

Summer 2021
Transition Support
Pack Three

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Supported by National WfER Funding

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4. Transition and Emotionally-Based School Avoidance

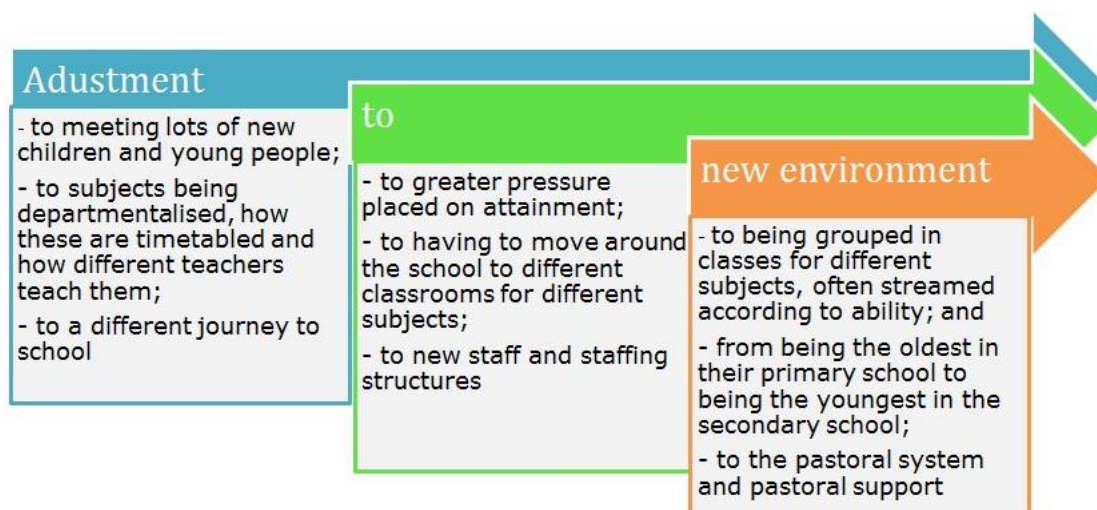
This section is taken directly from Emotionally Based School Avoidance Guidance produced by Hampshire Local Authority.

Literature has shown that peaks in the number of young people with EBSA correspond with transition in educational phases. This is not surprising as young people face significant changes at such times.

Most children adjust to these changes over time. However, young people who experience higher levels of anxiety or who have experienced loss and separation may be vulnerable to developing, or experiencing, an exacerbation of EBSA behaviours. It is important that schools and parents provide appropriate support and any vulnerable young people are flagged up early by the 'feeder' school and an individual approach is taken.

Good transition practice involves effective exchange of information, both pastoral and academic, from primary to secondary school. **It is really important for 'feeder' schools to flag up any early separation difficulties and past EBSA even if the issues were mild and attendance is now fine.** We advise that secondary schools should specifically ask this information on any transition gathering forms.

Good transition also involves good communication with the young person and their parents.



Key information required		Practical supports
Travel to school – how will they get there	→	Go through journey to school, practice this, identify any companions
Key people in school	→	Give a simplified structure chart, provide photos, identify a key person
Environment	→	Layout of the school – provide maps, give tours, quiz, colour code subjects to building areas
Structure of the day timetables, break and lunchtime systems	→	Provide timetables, colour code these, lay out break and lunchtime systems
Social time – supporting social interactions and those more vulnerable, bullying policies	→	Identify how pupils will be supported to make new friendships, access to supported social activities
Academic demands – how lessons are structured, homework	→	Give information about how lessons are structured, homework expectations
Support systems in place – pastoral SEN support	→	Set out how young people will be supported, provide one page profile
Equipment needed	→	Provide checklist for each day

Familiar school staff should discuss with young people and their parents what they are looking forward to and what they are worried about and this should be individually addressed. An example of support for this is 'What if ...' cards.

