

Every Child is Included:

Effective Transition Procedures for Children and Young People with Speech, Language and Communication Needs.

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Good Practice

Transitions can be extremely stressful for young people and their parents alike. Some strategies to consider which could help to alleviate stress on young people and their families could include:

Encouraging positive expectations about transition changes

Ensuring clear communication and transparency about the processes

Talking about transitions to young people in positive and creative ways

Preparing young people and parents/carers for key transition points early

Trying to establish peer support networks to let young people hear directly from their peers who have been through the process themselves

Thinking about stress management strategies such as relaxation and meditation potentially for young people who may be feeling especially anxious about transition events.

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1. Introduction

- Starting school and moving/leaving school is a process that thousands of children go through in Glasgow every year and it is a period of time filled with a range of emotions for both the child/young person and the parents/carers. For children and young people with Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN), including those with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) this process can be very difficult due mainly to their need for routine and predictability and the way they process their environment. The need for a consistent approach and predictability is likely to be interrupted during a transition and so any transition needs to be managed carefully. Difficulties in understanding changes can provoke high levels of anxiety and may result in unusual behaviours, including non-compliance, heightened fear and distressing behaviours. However, if strategies to prepare children and young people are implemented, successful transitions can be achieved.
- “Whatever the scale or complexity of the transition the most important factor is to consider the situation from the perspective of the pupil, taking account of their strengths, difficulties and past experiences.” (The Autism Toolbox, 2009 pg125)

Aims

- These guidelines articulate with ‘Every Child is Included and Supported. Policy Guidelines.’ and should be read in conjunction with 6.4 Transitions (p18).
- “All transitions into and across establishments and services in all sectors should be regarded as processes not events. The process is not complete until the child or young person with support needs is settled and progressing in the new situation.”
- http://www.goglasgow.org.uk/content/UserGenerated/file/Policies_Guidelines/SGL/ECIIS_PolicyGuidelines_June16.pdf
- The main aim of this booklet is to provide guidance for all practitioners on effective transitional practice that supports children/young people with SLCN, including those with ASD, and their families during what can be a very stressful and anxious time. A key aim of any transitional programme should be that it supports the child and family to feel secure and confident in the new environment and in a position to tackle the challenges ahead. Transitions also need to be considered as a process and not as a one off event to ensure that children and young people receive the support they require to achieve success.
- The guidelines outline the expectations when managing these major transitions for children and young people with SLCN, including ASD. It is expected that the needs of children/young people and their families will be considered and jointly planned for during these important stages by all involved.
- “The effectiveness and quality of programmes depends largely on communication and collaboration between all people involved in the process.” (Margetts, K 2004)
- Within this pack we have provided a range of potentially useful materials to support the enhanced transition process and the planning around this.
- You should note that there is no compulsion to use all of these materials and they may be altered and adapted to meet the individual context and needs of each establishment.

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2. What is Quality Transition?

- The success of any transition will depend on the quality of the planning and implementation but it should be remembered that the child/young person is at the centre of the process. All practitioners involved in transitions need to recognise the importance of giving the child or young person who is moving to a new setting consideration when planning their transition and involve them when appropriate. All staff involved in the transition process should consider the systems and approaches needed to ensure that the child/young person can engage effectively where possible.
- It is also important to recognise that the capacity to cope with transition will be very individual – some pupils may need to be involved and prepared over a long period of time whilst others may not be able to cope with prolonged anticipation. This is not to say that the process should not be started, only that the child/young person's involvement should be planned carefully.
- It is likely that there will be many people involved with the child/young person and lots of information will need to be communicated effectively to ensure a smooth transition from one setting to another. This will involve a co-ordinated, agreed process between the feeder establishment and the receiving establishment. Responsibility for a successful transition lies with both establishments and collaborative working and open channels of communication are vital to that success. Shared perspectives between all involved in supporting the child / young person throughout the transition is likely to lead to more proactive planning and supportive practice.
- Parents/carers will play a key role in supporting their child/young person to feel comfortable with the transition process and so it is important that the parents/carers are given opportunities to meet with all key staff and to be involved at all stages. It must also be remembered that for many parents/carers this will be a time of stress and anxiety for them too. Listening to parents concerns/suggestions will help them to feel valued as a member of the team.
- Throughout the transition process the emphasis tends to be placed on the child/young person, however, it is important to recognise that for some staff it may be the first time they have worked with a child with SLCN, or ASD and therefore it is important to consider issues regarding training and confidence. Having trained staff will help to ensure that the child/young person's needs are better understood and any necessary adjustment to curriculum or environment can be made with confidence. (See 'Other Information' for advice on training support available)
- Another key factor in ensuring successful transition is establishing a timeframe. There is a legal duty on local authorities to support certain children/young people with some of the changes in education to ensure that the transition goes smoothly.
 - At least 12 months before a child/young person starts or changes primary or secondary school (or six months for those starting pre-school), the authority must gather information from education, health and social work services that currently work with the child.

