



Supporting the Transition Process

Between phases of education during COVID 19



Supporting the transition process between phases of education during Covid-19

This guidance has been produced in light of the current Covid-19 impact on educational settings, to assist schools with additional considerations that are required this year when planning for the transitions that children make between phases. It follows on from the questions outlined in the [Framework for Re-opening West Sussex Schools \(Section E – Curriculum and Learning: Transitions\)](#) and provides some practical ideas and advice for each of these questions. The guidance has been written in the knowledge that schools are very experienced in planning for these transition phases, both within and between settings. The guidance is not therefore intended to be a complete best practice guidance on transitions, but as complementary guidance to schools' existing arrangements to assist with the different or additional considerations during Covid-19. It is not exhaustive in its suggestions, but draws on existing practice within the county. It is written at a time of dynamic change for schools and therefore at all stages the guidance and advice included should be used alongside the most up to date advice from Public Health England (PHE). **At the time of writing, we anticipate that all transition arrangements will need to be of a virtual nature in line with PHE advice.**

The guidance has been created working from a set of guiding principles that are recognised as underpinning a positive, quality transition process. These are:

Key principles

- Emotional health and well-being are the priority (EHWB)
- Child's needs are central, including gathering pupil voice
- Relationships are key – existing and new ones ahead
- Extra consideration must be given to transition for pupils with SEND including those with EHCPs or vulnerable pupils, including Gypsy, Roma, Traveller (GRT) pupils, whilst recognising that more pupils and families will be vulnerable due to Covid-19 or the response measures to it
- Transitions require:
 - Clear planning and preparation
 - Communication between all people involved, including pupils, teachers, parents and families, settings, schools
 - Information sharing
- Transition is a process, not an event, which includes:
 - Leaving something behind - 'Ending Phase'
 - Familiarisation with what's ahead - 'Neutral Zone'
 - Returning to a settled space of belonging, involvement and achievement – 'New Beginnings Phase'

Where additional consideration needs to be given to either planning for pupils with specific needs, or where particular elements within the different phases of transition may require more detailed advice beyond the scope of this guidance, links or references have been provided to additional West Sussex resources available to you.

N.B. At a time when we are relying heavily on virtual/remote means of communication, please consider ways in which you can promote inclusivity for families with no, or limited IT access.

Key questions considered in this guidance:

1. What were the processes that would have been implemented to enable familiarisation, exchange of information with parents/settings, visits to settings/home, etc and how will these be adapted?
2. What needs to change this year and what can be organised through online/ remote means, and meets the differing needs within the community?
3. What alternative arrangements for usual leavers activities and saying 'goodbye' will be made? Will some form of leavers event be able to take place?
4. How will leaders facilitate opportunities for pupils and their new teachers to build relationships and for pupils to start to become familiar with their new school ahead of the autumn term, through remote means?
5. Do timescales for the transition process need to change? Have leaders considered staggered starts in the autumn term to facilitate gradual familiarisation? Have leaders considered extending the transition period for those most in need?
6. How can the time remaining in the summer term be used to prepare pupils in Y2 or Y6 for their new school whilst in school or working in a remote learning situation?
7. What adjustments will need to be made to the provision when pupils start in their new year group or new school considering a re-start curriculum?
8. What information will teachers be expected to pass onto pupils' next teachers and schools?

- 1. What were the processes that would have been implemented to enable familiarisation, exchange of information with parents/settings, visits to settings/home, etc and how will these be adapted?**
- 2. What needs to change this year and what can be organised through online/ remote means, and meets the differing needs within the community?**

Possible activities	Any extra age specific considerations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Virtual tour of school for families and children to see the school or setting/ their learning environment. – Virtual 'new parents meeting' including key information that parents want to know and advice for parents on helping children be 'ready for school'. – Subject to current PHE advice, offer an autumn term new parent meeting and/or informal coffee meeting once the children have started school to enable parents to ask further questions and to share information following the initial transition. – Virtual parents' information day with 'drop in' or appointments with phase leader/teacher/head of year. – Add or update school website transition 	<p>For pupils joining YR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Information usually shared at Early Years Transition Events should be shared by the early years setting by email/post. This should include identification of pupils who will need a supported transition. Schools will need to contact settings to arrange for the transition plans to be made for these pupils in collaboration with the early years providers and any other professionals involved. <p>For pupils joining Y7:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – For pupils joining Y7, set up school email addresses. If possible, communicate these to parents and pupils this half term to form a channel of communication with the new