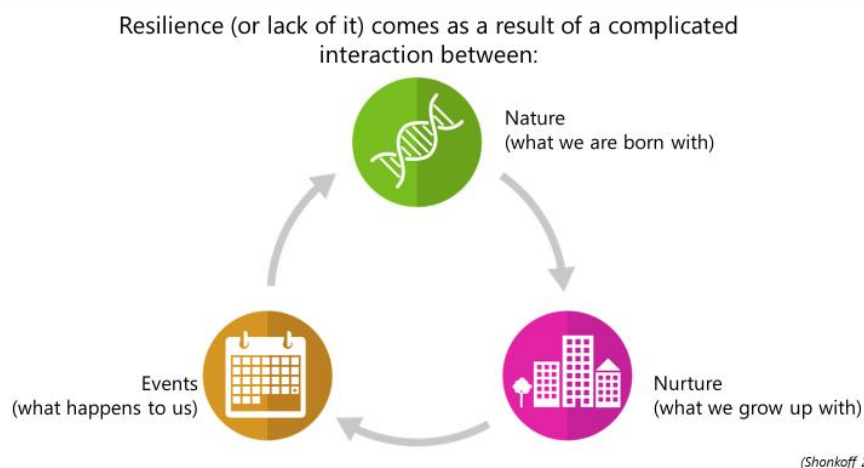
If I don't know where my classroom is...	If someone calls me an unkind name...	If I have nothing to do at breaktime...
I will get my plan from my student planner and see if I can work it out	I will try and walk away and not swear or shout	I could go to the library
I will try and ask someone in my class	I will tell a teacher why I feel upset	I could buy a snack and eat it in the dining hall
I will ask my teacher	My teacher will deal with it and talk to that person	I could find my buddy

5. Resilience and Well-being

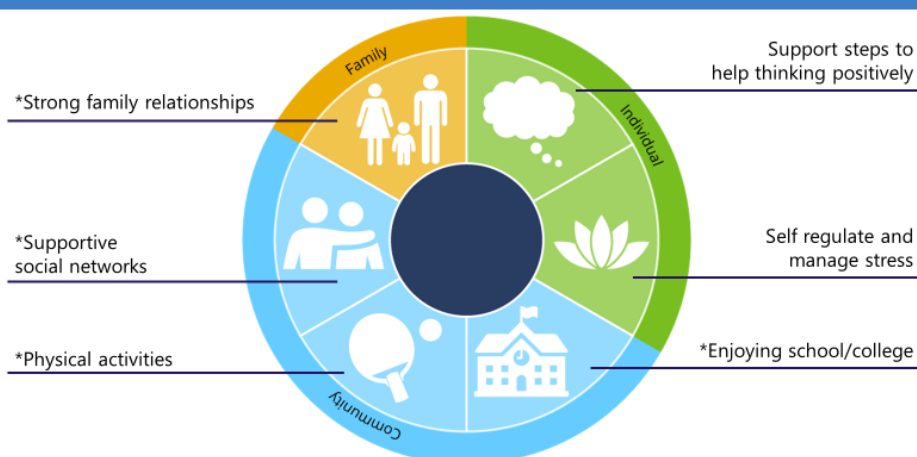
Most schools understand the importance of promoting resilience and well-being in their children, and this is key to supporting a successful transition. Children who are resilient will cope with change in a positive way and will bounce back from adversity and difficult situations quickly.

Recognising resilience traits and supporting their development is key at any age, but a heightened awareness around transition from both settings, with specific teaching and modelling of how to build resilience, will support all children, but especially those who are most vulnerable.

The WfER training provided the following to help us think about awareness of and building resilience:



How Can We Learn To Be More Resilient?



(Masten 2014)

Being explicit about what resilience is and supporting children in developing resilience is important. The WfER training packs (from which these slides are taken) are available on School Comms from 19th October and 2nd November and give more support and suggestions to promote resilience and well-being.

In terms of resilience and transition, children will need to have information about all the aspects referred to in the table in section 2; they will need reassurance; they will need to know they can get things wrong and be supported; they will need help with organisational elements of school life... the list is endless and will be different for each individual.

Much of this work can be anticipated and children can be prepared for what is coming next – one school last year did a unit in year 6 on Change and Resilience (in a very positive manner) before applying the principles to transition ensuring the positivity continued. But it is also important to carry on building resilience when the theoretical transition in June/July becomes a reality in September. Explicit teaching of this, alongside social resilience and emotional regulation will support a child's ability to manage change effectively.

It is important that, as with academic learning, we recognise that some children will need more support with developing resilience and will need explicit intervention – and although not exclusively, these could be our more vulnerable young people who, at times of transition, are at the greatest risk of exclusion.

Ideas from Schools based on Experiences in 2020

Schools across Hampshire have shared their successes from transition in Summer 2020 – they are grouped into specific ages, but many ideas are relevant to many phases of education, so it is worth reading them all.

