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| **Supporting Transition from**  **Early Years Settings to Reception** |
|  |
| June 2022 - DRAFT |

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# Introduction

A lot of time and effort always goes into planning transitions from Early Years Settings to Schools.

Early Years practitioners and staff in schools have developed skills and expertise in this area over many years.

We know that **transition is a process and not an event**.

In addition to traditional information exchanges, visits to school/settings or home visits, this document offers some suggestions about additional and different ways of managing transitions. It should be used alongside transition documentation, information and resources.

In determining your planning for transitions, it is also important to work towards the latest published Department for Education guidance. This covers a wide range of areas that will need to inform your practice. The former COVID-19 guidance has been revoked. It may be helpful to use the following as a starting point.:

## <https://www.gov.uk/education/health-safety-and-wellbeing-in-schools>

## <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/early-years-foundation-stage-framework--2>

## <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/development-matters--2>

## Things we can be doing now………..

### Early Years Settings

* Establish which children currently attending your setting are transferring to individual schools and **make an initial contact** with parents/carers.
* Complete and return the **Enhanced Transition** spreadsheet to the Local Authority if not already done so.
* **Collate any relevant records** and contact details of professionals that have been involved with the child or family; past or present; that need to be shared with the new school, subject to GDPR. This might include:
  + SEN Support Plan
  + EYFS tracker
  + Speech and language reports
  + Medical reports
  + Behaviour Support Plan
  + Health Care Plan
* **Identify any health issues** that may need extra support or a care plan in place at the setting (e.g. asthma, diabetes, epilepsy allergies)- advise parents to inform the receiving school if they will be required to administer medication in school. School may need to involve the physical/medical team if an individual health care plan is required.
* Ask parents to check their child’s **immunisations** are up to date.
* Support parents with **toilet training advice** if toilet training is not yet started or still a problem . If they require health advice, please contact the Health Visitor.
* Refer to **Early Help** if the family require support
* Arrange a time to **telephone or video call** the school to discuss collaboration around making the transition as effective as possible for the children, for example, producing a video to share with the families of the school environment and the teacher to familiarise the children with their new setting.
* Consider which children may need **Targeted or Specialist support** at transition and what your role will be in supporting this.
* Encourage families to complete the **parental transition form** and to share it with the receiving school.
* Add some **school uniform**, book bags and lunch boxes to your role play/dressing up area.
* Arrange a virtual or face to face **transition meeting** with school, family and other professionals if appropriate. Ask the parents/carers what would be the best way for them – for example would they have access to Zoom via a mobile phone or would they be able to phone in to a meeting.

### Primary Schools

* Start to **gather resources** that will support the process of sharing information with families/carers; for example photos, videos of the staff and the school.
* **Draft letters to families introducing staff and school** - aim to make these as personal as possible to facilitate building of relationships and trust. If they don’t have trust, this may increase the likelihood that they will not send their child to school and / or a negative pattern of attendance may develop.
* **Contact Early Years settings** to arrange meetings or virtual conversations to share information.
* Anticipate receiving **Transition Documents settings and parents** with information unique to each child in your cohort. This will be useful in planning those first weeks in September.
* Contact any other **involved Early Years professionals** in relation to children with EHC Plans, to ensure that you have the most up to date EHC Plan and associated documents following any reviews.
* Consider how **staffing** will be arranged to ensure support is in place for children at SEN Support and those with an EHC Plan in place.
* Ask Early Years settings and check admissions information for information of children that have **health needs** including diabetes, epilepsy, asthma, allergies and other health conditions. Ascertain if they have a named health care professional and a care plan agreed. Check if any implications for medicines management.
* Watch out for the **annual health booklet** which contains the Child Measurement Programme and consent for hearing and eye tests and parental request for a school entry health assessment.
* Check **School health policies** are up to date e.g. Asthma and any equipment is in date.
* Begin to think about physical **resources and equipment** needs.
* Encourage staff to participate in **training opportunities** regarding successful reintegration.

