

So what can parent/carers do?

- Plan ahead and discuss transition at your child's annual review in year 5 /Year 9- its never too early to think about it, time goes very quickly!
- Gather as much information as possible about the different schools/colleges. This will hopefully enable you to reach an informed choice.
- The information that you could collect for transition includes:
 1. **The school /college prospectus**
 2. **Parent handbook**
 3. **A copy of the school's /college Ofsted report**
 4. **A copy of the school's /college policies and procedures (specifically their SEND offer, and behaviour policy), and any parents' comments on the school/college website.**

What parent carers can do continued.....

- Read these documents and makes notes of any queries.
- Try visiting in person a selection of schools /colleges and keep an open mind (you may have heard rumours – put them to one side whilst you visit). It may have been a school/college that you went to, or one that a friend's child had a bad experience with, but remember your main concerns will be for YOUR child and so much of the information you seek will centre on what each particular school /college can offer.
- See if you can see the school/college policies being put into practice during your visit.
- Request a visit in the school day hours, so that you get a good sense of what its really like (how busy the corridors are, how the students behave etc)
- Call the school before hand and ask for a meeting with the SENCo as part of your visit. If your child has an EHC plan, statement or is at SEN support, take a copy of the documents with you.

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- Read and talk through the SEN Policy – and remember there is no such thing as a silly question, so just ask.
 - Read and talk through the Behaviour Policy if applicable to your child and family situation.
 - Ask about the type of support/assistance that might be available for your child- you should note that support in secondary school and college is likely to be deployed differently than in primary school. Ask what it could look like for your child.
 - Ask about parent to school /college communication.



Things to consider before your visit

- Will you be taking your child with you?
- Do you want someone else to accompany you to take notes or just be there in support?
- When would you like to visit? We suggest going at different times of the day to get a real flavour for school/college life.
- It is unlikely you will be able to meet all of the staff involved in your child's life, but a good starting point is the Head of Year/Head of Curriculum SENCO.
- Write down all the things you are hoping to find in a secondary school/college, the things that you know will be beneficial to your child, the things that your child will be keen on, the things you're not sure of – this can help you to focus on making decisions. Sometimes it's easy to be swayed by something that in the long run might not play a key factor, e.g. a particular member of staff might leave before your child even gets there.



After your visit

- Discuss your thoughts and feelings about the school/college with someone else.
- Did you feel welcome at the school/college ? Did the children /young people seem friendly and helpful?
- Do you think your child would be happy at the school/college?
- Did the school /college answer all of your questions?
- Have you got further questions that you would like to ask the school/college?



Additional support for transitions from other services

If your child is on caseload with Ladywood or Behaviour Support Service, it is highly likely that service will accompany and possibly even provide additional transition days for your child at their new setting.

They are unlikely to have the same worker once they are in situ at their new setting, but a smooth handover will take place gradually over the transition period so that your child is familiar with and comfortable with their new worker when they start their new school.

IAS will also be happy to accompany you to follow up meetings once the child is in situ at school if there are any issues, and can provide advice and guidance on what you can expect on an individual basis at any point.

A one page profile is a useful tool.

The image shows a template for a one-page profile, enclosed in a dashed blue border. At the top left is an orange rounded rectangle. Below it is the text 'Great things about me...'. To the right of this text is a white rounded rectangle with a dashed border containing the word 'PHOTO'. Below the 'Great things about me...' text are ten yellow stars of varying sizes arranged in a cluster. To the right of the stars is a blue rounded rectangle with a white exclamation mark and the text 'What's important to me...'. At the bottom is a green rounded rectangle with the text 'What you need to know to support me...' and three faint circular patterns below it.



Sample questions

You don't have to ask them ALL or any; they are just for ideas

- What is the general structure and timetable for the school /college day?
- How many children would be in your child's class/lesson?
- How many members of staff would be in your child's class?
- How does the school /college support children with SEN, medical or care needs?
- Does the school /college have prior/current experience of working with others who have similar needs to your child?
- Are all areas of the school accessible to your child? (Are adaptations required?)
- How will your child be supported outside lesson times? (E.g. break time/ lunchtime/after school /college activities/sports events/trips away from school/college)
- How does the school manage behaviour that challenges – does the school /college policy match practice?

- How is bullying, taunting and teasing managed at the school/college ?
- How does the school/college help children mix and make friends? E.g. buddy systems in peer groups/forms.
- What extra activities does the school/college provide before school/college , break times, lunchtime and after school /college that your child could be involved in?
- What will be the transport arrangements?



Communication

- How does the school /college communicate with parents – do they use the key-working system having one point of contact? This can be especially helpful at secondary school/college , e.g. text/email updates, face-to-face discussions, regular telephone calls at the end of the week.
- Will the school/college expect you to be at the end of a telephone call and come to collect your child immediately? Discuss the implications of this whether you are a working parent or not.
- How can a parent make contact with a school/college ?