It must be remembered that transition between schools (into YR, Y3 if moving to a junior setting, and Y7) can be even more challenging for even more pupils, especially those vulnerable groups including LACs, SEN and those with an EHCP. Many cope admirably with the change, but a significant number can find it tricky and need extra support and understanding. If the right support is missing, children can be at higher risk of exclusion so it is crucial that schools put the right measures in place for **all** children, which will mean doing it differently for some. It will also mean recognising that some inappropriate behaviours will be as a result of unmet needs during transition, and these will need support and understanding to address.

6. Transition to Nursey and Reception

Transition to Nursery

- Phone calls home replaced home visits.
- Children also did visits to nursery.

Transition into Reception

Summer Term

- At the end of summer term, timetabled slots for teacher and TA to be outside school at a table so that parents could collect book pack and briefly meet staff face to face
- A range of school dinner tasters were available for parents and children to try
- Home visits carried out by zoom
- Activity packs were delivered to all new starters which included a small, knitted toy in school uniform
- Videos of teachers reading stories were posted on the school website, and all relevant starting information was uploaded on there too
<https://www.oakscelearningfederation.co.uk/new-intake-2020/>
- Teams meetings between families and school
- Teams meetings with key workers for pupils with additional needs
- Transition booklet that included photos of the environment and pictures of teachers
- Head of Primary Phase led story time weekly via video during the summer term
- Outside second-hand uniform sale
- Information meeting live via teams sharing the transition process with parents

- Induction was bespoke with parents offered different alternatives to meet the needs of their children, with specific children with additional needs having individual transition meetings via teams
- During lockdown, our two year R teachers worked down in the nursery to develop relationships to support their Leuven levels
- We put together welcome packs for the families, including the usual information and some extra resources for the children and included a picture of their class teaching team and a handwritten post card from their teacher. These were collected from the school office when necessary paperwork needed to be handed in
- All children were given a blank scrapbook from the school in their pack that they could add to over the summer holidays. This has been one of the most successful transition tools that we have used throughout the years as the books are able to stay in the reading corner all year and the children can look at them whenever they choose. It is also nice to have all family set ups represented in our reading areas
- Towards the end of last year, we set up new families with a Tapestry account that they could access from June. We used this as our main communication tool throughout to send videos, messages, story times and other useful links. Between June and the end of July, we sent videos explaining what class each child would be in and had a video of both teachers and TA's. We also sent home a classroom and environment tour for the children to watch in advance which was hugely successful
- Before the children started, we were able to send home a virtual induction evening via tapestry. This had a huge uptake and due to the nature of it being recorded, we had positive feedback that working parents could access it without fear of missing out
- We set the children some tapestry challenges over the last few weeks before they started. One of them was to put their uniform on and send a photo of themselves to their teacher, ready for their peg photo
- In place of home visits this year, we set up zoom call home visits with each family. We dedicated two days to the process and found it a great way to communicate and for the children to see us in a school context. We challenged each child to find their favourite toy on the zoom call so that they were part of the conversation
- The class teacher and 2 LSAs hand-delivered and collected the new year R information packs. This gave us an early and valuable opportunity to meet families and chat to the children at the doorstep
- Tapestry was set up early in July and we shared videos of staff and setting to familiarise children and families - we also asked parents to contribute information and observations about their child early on which has led to 100% engagement with Tapestry
- A booklet was made with a picture of each child in the class with facts about them so they could read about their new friends (in recognition that the children had not had stay and play sessions to get to know each other)
- A Teddy Bears' Picnic event was held on the first day of the Summer holidays. Children came with one parent to search for teddy bears around our school grounds. They then took part in a socially distanced picnic on the field. We did this in two groups to ensure we were not going above the figure of 15 for each bubble of children.