For further information: <https://localofferwirral.org>

* Revisit the ‘**Welcome Back**’ toolkit resource: <https://localofferwirral.org/a-guide-for-early-years-settings-and-providers/>
* Consider how **movement around the school** will be managed, especially at peak times such as the start and end of the day and lunch times.
* What is the school policy around **transitional objects or comforters** (such as a favourite toy or blanket)? Understanding and appreciating the role that comforters play helps us to respond sensitively to their presence. If it is important to the child’s security, then it needs to be somewhere it can be seen until it is no longer required. However, discussions with families will be crucial in order to establish how these objects are used in relation to updated Health and Safety advice for toys and equipment following the Covid-19 pandemic.
* **‘Virtual’ transitional objects** can also convey equally important reassurance. Help parents / carers explore the ways that they can make use of these powerful images to strengthen connection and support their child with separation: e.g. a kiss or a smile to keep in the child’s pocket for when it is needed, or an imaginary ‘heart string’ that stretches from the parent/ carer to the child and can’t be broken even though it stretches all the way from home to the classroom!
* Feelings of safety and security through predictability and **routines will be especially important** during the settling in phase without too many interruptions to sustained play or too many breaks for adult-driven tasks such as snack times. Visual timetables may be an important reminder of the new routine.
* In specific circumstances and where there is agreement between parents / carers and school leaders, some children may benefit from a **temporary staggered start** to school to help them settle.

These key points will help to foster and develop the relationships between home and school.

### Families

#### (be mindful of overwhelming families with additional perceived expectations and demands – but some will want to do something proactive)

* Start to consider ways to **introduce the idea of starting school** to your child through books, stories and TV programmes.
* Talk to your child about **what school will be like** and the sorts of things that they will be able to do.
* **Share any information** that comes to you from the school with your child to get more familiar with the new environment and staff.
* Think about ways that you can help your child to **grow in their skills** and be a little bit more independent, it might be to recognise their coat or to wash their hands by themselves. Perhaps there are things that you automatically do for them, like dressing or toileting, that they are now developmentally ready to do for themselves?
* Complete the **“I’m starting school”** transition form and share it with the new school. it can include a picture of your child and a reflection on their feelings and experiences.
* Start to **make a list of questions** that you are thinking about for September so that you can ask the new school.
* Consider **walking past the school** when you go out for exercise.
* Encourage and support your child to be **toilet trained** /able to use the toilet independently – check out ERIC for more information and resources [www.eric.org.uk.](http://www.eric.org.uk/)
* Check your child has had all their **immunisations** before starting school.
* If your child has Asthma or any other **health condition that requires medication**, talk to your Health Visitor about managing this in school. If medication is needed in school or if school may need to intervene at any point, your child may need a health care plan.
* If you need **individual help and support**, look up **Early Help** through the [Wirral website](http://www.wirral.gov.uk/) or talk to your child’s Early Years setting to help you with this.
* The free **Wirral Family Toolbox** has been set up to help Wirral families be the strongest they can be and is full of videos, tips and ideas. Search for @**FamilyToolboxWirral** on Facebook or go to familytoolbox.co.uk

# Universal, targeted and specialist approaches to

**transition- who needs what?**

This is only a guideline – the people who know the child best should use their own judgement to decide which strategies are best for that child.

**Specialist support – could be needed for:**

* Children with an EHC plan
* Children who found it harder to settle in their Early Years setting
* Children who have a social worker (Children Looked After, Child Protection plan)
* Children who have experienced a recent significant bereavement or major illness (e.g. of a parent, sibling, other close relative or similar).

**Targeted support – could be needed for:**

* Children with identified additional needs (physical, medical, academic, sensory, communication, emotional wellbeing etc.) – may or may

not have involvement from external professionals

* Vulnerable children (e.g. Child in Need)
* Children who have experienced a recent bereavement.
* Children whose circumstances have changed significantly, e.g. parent/s losing jobs
* Children who are transitioning to a different school to their friends/peers
* Adopted children
* Children of parents with poor medical or physical health.

**Universal support – all children**

**Targeted support**

**Specialist Support**

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| **Sharing Information** | | | |
| **Area for**  **consideration** | **Universal** | **Targeted** | **Specialist** |
| **Transition Planning** | * Sharing an All About Me type transition document for completion by Early Years setting and family. * Transition documents will be sent to all parents and settings to be completed to allow sharing of information. this should be returned to the receiving school. * Send a personal letter to each family – that names the challenges but reassures and outlines the plans. * Meeting before start of school but after schools “open”. * Arrange a virtual home visit * Use PHE guidance for infection control and prevention. | As Universal plus:   * Attendance at a virtual planning meeting by reps from school and setting as well as family and other professional if appropriate. * Involve Health Visiting and School Nursing in virtual meetings as required. * Identified key contact within the receiving school whom family can * direct communications to | As Targeted plus:   * Attendance at virtual transition planning meeting (Transition TAC or EHC review, PEP) with reps from both settings and professionals - aim to share key information and reassure as well as to identify any specific support, training or modification needs that need to be addressed. |

