Oxfordshire SEND

Guidance for a successful primary to secondary transition

OXFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

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Introduction

This handbook has been designed to provide guidance to promote a successful primary to secondary transition for all learners in Oxfordshire, including vulnerable learners that may need an enhanced transition. The handbook aims to provide a supportive structure to the transition process and includes a range of tools that have been developed in partnership with pupils, school staff and various local authority teams.

Within this handbook you will find the following:

- **Checklists for planning the transition process** – for key primary and secondary staff managing transition.
- **Transition process guidelines and a transition timeline** – to provide a visual overview of the transition process including when each tool should be used during the transition process.
- **Year 5/6 screening tool** – to support primary staff to identify vulnerable learners.
- **Transition thinking ahead tool** – to support thinking about transition for vulnerable learners in Year 5/6 and what support is needed from primary before transition.
- **Information form on pupils needing an enhanced transition** – to be completed by primary schools (year 6 teachers) for the vulnerable learners in their class.
- **Action plan for vulnerable learners** – to capture the information shared by primary staff and plan support for transition for vulnerable learners.

There are also several supportive documents alongside the tools listed above including:

- **Top tips for transition** – collated from the literature review and the views of staff we have worked in partnership with.
- **Helpful transition documents guide** – a list of supportive documents available from other agencies.
- **FAQs for transition**.

Transition process guidelines

The following guidance should be used by settings to ensure effective support and coordinated planning, to assist in the successful transition of learners between primary and secondary school.

Primary settings

Whole school approach:

As a school, consider the provision for vulnerable learners at a universal, targeted, and individual level. The educational psychology service's good practice guidance 'promoting wellbeing in schools' may be a useful tool to support reflection and planning.

Start of year 5:

1. Staff in the primary school, who know the pupils well, should use the '**year 5/6 screening tool for transition**' (section 3) to identify pupils who may need extra support during the transition to secondary school (an 'enhanced transition').

2. For each pupil identified, plan and implement strategies to teach the skills the pupil will need for a positive transition. Try using the '**transition: thinking ahead**' form (section 5). This identifies strengths and areas to develop so that strategies can be implemented early on. Supporting documents such as '**top tips for the transition of vulnerable learners**' (appendix b) and '**helpful transition documents for vulnerable learners**' (appendix a) may assist with this.

Term 2 of year 6:

3. Review the children identified in the **year 5/6 screening tool** and update accordingly.

4. Primary transition lead to contact secondary transition lead.

5. Begin collating information on identified pupils to share with the secondary school. Try using the '**information on pupils needing an enhanced transition**' form (section 7).

Term 4 of year 6:

6. Finish collating information on identified pupils using the '**information on pupils needing an enhanced transition**' form (section 7). Send forms to secondary schools once school places are known.

Term 5 of year 6:

7. For each vulnerable learner, meet with secondary staff and parents, as soon as possible, to agree a joint action plan for transition. Try using the '**enhanced transition action plan** (section 7) document. Supporting documents such as '**top tips for the transition of vulnerable learners**' (appendix b) and '**helpful transition documents for vulnerable learners**' (appendix a) and '**special educational needs support in Oxfordshire schools and settings**': Early years and primary and Secondary schools may assist in action planning.

Term 1 of year 7:

8. Build in time to reflect on the transition process between primary and secondary schools and plan adjustments for the following year.

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Transition process guidelines

Secondary settings

Whole school approach:

As a school, consider the provision for vulnerable learners at a universal, targeted and individual level. The educational psychology service's good practice guidance 'promoting wellbeing in schools' may be a useful tool to support reflection and planning.

Term 1 - 2 of year 6:

1. As early as possible, secondary transition lead to start making links with primary schools e.g. visits to school/inviting primary schools to attend events at the secondary school etc.

Term 5 of year 6:

2. Once the '**information on pupils needing an enhanced transition**' forms (section 7) have been received and discussed, begin bespoke transition plans.