Start of the Autumn Term

- In first week of term, we arranged for 5 children at a time to come in with 1 parent for a 20 minute story session with the class teacher in the classroom. Following this, the next day, half the class came for a 40min session, followed the next day by a half-day session. This sequence was repeated for the other half of the class before all children came in together. Having these sessions so close together, in the Autumn term (rather than in the Summer term) helped to ensure the children felt comfortable and we had very little issues with transition
- Parents were invited for a class information session on the first day back in September and this was followed by individual Microsoft Team meetings with the Class Teacher and parent
- We started with a trim trail visit outside in groups of 15 with 1 parent. We then moved to a morning visit in the classroom for 45 mins, then a morning visit to include lunch and then an afternoon visit. These were all done without parents. Clear expectations and guidance were given to parents and children were dropped at the gate to independently walk to their classrooms. Teachers were standing at the gate with LSAs in the classrooms, bunting was erected and we had a bubble machine! We now have independent children who walk to the classroom confidently! Reflecting on this new procedure, we all believe the children benefitted from finishing their time at Nursery completely before starting school
- Our Early Years teachers carried out two home visits via Zoom (one before the summer and one in the first week back) and then a number of stay and play sessions took place in the first week of school, to ensure the children were familiar with their environment before starting full time
- As children had not had the opportunity to play in their classroom previously, we invited them for a classroom visit in September before starting. They came in with one parent and played with our LSAs while the class teacher met with the parent
- Stay and play sessions with parents staying on site but outside whilst children went into the building (this happened start of September instead of July but moving forward we are staying with this arrangement)
- Luckily, we were able to set up small stay and play sessions at the beginning of the year. No more than 13 children with 1 parent accompanying each child, came to school to explore the outdoor area. By this point, the children already knew who their teacher was and their teaching assistant. The whole EYFS team were at each session ready to get to know the year group. It was very intimate and allowed parents to ask questions but we found that these sessions were more successful than usual as the parents had already had all the information needed and so the stay and play sessions were completely about the children. The children brought their scrapbooks with them to these sessions and we were able to store these in quarantine before the children started school. This meant that on the children's first day, they could access their books
- We continued our staggered start in the first two weeks of half term. This enabled us to build relationships successfully and allowed each child to get to know school at their own pace
- Since starting school, we have continued to build upon our transition and communications. Each Friday, all Year R pupils receive a 'Talk and Walk' post to home via Tapestry. This is a summary of what we have been learning in the week and some ideas of what optional Tapestry challenges the children could do at home. There is a noticeable difference this year in how active families are on Tapestry and our home evidence has surpassed any previous year. We share all home learning in our classrooms and celebrate this as a class

- We paced ourselves a little slower with our baseline this year and this has really benefitted the children. All children have responded well to a slight change in pace post October half term. Again, using Tapestry, we have been able to send home virtual workshops for subjects like Phonics. Sending out this workshop pre teaching of the phase 2 sounds has made a huge difference to the children's understanding. Our English lead has been a driving force in making reading accessible at home and we now have a 'Rising Stars' account for every child in the year. The children have enjoyed having access to this and earning their reading stars

7. Transition from Year 2 to Year3 (Infant to Junior school change)

Summer Term

- Website pages with specific information for new starter, including ethos and philosophical information
- An online tour of the school delivered by key worker children
- An on-line question and answer session with year 3 teachers and current year 3 pupils on hand to answer questions
- Short video introductions of all year 3 staff which were sent to parents
- A booklet was sent to all new starters with names, faces and roles of all staff members
- On-line preparation activities were set to support the children in being organised, responsible and ready for year 3
- All new parents were invited to join the Classdojo app (free) 83% signed up, 8 families not connected. Through this we uploaded a virtual tour of the school and families could see the school story where they get a real flavour of school life. The new Year 3 teachers started adding messages and pre-recorded videos eg. reading stories. Parents uploaded comments in response and dialogue was developed
- Every family had a doorstep visit from their new teacher and either the head teacher or the deputy head. During this visit information packs and teddy bears in school uniform were given to the families. The children were also given a postcard and pencil to write down questions/ worries that they could share with staff when they next saw them
- A socially distanced transition session was planned for the final 2 days of term, when the Year 6 bubbles were not in school. During this the children got to see their new classrooms and meet their teachers and LSAs, as well as other staff
- Videos were recorded and uploaded for parents to receive information from the Headteacher which would normally have been delivered in an information evening at school. This was been followed up with each family getting a phone call from either HT or DHT where they could answer questions and settle any worries
- A video was made which showed photos of staff - 'people who might help you', This included the admin team, site manager, lunchtime supervisors, cooks etc... to help build the children's familiarity with the whole team
- Handover meetings took place between teachers and the SENCO across all schools which had children transitioning
- Our partner infant school offered 3 separate dates to their Year 2 children where they could partake in specific transition activities, in socially distanced bubbles. On these occasions, our year 3 teachers have either attended their site or children came up to our school (outside) to spend time 'getting to know each other'
- There was liaison with other infant schools (in addition to the main partner school) to ensure that their pupils had access to this programme as much as is possible. This also included handover conversations for class teachers, LSAs and the SENCO

