



The Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School

Summer SEND Newsletter 2025

Following Jesus, The Good Shepherd, in all we say and do

Welcome to our Summer term SEND newsletter. A newsletter addressing all things related to SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities). In this issue you will find out more about how to support your child with transition and coping with change, along with some useful links and advice.



As The Good Shepherd's Special Educational Needs and Disability Coordinator (SENCO), I am here to offer support and advice regarding additional needs or SEND support for your child. As a school, we value the engagement of our parents so please do not hesitate to get in touch if you have any questions or concerns. My contact email address is: CThomas@olicatschools.org

Spotlight on: Transition

Transition: How I can help my child?

Transitions whether they are between Year Groups, Key Stages or Schools, can be a stressful time for all children as they get use to new routines, new adults, new friends and new surroundings. This is the case for all children and for children with additional SEN needs, the changes can be even more unsettling, causing significant overwhelming feelings and increased anxiety.

As a parent or carer you can help!

Starting **conversations** with your child and finding out **how they feel** about the transition is a great starting point. **Asking** them what they are looking forward to, what they will miss about their old school and or class or to draw about how they feel. Thinking about what they **enjoy doing** and what they may find difficult will help along with any questions they may have.

Transitioning from Primary to Secondary school is a particularly significant change for children. Learning about change and how to cope positively, will help them with this particular transition and prepare them for many other changes and challenges they will face in life.

Below are some **different resources** that you might like to use if you want further guidance on supporting your child. If you have **concerns** about the changes coming please don't hesitate to **get in touch with the school**.

The following links contain further support material and advice

- Transition from Primary to Secondary School support pack: <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/media/151j4yqc/pupil-resource.pdf>
- Moving up! The transition to secondary school | Anna Freud Transitioning to secondary school - BBC Teach
- Supporting school transitions | Resources | YoungMinds
- Starting secondary school - BBC Parents' Toolkit - BBC Bitesize
- Home - Starting Reception
- Starting primary school - BBC Parents' Toolkit - BBC Bitesize



How can I support my child to cope with transition and change?



Many SEND children and young people find the change of starting or moving to a new class or school difficult. If you're the parent or carer of an autistic child, it can be tough to know how to help. In this section, we look at how to prepare your child for this change and suggest ideas which may support them.

Preparing for change

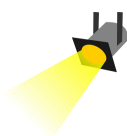
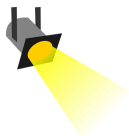
Plan visits and phased entry : Visit the school at least once with your child before they start. If possible, meet and take photos of any key people who will be involved in their transition. Create a book of photos and information they can refer to, as this can help to relieve anxiety. You might be able to arrange further visits or at different times of the day. It may be possible for phased transition to be developed with the school, if felt it would support a positive integration.

Use visual supports : Visual supports and schedules can help your child to understand what will be happening, prepare them and reinforce verbal communication. These will need to be used consistently and embedded into their routine. The use of calendars and checklists may also help to reduce anxiety. When using visual supports it's important to use clear language and give your child time to process what is said . Make sure that you show outcomes as well as the stages of a process. As a school, we can help you to create these if you feel it would be beneficial for your child, so please just ask!

Use social stories : Social stories are short descriptions of a particular situation, event or activity, which includes specific information about what to expect in that situation and why. You could create a social story to help your child know what to expect in their new school or we can create these for you.

Prepare in the current setting : Involve your child in choosing and organising their things ready for school. Include activities that will help your child with transition and to be more independent. Communicate with school: Share key information with their teacher about your child's needs, likes, dislikes, capabilities, difficulties, and what causes them anxiety. Effective communication between you, your child, the authority, school and any support services, will make a positive difference.

Managing your child's anxiety: If you are concerned about your child's anxiety regarding the change, make sure you give them the opportunity to ask questions about their concerns and explain why the change will benefit them. You could provide them with a worry toy, book or box where they can write or draw any concerns they have. Try to set aside some time to try and teach some relaxation techniques or use some sensory toys or games.



Top tips for Coping with Change

1. **Allow for Feelings** It can be really hard to see our children get upset. As parents, we want our children to be happy all the time. Acknowledge their emotions and let them know it's okay to cry it out a little. Saying, "I know you're disappointed that you can't see your friends at the moment, and it's okay to be sad," lets your children know what they're feeling is normal, validated and okay.
2. **Listen** When your child is upset, listen to them and let them talk it out. Stop what you're doing, put down your phone, and really listen to their feelings. Talk about the highs and lows of what they're going through. Help them write out their feelings or draw a picture of what is going on. Also provide them role playing activities to provide them with the necessary and correct words to help them describe how they are feeling. Oftentimes things escalate because children don't feel heard or acknowledged.
3. **Keep a Routine** If your child is facing a big transition—a move of year group, a change of schools, a loss—keep the rest of their lives as consistent, predictable and routine as possible. When children are coping with a problem, it's easy to introduce too many other things into their lives as well, and just like anyone, they become overwhelmed and stressed. Routine breeds consistency and safety, so keep bedtimes the same and mealtimes as 'normal' as possible.
4. **Ensure Proper Sleep and Nutrition** When children are going through transitions, it's critical they get enough sleep to keep them rested. As we all know, naps can work wonders for children's moods and coping skills, and just like adults, plenty of sleep helps them feel more in control and able to deal with new experiences.
5. **Build Trust** Our children trust us and with their trust comes responsibility. This means when we say it's time to go or we have set a time for an activity, they trust us to stick to it. When you go back on things or let it slide, it not only teaches our children "a tantrum will get me what I want" but it also teaches them "They don't really mean what they say."
6. **Offer Autonomy and Choices** One of the best ways to help children cope with lack of control and autonomy is to give them the ability and ownership to make smaller decisions. The little options allow children to feel they have control over some element of the decision in their lives and with that control comes peace.
7. **Let Them Know When You're Close** It's extremely important to help children prepare for an upcoming transition. Remind them you'll be turning off the TV in ten minutes, then five, then three. It may feel odd to you, but to someone who doesn't feel secure with time, it gives them an opportunity to mentally prepare for the next activity. Children will be much more excited about any given situation when you invite them to join you to take part in this next "exciting" activity.
8. **Don't Make Your Anxiety Theirs** Life's changes cause all of us stress and anxiety, especially when it's during these challenging and uncertain times. While children need to know we're human and that we have emotions (and that it's okay to express sadness, frustration and hurt), we have to be careful not to project all of our emotions and anxiety on to our children in a new situation.

Change is a normal part of life; transitions can happen through school years and can be small or big changes. Some changes can be exciting - but others can be stressful, worrying and upsetting. Young Minds have a guide for parents and carers: [Transitions and change | Mental Health Parent Guide | YoungMinds](#)



Action for Children also have a guide to help support children in **transitions:** [My child is anxious about school transitions or changes - Support for Parents from Action For Children](#)



Many autistic children and young people find the change of starting or moving to a new school difficult. Advice about strategies and support that can help during key life transitions - starting or changing school, leaving school, and starting or leaving college or university can be accessed here: [transitionsengland \(autism.org.uk\)](https://transitionsengland.autism.org.uk).



have resources to help pupils, schools, parents and carers to cope with the changes and transitions they experience during their time at school. [Supporting school transitions | Resources | YoungMinds](#)