

## **Script for Video: Preparing for transition to high school for children with special educational needs (SEN)**

### **Title slide**

This is a recording of a webinar which was coproduced with parents and carers in our county of Suffolk to support families to prepare for the transition to high school for children with special educational needs or SEN

### **Slide 2**

This is one of two linked recordings which were coproduced with families. You may like to watch this second video too, which focuses on resources which can help children feel more confident about the transition and lessen any anxieties and questions they may have.

### **Slide 3**

You may be new to SEN. If special educational needs are only emerging as your child nears the end of primary, our videos may help build your understanding and confidence.

We also offer information sessions each term, explaining the graduated approach to SEN support and how you and your child are involved.

### **Slide 4**

This recording will refer to the Special educational needs and disability Code of Practice of 2015.

[SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

This is statutory guidance which means it comes directly from law. You can download this for free.

Chapter 6 which is all about SEN support in schools.



## **Slide 5**

Moving up to high school can be daunting for parents and children.

It's a time of great change so mixed feelings are natural.

Transition planning will help ease the process so that your child will find it easier to:

Develop friendships and maintain good self esteem

Get used to routines and school organisation

And show an increasing interest in the new school

## **Slide 6**

The SEND Code of practice says:

Where SEN support is to be provided:

'the teacher and the SENCo should agree in consultation with the parent and the pupil the adjustments, interventions and support to be put in place.'

The Code continues:

'SEN support should include planning and preparing for transitions between phases of education and preparation for adult life.'

(SEND Code of Practice 2015 sections 6.48 and 6.57)

## **Slide 7**

So transition planning needs to start early.

You, your child's primary school and the new secondary school can all play a part in supporting the process.

Parents of children with SEN and disabilities will find it helpful to start finding out information and laying the foundations of preparation before your child begins year six.


## **Slide 8**

So, with that in mind, today this recording will explore:

Information to look for, to help you and your child prepare for working with school around transition from slide 9

We'll discuss transition meetings from slide 21

We'll look at resources to help your child share their views from slide 29



And we'll explore additional transition support and considerations, including children with Education, Health and Care plans from slide 39

We have created timestamps under the description of this video on YouTube so you can click on a particular section and the video will open at that point.

## **Slide 9**

Let's start by considering what is helpful for you to find out about and find out from the new school and what resources do schools offer to help you prepare.

## **Slide 10**

We recommend you spend time exploring the full secondary school website. A menu of information on the website is usually at the top of the home page.

In Suffolk, different schools may post information about transition to year 7 under a variety of different tabs. Some school websites have a separate transition section. Others may post information under a section for parents and carers.

## **Slide 11**

Or transition information may be under tabs like:

Pupils

Admissions

Information

Welcome (often with the academic year)


And open evening (for the next academic year)

## **Slide 12**

Since the pandemic, schools have developed their web information. Many schools now have transition webpages which explain what to expect and what to prepare. Sometimes this is in the form of picture guides of their schools as in this example.

## **Slide 13**

Many offer photos or virtual tours of the school which can be especially helpful in supporting your child to understand what to expect.



You might like to take a look first and look out for things which match your child's interests so that you can draw their attention to them when you share the video or photos with them, to help build their interest.

### **Slide 14**

Some offer 360-degree tours like this alternative provision Parkside. This might spark the interest of a more tech minded young person.

[Click here for a virtual tour of Parkside Academy KS3.](#)

### **Slide 15**

Some schools have created videos introducing key members of staff, welcoming you and your child to their school or introducing subjects. Some of these subjects might be new like humanities so it can help demystify things a bit. If your child loves music then a video like the one on screen about music might help begin to forge a connection.

All schools will have some information about starting year 7 on their website and it's worth exploring the full website menu.

Some high schools also have Instagram accounts where they regularly post little videos which can build your child's engagement. At the end of the day, you know your child best, and it's important you have a good explore first so that you can draw their attention to aspects which you know will help build a positive connection.

[Suffolk Inclusion Facilitator free resources](#)

### **Slide 16**

Instead of webpage information, some schools have produced downloadable guides which explain expectations instead.

### **Slide 17**

Some have produced guides which explain learning support for pupils with additional needs. If you find an example of a resource on another school website but not on the website of the school you are interested in, you could share the positive example, explain why you found it helpful and ask the school if they have a similar resource or would consider producing one.



## **Slide 18**

Every school must publish a SEN information report on their website which could be part of their SEN policy or published separately. The report must include:

Explaining how the school assesses SEN, how they review progress and evaluate how effective a support plan is.

It must explain the school's approach to teaching pupils with special educational needs and how adaptations are made to the curriculum and the environment.

And it must also explain support for improving emotional and social development and preventing bullying.

