

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES



WELCOME TO BIRCH COPSE'S TERMLY LETTER FOCUSED ON SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES.

Transitions and Change – why can they feel so difficult?

Everyday Transitions

Transitions are part of everyday life for children such as moving from one activity to another, getting ready for school, or settling into bedtime. There are also bigger transitions, such as moving to a new class or starting secondary school.

While some children manage these changes with ease, others may find them more challenging. This can be particularly true for children who may be neurodivergent, as they may need more time to process information, rely more on routine, or find uncertainty unsettling.



You might notice this at home as:

- resistance to stopping a preferred activity
- difficulty getting ready for school or bed
- heightened emotions around changes in plans
- anxiety about what is happening next

It's important to remember that these responses are not always about behaviour choices but can be a sign that a child needs more support to manage the change. There are some strategies to try that may make these moments feel more manageable:

Give clear warnings

Let your child know what is coming next:
 "In 5 minutes, we're turning the TV off"
 "Two more minutes, then it's time for bed".



Use timers and visual cues

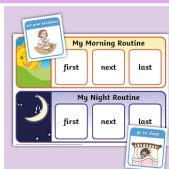
Some children find it easier to see time passing rather than just hear it.

Keep routines predictable

Consistent morning and bedtime routines help children feel safe and reduce anxiety.

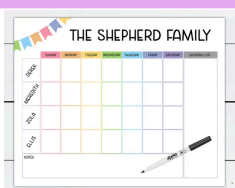
Break things down into steps

Instead of "Get ready for school", try:
 "First shoes, then coat, then bag".



Use visual supports

Simple checklists or picture timetables can reduce the need for lots of verbal instructions.



Talk about plans in advance

Letting your child know what is happening at the weekend or after school can reduce uncertainty.

Acknowledge feelings

"I can see this is hard. I know that stopping something you enjoy can feel frustrating".

Preparing for bigger transitions

Moving to a new class

Larger changes, such as moving to a new class, can feel worrying. New environments, new adults, and new routines can be challenging particularly for children who find change difficult.

At Birch Copse, we support children with this transition by:

- Holding a Meet the Teacher morning, where children visit their new classroom
- Offering Meet the Teacher open evenings for parents and carers
- Creating transition booklets with photographs of classrooms and staff

For some children, these booklets are personalised and may include the specific LSAs who will be supporting them.

These approaches help children to become familiar with their new environment and reduce the uncertainty that can make transitions feel difficult.

How you can support your child at home

You can help your child prepare for these changes by:

- Talking positively about the new class
- Looking at transition materials together more than once
- Keeping language simple and clear
- Giving your child time to ask questions (or come back to them later)
- Keeping routines as consistent as possible

Revisiting information regularly can be particularly helpful as many children need time to process and feel comfortable with new ideas.



Looking ahead to secondary school

Moving to secondary school is a big step. Children are adjusting not only to a new environment, but also to different teachers, larger buildings, and increased independence.

At Birch Copse, we work closely with secondary schools to support this transition:

- Teachers, the SENCo, and wider staff (including the Parent Family Liaison Officer and Headteacher) liaise with new schools
- Children are offered opportunities to visit their new secondary school
- Secondary staff may visit to meet pupils
- Small group sessions are provided to talk through worries
- Transition work is completed within the classroom.

SECONDARY SCHOOL



Supporting the move to secondary school at home

There are lots of ways you can help your child feel more prepared:

- Talk through what a typical day might look like
- Practise independence skills (e.g. organising belongings, following routines)
- Visit the school site or look at photos online
- Break the change into smaller, manageable steps
- Keep communication open and reassuring

You can also remind your child that:

- It is normal to feel nervous
- Everyone else is new too
- Things will become more familiar over time


For some children, particularly those who are neurodivergent, it can also help to:


- Use visual supports such as maps or timetables
- Practise new routines gradually
- Focus on what will stay the same as well as what will change


Websites for further support - Transitions


- <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-a-z-mental-health-guide/transitions-and-times-of-change/>
- <https://www.justonenorfolk.nhs.uk/nd-digital-library/everyday-needs/transitions-and-change>
- <https://www.sheffieldchildrens.nhs.uk/services/child-development-and-neurodisability/autism-home/autism-support/coping-with-change/>
- <https://www.autismcentral.nhs.uk/guidance/transitions>
- <https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/transitions/england/starting-or-switching-school>


Upcoming Events in the Local Area - [please click on the link to check eligibility](#)


