

# SEND Transition in Education Partnership (STEP) Guidance

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# **SEND Transition in Education Partnership (STEP)**

## **Guidance**

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## **Introduction:**

The move from primary school to secondary school is an exciting and apprehensive time for all children. However, for those with Special Educational Needs, it can be a time of high anxiety, after being settled within a smaller primary school setting. Sometimes these fears can be around their access to lessons and learning, but often they can be around the bigger picture of how to find their way around the building, whether they will make friends, and knowing which teachers they should speak to if they have any worries.

This phase of 'transition' is important for the children, the parents/carers and the school. In Telford and Wrekin, it has been raised as a matter of importance through conversations with schools and at the SENCO termly forums. Our research shows that 45% of all permanent exclusions, and 43% of all fixed period exclusions can be accounted for by children with Special Educational Needs. The number of permanent exclusions in the West Midlands area is high when compared to other regions, and the number of exclusions in secondary settings is significantly higher than that in primary. This difference is even more noticeable with regards to fixed period exclusions, where primary schools' rate of fixed period exclusions is 1.4% and secondary is 10.13%. There is a significant increase in fixed term exclusion rates between the ages of 11 and 12, around the time when children are moving on to the next phase of their education (DfE, 2019).

Throughout our engagement in reaching these transition guidelines, we have spoken to parents of children with Special Educational Needs through the Telford PODs group (Parents Opening Doors), who agree that good transition is of paramount importance to children and young people with additional needs, whether they are moving onto a mainstream setting or a specialist setting.

Whilst this document has been created with SEND pupils in mind, moving onto a Secondary setting, much of the guidance is good practice for all pupils and can be adapted for different age groups.

## **Process:**

Schools from Telford and Wrekin Local Authority were asked to take part in a transition project in April 2019. The aim was to create guidance for best practice in transition for SEND pupils, in their move from year 6 to year 7.

The schools involved in the process were:

- Shortwood Primary School
- Charlton School
- The Linden Centre
- Haberdashers' Abraham Darby
- Sir Alexander Fleming Primary School
- John Randall Primary School
- Teagues Bridge Primary School
- Hadley Learning Community Primary
- Hadley Learning Community Secondary
- Holy Trinity Academy
- Donnington Wood Junior School
- Southall School

### April 2019

- Initial meeting to look at current strengths in transition across the borough and opportunities for improvement. The main findings were that good communication is a barrier to successful transition and there is a need to standardise practice, particularly for secondary schools with several feeder primaries. Participants were grouped into parties involving primary, secondary and special school colleagues.

### July 2019

- This was a follow up meeting to review our procedures so far. We welcomed PODS to the group and used our work to begin to develop the Must, Should, Could guidance. Following on from this, the guidance was shared with the SENCO forum to gather ideas from across the authority.

### October 2019

- A final meeting to finalise the guidance and begin to collate associated resources.

### Summer 2020

- Collation of resources and appendices to support the transition document

### Spring 2021

- Draft document sent to schools for initial use and feedback

### Proposed for Autumn 2021

- Feedback collated and final document produced for publication

## **Case Studies**

### **Focus: The quality of Year 7 writing.**

#### **What we hoped to achieve and why:**

Concerns related to the apparent 'drop' in standards in terms of writing when children transferred. In many cases written work in year 6 was far better than what is produced in year 7: content and presentation.

It was felt that year 7 teachers would benefit from year 6 writing examples for each student and could then refer to these with the students upon transfer.

#### **A summary of what we did:**

Primary and secondary teachers worked together to produce a writing task for year 6 to complete. Subject, time, amount of support and so forth were all agreed so that secondary teachers would have a clearer idea of what each student could produce. The writing was completed in the primary setting and used as a baseline alongside a reading and spelling assessment. Secondary staff observed English teaching in the primary setting.

#### ***Review:***

##### **What worked well?**

This worked well in terms of understanding where students were working rather than just examples of writing with no knowledge of support etc. Visiting primary schools to see how English is taught is also very informative.

