

# What a good transition process from primary to secondary looks like – five simple steps



## 1 Connect with secondary schools early on

Start working with secondary schools early on – guidance suggests up to six months in advance - to develop an agreed transition process and policy. This may involve working with staff at both your primary school and local secondary schools. Part of this process may also involve using PSHE lessons to help children prepare for the transition to secondary school; addressing any concerns, strengthening their coping skills, and reflecting on changes once in their new school environment. The START programme is a good example of how a PSHE curriculum might work across primary to secondary schools during this transition period.

## 2 Work with parents and carers to prepare pupils

Schools can help families and pupils prepare for change by providing positive coping strategies as a way to manage any anxieties that may develop about the move. Strategies may include:

- ✓ running taster days to help families and pupils familiarise themselves with the new school setting
- ✓ helping children focus on the positive aspects of change and on building resilience skills - their capacity to recover quickly from difficult, daunting or disappointing situations
- ✓ developing a buddy system where older pupils who have already been through this transition process are trained to support younger pupils to make this period easier and less daunting
- ✓ encouraging children to prepare for the school day the night before, by getting their uniform ready, packing their school bag, and making sure they get a good night's sleep.

## 3

### **Help pupils stay safe online and learn about cyberbullying**

Teach children early on about being safe online and help them be aware of the potential positives and negatives of using social media. One of the things that pupils say they are most worried about when moving to secondary school is being bullied. Make children aware of cyberbullying and provide advice on where they can go to for support. This can be built into supporting the transition process to secondary school.

## 2

### **Work on projects that support their move to a new school**



#### **Personal portfolio**

Encourage pupils to create a personal portfolio while they're in year 6 – this can be an overview of who they are, including their strengths, achievements, vulnerabilities and what helps them learn and thrive – which can then travel with them to their new school. It can be used as a way to introduce a conversation between the pupil and new teacher(s) about how they are getting on, and like to learn. It can also be shared with their parents or carers.



#### **Map out the school**

Draw a map of the secondary school or give children the opportunity to take photos to become familiar with the school setting when they visit their new school. This can include taking pictures of buildings or rooms to help them remember and become familiar with their new environment.

## 5

### **Check-in with the pupil and address any problems early on**

Build in a “check-in” or review process with the pupil and their parents or carers when they've started secondary school to address any transitional problems. Keep track of any pupils who are struggling to fit in to the new school environment or who feel that they don't belong. Work together with the pupil and their parents or carers to problem-solve how best to support them. Provide additional support if necessary – this might be through mentoring, a buddy scheme or through school or community counselling.