

Transition to Secondary School – Frequently Asked Questions by Parents



The prospect of your child moving from primary school to secondary school is an exciting time but can also be daunting, for the child and also for parents/carers. This year transition is particularly daunting because of the uncertainty caused by the Covid 19 health situation. Unfortunately, we don't have the answers to the questions you may have about the changes to education at this time but we promise that we will keep you informed and give you pertinent information at the earliest stage we can.

This leaflet is intended to support parents/carers through the transition process as well as put your mind at rest. It may not answer all your questions but will address some of the most frequently expressed parental concerns.

1 Will my child be in the same class as some of his/her friends?

The Depute Head Teacher, responsible for primary school transition, does her best to ensure your child is not the only one from his/her primary school in that class but this may not include your child's particular friends. Our experience is that it is neither possible nor desirable to keep groups of primary school friends all together. In fact, most pupils will thrive in their new surroundings and will have made several new friends after a few weeks. In our experience, it is better for all pupils to mix and create new friendships right from the start.

2 How will my child cope if most of the people in his/her class are people he/she doesn't know or like?

Remember Primary school has already helped your child to develop vital inter-personal skills and resilience. This transition to Secondary is just another step which helps further develop their confidence and resilience to prepare for adult society and the world of work beyond school. They will be fully supported on this journey at Forres Academy.

All S1 pupils will find themselves in classes with people they do not know as the classes have a mix of pupils from 8 ASG primary schools as well as pupils from other areas. In February, P7 pupils had the opportunity to visit the school to tour the building and meet key pastoral staff. To add to this a virtual Transition process has been carefully planned to introduce your child to other new S1 pupils and to key pastoral and support staff. In mid-June your child's House team will open up with a Powerpoint welcoming your child to their House-group. The Guidance teacher will introduce herself, explain her role and give information on an interactive activity which will enable pupils in their new class to chat to one another. By this means, your child will get to know some of their new class mates, prior to starting in August.

It is true that making friends comes more easily to some than to others and the process can take time. Please reassure your child that they will make friends and offer them suggestions as to the sort of things they could say and do to help. For those struggling, there is always support available from Guidance staff, S6 Buddies and staff at The Hub

A great deal of work goes on behind the scenes in the creation of classes, including the input of all Primary 7 teachers and our Support for Learning staff. Although we are happy to discuss concerns and consider requests, it is unlikely we will be able to accommodate requests to move pupils into alternative classes.

3. How can I ensure my child is keeping up with homework?

Forres Academy uses an online programme called Show-My-Homework which can be monitored by parent/carer. Usernames and passwords will be issued in August. Some pupils will choose to take a photograph of the homework instructions on their phone or write it on the inside cover of the relevant jotter (because more likely to remember it that way) so you need to discover the method your child has chosen to record it and ask regularly about homework deadlines.

Please note, pupils in different classes may well have been given different homework, because of the constraints of shared resources or because other classes are working through the curriculum in a different order or speed. Teachers will adapt their programmes of work to suit the pupils in their classes.

4. What should I do if my child tells me another pupil is making nasty comments?

Bullying is an unfortunate and unacceptable aspect of school-life. Forres Academy has a robust Anti-Bullying policy which is regularly reviewed. The most important thing is to communicate with us if you are concerned that your child is being bullied as early intervention is often the key to a solution.

We always do our best to use a restorative practice approach to ensure that all pupils feel happy and safe while at school. This attempts to repair the harm caused by unacceptable behaviour by getting those involved together to discuss how they feel and what they want to happen. It attempts to focus on relationships, addressing victims' needs and holding everyone accountable for their actions.

School staff need the support of all our parents/carers. If you have been told or suspect your child is being bullied, please do not let them suffer in silence. Advise them to speak to their Guidance teacher and call the Guidance teacher yourself to discuss your worries and concerns.

5. What can the school do to stop bullying on social media?

The school does not give pupils access to equipment which can be connected to social media sites and the local authority has effective safeguards in place to keep pupils safe on-line when school equipment is being used for educational purposes.

All pupils sign an agreement on the correct use of school equipment and access will be removed in cases where this use has been breached. However, most instances of bullying on social media take place within the pupils' own homes or on equipment provided by parents. Guidance staff will teach pupils about the safe use of social media but ***the school is unable to deal with bullying which takes place on-line and would recommend that parents take appropriate action to monitor young people's use of social media and respond appropriately to bullying,***

which may well involve contacting the social media provider or the police.

Age Restrictions for Social Media Platforms

What is the minimum age for account holders on these social media sites and apps?



Sourced from NSPCC website October 2019

6. What advice should I give my child about keeping safe at lunch-times?

Advise your child to stay on school grounds, to socialise in the school canteen and to avoid outside areas in the community where they may feel unsafe.

7. What happens if my child experiences problems on the school bus?

Another first for you child may be travelling to and from school on the school-bus.

The Public Transport Unit (PTU) issues forms which are completed by all parents prior to pupils being issued with a bus pass. Please ensure you read this document carefully.

Seatbelts are provided and it is essential that parents encourage their children to use them.

Please note that the drivers are not responsible for the behaviour of passengers but the PTU works closely with the school and any pupil who indulges in inappropriate or dangerous behaviour may lose the right to travel on the bus.

An assembly takes place each session (and a letter will be sent home) giving advice about actions required in the case of adverse weather conditions.

8. When will I receive information about my child's progress in school?

There is usually an informal chat for S1 parents with your child's Guidance teacher in Term 1 to give general information about how your child has settled in. The S1 Reports are usually issued in May but you can, of course, contact your child's Guidance teacher at any other point during the year if you have specific issues you wish to discuss.



9. What is the best way to contact my child's Guidance teacher?

The Guidance teacher is the key contact for your child at Forres Academy. Any concerns or questions you have about your child's physical, emotional, mental and social well-being it is worth sharing with Guidance. The mode of communication you use to share this information really depends on the nature of the concern. You may wish to email the school's admin who will forward your email.

Alternatively, you may phone the school office and ask to speak to the Guidance teacher. Often, she will not be at her desk so you can leave a voicemail and your call will be returned.

In some circumstances, a face to face meeting is preferable. You and the Guidance teacher can liaise to arrange an appointment time.

Your child will have the same Guidance teacher throughout their time at Forres Academy so will get to know your child very well and is best placed to work alongside parents/ carers to co-ordinate the supports your child may require.

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We hope that this leaflet has addressed some of the questions you might have. As stated in the opening paragraph, any implications surrounding coronavirus will be shared with you in a clear and timely fashion by Mrs Sinclair, the Head-teacher.

In the meantime, please be assured that most young people transition smoothly into secondary school – despite parental anxieties! The entire school community is very much looking forward to welcoming your child to Forres Academy!