Autumn Term

- On the afternoon of the INSET in September, the new Year 3 children were invited in to meet their teacher, spend time in the classroom and take a tour around school

8. Transition from Year 6 to Year 7

Summer Term

(from the primary/junior school perspective)

- Year 6 engaged in an 'embracing change' project that developed into work specifically related to transition
- Using maps of secondary schools, year 6 explored the layout of their new school and then had a pretend timetable and had to find their way to different lessons and classes
- Year 6 took part in Teams meetings with a DHT and year 7 lead from one partner secondary school
- The SENCo liaised with staff from partner secondary schools to ensure that individual needs were shared and relevant support and provision discussed
- All handover conversations included the sharing of information about curriculum coverage and which objectives may not have been covered due to COVID-19
- As we had the whole of Year 6 back in school, teachers were able to cover transition as part of their normal lessons. We did invest in a transition support book so that they also had something to refer back to over the holidays

(from the Secondary School perspective)

- All students were issued with their school email addresses in the Summer term which gave them access to a google classroom where messages and resources were posted including taster lessons and activities for the Summer. 200 students joined the classroom - it remained open over the summer and year leaders and other staff were able to answer questions when they arose
- We had a password protected page on the school website which children and their families had access to from sometime in the Summer term. Info about key staff, virtual tours, tutor videos, taster lessons & a FAQ section were all available. We also made some videos of our 'then' year 7's introducing themselves as they will be the tutor buddies on return to school
- We invited all year 6 pupils and parents in during the last week of term for a socially distanced 1-2-1 meeting with tutors as we couldn't have a transition day – it was an excellent opportunity for them to meet the tutor, have a brief look at the school and pass on any information, concerns and worries. Tutors collated this information using a Google form so the year leader was also able to get an overview
- At 1-2-1 meetings, parents were given a uniform voucher (all year 7 get new uniform voucher to cover the cost of the new clothing) and an information pack which included all forms required and a transition booklet. We posted out these packs to parents who could not attend
- Transition meetings with partner schools were held virtually after the March lockdown and information was shared electronically
- Detailed 'Return to school in September' videos were sent out in the summer holidays to show what the routines would be like https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FWk_eFmFN24
- From mid-May onwards parents were emailed once a week with brief updates and 'drip-fed' the new resources/events over that period. These emails included information about:
 - All About Me: Students were invited to complete an 'All About Me' form that was shared with their new tutor, with an opportunity to ask us questions

- A virtual tour of the school which we produced in house
<https://www.brookfield.hants.sch.uk/year6.php> (in the 'Useful Videos & Information' section)
- A Welcome Booklet was produced by the school with a paper copy delivered to all students as well as being available on-line at
<https://www.brookfield.hants.sch.uk/year6.php> (in the 'Useful Videos & Information' section)
- An FAQ (based on the student questions on the All About Me form that weren't answered in the Welcome Booklet) <https://www.brookfield.hants.sch.uk/year6.php> (also in the 'Useful Video & Information' section)
- DHT & House Leader visited all feeder Yr 6 classes in person for a Q&A session with the Yr 6s, just seeing the Yr 6 'bubble'. With 375 in the year group this involved many visits!
- We held Teams meetings with Yr 6 co-ordinators from all of our feeder schools to discuss individual students and ensure they were placed in the correct tutor groups and Houses
- The Year 7 Leader produced an hour long video, which included interviewing current year 7 and carrying out a virtual tour of the school
- A second-hand uniform sale was held outside
- The year Leader met virtually with primary colleagues for a hand over
- All partner schools were invited via teams to three live lessons in Art, Science and History
- We held a virtual induction evening with parents and pupils meeting the form tutor and a virtual Parents information evening via teams
- There was bespoke transition for those pupils with additional needs, including an extra two days in summer camp
- Summer camp held at the end of the summer rather than the start this year; a process will we keep to this year
- Additional letters were sent to the year groups to welcome them to the school
- Phone/Zoom meetings with all primary schools (22 in total). We made initial contact via email asking what would fit in with the Year 6 teachers. This meant that in addition to hard data (we send out a detailed spreadsheet asking for levels, Attitude to Learning, SEND details, attendance, whether the child has outside agency involvement, friendship groupings - positive and negative in March) we had conversations and therefore gained a better understanding of the children
- We initially sent out a welcome letter in March which was accompanied by a small postcard to the child and the parent asking what they were worried about, what they liked, what they were good at
- We sent a 'This Is Us' type video at the end of May (just before half term) via email. This video introduced the Head plus key pastoral team members
- In July, once we knew that we could not hold transition days, we sent out a further video with a tour of the school; this was followed up with a presentation for parents to replace the parents' information evening. These were emailed directly to families
- Pupils were sent a 'welcome pack' in the post to their home addresses with information about subjects, a reveal about what House they would be in and other information/messages
- We emailed home a 'This Is The Year 7 Tutor Team' sheet with pictures of the tutors and a brief message
- Link work for Maths and English was sent to primaries – not only for pupils coming to us but, if appropriate, to use with pupils who were not
- Primary schools were also sent links to the videos so that they were kept in the loop
- Used Edmodo to create virtual tutor groups, allowing two-way chats and sharing of transition resources and videos