 The A Team (Including Girls Parent/Carer Support Group) – Parenting Special Children
Saturday 16th May 2026, 10.00am–12.00pm
Monthly support group in Reading for autistic and ADHD girls aged 8–18 and their parents/carers. A safe, inclusive space to meet other neurodivergent girls and families.
[Event info](#)


 Dads & Male Carers Support Group – Parenting Special Children
Tuesday 19th May 2026, 7.30–9.30pm
Monthly face-to-face support group in Reading for dads and male carers of children with SEND or additional needs.
[Event info](#)


 Ethnically Diverse Communities Coffee Morning – Parenting Special Children
Wednesday 20th May 2026, 10.00am–12.00pm
Coffee morning in Reading supporting families of children with additional needs from diverse ethnic communities.
[Event info](#)


 Who's In Charge? – Berkshire West SEND Parenting Course
Starting Monday 1st June 2026, 7.00–9.00pm
An 8-week online course for parents/carers of children and young people with SEND aged 8–18 who display violent or aggressive behaviours.
[Course info](#)


 From Survival to Safety: Rethinking Food, Trauma & Neurodiversity
Monday 1st June 2026, 7.00–9.00pm
Online workshop exploring how trauma and neurodiversity affect eating, sensory needs and feelings of safety around food.
[Workshop info](#)


 Understanding Pathological Demand Avoidance (PDA)
Tuesday 2nd June 2026, 7.00–9.00pm
Online workshop for parents/carers exploring PDA traits, anxiety-based demand avoidance and supportive strategies at home and school.
[Workshop info](#)


 Online Workshop: Autism & Mainstream Schools – Autism Berkshire
Wednesday 3rd June 2026, 10.00–11.30am
Free online workshop for Berkshire West parents/carers about supporting autistic children in mainstream schools, including practical strategies and SEND legislation.
[Workshop info](#)


 Supporting Behaviour Part 1 – Autism Berkshire
Thursday 4th June 2026, 12.30–2.00pm
Online workshop exploring meltdowns, shutdowns and distressed behaviour in autistic children and young people.
[Workshop info](#)


 Supporting Behaviour Part 2 – Autism Berkshire
Thursday 11th June 2026, 12.30–2.00pm
Follow-up workshop focusing on reducing distress, supporting regulation and practical family strategies.
[Workshop info](#)

 Understanding Emotional Regulation Workshop
Monday 15th June 2026, 7.00–9.00pm
Online workshop for parents/carers looking at emotional regulation strategies and supporting distressed children.
[Workshop info](#)


 Sensory Processing Workshop – Parenting Special Children
Tuesday 16th June 2026
Workshop exploring sensory processing differences, sensory seeking/avoidance and practical sensory support strategies.
[Workshop info](#)


 Teenagers & Social Situations – Autism Berkshire
Thursday 18th June 2026, 12.30–2.00pm
Online workshop for parents/carers of autistic teenagers covering friendships, online safety and social understanding.
[Workshop info](#)


 Autism & ADHD Show – London
Friday 19th & Saturday 20th June 2026
Major national SEND exhibition with speakers, sensory products, education providers and family support organisations. Popular with Berkshire families.
[Show info](#)


 National Cream Tea Day – Parenting Special Children
Friday 26th June 2026, 10.00am–5.15pm
Relaxed family social event at Riseley Village Tea Room for SEND families across Berkshire.
[Event info](#)

Interoception Workshop – Parenting Special Children
Tuesday 30th June 2026, 7.00–9.00pm
Online workshop exploring body awareness, emotional understanding and recognising internal signals in autistic/ADHD children.
[Workshop info](#)

 AuDHD Workshop – Parenting Special Children
Tuesday 30th June 2026, 7.00–9.00pm
Workshop for parents/carers supporting children with both autism and ADHD traits.
[Workshop info](#)

 Sensory Processing Workshop – Berkshire-wide
Monday 6th July 2026, 7.00–9.00pm
Online sensory processing workshop open to Berkshire and non-Berkshire families.
[Workshop info](#)

 From Distress to Security: Supporting Children Through Separation Anxiety
Monday 6th July 2026
Workshop focused on attachment, anxiety and supporting children who struggle with separation and transitions.
[Workshop info](#)

 Sleep – Autism & ADHD (Berkshire West)
Tuesday 7th July 2026, 7.00–9.00pm
Online sleep workshop specifically for families registered with Berkshire West NHS GP surgeries.
[Workshop info](#)



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Book a meeting with me -

<https://calendly.com/kburnard-birchcopse>