

# STRATEGIES FOR PARENTS/CARERS TO SUPPORT CHILDREN WITH TRANSITION

It is important for your child to discuss their fears with a trusted adult at home. Talking and supporting young people (YP) through issues and concerns can help them to cope with practical and emotional worries and can help with building their confidence. Help them to verbalise their worries if they are able to. Encourage your child to think about why they are nervous about starting secondary school and what actions they can take to manage the changes in secondary school? Ask questions such as; What is the scariest thing about starting a new school? What do you think the most exciting thing about starting secondary school is? What will they miss in their old school? What new things are they looking forward to experiencing?

Some of the most common issues and reasons YP worry about moving to secondary school are because of:

- uncertainty of 'the unknown' following the predictability of primary school
- the journey (it's not uncommon for pupils to have to catch a service bus)
- worry about making new friends, about not fitting, and being bullied
- worry about getting lost in a 'maze of corridors'
- apprehension of new teachers and support staff
- concern with their ability to do the work



## PREPARATION FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL

- Encourage your child to learn their route to school. Ask someone they trust to do the journey to school with them before doing it alone.
- Make a photo album of their friends at primary school to have as a transitional object
- Spend some time looking at the secondary school website. You can find out information about trips, homework expectations, clubs etc. This can all help to alleviate uncertainty.
- Spend some time looking at the school dinner menu online to see what kinds of foods are available so that your child feels prepared when it comes to lunch times.
- Learn the school rules (as they will probably be considerably different to primary school).
- Find out what school clubs are on offer and when and where these are run.
- Encourage your child to write a list of questions about the things that they would like to know about secondary school. E.g. what the structure of their day will look like, how many teachers they will have, how many people will be in a class, where the toilets are, what time lunch is etc.
- You can explore the differences between both schools if your child is comfortable to do so otherwise focus mainly on language of similarity and things that are the same between the two schools.
- Think ahead to how their feelings might change during the first year at secondary school. Acknowledge it is normal to have lots of different feelings about change.



## SUPPORT IN SECONDARY

- Find out who they can speak to if they're finding something difficult or are worried about something in secondary school. Remind them never to be afraid to ask for help and support.
- Arrange for them to walk to the bus stop with a friend/or to meet a friend at the bus stop.
- Make a homework timetable and write the names of their teachers in it.
- Ask for a school map to keep in their pocket or handbook until they get used to the layout of the school.
- Encourage and support your child with practical day to day activities i.e. reading their timetable, packing their bag, topping up dinner money etc. until they are confident in doing this by themselves.
- If your child is struggling to make friends encourage them to take their time getting to know people in their classes.
- Ensure that your child stores key contacts on their phone and discuss who they will call in an emergency. It's also a good idea to have some 'emergency money' in their bag just in case.
- Help children to be organised by encouraging them to pack their bag and get their school clothes ready the night before school so that they're not in a rush in the mornings.



## IF YOUR CHILD NEEDS EXTRA SUPPORT CONSIDER LIAISING WITH THE SCHOOL TO:

- Create an individualised transition plan; which includes effective strategies that have been identified.
- Ask for an assigned staff member you can keep in contact with to discuss your child.

## REMEMBER

**REMINDE YOUR CHILD WHAT THEY'RE GOOD AT AND THINK POSITIVELY. KEEP ENCOURAGING THEM AND DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK SCHOOL FOR HELP!**