

EFFECTIVE PRACTICE GUIDANCE



For transition from primary to secondary schools

The transition from primary to secondary school can be an exciting time for learners. It marks an important stage in growing up, and learners recognise that their lives are about to change in various ways. In Monmouthshire, we are committed to ensuring that all learners have the best possible education. Effective transition can play a pivotal role in setting learners up to thrive and succeed in their future.

Aiming to achieve effective transition for all learners on a universal level while using a whole school approach is paramount. This document is the result of various professionals coming together who are linked to the education sector to provide effective guidance on this important part of school-life. I would like to thank them for their contribution to this work.

I hope that you find this information a useful tool to support your collaborative work when developing your cluster transition plans.

Will McLean

Chief Officer Children and Young People
March 2024



monmouthshire
sir fynwy

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This effective practice guidance for transition from primary school to secondary school focuses on 5 key principles. It includes suggestions for schools, to ensure the transition process runs smoothly and is a positive experience for all involved including learners, parents/carers, and professionals.

Principles for effective transition

These principles can be used to develop effective transition processes:

- Give learners a voice.
- Build positive relationships between staff and learners.
- Support learners to be familiar with the school site.
- Involve all stakeholders in decisions.
- Address risk groups with social interventions aimed at building relationships.

New [2022 Transition Regulations](#) have been made which revoke and replace the 2006 regulations and came into force 1 July 2022. This legislation places a requirement on governing bodies of maintained secondary schools and their feeder primary schools, jointly, to draw up plans to facilitate the transition of pupils from primary to secondary



transition plan drawn up collaboratively, that meets their own individual circumstances.

Transition should be a timely, planned process that meets the needs of individual learners and reflects their rights, as set out in the United Nations Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

What does effective transition look like?

Focussing on the key principles, examples of effective transition from Monmouthshire schools can be found below.

Give learners a voice

Giving learners a voice in the process of transition is crucial as it allows for learners to feel some control at a time when there is much change to adapt to. There are many ways to give learners a voice during the process of transition. Schools should aim to provide learners with as many opportunities to ask questions and have discussions, both virtually and face to face. Learner voice might also be facilitated by secondary school learners



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visiting primary schools to meet and greet learners for the purpose of sharing information, experiences, advice and forming relationships.

Building positive relationships between staff and learners

Building positive relationships between learners and staff at the new school is important. Relationships are best formed over time with frequent contact in a familiar setting. Learners can get to know staff through Areas of Learning Experience projects where the teacher from the secondary school comes and teaches a series of lessons at the primary school. This practice is beneficial on two levels; a useful way to provide connections between schools and upskill staff as well as familiarising learners with prospective new teachers.

Secondary school pastoral leads, safeguarding leads or wellbeing leads/team members could be invited to visit primary schools to build some of those positive relationships between staff and learners. Senior leaders might also visit primary schools to get to know learners prior to secondary school transition.

A welcome pack or welcome video is an effective way to send a positive message. Some secondary schools will gift a piece of equipment / uniform to primary school learners as a way of sending a very welcoming and positive message to the learner and family.

Being familiar with the school site

Being familiar with the school site encompasses both the physical layout and orientation of the setting but also the infrastructure and routines that make up secondary school life.

Learner feedback consistently emphasises that the following should be essential features of any plan that aims to give those transitioning learners a sense of what to expect.

• **Visiting the School**

Visiting the new school several times for a warm and welcoming orientation is beneficial. Virtual tours are also popular as are images that give a flavour of the setting. Learner led visits are felt as meaningful as well as being able an opportunity to include family members. Sending learners, a map of the school as part of a welcome pack can be a very positive way to involve families and build excitement. There are examples of transition videos on our secondary school websites.

• **Learning Environment**

It is very important that learners and their parents/carers are provided with details about timetables, break and lunch routines. Knowing what to expect from the learning environment e.g. how lessons proceed, homework expectations, and what is expected from them as a learner and what to expect from the teaching staff. Taster lessons are an important part of experiencing the changes that are to come and they can offer an opportunity to build excitement and positive emotions for learners.

• **Building Positive Relationships**

Getting to know their form tutor, who will be an important point of contact for both learners and parents/cares. This will also help to build positive relationships.



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Knowing who is in their form so learners can connect with new and old friends outside of lessons is very important to foster a sense of belonging. Meeting older learners and connecting with peer support opportunities can be reassuring. Being able to talk about what types of worries might arise in the first period of transition, how to problem solve these, who to go to for support, and knowing the school policy towards relationships and behaviour all help to settle anxieties.

Involving stakeholders in decisions

Communication between stakeholders is crucial. In any circumstance the new school should be made aware of the agencies involved with learners and the background to the involvement. Learners with social interventions aimed at building relationships should be highlighted and supported as these learners often find transition challenging.

Address risk groups with social interventions aimed at building relationships

Successful transition happens on a universal level. All learners and families ought to be given the same opportunities, using a whole school approach. Some learners might require additional provision through enhanced transition. Communication should be timely and meet the needs of all learners and their families.

Cluster transition meetings

A cluster approach to transition is very effective for learners within catchment. Regular cluster transition meetings is an

valuable way to ensure a collaborative approach and consistency across Monmouthshire. Some learners may be coming to your school from out of catchment. It is good practice to use new technologies to involve these learners in as many opportunities as possible and perhaps offer additional visits.

Support for parents/carers

Communication

It would be beneficial to provide parents/carers regular opportunities to ask questions and the opportunity to express how they want to be contacted and how they wish to receive information from secondary school. Some parents/carers might be happy to communicate via email and comfortable with use of an App for communication, however some parents/carers might feel 'cut off' from secondary school as they no longer have the 'gate post' regular contact. Families of out of catchment learners might value additional forms of communication. Transition information should be a visible aspect on the secondary school website and this information should be regularly updated. Social media can be used to communicate with parents/carers. Learner-friendly videos for key aspects of school life are informative and helpful. Early communication with all stakeholders is important.