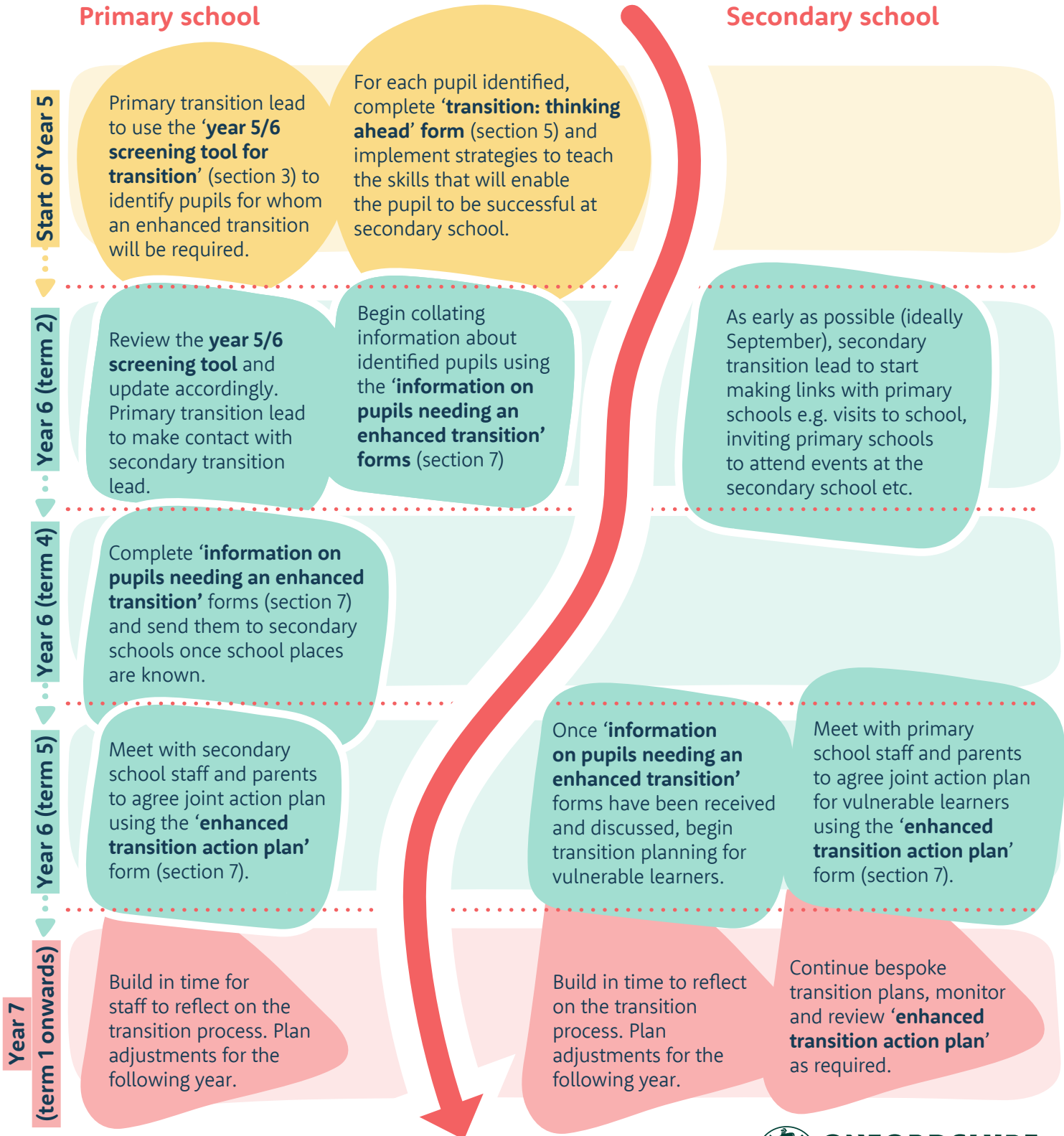
3. Plan meetings with primary staff and parents to agree a joint action plan for each vulnerable learner. Try using the '**enhanced transition action plan'** document (section 7). Supporting documents such as '**top tips for the transition of vulnerable learners**' (appendix b) and '**helpful transition documents for vulnerable learners**' (appendix a) and '**special educational needs support in Oxfordshire schools and settings**': Early years and primary and Secondary schools may assist with action planning.

Term 1 of year 7:

4. Continue bespoke transition plans; monitor, adjust and review **'enhanced transition action plan'** document (section 7) as required. Monitor individual learners and review support regularly, e.g. every 3-6 weeks.

5. Build in time to reflect on the transition process between primary and secondary schools and plan adjustments for the following year.

Timeline for transition



Checklist of duties for primary transition lead (Year 6 transition)

Name of secondary transition lead: _____

Year 5

- [ ] Use 'year 5/6 screening tool for transition' to identify pupils requiring an enhanced transition.
- [ ] Complete a 'transition: thinking ahead' form for each pupil identified.

Year 6, term 2:

- [ ] Make contact with secondary transition lead.
- [ ] Begin adding information about identified pupils to 'Information on pupils needing an enhanced transition' forms.

Key contacts and transition dates:

Secondary contact Name: School: Email: Phone number:	**Key dates:**
Secondary contact Name: School: Email: Phone number:	**Key dates:**
Secondary contact Name: School: Email: Phone number:	**Key dates:**

Year 6, term 4:

- [ ] Complete 'Information on pupils needing an enhanced transition' forms and send to secondary schools once school places are known.

Year 6, term 5:

- [ ] For each vulnerable learner, meet with secondary staff and parents and create an 'enhanced transition action plan'.

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Checklist of duties for secondary transition lead (Year 6 transition)

Name of primary transition lead: _____

Year 6, term 2:

- [ ] Start making links with primary schools.

Key contacts and transition dates:

Primary contact Name: School: Email: Phone number:	**Key dates:**
Primary contact Name: School: Email: Phone number:	**Key dates:**
Primary contact Name: School: Email: Phone number:	**Key dates:**

Year 6, term 5:

- [ ] Review 'information on pupils needing an enhanced transition' forms from primary schools and begin transition planning.
- [ ] For each vulnerable learner, meet with primary school staff and parents to create an 'enhanced transition action plan'.

