

Moving up: Preparing for Secondary School.

Learning Objective: At the end of the lesson children will be able to:

- Identify common feelings and worries about moving to secondary school.
- Understand practical differences between primary and secondary school.
- Learn coping strategies for managing change and anxiety.
- Build confidence through discussion and reflection.

Success Criteria:

- To talk about the move to secondary school and identify the positives and the challenges.
- To develop a range of strategies to support the transition

Pupils Can.....	Will be able to share one strategy they can use to support the move to secondary school.
	Will be able to share 3 questions that they would like to know the answer to about their new secondary school and how to find the answer.
	Will be able to verbalise the challenges they may face and ways of managing those challenges.



Transition: Transition is the process of moving from one stage, setting, or experience to another. In the context of education, it usually refers to moving from primary school to secondary school—a significant change in a young person's life. This transition doesn't just involve a change in buildings or teachers—it includes shifts in:

Routine and structure
Peer relationships
Academic expectations

Independence and responsibility

Emotional and social development

The move to secondary school is often one of the biggest transitions in a child's life so far. Supporting it well is crucial for their mental health, confidence, and learning success.

Key Reasons Why Transition Support Matters:

Reduces Anxiety and Fear of the Unknown

New environments can feel overwhelming.

Support helps children feel prepared and reassured, which reduces stress.

Builds Emotional Resilience

Positive transition experiences help children develop coping skills they'll use in future life changes.

It fosters a sense of control and confidence.

Supports Social Belonging

Making new friends and navigating new peer groups can be tough.

Thoughtful transition activities help build connections and inclusion early on.

Improves Academic Engagement

When students feel safe and settled, they're more able to focus on learning.

Poorly managed transitions can lead to dips in achievement or motivation.

Promotes Positive Mental Health

Children who feel disconnected or unsupported in transition are at greater risk of low self-esteem, anxiety, or behavioural issues.

A smooth transition helps lay the foundation for long-term wellbeing.

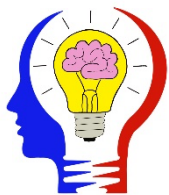
Transition is more than just moving schools—it's a major emotional and developmental shift.

Supporting young people through it with empathy, structure, and connection ensures they start secondary school feeling safe, seen, and supported, which is essential for both their mental health and their future success.



Post it notes

Picture of a train



Taster: The Change Train

1. Hand out sticky notes and ask pupils to write one word or phrase about how they feel about moving to secondary school. Add to the note the colour of that emotion and a shape that represents it. Example: anxious might be a green wobbly shape.

Encourage honesty—scared, excited, curious, nervous, unsure.

2. Ask them to place their sticky note on the "Change Train" display.
3. Discussion and highlight similarities and the fact that most people are feeling lots of different emotions at the same time.

"What feelings are most common?"

"Why do you think change can feel hard?"

"Is it normal to feel more than one thing at once?" (Yes!)

4. **Key Teaching Point:** Change is part of growing, and it's okay to have mixed emotions. Everyone on the "train" is on this journey together.



Mini Task: What's different and what's the same?

1. Work together to create a T-chart: Left side: "Primary School" Right side: "Secondary School"

Same: Teachers care, you make friends, learning continues.

Different: Bigger buildings, different teachers for subjects, lockers, timetables.

Discuss things that might seem scary but are manageable once you learn the routine (e.g., finding your way around, remembering equipment).

2. Role play scenarios.

Ask the children to work in groups and write 2 scenarios that they may encounter at their new school on strips of paper.

3. Fold the paper strips and put in a container. Each group chooses one and acts out 2 ways of dealing with things.
4. Each group shows their scenarios and possible ways of dealing with things. The class votes on which one is best and why.

Examples:

1. You're trying to find your next lesson and you're not sure where to go.
2. You've forgotten your maths book and your teacher notices. How do you explain and handle it?
3. You don't know anyone in your form group. How do you start a conversation with someone new?
4. You don't understand something in class, but feel nervous about asking. What could you do?
5. You're not sure what lesson is next and you're carrying the wrong books. What do you do?
6. Someone dares you to do something you know isn't right, like skipping part of a lesson. What do you do?
7. You see another Year 7 who looks upset or lost. How could you support them?
8. Something awkward happens (like tripping or dropping your lunch). How do you recover and laugh it off?
9. You're at home the night before your first day and feeling really nervous. Talk to a parent, carer or friend.
10. You get the chance to share something you're good at with a new classmate or teacher.

"What felt challenging in that scenario?"

"What skill did you use to handle it?"

"Have you ever done something like this in real life?"

"How could you support someone else going through this?"

Key Teaching Point: While some things change, you already have the skills to enable you to handle the new challenges you will meet.



Main Task. Secondary School Survival Kit

1. Ask each young person to design their own "Survival Kit"—a backpack showing what they will take with them (not physical items, but inner tools):

A phrase of encouragement ("I can ask for help!")

A goal they have already achieved (e.g., learning how to draw maps or , making friends)

A memory or success from primary school

A coping strategy (e.g., deep breathing, talking to someone, writing worries down)

A Support Buddy who they can talk to.

A post it note that contains 3 skills they have developed at primary school.

A challenge they overcame.

An internal tool that they are proud of and which helps them when they struggle.

5 things that supports them when the going gets tough.

Optional: decorate and display! This offers the opportunity to continue thinking and talking and adding information and skills.

2. "Who Can Help?"

Draw a

Support Network Circle on the board (child in the middle). Ask pupils to name who they could talk to if they're feeling anxious in secondary school:

Friends, Teachers, Parents/carers, School counsellor, Friends, Older siblings

Reinforce that asking for help is a strength.

3. "One Positive Thought"

To finish ask each pupil to share one thing they're looking forward to about secondary school (can be written or said aloud). So that the session ends up on a positive note. Remind the children that adventures can be scary but also very exciting and that they are getting ready to start a new adventure.

🌟 Reinforce a message of growth, possibility, and confidence.

Teacher Tools and Techniques	
Emotional Literacy	Talking about feelings and thinking about strategies to manage.
Developing Relationships	Exploring friendships skills
Self-Development	Reviewing the skills that have already been learnt Thinking and exploring strategies they have developed that help them manage.
Skills for Learning	Working together Exploring the many things they have learnt at primary school.
The Brain Learning and Behaviour	Link between how we feel, emotions and how we behave. Strategies to manage anxiety and transition



PHSE Link (PSHE Association Programme of Study for PSHE Education - KS2)

H11. about different feelings that humans can experience

H12. how to recognise and name different feelings

H13. how feelings can affect people's bodies and how they behave

H14. how to recognise what others might be feeling

H15. to recognise that not everyone feels the same at the same time, or feels the same about the same things

H16. about ways of sharing feelings; a range of words to describe feelings

H18. different things they can do to manage big feelings, to help calm themselves down and/or change their mood when they don't feel good

H19. to recognise when they need help with feelings; that it is important to ask for help with feelings; and how to ask for it

H20. about change and loss (including death); to identify feelings associated with this; to recognise what helps people to feel better

H27. about preparing to move to a new class/year group

R25. how to talk about and share their opinions on things that matter to them