

# *Children with Special Educational Needs*



## *Secondary School Transfer Guidelines (Mainstream Schools)*



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## Introduction

Transfer from primary to secondary school can be a particularly stressful and worrying time for children with special educational needs (SEN) and their parents<sup>1</sup>.

Both the child and the parents are likely to worry about the provision that the secondary school will make for the child's SEN and whether staff will understand the child's needs, about whether the child will be able to cope with the size and more complex organisation of the school and about whether the child will be able to cope with the social pressures from the other pupils. Fear that the child will be bullied is often foremost in their concerns.

These anxieties are often what drive parents to pursue special school placements for their children even where the child has a good capacity to progress in mainstream education.

Consequently, if a policy of inclusion is to be meaningful, it is important to ensure that transfer is managed so that parents and children build confidence in the secondary school and the child is prepared effectively for the transfer and the expectations of the new school.

<sup>1</sup> In this document the term parent includes all those with parental responsibility for the child or who care for him or her.

## Pupils with statements of SEN - Statutory Procedures

Transfer arrangements for children with statements of SEN are dependent on their statements being amended by the LEA to record the new school. Regulations require the LEA to issue these amended statements no later than 15 February in the year of transfer. At a formal level this is to allow parents time to appeal to SENDIST<sup>2</sup> against the LEA's decision, if they disagree, but it also reflects the time that should be made available to plan the transition and prepare the child for life in the new school.

In order to allow sufficient time for the LEA to prepare all the new statements and allow parents to express a preference for their choice of secondary school, primary schools must arrange an Annual Review before 15 October in Year 6 to consider and make recommendations in relation to the child's needs following school transfer.

The review could take place in Year 5 (in fact, the DfES recommends this) but it would seem unwise to hold it too far in advance of transfer because the secondary school will seem even more daunting to a child in Year 5 than to one in Year 6.

At the review, the parents should be invited to discuss their preference for their child's secondary education. However, even if their preference is for a special school placement, they must be advised to submit a choice of a mainstream secondary school, according to the normal procedures, so they are assured a place in a secondary school of their choice if the later decision is for the child to remain in mainstream education.

At the review, if they have not already received one, parents should be given a copy of the booklet *"Transfer from Primary to Secondary School: Guidelines for parents of children with Statements of SEN"*.

<sup>2</sup> Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal

Following the review and before the 1 November all the Annual Review documentation must be sent to the Pupil and Parent Services.

Proposed amended Statements will be sent to parents in December or early January when parents will be able to express a preference for the secondary school to be named in the Statement.

Subject to further discussion with the parents if necessary, the final Statement will be sent to the parents in January or early February. This will name the child's secondary school as agreed by the LEA's SEN Panel.

In most cases, the school named will be consistent with the parents' preference but, if the parents are dissatisfied with the school allocated, they may exercise their right of appeal to SENDIST at this point.

## Transition Planning

Once the secondary school has been named, the primary school SENCO should arrange a Year 6 Transition Meeting. This meeting may also function as a Statutory Annual Review and might usefully do so if the previous Annual Review took place in Year 5.

The Year 6 Transition Meeting, involving the parents and the child<sup>3</sup>, should be arranged so that the SENCO from the receiving school can attend.

Invitations should also go to the following so that they have the opportunity to attend, if they judge it appropriate:

- The school's educational psychologist.
- Other LEA specialist staff, if involved with the child.
- Any social worker involved, particularly if the child is looked after.

<sup>3</sup> The child should always be involved in at least part of the meeting unless there are very good reasons for not doing so.

- Any other specialists involved, such as:
  - Speech and language therapist
  - Physiotherapist
  - Staff from the Child and Family Unit at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital (particularly if the child has been diagnosed as having attention deficit hyperactivity disorder or an autistic spectrum disorder).

At least 4 weeks notice of the meeting should be given.

At the meeting a Year 6 Transition Plan should be prepared.

This should cover:

- Arrangements for pre-admission visits - additional to those normally arranged.
- Any SEN and Disability Act issues, such as steps that will be necessary to ensure full participation in School life (i.e. The 'reasonable adjustments' that may be necessary).
- Arrangements for staff training and awareness-raising.
- Medication arrangements.
- Identification of any risks and measures to avoid or minimise these.
- Arrangements for home/school communication.
- Support arrangements following transfer, such as the nomination of a 'key teacher' for individual support and monitoring.
- Arrangements for any continued involvement of the specialist agencies.
- Arrangements for parental involvement.

- Reports and other information to be made available to the secondary school.
- Arrangements for monitoring and review following transfer.

The Year 6 Transition Plan should be written up, if possible in the meeting, and circulated to parents, relevant staff in the two schools and the specialist staff from outside agencies.

The plan should be implemented with modifications agreed as and when it proves necessary.

## **Guidelines - Pupils at School Action or School Action Plus.**

The majority of children with SEN will not have a statement of SEN, nor should they. However, they may well still be vulnerable at school transfer.

Where children have special educational needs but do not have a statement of SEN there is no statutory requirement for an Annual review but, for some at least, a Year 6 Transition Review, as part of School Action or School Action Plus, would be good practice.

Identification of which children might benefit from a detailed planning review will be a matter for the school and parents to decide but where it is indicated it should follow a similar agenda to such meetings for children with statements and include the SENCO of the secondary school and specialists from the support services, if involved.

# Transition Planning Flowchart

**Jan in Y5  
to 15th Oct in Y6**

Annual Review held

Parents submit  
choice of  
mainstream  
secondary  
school

**Before  
1st Nov in Y6**

Papers sent to Pupil  
and Parent Services

**Dec or early Jan  
in Y6**

Proposed Statement  
issued

Parents express school  
preference

**Before  
15 Feb in Y6**

Final Statement  
issued

**March to May  
in Y6**

Transition plan meeting  
held - plan prepared  
and circulated

**Up to July in Y6**

Transition plan  
implemented in  
primary school

**From Sept in Y7**

Transition plan  
implemented in  
secondary school

# Year 6 Transition Plan

Name:

DoB:

Current School:

Named Secondary School:

1. Arrangements for Pre-Admission Visits:

2. Arrangements for parental involvement and home/school communication before and after transfer:

3. Support arrangements following transfer:

4. Arrangements for staff training and awareness-raising:

5. Medication arrangements:

6. Identification of any potential risks and measures to be taken to avoid or minimise them (Separate risk assessment should be carried out if necessary):

7. Arrangements for monitoring and review following transfer:

8. Any reasonable adjustments (ref. SEN and Disability Act, 2001) that will be necessary to support full participation in school life:

9. Arrangements for any continued involvement of the support services:

10. Reports and other information to be made available to the secondary school:

11. Signature

Signed: ..... Date: .....

Designation: .....



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