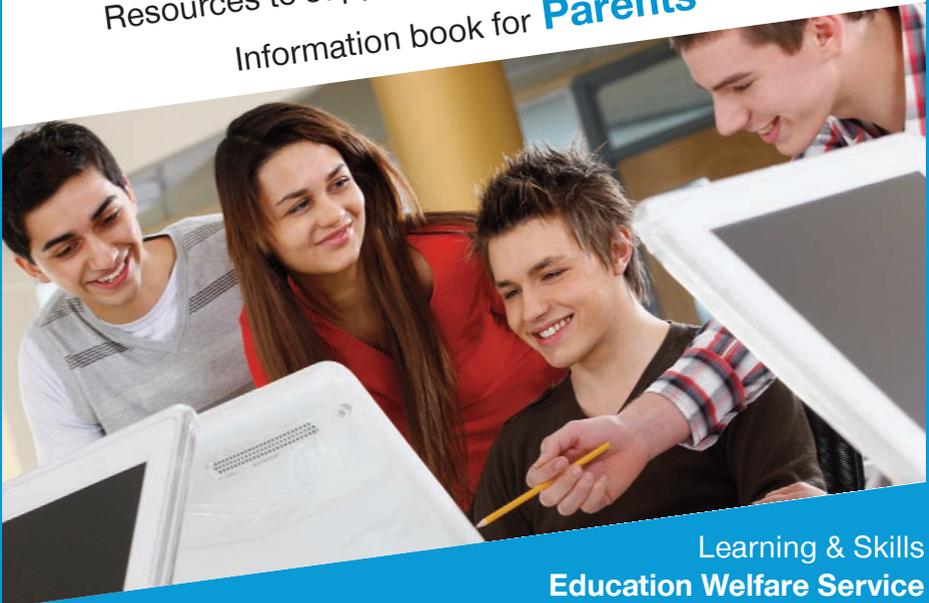




Managing change between schools

Resources to support schools, parents and pupils
Information book for **Parents**



Introduction



Your child will soon be transferring to a new school; this will involve changes to their social and learning environment. Pupils from Shropshire Schools have identified particular things about transferring between schools that they feel are important to them. The Education Welfare Service has designed this leaflet to help parents support their child through the process.

Preparing for the transfer

Change can be both an exciting time offering new opportunities and also a challenge to what we are used to. Consider the following as you and your child prepare for this change:

- Explain to your child the reason for the transfer.
- Identify with your child the positive aspects of the transfer.
- Visit the new school with your child.
- Identify any differences between the schools and the impact these may have on your child.
- Become familiar with the names of your child's teachers.
- Visit the new school with your child.
- Have a process in place before the transfer of how you can best communicate with the new school and who would be the best person for you to do this with.
- Be clear about the arrangements regarding what will happen if your child has to be sent home unwell during the school day.
- Gather all the information you can about the school's policies and procedures, including school rules.
- Help your child to meet with others who will be in the new school; the school your child is moving to will be able to help with this.

Following transfer

Most children transfer between schools very well and soon settle into their new routines. If small problems occur, it is much better if they can be dealt with as soon as possible and this will prevent them becoming a serious concern. Following the transfer to the new school consider the following:

- Keep all relevant school contact details close to hand. Always remember to make contact as soon as possible if your child is unable to attend, or if ever you or they have any concerns or worries.
- Remain aware of your child settling in. Keep communicating with them, asking specific questions about what has happened on a daily basis. Be specific and positive, for example ask:
 - “Who did you sit next to?
 - What lesson did you enjoy best?
 - What did you learn in your French lesson?
 - Did you enjoy lunch time?”
- Show an interest in your child’s work and help them to be prepared for the following day.



Contact between school and parents

Good communication between you and school staff is central to your child settling in well and will be of value to you, your child and the teachers.

- Establish with the new school **who** is the best person for you to communicate with and the best times to do so.
- Find out **how** you and your new school can communicate with each other.
- Attend parents' evenings and where necessary make individual appointments with relevant staff.
- Keep up to date with any communications between school and you eg. letters in your child's school bag.
- If you have any concerns about your child, contact the school as soon as possible.

Relationships: between your child and school staff

Children in Shropshire told us that they like it when teachers recognise them and know about their background and families.