<p>information page, including 'frequently asked questions', key information about timings, uniform, equipment etc. Make a printed copy of this available.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Send any hard copies of transition packs that are usually collected at new parents' meetings to families by post. Include a letter to families that details the challenges, reassures and outlines plans for adjusted transition arrangements. Include where information can be located and provide telephone contacts for parents who would welcome a personal contact to ask questions or seek information. – For families of pupils with additional needs or vulnerabilities, identify how the information regarding Year 6, Year 2 and joining Year R pupils will be passed on to their receiving setting e.g. pupil profiles, virtual meetings if not possible face to face. 	<p>school – enabling transition work, induction booklets or other materials and information to be shared. Monitor those pupils who do not engage and contact family to establish level of access to IT or confidence with email.</p> <p>For year 10 students (summer term):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Communicate to students and parents the details of any college open events. – Offer telephone or email support for those who would like to discuss college choices prior to their return to school in the autumn. For those not in school it may be useful to arrange a telephone appointment for a post-16 conversation. <p>For year 11 students joining the school's sixth form:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – In the summer term send a welcome video introducing key people/contacts; utilise existing students as points of contact/mentors. – Tutors to make contact with new students. – Social media to keep up with positive messages
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3. What alternative arrangements for usual leavers activities and saying 'goodbye' will be made? Will some form of leavers event be able to take place?	
Possible activities	Any extra age specific considerations
<p>What is appropriate will not look the same for everyone, but the following could be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Live virtual event for pupils to share some important memories of their time at the school such as achievements, funny and important moments shared etc. – Virtual disco/party – Live or recorded virtual assembly/event for staff to celebrate the pupils. Could include a specific song, stories, photo montage, memories of each of them and places in the school. – An appropriate socially distanced outdoor event for pupils and their families, e.g. a 	

<p>picnic on the school field in socially distanced family groups</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Pupils and staff contributing (virtually or otherwise) to a leavers book. – Individual phone calls from teachers to pupils. – How to say 'goodbye' to parents as well as pupils, even if this is done retrospectively. – A celebration event in the autumn term when PHE advice allows. 	
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4. How will leaders facilitate opportunities for pupils and their new teachers to build relationships and for pupils to start to become familiar with their new school ahead of the autumn term, through remote means?

Possible activities	Any extra age specific considerations
<p>For pupils and teachers to 'meet' each other, consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Welcome videos from teacher(s), telling pupils a bit about themselves, similar message by letter with a photo for those with limited internet access. – Invite young children/families to complete 'All about me' information or to record a short video to send to their new teacher. For older pupils, write a letter to send by email, post or bring in when they start school. – Current pupils record a welcome message or a song to share with new pupils (with appropriate parental permission if using video). – The new teacher could record a story or hold an on-line small group session for new pupils to join with their parents. <p>To build familiarity with their new school/classroom:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Provide opportunities for pupils to be able to ask questions: e.g. online with the new teacher; through class session(s); via FAQ post box that current teacher can collate to share with new teacher; pupil survey – Share photos of their new classroom 	<p>For pupils joining YR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – record a video to show pupils where their pegs will be and where their book bags, water bottles, etc will be stored to help build a picture for them. <p>For pupils joining Y3 from infant school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Current pupils could share information with current Y2 pupils about what they think is important for them to know about starting at their new school. <p>For pupils joining Y7:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Current Y7 pupils could write to Y6 pupils about what they think is important for them to know about starting at their new school. – An online survey could be used for pupils to ask questions which can be answered through a newsletter/welcome letter.

<p>(indoor and outdoor where applicable), map to show where this is in relation to their existing classroom for returning year groups, or in relation to where the pupils will enter their new school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication regarding support available for pupils with SEND; reading lists, subject specific vocabulary and work set in advance of joining the next year group. - Can visits be facilitated for the most vulnerable of pupils with SEND? - If the school is not in 'usual operation' how will children, for example with Autism, be supported to understand how the school will be different in September? Could pupils with SEND visit certain outdoor areas with current staff member or parent before school site becomes too crowded? - Information regarding key people and places could be shared through provision of an individualised transition booklet. 	
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5. Do timescales for the transition process need to change? Have leaders considered staggered starts in the autumn term to facilitate gradual familiarisation? Have leaders considered extending the transition period for those most in need?

