

North Lancashire Directions Group Transitions to High School Newsletter

As a parent to a young person moving to high school, the first thing you need to do is breathe. Most parents feel anxious about this next step, this is very common. You will have lots of questions and your young person will have lots of questions too. (See top tips).

Whichever primary and secondary school you have, they will have done this many times before so will have processes in place to support you and your young person. However, due to COVID, last year was the first-time things were a bit different. I expect there will be similar strategies in place this year which may mean many activities will be virtual and that is ok. Please be assured that there is support out there for this time. (see below)

Transition Planning

Transition planning meetings usually start around Easter time when staff from the high school meet virtually / in person with primary schools to talk about the students they will meet in September. These meetings are just for school staff, but you should have opportunity to share your views also. If you have an EHCP (Education Health and Care Plan), SEN Support Plan or Individual Support Plan, you will hopefully have an additional meeting before the summer to plan the transition for your young person to make sure it's a smooth process for all concerned.

It's vital that your primary school have all the strategies currently being used recorded and passed on, including any access to TA's or support staff in unstructured times even if your child doesn't access them often. That strategy is in place for a reason. Any strategies that have helped and any flash points during the school day are useful bits of information for the high school. For support with this, SENDIAS are able to advise and support families accordingly.

Key timings

If you are happy with the offer you don't need to confirm their place unless you are contacted by the school directly. Please respond if they contact you.

If the offer is not for a preferred school or academy this is because other applicants had higher priority within the determined admission arrangements for that or those establishments. If you applied late – after the statutory closing date on 31 October 2020 – this may have reduced the chance of a place being offered at some establishments.

To explore alternative options, read our information about appeals and reserve lists: <http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/schools/appeal-against-an-admission-decision>

You are urged to access the reserve list and appeals processes as soon as possible. Please note that the offer situation does change for many families as the process rolls forward through reserve list and appeals processes.

Please note you must confirm that you want your child's name on reserve lists for other schools and academies and appeals information by Friday 12th March 2021.

If you have made alternative arrangements for your child's education please contact the Area Education Office as soon as possible. This will allow any places which become available to be offered to other families who are on reserve lists.



If you need any further information or advice please contact your area education office: <http://www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/schools/area-education-offices>

Reachout ASC

Reachout ASC have written a blog post on transitions for autistic pupils here <https://reachoutasc.com/what-makes-transition-work-for-asc-pupils/>

Top tips

1. Write a list of all your questions and get your young person to do the same. Use whatever communication style they feel most comfortable with. It could be drawing, writing, or talking to you about it.



2. Do your research. All high schools have a website and most have Facebook pages too.



3. Your high school will send you information by post/email about any transition sessions, what to expect when term starts in September, uniform and equipment requirements, term dates and usually lots of permission letters for various things.



4. See the NLDG Top tips for transition to high school guide.

5. Sign up for the Transition to high school course from Trinity Snap and Lancashire SENDIAS by emailing trinitysnap17@gmail.com for the 3 virtual sessions ASAP!

Support

SENDIAS - For general information about SEND or to find out if the service can help you contact:

Tel: 0300 123 6706

Monday to Friday 9am to 5pm

Email: information.lineteam@lancashire.gov.uk

<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/children-education-families/special-educational-needs-and-disabilities/help-for-parents-and-carers/information-advice-and-support/>

CONTACT - <https://www.contact.org.uk/advice-and-support/education-learning/extra-support-in-mainstream-schools/>



Top tips for transition to high school for pupils with SEND



- Ask the young person what they are worried about. Use this as the basis for any support strategies.
- **Home-school communication** - Is there a person the family can contact about any issues and what is the best way to get in touch? Please remember this is daunting for all parents of first-time year 7 starters. There may be a few hiccups to start with but hopefully your young person should settle in fairly quickly. If there are any major concerns, try to find a solution and contact the school where necessary. Please be patient and provide solutions if possible as you know your young person best, school will have strategies ready to go but it's important that young people are given the opportunity to try for themselves first to build their confidence, self-esteem and independent skills.
- **New environment** - maps, locker, bells.
- **New uniform** – Check the school policy and don't leave it too late to buy what you need. School shoes are an issue for some, buy early if possible so they have time to try them on and get used to them. LABEL EVERYTHING! and show them where their name is on their clothes so they can check theirs. I guarantee they will lose at least one thing including coat, calculator, drinks bottle & PE socks!
- **Start & end of the day** – How are they going to get to and from school. If starting a new routine, practice, practice, practice. Is there someone they can meet at school, on the way? DO they take a mobile phone? There are lots of apps you can install to track their journey, with their consent, if you need that extra reassurance.
- **Mobile phone rules** – Schools have different policies around phones in school, please make sure to check these out before they start.
- **Lunchtimes** – What happens at lunch? If they have packed lunch vs school dinners. Where do they go? Where can they go if they get overwhelmed?
- **New expectations** - break/lunchtimes, transition between classes
- **New vocabulary** - 'tutor group', 'head of year', subject-specific vocabulary.
- **Forgotten items** - What to do if they forget their PE kit, pencil case, lunch. Who can they ask to help?
- **Lost items** - What to do if they leave their PE kit, coat, lunch box etc and can't find it. Does it get taken to a specific area? If so, where and how do they access it?
- **Key people** - mentor, form tutor, SENCO, who/how to ask for help. Who can they talk to if they need help or advice and where are they? Show them who they are, where they can find them and write it in their planner.
- **Quiet area** - library, allocated area for stress management, safe base.
- **The timetable** - how to use it, formatted for the individual's understanding
- **Systems for organization** - diary, checklists for materials and books. Using a paperclip/bulldog clip to mark the right week in their planner helps.
- **Homework** – expectations and explanations. Consider if the young person will need help recording homework details in their planner. Asking the teacher or LSA/TA to check they have the right info recorded saves a lot of stress and worry. Does the school offer homework support sessions? Some young people have a mental barrier with completing homework at home. Can they access the library after school or have access to support during the week to help with homework issues?
- **Transition workbook** – addresses differences between primary and secondary school, and new experiences with a step-by-step approach. Things to look forward to, sports clubs, lunchtime clubs, new subjects, technical lessons, new friends and old friends.
- **Personal Profile** – written by pupil (with LSA/parent/teacher support), includes all the information new staff should know about the pupil. Please include positives as well as areas of need.