- Zoom consultation evening allowing parents/carers to meet a member of SLT or the pastoral team
- Videos were made and shared: virtual tour; assembly from the head, tutor, HoY, subject lead and SENDCo introductions
- Letters sent home to care givers every three weeks during the transition process
- Transition booklets were shared: one focusing on key information and sample year 7 tasks; one a PIXL booklet focusing on growth mindset

Autumn Term

- We did a 'This Is Our First Day' snapshot video which we sent home to parents
- On the return to school in September, we had Year 7 in school for one day on their own for site familiarisation etc.
- Students wrote postcards back to junior/primary school, thanking a member of staff
- Zoom meetings to place in October/November with junior/primary schools to update and share more information.

9. Transition from Year 11 to Year 12

Summer Term

- Year 11 leader made contact with the main feeder colleges and requested work for the pupils to complete in preparation for their move to college
- We introduced the 7 habits of an effective teenager: an opportunity to complete an online course encouraging pupils to be more independent and reflective learners in preparation for moving to college
- We set up a Google classroom for information from colleges and for students to post questions
- We liaised with the colleges to get information about their transition classes and to disseminate details of logins and opportunities for sample courses, etc
- We had online tutor times and assemblies to keep in touch with those who needed it
- We held weekly pastoral support days where pupils could book appointments to see the support staff and counsellor
- We held virtual careers appointments where the advisers phoned the students after we had agreed that parents would be present for the meeting
- We spoke to the colleges on behalf of students who had not received their offers or interviews
- We liaised with Hampshire futures over potential NEETS and over intended destinations for a number of students
- We maintained contact as departments so that where appropriate, students were able to submit work that could be counted towards final grades - until we found out the Govt requirements
- We did manage to give the year 11s a meal and send-off just before lockdown and they have expressed an interest in having a delayed Prom when it is allowed again.

10. Within School Transition

Summer Term

- We were able to invite all children from Years 2, 3, 4 and 5 back for two hour long sessions with their previous teacher in June/July so they had the opportunity to see their friends and gain closure on their year
- All children were invited to a 'meet the teacher' session in July (10 children per session) where they played 'getting to know' games and completed a short art/writing task to go on a display board in their new classroom
- We sent home an 'About Me' form along with the children's end of year reports for the children to complete and bring back to school during their meet the teacher session. This gave the teachers the opportunity to get to know the children before coming back to school and we also used these to help build relationships with the children quickly in September
- Once the 'meet the teacher' sessions had taken place, all teachers met with the teachers from the previous year group to discuss the children and share information regarding specific groups

- This year we made 'classroom tour' videos and posted them on the website before the summer holidays for the children to see their new classroom before arriving in September. We had really positive feedback from children and parents so we will continue to do this each year moving forward
- Children were invited in for a short socially distanced meet the teacher. All the teachers wrote a short introduction of themselves with a picture attached. These also included three facts about themselves and a joke. The children were able to reply to the teacher with three things about themselves and, if brave enough, share a joke as well
- We have a booklet for every year group online so all families can see new teachers and share expectations. Every year group had a live teams parents information evening in preparation for the new academic year
- On the final 3 days of term, each class had an opportunity to come into school for a session with their previous and new class teacher. This gave children an opportunity for closure as we come to the end of this school year, whilst also looking forward and starting to build a relationship with their new teacher before September
- All class teachers held in-house handover conversations, including TAs when appropriate
- New classes started to engage through the ClassDojo app

Autumn Term

- All classrooms then had a piece of every child's work up on display on the first day back in September which really helped some of the children come into class on the first day.
- We have had a particular focus this term on the transition between Year R and 1, developing our Year 1 environment to reflect a more play-based approach than usual. The Year 1 teachers have been supported by the EY Leader to develop opportunities for child-initiated learning, with a particular focus on the learning missed in Year R in the summer term.
- We have used outdoor learning opportunities which has not only had a huge positive impact on the children's mental health and wellbeing but has also greatly supported the children's transition.