Possible activities	Any extra age specific considerations
<p>Consider the impact of any staggered start arrangements on families. Ideas to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Subject to current PHE advice, build into the autumn term some or all transition days/weeks/events that usually take place over the summer term. - Could some pupils build up their time more gradually in their new school/ class before full time attendance to aid familiarity and confidence and how/when would this be communicated to parents? - For pupils with SEND, remember that staggered starts may be confusing, and visual supports may be necessary to identify which time will be in school and which will be at home. - Preparation for transition for SEND pupils will need to be planned individually, with a 	<p>For pupils joining Y3 from infant school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If PHE advice allows have leaders considered if, within their own staffing context, it is possible for any Y2 staff to be available to spend a few days in the junior schools at the start of the autumn term to support transition? <p>For pupils joining Y7:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - If PHE advice allows have leaders considered if, within their own staffing context, it is possible for any Y6 staff to be available to spend a few days in the junior schools at the start of the autumn term to support transition?

range of virtual and concrete opportunities if possible.

6. How can the time remaining in the summer term be used to prepare pupils in Y2 or Y6 for their new school whilst in school or working in a remote learning situation?

Possible activities

Consider the following ideas:

- Focus on key skills that would be priority for pupils to secure before moving on.
- Revisiting learning already taught.
- Fact finding about new school from school website, quizzes.
- Plotting a map of their route to new school.
- Letter to their new teacher to introduce themselves and to provide of information about themselves.
- Time for pupils to share their concerns about going to their new school: an in-school/ virtual session for teacher to acknowledge the range of emotions pupils will have, followed by time for pupils to write/email their concerns ahead of another session where these are addressed.
- Questions for their new teacher – what they want to find out; for older pupils use an online survey tool to gather questions.
- In liaison with the new school, pupils write to existing pupils to ask them questions about their school.
- Joint learning projects that usually take place with the next school: e.g. started in leaving year group and continued in new school/class/year group: can these be facilitated by virtual means so the benefit of this transitional working for pupils and teachers is maintained?

Any extra age specific considerations

For pupils joining Y7:

- Talk to pupils about travel and maintaining social distancing on public transport.
- Reading school timetables - navigating the school virtually or using printed maps.
- Challenges against a timer, e.g. getting ready for/after P.E and re-packing everything.
- Using organisational strategies such as making checklists, prioritising tasks according to timescales in possible Y7 scenarios – e.g. homework.

7. What adjustments will need to be made to the provision when pupils start in their new year group or new school considering a re-start curriculum?

Possible activities	Any extra age specific considerations
<p>Schools will rightly be re-thinking their provision and curriculum in light of Covid-19, as the primary task will be to re-connect with the learning community and assess the impact of the pandemic, prior to adapting a re-start curriculum that meets all needs; be it social, emotional or physical.</p> <p>The wide range of emotions pupils may be experiencing due to lockdown, in addition to those associated with a major transition to a new class or school, only adds to the need for the focus to be on the emotional security of the pupils and helping them to develop a sense of belonging to a new community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A newly developed WSSC and E4S Curriculum Re-start Hub includes resources covering six key themes (<i>Belonging, Controlling Worries, Coping with Loss, Dealing with Change, Feelings and their impact and Keeping Healthy</i>), and is available free of charge to aid school in their curriculum planning. It is: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Accessible via WSSfS – Covers Key Stage 1-4 and Early Years – Supports key areas for a restart curriculum – Includes resource cards containing key learning questions, book lists and links to resources. – National 'Primary SEAL' resource theme of 'Changes'. – WSSC E4S tool supports schools to meet the new RSHE curriculum including the key area of EHWP, with transition and change being an identified theme within that. 	<p>NA</p>

- Further guidance in respect of a graduated support for emotional wellbeing during and post Covid-19 has been developed '[Return to School: Promoting Everybody's Emotional Wellbeing](#)'.

In respect of the immediate transition pupils will be making into their new year group or new school, consider the following ideas in relation to the environment and resources:

- Set up the environment taking into consideration what the pupils were used to within their previous year group, pre-school setting or school – what resources and learning prompts were supportive to them at that stage, what will need to be added to these to support pupils who have moved on or back? Use the information from transition conversations and activities with pre-school settings, previous teachers, families, pupil's letters/'All about me' profiles to add in resources and supports that reflect the individual pupil's interests and needs.
- Where appropriate and only when all pupils have something to contribute in some way, display photos or some projects pupils enjoyed or are proud of from remote learning or from their key experiences during lockdown.

For SEND pupils teachers need to be aware that anxiety or arousal levels may impact on the pupils' ability to engage. Refer back to transition documents for best ways to support the pupil and for an overview of their typical engagement and attainment.