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- At least six months before a child/young person starts or changes secondary school (or three months for pre-school and primary), the authority must provide information to prepare the services and staff in the setting the child/young person is moving into
- Ensuring that these timescales are adhered to will enable the transition process to be carefully planned taking account of the child's / young person's needs and providing the correct support to ensure a successful transition.
- In line with Curriculum for Excellence, Senior Phase provides educational opportunities which will inform transition pathways. Transition planning, therefore, will begin in S4 to provide opportunities for progressive and cohesive planning.

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3. Enhanced transition from early years to Primary

1. Parents/carers should visit the receiving primary school. On the first visit, parents/carers should not take their child (if possible) as this will allow them to focus fully on the visit.
4. Early years staff will complete a passport for primary staff to ensure that all key information relating to the child is transferred. (see [appendix 2](#) for exemplar template and [appendix 2\(a\)](#) for suggested letter for parents)

Parents/carers will be given a school handbook and any specific ASD policy documents and procedures.

Remember, parents/carers may be anxious about the transition and it is important that enough time is allocated for the visit to allow for any questions parents/carers may have to be answered fully.

2. Staff in the early years establishment will liaise with primary staff to gather information that will be used to help prepare the child for the transition. This may consist of: photographs of key members of staff; photographs of classroom and any other room /area that will be accessed by the child, including dining hall and toilets; photographs of playground and any play equipment. Any other photographs identified as necessary by staff.
3. Staff from early years establishment will complete a 'moving on' booklet in conjunction with child (if appropriate), parents and any other partner agency involved. Photographs from receiving primary should be used to complete the child's booklet. (See [appendix 1](#) for exemplar template) This will be given to parents/carers to help prepare the child for the transition.

Remember cognisance must be taken of the child's capacity to cope with the transition in terms of timescale and the introduction of the 'moving on' booklet should be given due consideration.
5. Staff from early years establishments will gather all current reports, including most recent progress report and any assessments. If visuals are used to support communication, a copy of these should be gathered.
6. An initial transition meeting will take place no later than the end of January of the children's pre-school year. This will allow plans to be put in place to facilitate a smooth transition. Information will be shared with all relevant personnel within the primary school and any reasonable adjustments necessary should be made prior to the child starting. This will include taking cognisance of any sensory issues e.g. providing a dark den/quiet space, ensuring ear defenders are available etc. An AR1 form should be submitted **no later than the end of January** to allow a reasonable time for any adaptations to be planned and carried out. Additionally, any requests for a Grade 4 SLW should be made by directly liaising, in the first instance, with the Head of Service.
7. A final transition meeting (Professionals only) will be arranged by the receiving primary establishment at least 4 weeks prior to end of summer term to ensure all relevant information is transferred. Parents and all professionals involved with the child will be invited. (See [appendix 3](#) for transition meeting template)

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8. The receiving teacher will visit the child in the early years establishment. This will allow for the introduction of a new adult in a familiar environment.
9. The receiving primary will provide details to both early years establishment and parents of transition visit time(s) for the child. This might include an initial visit when the school does not have other children. This will allow the child to see the school, classroom etc. without feeling anxious about other children being around.

Parents/carers and/or early years staff should accompany the child on this first visit. The receiving teacher should be available to meet the child.

Any other transition visits should include children who will be in the child's class and will be based around non-demanding and enjoyable sessions.

Early years and primary staff will liaise to establish what these sessions might include. Early years staff will accompany the child on these visits and should leave the child in the classroom if possible. (It may be necessary to remain within the primary establishment to provide support if the child becomes very anxious or distressed.)

10. If any staff training needs have been identified by the primary establishment then training should be arranged prior to child starting, if possible.

Post transition:

11. A period of settling in will be given before the child is assessed using both curricular and an ASD specific assessment tool (if necessary).

A post-placement meeting should be scheduled to take place within 6 weeks of the child starting school, with a follow up meeting taking place 6 weeks later, if required.

12. The child's passport will be readily available to all staff working with child and updated regularly to reflect child's changing profile.

Remember the need to be mindful of confidentiality

13. You may wish to consider providing a 'soft start' to the day. This can be a whole class initiative and will allow children to engage in activities which are based around their interests and will help to ensure anxiety is kept to a minimum.
14. You should ensure the child has necessary visuals/supports to provide predictability and to support the development of routine to the school day.

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4. Enhanced transition from Primary to Secondary

1. Parents/carers should visit the receiving secondary school. On the first visit, parents/carers should not take the young person (if possible) as this will allow them to focus fully on the visit.

Parents/carers will be given a school handbook and any specific ASD policy documents and procedures.

Remember, parents/carers may be anxious about the transition and it is important that enough time is allocated for the visit to allow for any questions parents/carers may have to be answered fully.