## **Slide 19**

We recommend that you go through the SEN information report and note down the details of the special educational needs coordinator (or SENCo).

The report must explain the school's arrangements for supporting pupils with SEN and how they involve parents and pupils in the process.

So jot down any questions you have from looking at the report.

## **Slide 20**

If your child has a disability, look at the school accessibility plan and prepare any questions.

This must set out how the school plans to increase access for disabled pupils to:

The curriculum

The environment

And to the information they share.

They often include examples of the kind of adjustments they might make for different types of disabilities so it can be a helpful starting point for your discussions with school.

## **Slide 21**

We're going to spend a bit of time now thinking about the importance of transition meetings.



## Slide 22

The SEND Code says:

To support transition, information should be shared by the current setting with the receiving setting or school. The current setting should agree with parents the information to be shared as part of the planning process.'

(SEND Code section 6.47)

A transition meeting is an ideal way for information to be shared together.

## Slide 23

The SENCo of the new school or member of their SEN team can be invited to one or more transition meetings at your child's current primary school to:

- Start to build a relationship with your child
- Give the secondary school a chance to see what adjustments have worked well and what might need to change for the high school environment
- To explore and agree any additional support which may need to be in place on the first day of term.

The school environment is likely to be very different so some strategies of support might need to be adjusted but it's always helpful to start with what has worked well until now.

## Slide 24

The primary school can share what support they have found helps your child to learn.

For example, maybe your child learns best through doing.

Maybe different visuals supported them to understand what to expect, or to share their needs.

## Slide 25

The SEND code says that parents know their children best and it is important that all professionals listen and understand when parents express concerns about their child's development. They should also listen to and address any concerns raised by children and young people themselves.

(SEND Code sections 6.20)



## Slide 26

You are an expert on your child - you have so much knowledge about them.

You have been making adjustments for years to help your child to listen to you, focus on a task, to get ready to do something, to eat, to dress and to play.

All of these are skills your child will need to do in school so it's really helpful to share with the new school what you have found to be the best way of working with and communicating with your child and what your child says helps them most.

## Slide 27

For example, do you break down instructions and give them to your child one at a time?

Do you find visuals help your child at home?

How do you get your child's attention or help them refocus if they get distracted?

Do you need to prepare your child for anything new or a change to routines?

If so, how do you usually do that? Do things like social stories help or visuals which show now we're doing this and next we're doing that.

What's the best way to communicate with your child? many families use visuals to help their child develop their language.

## Slide 28

The SEND code states that all schools must:

'use their best endeavours to make sure that a child with SEN gets the support they need - this means doing everything they can to meet children and young people's SEN.'


(SEND Code, section 6.2)

This doesn't mean that they have to offer the same strategies as primary schools or other settings.

If a high school is unable to offer an approach which your child is used to, it's important to ask, what can they offer instead that will have a similar impact? What is key is that they are going to do all they can to meet your child's individual needs.

## Slide 29

It's really important that your child's voice is at the centre of agreed support for both transition and for when your child starts high school so we're going to spend a bit of



time now looking at some resources and approaches to help your child to share their views and feelings.

### **Slide 30**

A simple approach is to take some photos with your child of what helps and email them to school.

Encouraging your child to take the photos and email them helps them to engage with this and gives them the powerful message that they are the most important person in the transition support you will be discussing with both schools.

### **Slide 31**

And don't forget to take photos and share what your child enjoys doing. If your child gets distracted or upset, bringing in a book linked to something they like or just talking about it may help them to calm down quicker or help refocus them on an activity.

### **Slide 32**

This PowerPoint template is on our SENDIASS website. Each box is a slide. Some pupils have used it to share their views and some have presented it at meetings. They often upload their own photos.

### **Slide 33**

One Page Profiles which focus on a few key areas can be especially helpful.

If you've never seen one before, here are a couple of examples on screen.

Although they look like simple summaries, they can be very effective in supporting children and young people to share their views and feelings and are used a lot in primary and secondary schools and also post 16 settings.

They work best when a learning setting, the child and the family work together to create it. As your child gets older these can be a helpful bridge between school and home.

(Examples shown on screen are free templates from:

[Sheffkids variety of one-page-profile templates](#)

[Helen Sanderson Associates](#))





## Slide 34

If you want to find out more, the [Suffolk Psychology and Therapeutic service YouTube channel](#) has a short video which explains [how to create a one-page-profile](#) and how they can help people of any age.

## Slide 35

Some high schools offer one page profile templates or 'getting to know you booklets' which may be easier for children with additional needs to use.

## Slide 36

All About Me booklets can help children share how they feel. Your child might like to make their own all about me booklet.