For pupils joining YR:

- Liaise with families to obtain a photo of their child for a welcome display in their new YR environment ready for their first day and for their peg and self-registration.
- Consider initial focus within the environment and in the general provision, on the Prime Areas of Learning to support pupils to settle and build their confidence.

For pupils joining Year 7:

- Ensure that tutors are fully aware of individual student / family issues during Covid-19.
- Consider use of tutor group resources and time.

8. What information will teachers be expected to pass onto pupils' next teachers and schools

Possible activities

A guidance document '[Transfer of Assessment Information](#)' previously issued through the COVID-19: Update from Paul Wagstaff, Director of Education and Skills 11/6/20, has been prepared to support teachers in preparing

Any extra age specific considerations

For pupils joining YR:

- Information usually shared at Early Years Transition Events should be shared by the early years setting by email/post, this

for the next academic year with recommendations regarding the sharing of assessment information within schools and across settings. Mindful that many schools will be building on existing good practice and that there may be locality and academy trust agreements already in place, it emphasises that teachers will need time to have discussions regarding individual pupils, including personal and social skills and curriculum strengths and areas requiring support.

In addition to information passed on relating to curriculum content not taught due to lockdown (e.g. particular aspects of writing, or Relationships and Sex Education, etc.), it is important that specific information relating to missed key experiences for groups of pupils, such as Bikeability in Y6, is also passed on to the next teacher/setting.

For SEND pupils additional documents or information might include pupil profile or passport and SEND file.

As per [KCSiE 2019](#) ensure there are detailed discussions and secure file transfers for any pupils who are being monitored from a safeguarding perspective.

should include identification of pupils who will need a supported transition. Schools will need to contact settings to arrange for the transition plans to be made for these pupils in collaboration with the early years providers and any other professionals involved.

The Early Years Team have shared information with early years providers in relation to transitions on pages 14-17 within the document: [Guidance and Frequently Asked Questions: West Sussex Early Years and Childcare Providers](#)

Governor involvement:

Governors do not need to be involved in the operational side of transitions but do need to assure themselves that the school is acting in accordance with the policies and procedures in place and that these policies and procedures are up to date and regularly reviewed.

Links to other key West Sussex guidance relating to the transition process in light of Covid-19:

Curriculum and Learning:

[WSCC E4S tool](#) supports schools to meet the new RSHE curriculum including the key area of EHWB, with transition and change being an identified theme within that.

A newly developed [WSCC and E4S Curriculum Re-start Hub](#) has been designed to aid teachers/schools in the delivery of an appropriate curriculum that meets the needs of all learners.

Wellbeing and Care:

Guidance regarding a graduated support for emotional wellbeing during and post Covid-19 has been developed: [‘Return to School: Promoting Everybody’s Emotional Wellbeing’](#)

SEND & Inclusion:

The Autism and Social Communication (ASCT) and Learning and Behaviour Advisory Teams (LBAT) have produced a SEND transition guidance document: **‘Planning for Positive Transitions: A Best Practice Guide for Schools and Parents’** and accompanying pupil transition booklets for schools which have been shared with SENCOs.

An Early Years specific version of these materials has also been produced and shared: **‘Planning for Positive Transitions from Early Years Settings into Schools: A Best Practice Guide for Schools and Parents’**.

(Copies of these documents can be made available by contacting the ASCT or LBAT teams or through school SENCOs)

Early Years Team, Early Help:

[Early Years universal transition documents](#) for settings and schools are available, where you can link to the documents for supported transitions for those children starting school, who need a more detailed support plan. The [separate supported transitions guidance document](#) is also available.

In light of Covid-19, the Early Years Team have shared information with early years providers in relation to transitions on pages 14-17 within the document: [Guidance and Frequently Asked Questions: West Sussex Early Years and Childcare Providers](#)

West Sussex Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS):

Can provide additional support for the transition of GRT pupils including contacting families, drop- in sessions at school (when WS guidelines allow) and phone advice.

Email tes@westsussex.gov.uk.

In addition, **advice and guidance on EAL pupils’ transition**, as well as to access liaison support for Portuguese, Bengali, Polish, Lithuanian & Russian families can be accessed via emat@westsussex.gov.uk.

Additional supportive guidance:

[Think Piece A Recovery Curriculum](#): Loss and Life for our children and schools post pandemic. Barry Carpenter, CBE, Professor of Mental Health in Education, Oxford Brookes University and Matthew Carpenter, Principal, Baxter College, Kidderminster, Worcestershire

[All change at school](#) – a signpost to a good transition. Educational Psychologist Elizabeth Gillies considers models to help children deal with unexpected forks in the road.