

Relationships with other pupils

Children and young people with ASD may struggle to adapt to the new social dynamics and relationships and can often misinterpret social cues which can mean making friendships and social integration is harder to achieve.

- Find out if any of your child's friends from primary school will be in their classes and if there were any special seating arrangements in place at primary school that need to be maintained e.g. individual desk facing a certain way to avoid distractions when undertaking tasks
- Find out if there are any summer activities taking place within the local community that your child might be interested in attending. These could provide opportunities for your child to meet some other children who will be attending the same school
- Find out if there are any after-school activities / clubs that your child might be interested in.



Transition from Primary School to Secondary School

for children and young people with
Autism Spectrum Disorders

Information for Parents

Your child will soon be starting at their new secondary school. This will involve lots of changes to their social and learning environment. This booklet has been designed to give you some help in supporting your child to effectively manage the transfer from primary to secondary school.

Contact between school and parents

Continue to be very optimistic about your child's transfer to secondary school as they will look to you for reassurance throughout the process.

- Become familiar with the names of your child's teachers and talk to your child about them
- Stay aware of how your child is settling in; keep communicating with them, asking specific questions about what has happened on a daily basis. You may have a home/school communication diary that will help with this.
- If there are any problems, contact school as soon as possible and highlight them to staff
- Have clear arrangements regarding what will happen if your child becomes unwell
- Keep all relevant school names and numbers close to hand and remember to contact school if your child can't attend for any reason

Homework

There will be an increase in the amount of homework your child will receive once they get to secondary school. It is important that your child is supported to be organised and that homework does not become overwhelming.

- Find out if the school operates a homework diary and talk to your child about this. Ask to see it on a regular basis.
- Find out what how much homework your child will be expected to undertake and if this is causing problems speak to school staff immediately.
- If there is a homework club consider whether it would be appropriate for your child to attend. For some children with ASD it is easier to do school work within the school building.
- If your child is comfortable doing homework at home try to designate a quiet area for them to work in, preferably not in front of a TV.

Lunch and break times

Lunch and break times should be periods of the day when your child can relax with their peers, but for some children these less structured times can be very problematic.

- If your child has any sensory processing difficulties you should make staff aware of these prior to your child starting school. E.g. noises, smells, crowds. Staff will work with you to offer solutions to support your child in any situation that may become stressful for them.
- Encourage your child to attend any lunch time clubs and activities that are available and will help them settle in
- Ask your child whether they want school dinners or packed lunches. Find out what types of food are available at break and lunch for snacks. Discuss any food issues with staff prior to your child starting school to help reduce situations where your child may become anxious.
- Find out how much a school lunch costs and if a pre-paid card is used. Ensure that your child has enough money to pay for lunch / has credit on his/her lunch card to reduce anxiety.
- If your child is entitled to free school meals ensure that any necessary paperwork is sorted out as soon as possible so that this can be processed. Find out how this is dealt with – usually children are issued with a pre-paid card.

- If alternative arrangements have been made for your child e.g. access to a quiet room, ensure that your child knows where this is located and who he/she should speak to about this.

Uniform

Every school in Glasgow has a dress code and a specific school uniform. To promote a sense of belonging and for health and safety reasons, pupils are encouraged to wear school uniform.

- If your child has any sensory issues that might affect his/her ability to wear a certain item of clothing you should speak to staff prior to your child starting school. In most cases a suitable alternative can be agreed.
- Find out if the school supplies uniform or where your nearest stockist is.
- Find out if there is a specific P.E. kit
- Find out if your child's school has non-uniform days throughout the year and talk to your child about these

Moving around school

Your child's experiences at primary school are probably of a single classroom, familiar classmates and one main teacher. At secondary school they encounter a variety of different classrooms, hundreds of pupils and many different teachers in a large building. This in itself can be overwhelming for some children, however there are some things you can do to help ensure that your child does not become overly anxious.

- Ask the school to provide a colour coded timetable and map of the school.
- Find out if the school operates a 'buddy' system for the first few weeks and if so, speak to your child about this. Ensure that your child gets to meet his/her 'buddy' on at least one visit and, if possible, has a photograph of his/her buddy.
- Ensure that your child knows what to do if he/she gets lost. You may wish to consider using a prompt card with instructions on it e.g. If you can't find your classroom go to the school office and tell the staff. They will help you and tell you what to do next.

Travelling to school

- If your child is going to travel to school by taxi or car, take them on the journey a few times in the weeks before starting school
- Make sure your child knows what to do if he/she misses their taxi at home time. You might want to consider using a prompt card with instructions on it.
e.g. If you miss the taxi at the end of the school day you should go to the school office and tell the office staff. The office staff will deal with it and tell you what to do next.
- If your child walks to school, walk the route with them a few times in the weeks before starting school.
- If your child will be walking to school with friends it would be useful to have their contact details.