##### **Even better if:**

In future, we would carry out the writing assessment in transition week so there is time to discuss any concerns with the primary school. This could be developed to create a student portfolio which includes unaided writing and a pupil profile. Moving forward, it may also be useful to consider a task which could be used as a starting point for further work at the beginning of year 7.

**Focus: Raising SENCo awareness and understanding of the SEND provision available to primary pupils when they transition to secondary school.**

**What we hoped to achieve and why:**

Many parents are asking for advice and support when thinking ahead to transition to secondary school. In order to offer accurate information, time was requested to meet with local Secondary SENCo(s) with the opportunity to see, first hand, the SEND provision available (mainstream lessons and / or the SEND unit).

**A summary of what we did:**

Dates and times were arranged to visit the secondary setting: agenda discussed and pre-arranged. Planned visits did not go ahead for various reasons.

***Review:***

**What worked well?**

A working partnership with a local primary school and SEND co-ordinator was started. Staff are continuing to work closely together.

**Even better if:**

The planned visits could be re-organised and go ahead. These are required to increase knowledge and understanding of how SEND is supported / provision offered at a mainstream secondary school level. Transition and partnerships need to be prioritised at a strategic level for them to be successful.

## **Focus: Successful transition from the whole family point of view.**

### **What we hoped to achieve and why:**

Many children / students find transition challenging: even more so if they have additional needs. Provision to support seems to be inconsistent and experiences of the pupils varied. It was hoped that some form of agreed standardisation of procedures could be developed ensuring that children and families were at the centre of provision.

### **A summary of what we did:**

A variety of support materials were used to support best practice in transition.

This included:

[STARS \(Appendix I\)](#)

Flying Start: School Transition and Resilience Training – The Linden Centre (Appendix II)

[Moving On top tips \(Appendix III\)](#)

In one school a questionnaire was developed for year 6 pupils to complete; questions were based on discussion with the pupils and concerns raised. The information was collated and then worries were addressed through PSHE sessions.

### **Review:**

#### **What worked well?**

Involving the pupils in early discussion related to their concerns and basing the 'work' on best practice resources. Secondary and primary colleagues collaborating and having quality time assigned.

#### **Even better if:**

- ❖ Transition visits targeted the areas identified: Covid precluded this in many cases.
- ❖ A parent focus was incorporated.
- ❖ The students were 'followed up' and issues revisited in year 7



## **Focus: Clarity of information sharing between primary and secondary settings.**

### **What we hoped to achieve and why:**

There is great inconsistency between settings in terms of information passed on. In some cases information is very sparse and, in other cases, files and files. Formats are diverse which can make accessibility time consuming: especially where there are several feeder schools.

The hope was to develop a passport / profile document that is easy and to the point and standardised between schools.

### **A summary of what we did:**

The group met together to discuss information required, collate and create a single page profile and provision map.

Pupils passport examples included a secondary version from Holy Trinity Academy (Appendix IV), the Autism Education Trust pupil profile (Appendix V) and a Pupils Passport developed by Hadley Learning Community across all year groups (Appendix VI).

### ***Review:***

#### **What worked well?**

A standardised format was produced.

#### **Even better if:**

Time, as a group, had been allocated to evaluate the impact and usefulness from the perspective of all staff. E.g. for all secondary teachers? The format could then be edited and redrafted as appropriate. This could be developed and adapted over time to meet ongoing needs. This format could be reviewed to see if it is suitable for a standardised format across Telford and Wrekin.