11. Key Messages

I am sure you will have been inspired by the range of tried and tested suggestions in the sections above. I wanted to draw out a couple of key messages that apply to all stages:

- **Technology is a wonderful thing** and has been used to the benefit of so many schools and children. Please remember though that there will **be some families who can't/don't access information electronically and plans will need to be put into place for identifying and communicating with these families**. Without wishing to stereotype, the fact that these may well be your more vulnerable families makes this even more important.
- **Continued dialogue into the Autumn term and beyond between partner schools can be crucial** in supporting children, families and staff to aid successful transition.
- Many of the ideas above develop **a sense of belonging** which children need in order to feel safe and secure in a new setting – it's better to do too much in this regard than too little! It is also important to see belonging from both perspectives – **the child needs to feel they belong to the school, but this will happen by the school showing the child they belong and are important to them. This process takes time and effort but is vitally important to successful transition.**
- **Establishing and maintaining multi-way communication between all stakeholders is vital.** Showing you value all stakeholders is always crucial, but hard during these times – lots of the ideas above give ideas to develop and maintain communication even when face-to-face meetings are difficult.

12. Further Options for Training and Development

Given the upheavals we have had in transition we have had over the last year, perhaps now is the right time to re-evaluate and re-assess our transition arrangements moving forward.

There is a huge opportunity for partner schools to collaborate and make plans together for the future to improve transition for all our children.

For information on training offers for either individual or partner schools to work together to improve our transition offer, please contact me on helen.porter@hants.gov.uk

13. Many thanks to the following schools and partners for their contributions:

Anstey Junior School

Brookfield Community School

Crestwood Community School

Fleet Infant School

North Baddesley Infant School

Oaks C of E Learning Federation

Copythorne C of E Infant School

St Michaels and All Angels C of E Infant School

Netley Marsh C of E Infant School

St Marys C of E Junior School

Stanmore Primary School

The Hamble School

The Westgate School

Tower Hill Primary School

Whiteley Primary School

Yateley School

EMTAS

HIEP

PBS

STAs

Virtual School

14. References

EBSA Guidance – Hampshire Local Authority

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School Comms 29th June 2020: Flexibility to Create Primary School Transition Time-Guidance

School Comms 19 October 2020 and 2nd November 2020: WfER Power Points.

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15. Appendix: Position of and Advice from the Virtual School

Virtual School and College Hampshire: Transition of Care Experienced Children

(Looked after (LAC) and Post Looked after (PLAC) Children)

1. INTRODUCTION

Rupture, loss, and change have been the nature of all care experienced children/young people to some extent. This does not necessarily mean that they are used to, and therefore cope, with it. Viewing transition as another episode of change and disruption, provoking anxiety rather than (and sometimes as well as) excitement, is key to enabling its success for children and young people who have experienced the care system. COVID -19 and Lockdown will probably, if not certainly, have exacerbated the impact of the above. Any kind of “ending” or significant change are often associated with loss and rejection as well as fear for these children and thus lead to increased levels of emotional and behavioural dysregulation. Furthermore, school staff may not be aware of what each child has experienced during this time. There may be some marked **safeguarding issues for these children as** there has been a significant rise in domestic abuse during the lock down and many children will have suffered significant harm during this time. Further, as the lock down has forced more and more of children’s social lives to move online, we need to be aware of the increased risk of online peer on peer abuse for these children as well as online grooming. In addition, there will be some children and young people who may have lost family members to Covid 19.