Year 7:

- [ ] Continue bespoke transition plans, monitoring and reviewing 'enhanced transition action plans' as required.

Screening tool for transition

Year 5/6 transition screening tool: guidance note

It is not always apparent which children may benefit from an enhanced transition to secondary school. Many factors can impact a young person's sense of resilience and ability to cope in new environments. Points of transition can prove a challenge to young people for a number of reasons. Therefore it is helpful to consider all young people and their needs to understand who may require additional support. A screening tool has been developed to identify the key factors that might impact a young person's ability to manage a significant transition. Ideally all children in the year group would be screened and the most appropriate children would be agreed to receive additional consideration and support around their transition to secondary school. As a guide we would imagine around 10 per cent of children may require enhanced support.

Step 1: At the beginning of year 5, record the name of all the pupils in Year 5 in column A.

Step 2: These are factors that could be relevant for each child:

- Personal circumstances e.g. bereavement, family break up, attendance below 90 per cent, more than two moves of school/home, adopted, caring responsibilities at home.
- Low self-esteem/resilience (including children who find coping with challenges difficult).
- Friendship difficulties e.g. bullying, being bullied, on the periphery of social groups.
- Children with identified SEMH needs who receive school support, including those with behavioural issues and pupils who are emotionally withdrawn.
- Pupils who are coping well due to a bespoke arrangement in place that would need to be replicated at secondary school (e.g. 'meet and greet' has been required every morning and time with the caretaker twice a week).
- Pupils with SEND needs. It is expected that these children would have a pupil profile which outlines the exact strategies and level of support the child is requiring.
- Social care involvement and/or safeguarding concerns, including pupils with a TAF.

Step 3: Look at the information gathered, remembering that not all factors have equal weight. Decide on pupils requiring an 'enhanced transition'.

Step 4: Complete an 'information on pupils needing enhanced transition' form for each child who requires this pathway.

Step 5: Review screening tool in year 6, updating as necessary.

Transition: Thinking ahead

Pupil's views

Currently enjoys:

Looking forward to:

Worried about:

Skills

What skills does the pupil have now to help support them in the next phase?

What skills would it be helpful for the pupil to develop now to assist them in the next phase?

Support

What works well to support the pupil:

Key details/messages for staff in next phase:

Key actions prior to transfer:

Information on pupils needing enhanced transition

Full name:									
Current primary:				**Preferred scondary:**					
Gender:		**CWCF:**	Y/N	**EAL:**	Y/N	**PP:**	Y/N	**Service child:**	Y/N
SEN: (Please tick box)	Universal provision		SEN support			Additional funding:			
If SEN, what is the primary need?									
Home school communication: Key contact and most effective method:									
Attendance:						**Fixed term exclusions:**			
Number of school moves:						**EHA/TAF:**			

Strengths and successes (please detail):

Behaviour (Please circle most accurate):

Consistently good	Usually good	Some concerns	Serious concerns
Any comments:			

Social (Please circle most accurate):

Friendships	Very sociable	Some good friends	Friendships difficult
Teamwork	Outstanding	Average	Poor
Contribution to school life	Outstanding	Average	Poor
Sense of belonging in school	Outstanding	Average	Poor
Relationships with adults	Strong	Average	Weak
Any comments:			

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Information on pupils needing enhanced transition

Emotions (Please circle most accurate):

Self esteem	Good	Adequate	Low
Anxiety	High	Medium	Low
Independence in learning	Independent learner	Requires some support	High dependence on adult support
Resilience	Copes well	Usually manages	Finds it hard
Any comments:			

Personal circumstances (please detail):

Please comment on any circumstances noted in the screening tool

Interventions:

Are there any specific outcomes which the school is working towards? Please detail here:
Successful interventions/teaching strategies which are being used to achieve this:

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Information on pupils needing enhanced transition

Outside agency involvement (Please tick where appropriate)

	Name	Date		Name	Date
Virtual school for children we care for			LCSS		
CAMHS			SENSS hearing team		
SALT (speech and language therapy)			SENSS visual support team		
Educational psychology			SENSS physical disability team		
School medical services			SENSS C&I team		
Physiotherapy			Occupational therapy		
Other (please specify):					
Additional information about agency involvement? e.g., relevant documents in file, key contacts					

Form completed by: _____ Job role: _____

Contact phone number/e-mail: _____

Form sent to: _____ Job role: _____

Contact phone number/e-mail: _____

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Date shared with parents: _____

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Enhanced transition action plan

Forename:		**Surname:**		**D.O.B:**	
Current primary school:		**Secondary school:**			
Primary school key contact:					
Secondary school key contact:					

Pupil views

Key concerns?
What's helpful?

Parent views

Strengths?
Key concerns?
Possible support?