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Learners with additional learning needs (ALN) or emerging needs

Some learners will require enhanced provision for successful transition. In some cases, additional visits can be helpful. It is vital that key information is shared between schools and outside agencies to ensure consistency for the learner and family. Schools could include pastoral staff as well as ALN staff. Support plans and One-Page Profiles or any other documentation should be shared and discussed as part of this process.

Learners with autism might need additional opportunities to prepare and process their transition to a new school. Strategies such as social stories, visual timetables, checklists and virtual tours can be helpful for these learners. Ensuring the learner feels safe with changes to their routine is important.

Learners who have had unsettled or traumatic early life experiences are likely to respond to starting secondary school in ways that are different from other children of their age. Staff should have an awareness that due to periods of frequent or prolonged stress, the learner's development may be affected in significant ways, and they may have emotional responses typical of a much younger child. Where possible, it may be helpful to consider extending the transition process. Learners who struggle to feel secure will likely need more

time to adjust and develop a sense of safety and comfort within the school environment. Think first year, not the first term.

Schools could consider how they can help learners, who have experienced Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) create a positive relationship with an emotionally available adult within the school or setting. Clear routines and consistency are important for all learners and even more so for children who have experienced trauma. A learner transitioning from primary to secondary school may need several practice runs while travelling to their new school. It is also beneficial to begin cultivating positive relationships with other learners attending the same school, ideally during the spring and summer term.



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Documentation for transition

Effective information sharing might include exchange of the following documents / information:

- One-Page Profiles.
- Safeguarding information.
- Wellbeing information.
- Provision maps.
- Pastoral support plans.
- ILPs/IDPs/IEPs.
- Attendance information.
- Information on peer-to-peer relationships.
- Risk assessments.
- Summative assessment data.
- Health care plans, if applicable.
- Dedicated staff member working on transition.
- Sporting, creative and practical project days on secondary sites in which learners take something home to develop the sense of belonging with their new school.
- Transition days in the summer term with dates published early to prepare learners for their new school.
- Secondary learners delivering lessons in primary schools.
- Secondary school teachers delivering lessons to primary learners either in person or online.
- Reading projects between secondary learners and primary learners.
- Inviting Year 5 learners to attend transition days.
- Uniform gifting: a school tie gifted to Year 6 learners on transition day.
- Publish a yearly transition timetable.

Examples of activities

As part of your cluster transition plan, ensure there is a consistent approach to planning teaching and learning and assessment of learner progression and the co-ordination of the transition of learners. The following activities have been effective transition practices and could be considered in your cluster.

- Cluster INSET days.
- Collaboration of secondary and primary staff to ensure continuity of learning in Curriculum for Wales.
- Transition information available on school websites.



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An example transition timeline

This is an **example** transition timeline and is in no way definitive. Monmouthshire schools will currently have their own timelines, process and plans, but the timeline below can be adapted and utilised by schools.

AUTUMN TERM	
September	Year 5 and 6 open evening
October	Sporting event at the secondary school
November	Dragons den project
December	Year 6 invited to Christmas performance
SPRING TERM	
January	AoLE teaching from secondary teachers
February	MasterChef event
February	Visit by head of year to primary school
February	Cluster school council transition meeting (online)
March	Sporting event at the secondary school
SUMMER TERM	
May	Open event for parents/carers
May	Sporting event at the secondary school
May	Drama production supported by secondary learners at the primary school
June	Questionnaire for parents/carers
June	Transition event at local castle / community site
June	Transition visits for learners where they will meet form tutor and classmates
June	One-Page Profile update from primary to secondary
July	Secondary learners to support with the primary drama performance



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Resources

Welsh Government guidance and information for schools to support the transition of learners from Year 6 to Year 7. [Transition from primary to secondary school guidance - Hwb \(gov.wales\)](#)

[The Transition from Primary to Secondary School \(Wales\) Regulations 2022 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](#)

Advice for parents who have a child starting secondary school, with tips on the emotional and practical sides of the transition. [Starting secondary school - BBC Parents' Toolkit - BBC Bitesize](#)

Appendix 1: Monmouthshire support services

Creative Therapies Team

Schools can contact the Creative Therapies directly to undertake group Play Therapy with pupils who have been identified as struggling with anxieties around the transition to comprehensive school. This is geared for those pupils who do not qualify for an enhanced transition and are not known to statutory services. In addition, workshops supporting parents manage their children's anxieties is offered during various dates in August, in order to support parents with transition.

Contact: DonnaBenson@monmouthshire.gov.uk

MonLife Youth Service

The Year 6 Transition Programme is offered to Year 6 pupils from primary schools in Monmouthshire. Schools can choose from a range of workshops that focus on aiding the young people's transition from primary school to secondary school, which include team-building and communication skills, smoking, peer-pressure, equality and diversity, managing responsibility, healthy relationships, online safety, positive mental health and anti-bullying.

Contact: monlife.co.uk/connect/youth-service or youth@monmouthshire.gov.uk

MonLife Sports Development Team

The Young Ambassador Scheme starts in Year 6. It builds on themes taught in the Year 5 Playmaker programme and it acts as the foundation for our leadership programme following on from their Year 5 Playmaker training. The annual conference provides pupils with the opportunity to meet children from across the county who may be attending the same secondary school in Year 7.

Festivals provide children with the opportunity to meet potential pupils who may be in their secondary school. This programme also utilises volunteers from the leadership academies which will be familiar faces they see when they attend the school.

Contact: monlife.co.uk/connect/sports-development/ or sport@monmouthshire.gov.uk