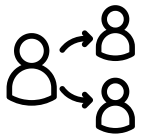


Smooth Transitions

9 Tips for Supporting Year 6 to 7

Transitioning from Year 6 to Year 7 is a significant step for students, bringing excitement but also challenges. Effective support can make a huge difference in helping students feel confident and ready. Below are nine practical tips for school staff to ensure a smooth transition.



Pass on What Works

Transitioning students benefit greatly when their new teachers understand what helps them succeed. Schools should ensure that key information about students' strengths, challenges, and effective strategies is passed on from primary to secondary staff.

- Gather key insights from primary teachers, SENCOs, and families about what has helped each student thrive.
- Focus on practical information: preferred learning styles, support strategies, social preferences, and emotional triggers.
- Ensure that vital information is shared effectively so students don't feel like they are 'starting from scratch'.



Make the Unfamiliar Familiar

A new school environment can feel overwhelming. The more students can become familiar with their new setting before they start, the more confident they will feel.

- Provide transition visits, taster lessons, or virtual tours to help students get a feel for the new environment.
- Use photos, maps, and videos to introduce key locations such as classrooms, canteens, and quiet spaces.
- Share a 'who's who' guide, introducing key staff members like form tutors, pastoral leads, and SENCOs.

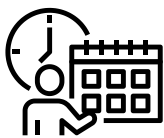
Smooth Transitions



Focus on Friendships

Social connections are a major factor in a successful transition. Helping students navigate new friendships and maintain existing ones can reduce anxiety and build a sense of belonging.

- Recognise that social shifts can be the hardest part of transition and provide support accordingly.
- Set up buddy systems or peer mentoring programmes to help students build connections early.
- Facilitate structured group activities in the first few weeks to encourage relationship-building in a low-pressure way.



Teach Key Routines

New school routines and expectations can be confusing. Explicitly teaching these routines helps students feel more in control and reduces anxiety.

- Help students understand and practise navigating timetables, changing classrooms, and managing their day.
- Make unspoken rules explicit—where to stand at break, how to queue in the canteen, and what to do if they're late.
- Offer practical support such as printed schedules, clear signage, and designated staff to assist in the first few weeks.



Support Emotional Readiness

Many students experience a mix of excitement and anxiety about the transition. Proactively supporting their emotional wellbeing helps them manage this change.

- Acknowledge that transition can be daunting, and create a culture where it's okay to feel nervous or ask for help.
- Teach self-regulation techniques such as deep breathing, sensory strategies, and positive self-talk.
- Ensure a trusted adult is available for regular check-ins, particularly for students who may struggle with change.

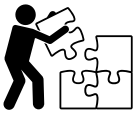
Smooth Transitions



Involve Families Early

Families play a crucial role in supporting transition. Providing them with clear information and involving them in the process ensures a smoother journey for students.

- Keep communication open with parents/carers, offering clear information about expectations and support available.
- Encourage families to discuss transition positively at home and involve them in preparation activities.
- Provide resources such as transition guides, school FAQs, or social stories for students who may need extra reassurance.



Build on Strengths

A successful transition isn't about starting over but rather building on what students already know and do well. Identifying strengths can help them feel more secure and motivated.

- Help students see transition as an opportunity to develop new skills rather than a complete reset.
- Identify and nurture their interests—encouraging participation in clubs or extracurricular activities can provide a sense of belonging.
- Celebrate small wins, such as successfully navigating their timetable or making a new friend.



Create a Safety Net

For some students, transition can be overwhelming, and they may need additional support structures in place. Ensuring they have a safety net helps them feel secure.

- Ensure students know who they can turn to if they feel lost, anxious, or overwhelmed.
- Offer safe spaces or quiet areas where students can go if they need time to regulate.
- Monitor students who may be more vulnerable and provide check-ins in weeks 2–6 when challenges often arise.

Smooth Transitions



Think Long-Term

Transition is a process, not a one-time event. Supporting students beyond the first few weeks ensures they continue to feel settled and succeed in their new school.

- Recognise that transition is not just about the first day or week—it takes time for students to settle fully.
- Maintain links with primary schools into the autumn term to check on students who may need additional support.
- Keep reviewing and adapting support strategies as students grow into their new environment.



Supporting Year 6 to 7 transition requires a proactive, empathetic approach. By focusing on relationships, routines, and emotional readiness, we can help students step into secondary school with confidence and resilience.