As a parent you could consider:

- Providing a brief profile about your child for their new teacher.
- Visiting the new school/teacher with your child before the transfer.
- Sharing with your child's teachers any concerns or events that may be impacting on them so that they have a complete understanding of him/her.
- Reminding your child of the names of their new teachers; write them in their home school log book.

Relationships: between your child and other pupils

Children in Shropshire told us that they like it when teachers recognise them and know about their background and families.

As a parent you could consider:

- Find out who will be transferring to the new school with your child from their old school.
- Arrange for your child to visit their new school/class to spend some time with their new classmates before the transition.
- Encourage your child to see the benefits of making new friendships.
- Encourage the development of friendships out of school and if possible prior to the transfer.
- Recognise your child may grieve over the loss of contact with staff and pupils, especially if they have become parted from a special relationship. Give your child the opportunity to talk about how they feel about this.
- Encourage new friendships and teach your child the necessary skills to make new relationships, without alienating previous friends.
- If there are any out of school activities that your child could be part of, enrol them into these. This is especially helpful if the transition is over a holiday period where there may be activities arranged within the period and children can start discussing their new school with other pupils.
- If you are concerned that your child is being bullied contact the school as soon as possible.

Travelling to school

Transferring to another school may mean that your child is using a different transport method to travel to school. Things you may wish to consider to help you and your child manage this are:

- If **travelling by bus**, find out the company name, phone number, pick up and drop off points and times.
- Be sure of the procedure if your child misses their transport.
- Explore how to obtain bus passes etc.
- If there are any problems on the bus, contact the school and bus company straight away.
- If your **child is travelling alone** ensure that they have details of their home phone number, emergency numbers and other relevant contact numbers.
- If your **child is walking** to school work out the best and safest route; identify where the road crossings are.

The Department for Transport says that one fifth of child pedestrian casualties happen on the journey to and from school. Parents need to feel assured that they have done all they can to ensure their child's safety.

- If your **child cycles to school** make sure that they have all the necessary safety equipment and that their cycle is in good working order.
- Negotiate the best cycle route for them and identify any difficult road hazards; time the journey to school with them.
- Identify where their bike and safety equipment can be stored at school.
- Wherever possible, arrange to be at home when your child leaves for school and on their return.
- Teach your child road safety.
- Time the length of the journey so your child knows how long it will take and they can be sure to arrive on time.

Lunch and break times

Lunch and break times are periods of the day when your child can relax with their peers but, for those pupils who haven't integrated well, these less structured times can be a problem.

Help your child enjoy these periods:

- Identify what the arrangements are at break and lunch times.
- Discuss with your child before they start if they are to have a packed lunch or a school dinner (what their friends are doing often influences this choice!).
- Enquire before your child starts at the school what the cost of a meal will be and how it is to be paid.
- If your child is entitled to free school meals ensure all the paper work is completed before they start school.
- Encourage your child to attend any lunch time clubs and activities that may help them settle in.



Uniform

Prior to changing schools children are often concerned about what they are supposed to wear and worry if they are going to fit in and look the same as the other pupils; this becomes more of an issue as children get older.

In order to relieve this anxiety you can:

- Ensure that you know the school uniform/PE kit requirement and where it can be purchased.
- Ensure that your child has their uniform well before they are due to start.
- Be aware of any sanctions that may be imposed on your child if they are not wearing the correct clothes.
- Ensure your child knows how to dress themselves in their new uniform eg. how to fasten their school tie, if this is a new requirement.



Moving around the school

Transferring from one school to another will mean that your child will be moving from a familiar setting into a new building.

In order to help them be more confident you could:

- When visiting the school with your child, prior to the transfer, ask for the opportunity to walk around the building together; when the school is empty it allows more time and freedom to explore.
- Identify where their classroom, the toilets and the dining hall are.
- Find out where your child can hang their coat and keep their belongings.
- Talk with your child about the positive things in this new environment.



Homework

It is possible that your child's new school may have different expectations of homework. Being prepared and aware of what is required will help to remove any worries about this for both you and your child.

Make sure that:

- Before your child starts at the new school find out what the homework expectations will be.
- Establish how you can communicate with the school/teacher about any homework issues.
- Support your child in ensuring they have completed their homework.
- If your child is struggling with their homework, talk to the teacher as soon as possible.
- Enquire if there is a homework club.



Learning & Skills



Education Welfare Service



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If you can read this but know someone who can't, please contact us on **0345 678 9008** so we can provide this information in a more suitable format.