Strategies to support transition

Primary school actions:	Secondary school actions:

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Enhanced transition action plan

Settling into year 7

Desired outcomes:
Support:
Review date: **To be reviewed with:**

Pupil signature: _____ Parent signature: _____

Teacher signature (primary): _____

Teacher signature (secondary): _____

Date: _____

_____ 's passport

Name: Class:

Primary school:

What is important to me:

My strengths and interests:

Things I find difficult:

School staff can do the following things to help me:

How I communicate:

In the future I would like to...

The most important thing to know about me is:

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Example

John 's passport

Name: John Smith **Class:** Mrs Jones

Primary school: Oxfordshire school

What is important to me:

My mum, my dad and my brother. Swimming and football are important to me too.

Having familiar people with me so I don't get nervous.

My strengths and interests:

I am good at listening to my teachers and doing maths. I am good at sports, especially swimming. I also really like cooking.

Things I find difficult:

I find it hard to sit still in class. I find reading and spelling difficult. Meeting new people.

School staff can do the following things to help me:

Giving me more time to read and write. Letting me have breaks to walk around when I need to. Listening to me when I feel worried.

How I communicate:

I like talking but only with people I know well like my friends and family. I might be shy with new people.

In the future I would like to...

I would like to be a teacher to help children learn.

The most important thing to know about me is:

I am allergic to peanuts so have an EpiPen.

_____ 's passport

Name: **Class:**

Primary school:

What is important to me:

This could be people, hobbies, routines, favourite things.

My strengths and interests:

Anything you are good at or like doing at school.

Things I find difficult:

What are some of the challenges you face in school?

School staff can do the following things to help me:

What can the adults at school do to help you and your learning?

How I communicate:

How do you like to communicate your needs and opinions? You may like talking, signing, writing things down or drawing.

In the future I would like to...

What are your goals for the future? What would you like to do and achieve?

The most important thing to know about me is:

What is something very important for your new teachers to know about you?

_____ 's passport

Name:

What is important to me:

My strengths and interests:

Things I find difficult:

Teachers can help me by...

How I communicate:

In the future I want to...

The most important thing to know about me is:

Moving onto secondary school – pre questionnaire

Oxfordshire County Council would like to gather your views about the things that may help you to experience a positive transition to secondary school. The information you provide will be shared anonymously with local primary and secondary schools and will help them to improve the transition process.

Please tick all the things you would like to know more about

1. Getting to school	☐ Yes	☐ No
2. The number of different teachers I will have	☐ Yes	☐ No
3. Finding my way around school	☐ Yes	☐ No
4. Class work	☐ Yes	☐ No
5. Homework	☐ Yes	☐ No
6. Break times	☐ Yes	☐ No
7. Timetable/times of the day	☐ Yes	☐ No
8. Rewards and consequences	☐ Yes	☐ No
9. Equipment	☐ Yes	☐ No
10. Uniform	☐ Yes	☐ No
11. Canteen	☐ Yes	☐ No
12. Key adults e.g. form tutor and head of year	☐ Yes	☐ No
13. Lunchtime clubs and after school clubs/activities	☐ Yes	☐ No
14. Key dates e.g. half term and my start date	☐ Yes	☐ No

Continued

Moving onto secondary school – pre questionnaire

What are you looking forward to?
1.
2.
3.

Please tick all the relevant boxes

What are you worried about?	
1. Making new friends	☐ Yes ☐ No
2. Size of the school	☐ Yes ☐ No
3. The number of different teachers I will have	☐ Yes ☐ No
4. Getting lost	☐ Yes ☐ No
5. Consequences	☐ Yes ☐ No
6. A particular lesson	☐ Yes ☐ No

Please write down/draw anything else you are worried about
1.
2.
3.

Moving onto secondary school – post questionnaire

We would like to ask you about your transition to your new school and the things that were put in place to support you in preparing for secondary school. Your answers will be used to help your school get it right in helping future students prepare for secondary school.

Please answer the below questions either yes or no and then rate how helpful each item was for you:

Please tick all the relevant boxes		If yes was this helpful?
1. In year 6, did you look at the website of the secondary school you were moving to?	☐ Yes ☐ No	
2. Were you asked who you would like to be in a form/tutor with when you moved to secondary school?	☐ Yes ☐ No	
• If yes, did you get at least one of the people you had asked to be in your form/tutor group?	☐ Yes ☐ No	
• If no, was it explained to you why this couldn't happen?	☐ Yes ☐ No	
3. Where you asked to share information about yourself with your new secondary school?	☐ Yes ☐ No	
4. In year 6 were you given any of the following information about your new secondary school?		
• Photos or videos of the school	☐ Yes ☐ No	
• Photos of the canteen and menus	☐ Yes ☐ No	
• Photos or videos and information about key members of staff	☐ Yes ☐ No	
• Example subject timetable	☐ Yes ☐ No	
• Map of the school and information on how to find your way around	☐ Yes ☐ No	
• Letters or information from previous year 7 students	☐ Yes ☐ No	
• Times of the day e.g. tutor time, lesson times, break, lunch and home time	☐ Yes ☐ No	
• Photos/information about buses or transport to the new school	☐ Yes ☐ No	
• Information about the different subjects and lessons at the secondary school	☐ Yes ☐ No	
• Information about uniform	☐ Yes ☐ No	