2. Staff in the primary will liaise with secondary staff to gather information that will be used to help prepare the young person for the transition. This should consist of: photographs of key members of staff; photographs of classroom and any other room /area that will be accessed by the young person, including dining hall and toilets. Any other photographs identified as necessary by staff.
3. Staff from primary will complete a 'moving on' booklet (Appendix 4) in conjunction with the young person (if appropriate), parents and any other partner agency involved. Photographs from receiving secondary should be used to complete the young person's booklet. If possible this should include a timetable and a list of what should be brought to school for each day/subject should be provided to parents/carers. The list could be colour coded in line with department coding (if appropriate). This will be given to parents/carers at the end of Primary 7 (at the latest) to assist with discussion and

familiarisation of the new school in preparation for starting in August.

Remember cognisance must be taken of the child's capacity to cope with the transition in terms of timescale and the introduction of the 'moving on' booklet should be given due consideration.

4. Primary staff will provide an updated passport for secondary staff to ensure that all key information relating to the young person is transferred. (see appendix 5 and 5(a) for exemplar templates)
5. Staff from primary will gather all current reports, including most recent progress report and any assessments. If visuals are used to support communication, a copy of these should be gathered.
6. After the Options Appraisal and CIG outcome has been agreed, an initial transition meeting will be arranged by the Primary no later than the end of September. Parents and all professionals involved with the young person will be invited. A final transition meeting will be arranged by the receiving secondary establishment at least 8 weeks prior to end of summer term to ensure all relevant information is transferred. Parents and all professionals involved with the young person will be invited. (See appendix 6 and 6(a) for transition meeting template and checklist). A new enrolment proforma for young people transitioning from primary to secondary is provided as Appendix 7.
7. ASN Co-ordinator/ Class Teacher/ Learning Support Teacher will visit the young person in the primary school. This will allow for the introduction of new teacher in a familiar environment.

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8. Receiving secondary will provide details to both the primary school and parents of transition visit time(s) for the young person. Public areas of the secondary could be visited when quiet and the visit should be a short, focussed visit. If the young person is transitioning to a co-located unit the first visit should be restricted to the base classroom and any other area identified as being of interest to the young person e.g. art room
9. Parents/Carers or Primary Staff should accompany the young person on this first visit. The receiving teacher should be available to meet the young person. A timetable should be provided for the young person to prepare for subsequent transition visits.
10. Information will be shared with all relevant personnel within the secondary school and any reasonable adjustments necessary should be made prior to the young person starting. This will include taking cognisance of any sensory issues e.g. providing a quiet space, colour coding departments to correspond with the young person's timetable etc.
11. If any staff training needs have been identified by the secondary establishment then training should be arranged prior to the young person starting, if possible.

Subsequent transition visits should include pupils who will be in the young person's class and will be based around non-demanding and enjoyable sessions.

Primary and Secondary staff will liaise to establish what these sessions might include. Primary Staff will accompany the young person on these visits and should leave the young person in the classroom if possible. (It may be necessary to remain within the secondary establishment to provide support if the young person becomes anxious or distressed.) If appropriate, a 'buddy' could be introduced and accompany the young person during transition visits.

Cognisance should be taken of the young person's capacity to cope with the transition in terms of timescale and the number of transition visits required may vary according to the young person's needs.

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Post transition:

12. A period of settling in will be given before the young person is assessed using both curricular and an ASD specific assessment tool (if necessary).
13. The young person's passport will be readily available to all staff working with the young person and updated regularly to reflect the young person's changing profile.

14. A post placement meeting should take place six weeks after the child has started school.

Remember the need to be mindful of confidentiality

Suggestions for secondary establishment to consider:

- Provide a map of the new school building, colour code subjects and classrooms; highlight important areas e.g. dining hall, toilets etc
 - Make the timetable easy for the individual pupil to use – consideration needs to be given to the young person's preferred method of communication
 - Create daily checklists so the correct items are taken to/from school according to daily activities
 - Create a user-friendly diary for organising home work – consider using technology to provide alerts for the young person on deadlines etc
- Set up a buddy system with a designated peer/ group to help the young person move between classes and become comfortable with their new environment
 - Assign a member of staff as the person to contact for help – highlight this persons office/ base in the map
 - Make provision for a 'chill out' space / quiet room and provide young person with procedures on how to access the space/ room
 - Procedures for break times which can often be very stressful. Lunch clubs can be an alternative to outside time with no structure.

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5. Stage to stage transitions

- Children and young people transitioning both from stage to stage within primary and year to year in both primary and secondary schools require the same level of advance planning to ensure these changes cause them the minimum of stress.
- We have included 3 potentially useful checklists as [Appendix 8 \(a\)](#) and [\(b\)](#) to act as aide memoir to staff working with young people at key transition stages.