The Virtual School in Hampshire are committed to ensuring an **Attachment and Trauma** aware approach is used. **School Transition is essentially about two things:- the development of positive relationships and a sense of belonging in the new school, and developing processes to support the child/young person’s social and emotional well-being as well as any other specific needs they may have.** The following is a brief overview of the type of approaches we will be developing (adapted in light of Covid 19 but based on resources that have previously been developed) for schools to support this group of vulnerable children. At this point the content of what this looks like is still being developed since our resources are reviewed each year. However, it is important to emphasise that more than the usual level of communication between the Designated Teacher LAC/PLAC in departing and receiving schools is required. Individual transition plans (drawing on the PEP) by the primary/school secondary school, carer/parent and social worker, which takes effect on day one of the child/young person’s arrival at the new school, will need to be developed prior to the end of the summer term,

1. PREDICTABILITY AND ROUTINES

- **Re-establishing routines**

For many the re-establishment of routines will be difficult. This will not just be for school routines; it will also be for those basic daily life routines, such as sleep, food times and getting up. This is particularly challenging for children who may have marked sensory issues and may have pre-existing difficulties in this area. Staff will need to allow a period of adjustment and be aware of the impact of trying to re-establish these routines for these children.

- **Re-establishing expectations**

School staff need to be aware that different LAC/POST LAC will have had very different experiences during the lockdown. Some will have been in school throughout, though for them school will have been a very different place. For those LAC/PLAC who have been in school the experience may have been very challenging for them. These are many of our most vulnerable children and there may be issues around “stigma” as their vulnerability has been brought to the forefront; having been “identified” as needing to attend school. Conversely, it may be that the school has been a “safe place” for them during this time and the return of the others may feel unsettling or intrusive for them. Thus, it will take time to re-establish and re-learn the expectations of school behaviour and learning for children who have complex behaviours resulting from attachment and trauma needs

2. ATTACHMENT RELATIONSHIPS

It is important each child has a **key adult** and a **safe space to** go on return. Staff need to be aware that children have formed attachments to previous teachers and may not have had time to say goodbye to them properly. This can evoke unconscious feelings of abandonment and trigger off high levels of emotional and behavioural dysregulation. Am I safe? Do I matter? are questions their young brains ask constantly albeit unconsciously. As the transition approaches the departing school will need to show these children the questions have been addressed and they have remembered something about them (e.g, a postcard sent in the long holiday). Care experienced children find it hard to understand that they can still be held in mind if we are not right in front of them so may feel they have been forgotten. **In addition, some of our children with marked attachment needs will** have become used to being with their parents/carers for an extended period and even those who are excited to regain their freedom and see their friends may experience higher levels of separation anxiety.

It is thus important the following are planned for

- Time spent at the very beginning, establishing who is the best matched key adult to support a child is a money and stress saving investment.
- A focus on building positive relationships with family/key carers so the child knows the member of school staff is someone they can trust
- For those transitioning to secondary school or college, there needs to be clear communication with the departing school regarding what makes that child/young person feels safe and secure

- Each child is an expert on themselves – the views and needs of children need to be clearly represented in the transition plan

3. MANAGING TRAUMA

Staff will need to ensure that children and young people have safe spaces to talk about their experiences during the lockdown with trusted members of staff, who will listen them and respond to them effectively and appropriately.

We need to remember that it may take a long time for children to reveal any abuse they may have experienced and they may communicate it through behaviour and other indicators, rather than any direct disclosure. All staff need to be aware of this and able to respond appropriately and immediately. For those children who have lost a loved one it is of paramount importance that staff are aware of this and take time to celebrate the lives and talk about those they have lost. Even for those who have not experienced a death in their family or community, the constant talk of death and illness may trigger off feelings associated with past traumas and fears (particularly relevant in the case of UASC and refugee children). Staff will need to be mindful of this and put in place appropriate support mechanisms.

5. SENSORY NEEDS

Many LAC/PLAC engage in some sensory seeking and avoidant behaviours which is typical of children who have experienced early trauma. Children will often either over respond or under respond to incoming sensory information because their brains cannot find “middle ground” of working out what information is “needed” and what information means “danger”. In light of this, the return to school, and thus being around many people again, could be experienced as frightening and overwhelming, particularly if we move rapidly from social distancing to a return to school. Staff will need to be aware of this and support it. For many the hustle and bustle, movement and number of people in school will be very distressing. We need to be aware that many will express their sensory issues and anxieties about the proximity of others physically.

For care experienced children who often are very fearful of others, this fear will be exacerbated. Having experienced weeks, or even months, of social distancing, children will have received an implicit message that other people are dangerous, for a child who experiences others as dangerous anyway this maybe very traumatic and lead to very high levels of emotional and behavioural dysregulation and fight/flight responses that will need to be planned for.