Continued

Moving onto secondary school – post questionnaire

		If yes was this helpful?
4. In year 6 were you given any of the following information about your new secondary school? • Other (please tell us anything else you might have received)...	☐ Yes ☐ No	
5. What sort of visits did you go on to your secondary school?		
• Open evening	☐ Yes ☐ No	
• Virtual tour	☐ Yes ☐ No	
• Whole class visit	☐ Yes ☐ No	
• Small group visit	☐ Yes ☐ No	
• 1:1 visit	☐ Yes ☐ No	
6. Thinking about your visits to your new secondary school (both virtually or in person)		
• Was this the right amount of visits for you?	☐ Yes ☐ No	
• Too many visits for you?	☐ Yes ☐ No	
• Not enough visits for you?	☐ Yes ☐ No	
7. What did you do on your visits to your secondary school?		
• Take part in a class/year discussion	☐ Yes ☐ No	
• Take part in lessons	☐ Yes ☐ No	
• Meet staff who could help you	☐ Yes ☐ No	
• Visit different areas of the school	☐ Yes ☐ No	
• Meet your form/tutor group	☐ Yes ☐ No	
• Meet subject teachers	☐ Yes ☐ No	
8. In year 6, did you practice following a daily timetable that looked like one you were given in year 7?	☐ Yes ☐ No	

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Continued

Moving onto secondary school – post questionnaire

		If yes was this helpful?
9. In year 6, did you have assemblies about moving up to secondary school?	☐ Yes ☐ No	
10. In year 6, did your school talk to you about any of your worries about moving to secondary school?	☐ Yes ☐ No	
11. Did any staff from your secondary school come to your primary school in Year 6 to talk about transition?	☐ Yes ☐ No	

How prepared did you feel for your first day at secondary school?
(Please tick/circle on the scale here)

☐ **1.** Not at all prepared ☐ **2.** Not prepared ☐ **3.** Neither prepared or not prepared

☐ **4.** Prepared ☐ **5.** Very prepared

Please tell us anything else that was helpful for you in preparing to move to your new secondary school

Moving onto secondary school – parent questionnaire

Oxfordshire County Council would like to find out about your experience of secondary school transition as a parent/carer of a child who is now in year 7. Responses to this survey will be collated and used to inform best practice to help schools to improve their transition offer.

Your views will be shared anonymously with secondary schools and will inform the review of the current transition handbook, which provides guidance and tools for schools to promote a successful primary to secondary transition for all learners.

1. Name of school:

2. Your child's level of support when they moved from primary to secondary school:

☐ SEN support ☐ EHC plan ☐ Neither of the previous ☐ Don't know

3. Did you view the website(s) of the secondary school(s) you considered for your child?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, how helpful was this?

☐ Very helpful ☐ Somewhat helpful ☐ Neither helpful nor unhelpful

☐ Somewhat unhelpful ☐ Very unhelpful

4. Did you visit the secondary school?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, how helpful was this?

☐ Very helpful ☐ Somewhat helpful ☐ Neither helpful nor unhelpful

☐ Somewhat unhelpful ☐ Very unhelpful

5. Did your child visit their secondary school prior to starting?

☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, complete questions 6-10. If no, go to question 11.

Continued

Moving onto secondary school – parent questionnaire

6. How many visits did they go on?

☐ 1-2 ☐ 2-3 ☐ 3-4 ☐ 4+ ☐ Don't know

7. Was this the right number of visits for your child?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

8. How did the visits take place? (tick all that apply)

☐ Open evening/day ☐ Virtual tour ☐ Whole class visit

☐ Small group visit ☐ 1:1 visit ☐ Don't know

9. What did the visits involve? (tick all that apply)

☐ Take part in class/year discussion ☐ Take part in lessons ☐ Meet key staff members

☐ Visit different areas of the school ☐ Meet their form/tutor group ☐ Meet subject teachers

☐ Don't know

10. Which of these did you find most helpful?

11. Which of the following were you informed about to support your child's transition? (tick all that apply)

☐ Key information (daily schedule, class timetable, term dates, uniform, canteen menus, homework, details about public transport etc.)

☐ A list of key staff members (form tutor, teaching assistant, SENCO, staff from the school admin team)

☐ Details of main point of contact

☐ None of the above

12. Which of these did you find most helpful?

Continued

Moving onto secondary school – parent questionnaire

13. Is there anything else that you would have found helpful?

14. If your child has SEN, what measures were put into place to make sure their needs were met in their new school?

15. Was your child asked who they would like to be in form/tutor group with?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

16. Did they have at least one known person in their form/tutor group?

☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Don't know

17. Was there anything else that you or your child found particularly helpful for their transition to secondary school?

18. Was there anything that was not helpful (if anything)? Could anything have been improved?

19. Overall, how prepared do you feel your child was for their first day at secondary school?

☐ Not prepared at all ☐ Not prepared ☐ Neither prepared or not prepared

☐ Prepared ☐ Very prepared

Thank you for taking the time to complete this.