## Transition for SEND pupils from Primary School to Secondary School

<b>MUST</b>	<b>SHOULD</b>	<b>COULD</b>
<p>As a minimum, all schools <b>must</b> ensure the following happens for pupils with SEND during transition:</p>	<p>School <b>should</b> be trying to ensure the following during transition:</p>	<p>Schools <b>could</b> implement the following during transition:</p>
<p>There is an agreed paperwork format between schools. Any graduated approach paperwork and support information is passed onto Secondary Schools by the end of the summer. This is possible prior to children starting their attendance at Secondary School, as long as the new setting has been confirmed.</p> <p>EHCP applications should ideally <i>not</i> be made in Year 6, purely for transition purposes, only if there is an urgent and historical concern. Good practice is for the primary school to support a secondary school in this process, so that advice and guidance is ‘secondary’ relevant. In the meantime, ISF funding should be considered to support a child.</p> <p>Secondary teachers to visit primary settings to see a child in their current environment. This could involve transition leads, SENCos or teaching assistants (if known). This can build a positive relationship with the child, but can also help secondary schools better understand the needs and appropriate expectations for an individual pupil.</p> <p>Primary staff to have a clear understanding of secondary settings in the local area. This can then inform conversations with parents, but also allow children to ask questions if they need to.</p> <p>Primary children with SEND must have the opportunity to meet with their form tutor, or a key person from the school, prior to attending their new setting in September. This could form part of the standard secondary transition dates.</p>	<p>Primary schools to provide examples of free writing. The focus and format to be decided between the schools (particularly important where there are several feeder schools). This will help with the agreed expectations and judgements of pupils’ work, and identify inconsistencies in pupil performance post transition.</p> <p>Agreed sharing of work or working projects across schools, with the goal of reducing unnecessary paperwork. For example Kensuke’s Kingdom mini project or Voice 21 which is based on the book ‘The Island’. <a href="#">Voice 21 – The national oracy education charity.</a></p>	<p>Year 6 teacher and/or SENCo to attend open evenings or transition events to ensure they have a good understanding of schools for parental enquiries. Encourage parents to opt for local schools and local provision where possible as this is better for children’s community belonging.</p> <p>Coffee mornings in either settings for year 6/7 parents to meet staff informally.</p> <p>Hold a cross-phase event e.g. picnics, sports day or PE staff could help with Y5/6 sports day.</p> <p>Schools could try and coordinate their transition weeks.</p>

<p>Primary school teacher must speak to a child's form tutor or SENCo. Shared communication should also involve parents where possible.</p> <p>PSHE 'Moving On' sessions (or a similar transition/resilience programme) should be incorporated into the curriculum. Students need to feel a part of the transition process.</p> <p>If appropriate, ensure year 6 pupils are aware of their own needs, so as to take ownership of this in secondary school. For example, do they know they have an EHCP? Do they understand the importance of using an overlay? Do they have an awareness of what works for them?</p> <p>Primary school to produce a 'Pupil Passport' or 'One Page Profile' to pass on to secondary school this should include pupil and parent voice. All appropriate staff at the secondary school should have access to this, e.g. a lunchtime supervisor would need to know about behaviour concerns.</p> <p>Secondary schools must provide essential information to pupils, especially those with SEND. This can be in the form of a 'transition booklet' with information on times of the day, photographs of the school and teachers, a map, expectations, how to access the school website. Ideally a working document to be completed with the children on their transition days.</p> <p>Enhanced transition for vulnerable or at risk students. However, pupils should not miss fun and important end of term activities to accommodate this.</p> <p>The school's behaviour policy must reference good transition. Including an understanding of 'The Belonging Strategy'.</p> <p>Use of language in all documents should be child and parent friendly, avoiding complicated references.</p> <p>Parents and pupils must have a single point of contact at both schools.</p>	<p>Where appropriate, the school can offer out of hours transition visits – to see the school at a quieter time.</p> <p>The use of buddying to support those Year 7s that need it.</p> <p>New school to attend key meetings e.g. reviews/TAC, with parent's permission and providing the placement is confirmed.</p> <p>Secondary schools to provide a checklist of recommended 'skills' for primary children, e.g. most being able to use a pen, being able to read a map of the school, and understanding a timetable (flexibility may be needed from the secondary school that some children may still not be able to do this).</p> <p>Consideration of procedures at transition days, for example, by each child wearing the primary school uniform, this could create early segregation</p>	<p>Lessen the movement in classes in the first year, particularly for those with special needs.</p> <p>Keep class sizes small for those pupils with SEND that need it.</p> <p>Pupils from secondary schools to visit the primary schools to share their experiences.</p> <p>A student link e.g. a student in the secondary school who already has a specific need, who is willing to support a new pupil with a similar need.</p> <p>Transition assemblies in both settings</p> <p>Follow up meetings in September with previous teachers, particularly where there are concerns, but also to celebrate success and forge good relationships.</p> <p>Movement of teaching assistants across the settings to support transition process e.g. Year 6 teaching assistant working at the secondary school for a week/half term to help</p>
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<p>Information sheets to be provided for parents with contact names and emails. The information should include details of expectations from all parties.</p> <p>Tours of the school to be available both pre-application and after acceptance. Although attendance on the tour is the parents' responsibility, secondary schools need to offer it.</p> <p>Inclusive School Forum (ISF) information should be passed on and actioned between schools.</p> <p>Homework to be slowly introduced in Year 7, and differentiated to needs.</p> <p>There must be 'appropriate provision' within <b>each</b> classroom. Accommodation of SEND is the responsibility of <b>all</b> teachers.</p> <p>Any specialist resources (including supporting parents in securing transport arrangements for EHCP)/usual ways of working that are used in a primary school to support a pupil (e.g. overlays, additional time or a time out pass) must also be used in the secondary, regardless of whether a diagnosis or EHCP is in place.</p>	<p>rather than developing belonging.</p> <p>Use of the <a href="#">Autism Education Trust (AET) Toolkit transition guidance</a> to support pupils with Autism.</p> <p>Governors should be aware of the transition process, and parents should know who the SEND governor is and their responsibilities.</p>	<p>with settling in, or secondary teaching assistants shadowing Year 6 pupils in primary school for the end of the summer term.</p> <p>Secondary schools to have a summer school, especially for students who need extra transition support.</p>
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## Next steps:

- Based on our findings, the Telford and Wrekin SEND Transition in Education Partnership (STEP) recommend all schools use this document as a good practice tool.
- This document should be used to evaluate and improve transition for pupils with Special Educational Needs. It will be seen as a working document that can be reviewed and added to in order to reflect changes in educational practice, and to incorporate future projects and findings.
- The document will be sent out to all schools in the summer term 2021, in order to receive feedback and be reviewed and finalised in the autumn term of 2021. It is then expected that a review should take place in the autumn term of each year.

We aim to establish a regular meeting schedule for all schools who are interested in improving SEND transition practices, this will provide an opportunity to evaluate the ongoing effectiveness of the transition document, opportunities for networking between primary and secondary schools, and opportunities for further projects related to different ages and stages. Further projects could be:

- Age specific: Identifying best practice for transition from nursery into reception, or from secondary school into college.  
Or
- Subject specific: Including projects to support transition, such as reading jointly chosen books, or working through joint maths projects.  
Or
- Establishing a standardised record keeping portfolio to include pupil passports and examples of work.

With thanks to all the schools, parents and professionals who have been involved so far. If you would like any more information, or to get involved, please contact one of the team.

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## Appendices:

- Appendix I: STARS (Case study 3)
- Appendix II: Flying Start School Transition and Resilience Training (Case study 3)
- Appendix III: Moving on top tips for pupils (Case study 3)
- Appendix IV: Pupil passport example from Holy Trinity (Case study 4)
- Appendix V: Pupil passport example from AET (Case study 4)
- Appendix VI: Pupil passport example from HLC (Case study 4)

## Further resources:

- [Calm Brain](#)  
CalmBrain for Schools, manages behaviour and cooperation in the classroom. Creates calm. Stimulates focus. Improves Learning
- [Voice 21](#)  
Transform your teaching & learning through talk.
- Personal Provision Map

## References:

- [Autism Education Trust](#)
- [DfE \(2019\) Permanent and fixed period exclusions in England: 2017 to 2018](#)
- [Moving On: Top tips for pupils moving on to secondary school](#)
- [The School Transition and Adjustment Research Study \(STARS\)](#)



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