The Inclusion Facilitator team in our county of Suffolk have created a number of free resources like this template.

[All about me book](#)

[Suffolk Inclusion Facilitator free resources](#)

## Slide 37

Or they might like to create their own One Page Profile with you. This video uses drawing to go through the process of creating a One Page Profile.

[Imogen's One Page Profile video](#)

Drawing might help your child to be involved and share their thoughts. Stick men would work fine!

## Slide 38

A form teacher or pastoral staff from the high school might be happy to produce a One Page Profile of themselves which is a great introduction for your child. We want to build your confidence in raising ideas like these with the high school.

Practitioners from the specialist education services and our own SENDIASS service share One Page Profiles of our ourselves before working with a child or young person and this might make a real difference to how welcome your child feels and is something you could refer to over the holidays.



## Slide 39

Now, we've been focussing on transition meetings and now we're going to explore other transition support and considerations.

## Slide 40

We'd encourage you to talk to your child's current primary school about transition preparations.

Most pupils are introduced to their new school in the summer term of year 6, usually in early July.

This is often called a transition, transfer or jump up day. Sometimes it involves 2 days.

This helps them experience the new environment and often includes taster sessions and fun activities to help children build positive associations.

For children with SEND, different and/or additional visits can be arranged.

## Slide 41

Additional transition support could include:

A first visit to the high school at the end of the day, to help your child get used to the environment when it is quiet.

Can your child take photos of key places and people?

Or could the school make up a photo pack? Both are common so perfectly reasonable to ask about this.

## Slide 42

[Suffolk's Inclusion Facilitator team](#) have produced this template transition photobook in case you and your child would like to make one yourselves.

### [Transition focused photo book](#)

Using photographs is one way we can help ourselves feel prepared we begin new things and again, is something you can refer to at different points over the summer holidays before your child starts year 7.

The book will help remind your child of what things look like and can help regulate feelings and emotions about them more effectively and help build that sense of security and control.



### **Slide 43**

Some schools have their own created social stories to help children with additional needs prepare for transition.

### **Slide 44**

The online educational publisher [Twinkl](#) have produced a template for a social story for moving up to high school for families or schools to make their own.

A parent can register for a free Twinkl account and search their resources, many of which are free to download.

### **Slide 45**

Note down additional questions to share at the transition meeting with school.

Key questions might include:

How will all staff be made aware of my child's needs? How will key information be shared?

Can you agree one main contact for me as a parent, to make communication easier?

Who can my child go to if they are struggling and/or anxious at the start of term?

What support can be offered to help my child manage the bigger environment and timetable?

### **Slide 46**

Other ideas you might discuss could include:


A year 6 memory book which your child's current primary school could support all year 6 pupils to create to help them process leaving primary school

Could a key person at primary visit your child in the early days at their new school or send them a card, to help maintain a sense of security and attachment?

Could future support staff shadow existing staff to share strategies already in place and look at what is working well?

### **Slide 47**

Our service is often asked: will a diagnosis of a particular medical condition bring more support?



A diagnosis will not bring additional support. One child with a diagnosis may present very differently from another child with the same diagnosis and need very different help.

School support is always driven by a child's individual needs so this is why full discussions around your child's individual needs are so important to transition.

A diagnosis of a particular condition is not needed to access for schools to access the advice and help of any of the specialist education services in Suffolk.

## **Slide 48**

For a child with medical needs you could ask about putting together an Individual Healthcare plan or IHP. This is different from an Education, Health and Care plan.

Any child with medical needs may have one but they are particularly important for children who may need emergency support like children with epilepsy or who may have an allergic reaction. It records the key information about a child's medical needs, the actions which are required to support the child effectively, who will provide the support and when. They are usually put together between the school, the family and a health practitioner like a specialist nurse.

[Health Conditions in Schools Alliance Individual Healthcare Plan templates](#)

[Medical conditions at school template individual healthcare plan](#)

## **Slide 49**

You can find further information about inclusion and support for pupils with SEN, disabilities and medical conditions on our [Suffolk SENDIASS website](#) and [SENDIASS YouTube channel](#).


## **Slide 50**

Parents and carers often ask us if an EHC needs assessment will help their child get the right support at high school?

The law expects the majority of pupils with SEN to have their needs met through the 4-stage cycle of SEN support which is often referred to as the graduated approach.

As we mentioned earlier, schools have a duty to do their best endeavours to meet your child's needs.

This includes accessing specialist advice, with your agreement, if they have exhausted their own strategies.



The [specialist education services](#) in Suffolk support schools to support children and young people aged 0 - 25 years and an EHC plan is not needed for schools to access their help.

The transition meeting is where you can discuss your child's needs in detail and explore whether any further advice or assessment would be helpful.