# Ideas and Questions to Consider

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| **Practicalities** | | | |
| **Area for**  **consideration** | **Universal** | **Targeted** | **Specialist** |
| **Uniform** | * Consideration for how easy or not it will be for families to source uniform | As Universal | As Universal plus:   * Individual uniform/ clothing requirements and reasonable adjustments will be made with the child’s parents/ carers. * Clothing will be school appropriate and will support the child to develop independence. |
| **School Lunches** | * Sharing information with families about the offer for Universal Free School Meals in your school - types of lunch on offer, how to make the choice. * Sharing photos or videos of where children eat their lunch. * Consideration of enhanced support for lunchtimes in the first few weeks. | As Universal plus:   * Supporting children and families to make choices that meet their child’s diet or sensory preferences with regard to lunch. * Supporting with developing independence skills. | As Targeted plus:   * Understanding the dietary or feeding needs - will someone need specific training? Will meal replacements need to be prepared? * Clear health and care plans in relation to meals – allergies or swallowing difficulties. * Realistic expectations on what will |

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| **Practicalities** | | | |
| **Area for**  **consideration** | **Universal** | **Targeted** | **Specialist** |
|  |  | * Sharing information relating to allergies. | be expected of children at lunchtime and for them to eat to reduce parental anxiety. |
| **Specialist equipment** |  | * Specialist equipment including auxiliary aids must be moved from setting to setting **before** the child begins at the new setting. This should be organised between the settings. * Mobility and accessibility equipment will need to be moved from setting to setting by the Loan Stores and this should be organised by the existing setting. What happens if this is at home? * if there are further questions regarding equipment please contact [juliehudson@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:juliehudson@wirral.gov.uk) | |
| **Direct Training**  **/ Support from the SEN Support**  **Services** |  | * Staff in school to seek further advice and clarity where specific equipment / resources or direct support /training might be needed from colleagues in the SEN Support Services including Hearing and Vision Support Services and the Physical and Medical Needs Advisory | |

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| **Practicalities** | | | |
| **Area for**  **consideration** | **Universal** | **Targeted** | **Specialist** |
|  |  | Service. (Websites included below alongside specific information in relation to Moving and Handling Training and Plans). | |
| **Sensory needs** | * Quiet, calm spaces should be available during both structured and unstructured times. | * Quiet, calm spaces should be available during both structured and unstructured times. * Some children may need access to specific resources such chewy tubes or access to resources to support sensory play and development, trampettes or peanut balls. | As Targeted plus:   * Plan spaces, staffing and resources for children who need sensory breaks. Activities to be planned / resourced and available. * Some children may need access to specific resources as detailed within the provision of their EHC plan. |

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| **Resources for Children and Families** | | | |
| **Area for**  **consideration** | **Universal** | **Targeted** | **Specialist** |
| **Navigating around the school** | * Video or photos shared with families of key areas of the school and classroom, including where to hang coats, toilets, dining hall or space and any outdoor areas. | As Universal plus:   * Photos or videos of specific areas of the school that they might access of activities such as physiotherapy. | As Targeted |
| **School Day** | * Sharing key information with families about the starts and ends of the school day. * Sharing information about what will happen as part of breaktime or lunchtime routines. * Consideration for staggered or flexible starts in line with family’s views. | As Universal | As Targeted plus:   * Discussions around how specific interventions or therapies will be incorporated into the day. |
| **Responding to questions / concerns** | * FAQs to be given to the family (or accessible electronically) around starting at a new setting, e.g. how will Families receive news from the school? | As Universal plus:   * Opportunity for the family to contact the new setting before | As Targeted |

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| **Resources for Children and Families** | | | |
| **Area for**  **consideration** | **Universal** | **Targeted** | **Specialist** |
|  |  | the child starts to ask their questions, could be through a webinar or emailed questions. |  |
| **Pupil views** | * Pupil views should be gained by the new setting before the child begins, asking key questions around how to support them best, likes/dislikes, any worries they have – this may be included in transition documents. These should be completed by the adults that know them best either through direct discussion or observations and knowledge / experience. | As Universal plus:   * One Page to be started at home with the child in preparation for school, this will inform the new setting of special considerations needed before the child begins the setting. | As Targeted   * Share information that has been gathered from other professionals prior to the child starting school. |

All communications and resources should be adapted to support the needs of children and families.

