



PARENT / CARER

TRANSITION

GUIDANCE

TOOLKIT

Parent/Carer Guidance

STRUCTURE

- Multiple teachers instead of one main teacher
- Moving between classrooms
- A larger, busier environment

LEARNING

- More subjects (e.g. science split into biology, chemistry, physics)
- Homework becomes more regular
- Greater expectation of independence

ORGANISATION

- Following a timetable
- Packing and keeping correct equipment and books
- Managing time between lessons

SOCIAL CHANGES

- New friendships and larger peer groups
- Mixing with older students
- More independence at break and lunchtime

WHAT MIGHT CHANGE FOR MY CHILD AT SECONDARY SCHOOL

CONTACT

- Less direct communication with teachers
- You may need to contact subject teachers via email or school systems

INDEPENDANCE

- Your child will need to take more responsibility
- You move from "doing for" to "supporting and guiding"

MONITORING FROM A DISTANCE

- Checking homework (not managing it fully)
- Talking regularly about school rather than relying on teacher updates

NEW COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

- Apps or online portals for:
- Homework
- Behaviour updates
- Attendance

WHAT MIGHT CHANGE FOR ME AT SECONDARY SCHOOL

STAFF & PASTORAL STAFF

- Who will be my child's main point of contact (form tutor / Head of Year)?
- How often do tutors check in with students?
- What wellbeing and mental health support is available?
- How are friendships and social issues supported?
- How do staff build relationships with children early on?

SEND

- How are SEND needs identified and shared when students start?
- How do you support anxiety, behaviour, or emotional needs?
- Is there a safe space or support available when needed?
- How do you keep parents updated and involved?
- How do you help SEND students become independent?

WHAT SHOULD I ASK AT OPEN EVENINGS ?

BEHAVIOUR AND SCHOOL CULTURE

- What are your behaviour expectations?
- How do you manage low-level disruption or bigger issues?
- How do you recognise positive behaviour?
- How inclusive is the school for all learners?

COMMUNICATION

- How will I be kept informed (apps, email, meetings)?
- How often will I receive progress updates?
- Who do I contact if I have concerns?
- How quickly should I expect a response?

TRANSITION SUPPORT

- What transition support is in place (visits, induction days)?
- How do you support children who are anxious about the move?
- Is there extra transition support for SEND students?
- Do staff visit primary schools before September?

PRACTICAL QUESTIONS

- What are class sizes in Year 7?
- How is movement between lessons managed?
- What support is available at unstructured times (break/lunch)?
- What are expectations for uniform and equipment?

TALK ABOUT CHANGE

- Have open, positive conversations about what secondary school will be like
- Acknowledge worries (getting lost, making friends, homework)
- Reassure them: everyone else is new too

BUILD FAMILIARITY

- Attend open evenings and transition days
- Look at maps/photos of the school together
- Practise the journey if possible

This reduces the “unknown,” which is often the biggest worry.

BUILD INDEPENDANCE

- Practice the journey
- Packing their own school bag
- Organising homework
- Getting ready in the morning
- Keeping track of belongings (PE kit, planner, etc.)
- Small steps now = big confidence boost later

SUPPORT SOCIAL SKILLS

- Talk about making new friends and keeping old ones
- Practise simple social strategies:
 - Joining conversations
 - Asking to sit with someone
 - Handling disagreements

BUILD CONFIDENCE

Encourage your child to:

- Ask for help when needed
- Speak to teachers if unsure
- Understand their own needs (especially important for SEND)

EXTRA SUPPORT

- Talk through routines step by step (e.g., moving between lessons)
- Use visual supports or checklists if helpful
- Practise “what to do if...” scenarios:
 - “What if I feel overwhelmed?”
 - “What if I don’t understand something?”

PREPARE FOR LEARNING

CHANGE

- Talk about having different teachers and classrooms
- Encourage resilience if work feels harder
- Build simple study habits (reading daily, completing tasks independently)

ONLINE & SOCIAL EXPECTATIONS

- Discuss phones, social media, group chats
- Set clear, realistic boundaries early
- Talk about kindness and staying safe online

HOW CAN I HELP TO PREPARE MY CHILD FOR SECONDARY?

Year 6-7

Home Preparation Checklist



Practical

- Buy and label uniform and equipment
- Check school rules and expectations
- Set up school apps/logins
- Know the timetable (when available)

Organisation skills

- Practise packing school bag
- Create a homework routine/space
- Order an alarm clock
- Checklist for belongings

Travel and Safety

- Practise the journey
- Discuss road safety and safe behaviour
- Create a plan for if something goes wrong



Emotional Preparation

- Visit the school (if possible)
- Find family/friends that have experienced transition recently
- Discuss who they can talk to if worried

Independence Skills



- Give time organisation tasks to build skill
- Let them solve small problems themselves



Health and Wellbeing

- Ensure good sleep routine before term starts
- Talk about friendships and peer pressure
- Take steps in balancing screen time



Signposting for families

Signposting for families :

- <https://nottalone.org.uk/>
- Nottingham City Autism Team: <https://padlet.com/grotesquewondermotors/transition-support-family-resources-coy1gbq0myi96yod>
- Barnardo's Support – transition booklet <https://educators-barnardos.org.uk/uploads/transition-guide-stepping-into-secondary-school.pdf>
- Young Minds Transition Support
<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/blog/helping-your-child-manage-the-move-from-primary-to-secondary-school/>
- <https://www.mentallyhealthyschools.org.uk/resources/>
<https://www.teenhealth.org.uk/stories/moving-to-a-secondary-school/>
- <https://www.annafreud.org/schools-and-colleges/>
- <https://www.scope.org.uk/advice-and-support/storybooks-featuring-disabled-children>
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ACJln68IUjE> - Young Minds Parent Support
- <https://www.annafreud.org/schools-and-colleges/resources/moving-up-the-transition-to-secondary-school-animation-teacher-toolkit/>
- Early Help Parenting Offer
- Early Help Family Support

References

Nottingham City Transition Research April 2026

Nottingham City Transition Project (2023-2025)

The School Transition and Adjustment Research Study (STARS) UCL :

<https://www.ucl.ac.uk/brain-sciences/pals/research/clinical-educational-and-health-psychology/research-groups/school-transition-and-adjustment-research-study-stars>

Camden Learning. (n.d.). Say hello, wave goodbye: Good practice guide for schools. Camden Council. <https://camdenlearning.org.uk/transition/>

Created by Nic Mills and Dr Sandra Kempzell