We'll be using this information to develop best practice in schools across Oxfordshire.

Helpful documents to support transition

The resources below are helpful to support the transition of vulnerable learners from primary to secondary school. Each resource has a brief description of its purpose, and guidance on where the resource can be accessed.

Parents

- **Moving on... suggestions for busy families with a child with special educational needs moving on to secondary school** – guidance for parents on supporting the transition of their child with SEN to secondary school.
  moving-secondary-school-parent guide.pdf
- **Transition to secondary school: a parent's guide** – information on supporting their child with transition to secondary school for parents.
  Newsletter (oxfordshire.gov.uk)
- **Oxfordshire County Council's moving on to secondary school: a handbook for parents/carers** – information about what to expect and how to support your child through transitions.
  Moving on to secondary school handbook
- **Young Minds: Transition tips for parents** – top ten tips to help parents support their child through the transition between primary and secondary school.
  top-ten-tips-for-parents.pdf (youngminds.org.uk)

Pupils:

- **Moving on: top tips for pupils moving on to secondary school** – guidance for pupils with SEN on supporting their transition to secondary school with clear, illustrated checklists.
  moving-on-top-tips-for-pupils.pdf (barnet.gov.uk)
- **Oxfordshire County Council's moving on: a workbook for year 6 pupils** – an activity book to complete with pupils about moving on.
  Moving on workbook
- **Oxfordshire County Council's one page profile** – to gain pupil voice and how they communicate with others.
  One page profile
- **Relationship circle** – identify who is important in a child's life and plan transition meetings and actions accordingly.
  relationship-circle.pdf (norfolk.gov.uk)
- **School concerns questionnaire** – a questionnaire to gain pupil viewpoints on their concerns about a new school.
  Information, Downloads and Resources | UCL Psychology and Language Sciences - UCL – University College London
- **Find Your Feet: Pupil Resource** – a booklet for pupils to help them prepare for secondary school, address their worries, and identify resilience factors.
  pupil-resource.pdf (youngminds.org.uk)

Helpful documents to support transition

Schools

- **Moving on: suggestions for busy teachers to support pupils with SEN moving from primary to secondary school** – guidance for staff on supporting pupils with SEN in their transition to secondary school with clear checklists for both primary and secondary phases. ED573482.pdf
- **Ofsted's Key Stage 3: good practice case studies** – best practice transition from KS2-KS3 from real school examples. Ofsted publication template (publishing.service.gov.uk)
- **Transition Partnership Agreement (TPA)** – document from Hampshire County Council to support the planning for effective transition for pupils with complex needs and supporting guidance. Transition | Children and Families | Hampshire County Council (hants.gov.uk)
- **Teach First cross-phase toolkit: Supporting smooth transitions for pupils between the phases of formal education** – a guide to support transition for pupils across phases of education. CROSS-PHASE TOOLKIT Supporting Smooth Transitions for Pupils Between the Phases of Formal Education - DocsLib
- **What is working and what is not working: for reviews** – a reflective tool for schools to review and improve transition and include the viewpoints of different stakeholders. what-is-working-and-what-is-not-working.pdf (norfolk.gov.uk)
- **BBC Teach: transitioning to secondary school** – website includes classroom resources to support transition and examples of transition stories from around the UK. Transitioning to secondary school - BBC Teach

Top tips for the transition of vulnerable learners

The following are effective strategies for transition identified by pupils and staff from primary and secondary schools in Oxfordshire in 2016 (IYFAP project data) and 2018 (Inclusion Conference data). A literature review was also carried out which provided additional support for some of the identified strategies.

Identification

- Primary school should identify their vulnerable learners and start to plan ahead in year 5.

Information sharing between schools

- Both schools have an identified transition lead who is given time in the spring and summer term to oversee the transition process.
- Primary schools need to communicate their wealth of knowledge with secondary schools, in a way that is **easy to interpret quickly and clear** regarding potential strategies to support the young person.
- **Consistent meetings:** regular, face-to-face meetings for primary and secondary school staff are more helpful than sharing documentation alone. The opportunity to discuss issues and ask questions is valuable.
- When sharing information remember to **include children who are managing well** at primary but for whom there are concerns for secondary school.

Relationship between primary and secondary schools

- **Identify key members of staff** to manage the transition process and make contacts.
- Establish, value and maintain **effective communication and personal links between the schools** throughout the year.
- **Understanding of school structure:** ensure the schools have an awareness of the structure of the different school settings their pupils are moving to or coming from.
- **Progression of curriculum:** it is helpful for there to be some overlap in work between primary and secondary school however care should be taken to ensure the secondary curriculum is novel and pitched at the right level. This will aid pupil motivation and progress.

Pupils relationship with new secondary school

- **Identify key staff:** a key staff member should be identified in the secondary school for vulnerable learners. There should be opportunities to develop relationships before transition.
- **Build relationship with key staff members face-to-face**
  - 1:1 meetings with tutors
  - Fun additional visit days such as summer schools
  - Secondary school staff visiting primary school
  - Home visits

Personalised planning for students

- Use **social stories.**
- Seeking activities linked to **pupils' interests**.
- Setting up buddy systems with older pupils.