## **Slide 51**

You can find out more about Education, Health and Care needs assessments and plans on our [Suffolk SENDIASS website](#). We also have a range of short videos on our [YouTube channel](#) around EHC processes, including explaining the purpose and threshold of an EHC needs assessment, who can request one and how.

## **Slide 52**

If your child already has an EHC plan, then the SEND Code is clear that it 'must be reviewed and amended in sufficient time prior to a child or young person moving between phases of education, to allow for planning and, where necessary, for commissioning of support and provision at the new institution.'

(SEND Code 9.179)

For transfer to secondary school, the review must be completed by the 15th February in the year of transfer. The SENCo from the high school can be invited to the review meeting to help ensure that the provision or support in section F of your child's EHC plan will continue to support your child to make progress.

## **Slide 53**

You will be asked to name your preferred school and the local authority must consult with the school and they must name the school in the EHC plan unless there is a lawful reason for them not to do so. Any such reason would need to be clearly explained to you and you will have a right to appeal if you are unhappy with their decision.

The EHC plan will be amended to name the school by the 15th February in the year of your child's transfer up to high school. So, in order for the plan to be finalised by this date, the transfer review process is usually started in the autumn term, with the gathering of information.

We have further information about choosing and naming a school in an EHC plan on our SENDIASS website along with information about EHC plan reviews which may help you.

## Choosing and naming a school in an EHC plan - Suffolk SENDIASS

### **Slide 54**

Some parents ask our service what to do if a school has recommended a phased start for their child due to their special educational needs. A phased start means starting on a part time timetable and gradually building your child's time in school.

All children of statutory school age have a right to a full-time education, so there is nothing in law to support a part-time timetable.

However, the statutory guidance states:

‘In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a **temporary** part-time timetable to meet a pupil’s individual needs.

The guidance is clear that:

‘A part-time timetable ...must have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time.

(DfE School Attendance guidance, 2020, page 19, FAQ 1)

You would have to agree to any such short-term part-time timetable and be clear about the benefits and clear about the plan to integrate your child into full time education.

[School attendance guidance \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

### **Slide 55**

A quick word now about induction days or evenings for parents.

There is usually a presentation explaining routines and practices and an opportunity to tour the school.

So we recommend you prepare some questions to ask, including questions linked to what you feel your child might find tricky.

The [School Run website](https://www.schoolrun.co.uk/) has some top tips for visits.

Many schools record their presentations so that you can go over information at your own pace and with other family members.

Before the induction evening or day, ask the school if they plan to make a recording if you feel that this would be helpful.



## Slide 56

BBC Bitesize has some additional helpful videos and information for starting school for pupils with special educational needs that you might like to explore.

[Starting secondary school with Special Educational Needs \(SEN\) - BBC Bitesize](#)

## Slide 57

..including this video about a child starting school with autism.

[Jessi's story: Starting secondary school with autism - BBC Bitesize](#)

## Slide 58

If your child has autism, the [Autism Education Trust](#) has a range of helpful free resources, including a resource pack for schools around supporting learners with autism during transition. You could share details with your child's early years setting and your chosen high school.

## Slide 59

The [Autism Education Trust](#) has also produced a sensory assessment checklist which the primary school might be happy to fill in with you. This could help the high school gain a better understanding of your child's sensory profile and help explore what might help regulate your child on a sensory level.

[37.2-Sensory-assessment-checklist.pdf \(positiveaboutautism.co.uk\)](#)

## Slide 60

Thinking about transport, a child or young person with SEN or a disability may be entitled to Suffolk county council funded travel, no matter the distance from the nearest suitable school, if they cannot be reasonably expected to walk there accompanied because of their SEN or mobility difficulties.

The council must also take into account whether a parent or carer could be reasonably expected to accompany the child on foot because of eg their own medical needs or disability.

You can submit a travel application once the local authority has confirmed a school place for your child.



## **Slide 61**

You can find out more information on the Suffolk on board web pages including information about free travel training for pupils with SEND. We have worked with many families who have found this travel training very helpful.

[Suffolk on Board - School Travel / SEND Travel](#)

## **Slide 62**

There's also transport information on our Sendiass website which may help you.

[Transport - Suffolk SENDIASS](#)

## **Slide 63**

.. along with leaflets like these which may help build your overall confidence.

[Leaflets and resources - Suffolk SENDIASS](#)

## **Slide 64**

We can also offer a live session for parents and carers exploring practical strategies for supporting positive and solution focussed conversations and meetings with school which may help you.

## **Slide 65**

This video was made by Suffolk SENDIASS but every county will have an impartial and confidential SEND Information, Advice and Support service.