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| **Wellbeing, resilience and relationship building for children** | | |
| **Universal** | **Targeted** | **Specialist** |
| * Key members of staff in reception contacting children and families to introduce themselves, and remain a key contact during the transition phase. Support families to identify any questions/issues which may be worrying, this can be done in conjunction with the Early Years setting. * A ‘Welcome pack’ of key information about the school and staff sent to all children/ families by email/post, alongside the personal letter. * Acknowledging the feelings that children have when starting school and use the opportunity to teach healthy coping skills. * Providing opportunities and encouragement of communication from parents / carers around the pupils’ experiences during the pandemic. * Staff focusing on creating relationships with pupils via play, greetings, individual conversations, checking in, calmness and warmth; emotion coaching may help. | As Universal plus:   * Appropriate training and support in emotional health and well being eg. Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSA) practitioners. * Clarify communication lines so that families are confident that contact could be made with them in case of an emergency. * Put in place dedicated safe spaces for children to talk about their experiences. * Children may benefit from a buddy system’ with a designated peer or group of peers to help when needed,   e.g. older children in the school. | As Targeted plus:   * Where a key adult has been identified, sending a letter/ postcard / email / video message introducing themselves, ideally with a photo / video, letting the child and their family know they’re looking forward to meeting them. * Matching key adult with pupils carefully depending on the needs of the pupil and the skills and emotional availability of the adult (based on their circumstances / experiences during the pandemic). * Offering a ‘virtual coffee morning’ and invite parents/ carers of new and current pupils as a way of developing supportive networks between the parents/ carers of pupils with additional needs. |

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| **Wellbeing, resilience and relationship building for children** | | |
| **Universal** | **Targeted** | **Specialist** |
| * Treating all children as having a need around attachment / relationships and use good practice around this. * Offer an extended ‘settling in’ period for all where the focus is building relationships/ developing resilience/sharing stories rather than learning. * Signpost to School Nursing Service on School website and parents notice boards. | * The use of social stories (i.e. changes to routines, handling difficult emotions etc.) * Examples of social stories are available from the ASC team | * Virtual tour/ photos of key areas of * school sent to the home or uploaded to the school website. * Opportunities for families to ask questions – this could be via a video chat, in writing, – a type of School Q&A session. * Specific children may benefit from a staggered start to school |

### For any sources of further information see:

### WIRRAL LOCAL OFFER <https://localofferwirral.org>

### WIRRAL FAMILY TOOLBOX – familytoolbox.co.uk

### Interesting Further Reading

<https://www.firstdiscoverers.co.uk/support-children-preparing-for-school/>

<https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/NCSE-Preparing-Young-Children-for-Primary-School-1.pdf>

https://www.eyalliance.org.uk/news/2022/03/half-all-children-are-%E2%80%9Cnot-ready-start-school%E2%80%9D-yougov-survey-suggests

<https://marymered.wordpress.com/2020/04/14/five-ways-to-help-children-heal-when-schools-reopen/>

[https://marymered.wordpress.com/2020/04/25/five-ways-to-harness-emotional-contagion-when-schools-reopen-a-reflection-](https://marymered.wordpress.com/2020/04/25/five-ways-to-harness-emotional-contagion-when-schools-reopen-a-reflection-inspired-by-chapter-7-of-boy-who-was-raised-as-a-dog/) [inspired-by-chapter-7-of-boy-who-was-raised-as-a-dog/](https://marymered.wordpress.com/2020/04/25/five-ways-to-harness-emotional-contagion-when-schools-reopen-a-reflection-inspired-by-chapter-7-of-boy-who-was-raised-as-a-dog/)

[https://www.seainclusion.co.uk/post/the-many-problems-of-returning-to-school](https://eur03.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.seainclusion.co.uk%2Fpost%2Fthe-many-problems-of-returning-to-school&data=02%7C01%7Channah.fugill%40cornwall.gov.uk%7Ca46611f7a6804a3209f908d7e6a04b2d%7Cefaa16aad1de4d58ba2e2833fdfdd29f%7C0%7C0%7C637231448444280265&sdata=uJ2Y30G4olc3OBviul1dQkiyrKQKbTQ4jh1BKyhPDyU%3D&reserved=0)

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