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Top tips for the transition of vulnerable learners

Building peer relationships

- Structured and supported **social activities** on school visit days.
- **Sensitive seating** / grouping arrangements.
- **Activities set up in September/October of year 7** to encourage social interaction with suitable staff monitoring / support for vulnerable students.
- Close **monitoring of social times** in year 7.
- **Careful planning for tutor groups** with a friend in their class.
- **Buddy systems**.
- **Meeting their form group** before the start of year 7.
- Establishing smaller groups within forms, and the teaching of social skills, to **help children develop relationships** in their secondary school.

Pupil concerns

- Use a **worry box** in primary school.
- Give pupils a chance to **talk about things that worry them** with adults they trust.
- Give pupils a chance to **talk to adults from their new school** about any issues causing them concern. Managed through opportunities to meet key members of staff from the new school.
- Completing **meaningful transition booklets** with the child.
- Set up a **year 6 project around the new school structure and systems**, to reduce uncertainty.

Parental involvement

- **Make contact with parents early** on in the transition process, particularly for vulnerable learners.
- Ensure that parents are **involved in the information sharing** process and are invited to relevant meetings and spoken to by primary and secondary where necessary.
- Ensure that **links are made to key secondary staff** who can answer parent's questions and ease anxiety.
- **Parent evenings** should be arranged to help build the relationships between the parents and the school.
- **Manage parental stress / anxiety** – e.g. run parent workshops, provide bespoke support where needed.
- **Empower parents** to contact staff and establish effective communication.
- Involve parents closely in the whole process.
- **Consider specific family issues**, e.g. how to support parents with EAL / disability.

Support in year 7

- **Face-to-face training and discussion for staff** in specific strategies to support identified vulnerable pupils.
- **Check in with parents to ask their views** on transition and how well their child is settling in.
- **Monitor closely** (staff team meet and review every two weeks).

Top tips for the transition of vulnerable learners

- **Nominate a member of staff** for the vulnerable pupil who will take responsibility to monitor the situation and 'receive' any issues/concerns raised by others.
- Have **non-teaching staff available** all day in term 1 to intervene and support.
- Ensure a **warm, friendly welcome.**
- **Help pupils to find their way around**.
- Provide **help with homework**.
- **Allow some leniency in expectations** for homework and uniform in the first few weeks to help pupils settle in.
- **Ensure vulnerable students know where they can go to seek help**. Consider having staff available at lunchtimes (in classrooms) as some pupils find it hard to find staff after school (e.g. if they have to get the bus).
- **Call the primary school for further details/ support/advice**.
- Plan and implement **individualised support**.
- **Share all relevant information to support the pupil with all staff who need to know** – allowing staff the chance to discuss anything before the start of term.

Feedback

- **Evaluate the whole process** and develop an **action plan** for the following year.
- Gain feedback from **staff, pupils and parents** to continue to refine the transition process and ensure a positive experience for future students transitioning.

Frequently asked questions

1. What should I do if the pupil is not attending?

Every pupil is entitled to a secondary education. It is important that children not currently attending primary school don't miss out.

Include all pupils on the school roll in the usual transition process and consider any additional arrangements that will need to be made to include the child and their family. More bespoke arrangements may need to be made. School should notify the family of the deadline date for school applications and invite them to ask any questions they might have.

When a secondary school place has been allocated invite staff from the secondary school to review meetings in the summer term of year 6.

Further support can be accessed through the county attendance team attendance@oxfordshire.gov.uk

2. What should I do if the pupil is on a reintegration timetable?

Reintegration timetables should only be used as a temporary measure (for up to 6 weeks) to support the young person to build back up to being able to attend full time. It is helpful for a secondary school to know about any pupils who have received a reintegration timetable in years 5 and 6. The 'notification of a temporary reintegration timetable' form should be forwarded on to the secondary school for information along with the other records for the young person, but this issue should be flagged up to ensure that the secondary school is fully aware of the situation.

Where a young person is on a reintegration timetable in the summer term of year 6 the secondary school should be invited to attend review meetings and a clear joint action plan across the schools should be drawn up to support the young person in making a successful transition to secondary school. The young person and their family should be fully involved in drawing up the action plan.

3. Should I start transition in year 5?

Transition works best when it is planned in detail and when there is sufficient time for preparation at primary school, information sharing and planning to meet needs at the beginning of year 7. Beginning to consider transition in year 5 is a very helpful opportunity to ensure a smooth, planned process. Ideally, the year 5 teacher will be supported to evaluate his/her class and consider any concerns/issues for transition in the summer term. A plan can then be developed to support any vulnerable pupils. The plan could include developing pupils' skills in key areas, seeking support to clearly identify any unmet SEN and successful strategies to support the young person, addressing any worries that children may have expressed and working with the young person's family to plan a smooth route from year 6 to year 7.

