher assessment of their writing.

Year 7 setting

Schools may consider keeping pupils in mixed ability 'home bases' for the first half of the autumn term until they have a clear view of pupils' achievement. It may also be helpful to plan for this model in the event that social distancing is still required at the start of the new academic year.

Supporting academic transition Year 6 to Year 7

Some schools are planning to create welcome packs for English and mathematics that Year 6 pupils could complete during the final weeks of the summer term to complement the work they are undertaking in their primary schools. If this is the case, leaders should ensure that the primary schools know what they have planned and have access to the materials themselves. Leaders should give primary colleagues permission to use the materials in class with other pupils, irrespective of which secondary school they are transferring to, if they would find this helpful.

Year 7 options

Some schools ask pupils to make limited curriculum choices in Year 7, such as opting to study from a choice of languages depending on which they have studied at primary school. If this is the case, the selection procedure should be included in induction arrangements. Schools may consider, for instance, creating a Survey Monkey or using MS forms to ask pupils to make a choice. Telephone calls, emails or letters could be used if more appropriate. Some leaders may elect to leave this sort of decision-making until later in the term, depending on their resource availability.

Summer schools

Many schools will be considering the feasibility of offering summer school provision, particularly for pupils who may need a boost during the holidays prior to joining Year 7. As the R rate continues to decline, this may be a possibility for late summer through a home base / bubble arrangement in which groups no larger than 15 pupils at a time are offered provision.