4. What do I do if a pupil has an EHCP?

The SENDCO in the school should begin to consider transition in year 5 for all pupils with EHCPs. The issue should be addressed in the year 5 annual review and a plan developed for the remaining time at primary school. The information submitted at the year 5 review will often provide the documentation that secondary schools consider when exploring whether they can meet a pupil's needs, so it is helpful if the information is thorough and up to date.

The year 5 annual review is a good time to ask parents for their views regarding secondary transition and encourage them to visit schools

Frequently asked questions

in preparation for making their choice in the autumn term. Visiting in year 5 allows more time if they would like to see the school on more than one occasion, or speak to certain members of staff. It is helpful if the annual review is held before the May half term in year 5 to allow parents sufficient time to consider their options.

Indications of parental preference should be included in the school's report of the year 5 annual review or the parents can write a separate letter to the SEN officer. SEN officers need to know parental preference for secondary school place by July in year 5.

All parents will need to inform the SEN officer of their preference for secondary school and apply for a school place following the usual admissions procedure as well.

EHCPs will be updated stating the allocated school for year 7 by 15 February in year 6. The usual admissions process will inform parents of their child's secondary school by 31 March in year 6.

It is helpful to hold a transition meeting/ annual review early in the summer term of year 6, inviting relevant staff from the secondary school to attend. The meeting can be a helpful forum to discuss any concerns and gain better understanding of the arrangements at the secondary school. It can also support effective working relationships between both schools and the family and allow an opportunity for a personalised transition programme to be developed.

All the details in point 3 above are particularly pertinent for young people with an EHCP.

5. What should I do if we have been managing the pupil's SEN well at primary school, but we are worried how they will manage at secondary school?

There are many students with SEN whose needs are well met at primary school where there are concerns how they will manage within the larger, more independent nature of a secondary school. It is helpful to start planning early for these students.

Every pupil is different so it is important to identify the student's strengths and the specific concerns around secondary school for them. An early planning meeting in year 5 between school staff and parents can explore the situation and consider skills that can be taught throughout Years 5 and 6. Progress can then be monitored regularly to give the secondary school clear information in the summer term of Year 6. Early discussions with secondary school staff in the summer term of year 6 can support a transition plan for the young person, ensuring everyone has full, accurate, up to date information.

6. What implications does GDPR have for transition to secondary school?

All schools should have a privacy notice (and some may also have a data sharing protocol) that describes how the school keeps its data secure and who it may share information with. The privacy notice needs to state that a child's records will be passed on to the receiving school via an appropriate, secure system. The privacy notice needs to meet GDPR principles, have a lawful basis and take care of special data.

Frequently asked questions

7. What does the process look like for children going to independent schools or schools outside Oxfordshire?

The guidelines have been produced to encourage best practice. Any receiving school would value the information you have collected and should be keen to engage in liaison to ensure smooth transition for all pupils.

8. I have received different transfer forms from two secondary schools – which do I complete?

It would be helpful to liaise with both schools to encourage them to adopt the same processes and forms to assist primary schools and ensure they receive the most helpful information. The forms included in the transition handbook have been developed in collaboration with primary and secondary schools and should provide all the information required to support transition.

9. A pupil only joined our school a week ago. I have very little information about them.

It will be important to link with the family and gather information about their educational history, gathering records from previous schools and compiling as full a picture as possible for a successful secondary transition.

10. What is enhanced transition?

All pupils will benefit from carefully planned transition support. For some pupils, they will require an 'enhanced' transition that considers their specific circumstances. In these cases staff from the primary and secondary school will work together to take account of parent and child views to plan a supportive transition process which might include additional visits, personalised documentation, identifying key adults, time to meet key staff at the receiving school and explore questions/areas of concern, support to identify things the young person can look forward to when they join the new school and many other ways to ease the transition to the new setting. Essentially an 'enhanced transition' provides something additional to what is available for the majority of young people, designed specifically for the young person in question. It may begin in the summer of year 6 and continue through into the autumn term of year 7.

11. When will year 6 pupils find out the name of their secondary school?

The admissions team will inform parents of their child's secondary school by 31 March in year 6.

12. In year 6 when should schools start transition work?

Good practice would suggest staff across both schools beginning to plan for transition together from term 5 with transition work/visits/support running through term 6 of year 6.

13. If a pupil has transitioned successfully, how will we know?

Some indicators that a pupil has settled well into their new environment would include:

a) Their attendance levels

b) Their engagement in lessons, learning and general activities

c) Their social inclusion (developing friendships)

It would be good practice to ask students how well they feel they have settled into secondary school and if they continue to have any concerns. As part of the transition handbook,

Frequently asked questions

there are surveys developed to gather pupil views about transition in year 6 and year 7 (see pages 20 and 22). There are also surveys to gather parental views included in the handbook (see page 25).

For individual pupils, specific transition outcomes can be considered and agreed during the action planning stage in term 5 of year 6.

14. How do primary schools find out the transition arrangements made for pupils by secondary schools (these are mainly shared with parents)?

The transition leads at the primary and secondary school should liaise to ensure arrangements are clearly communicated across schools (please see checklist of duties for transition leads in the handbook, section 4)