

Moving On...

Suggestions for busy teachers to support pupils with SEN moving from primary to secondary school



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Primary schools – prior to transfer:

Quick tips!

- Involve pupils in the planning and preparation process** – work with them to identify small achievable steps over the transition journey.
- Start early! Use Annual or IEP Review meetings in Years 5 and 6 to identify potential needs in transition for young people with SEN/ additional needs – invite the secondary SENCOs.
- Ensure that primary school SENCOs and TAs liaise with staff in secondary schools to alert them to potential needs. Invite secondary school staff to observe pupils in situ in a range of lessons/ contexts where possible - to highlight practical resources, types of support and strategies currently used.
- Ensure that primary school records (academic, personal and social, relating to IEP targets etc) are in a form that will be useful and relevant in the secondary context. Brief pupil profiles of key information are a valuable start to sharing.
- Plan visits to the secondary school early – identify those who may need several visits or phased transitions. Some pupils will benefit from starting transition planning in Year 5.
- Involve pupils in preparing for secondary school visits and taster sessions (e.g. use school brochures, maps, staff photos, or explore the school website) and in decisions about who might accompany or support them.
- Inform and involve parents/carers in plans and preparation to ensure consistency of information, support and reassurance – some aspects can be practised at home too.
- Invite secondary SENCOs to meet parents/carers in the familiar primary school setting.
- Run regular 'Circle Time' sessions focused on the transfer to secondary school – breaking down the myths and concerns and clarifying the genuine expectations. Explore similarities and differences and potential 'new' terminology.
- Introduce a homework planner and set regular homework tasks – scaffold skill development to organise and complete this work on time.





- Encourage pupils to use their timetables to identify and plan ahead – what equipment or preparation will they need? When do they need to do this? Some useful apps are available to support this e.g. 4KidCal.
- Introduce opportunities for pupils to work with others they don't know so well – either in class or across school.
- Display a Transition Timeline and checklist in class - highlight what they need to practise, do and learn.

Additional strategies requiring more planning:

- Support pupils to prepare for secondary school visits – create personalised information about key people/places/expectations – use their own photos or images from the school website.
- After SATS run a simulated secondary timetable so that pupils can practise 'reading' their timetable, moving rooms and organising their own equipment.
- Run 'catch up' clubs to help pupils with SEN to prepare for secondary school – for example, working on computer skills, preparing for PE lessons, telling the time, using technology to aid organisation/planning.
- If any school trips are planned, use this focus to develop skills in problem-solving and planning. Encourage pupils to take responsibility for what's needed - make lists and a timetable of what needs to be done.
- Use the Year 6 residential activity to promote skills which pupils will need in secondary school e.g. following a timetable, packing bags, matching equipment needed to planned activities.
- Ensure there is follow-up at home for pupils with SEN to consolidate planning skills, matching equipment needs to timetabled activities and ideas to promote independence and making new friends.
- Develop Personal Passports for individuals, including pupils and their parents/carers in the process. These 'living' documents note essential information including key details of preferred access and learning styles and on the most successful strategies. A one-page profile or summary of essential information can valuably be shared with secondary school staff involved.

- Introduce opportunities for pupils to work with others. Encourage them to take a role of responsibility e.g. as play buddies at break-times.
- Inform pupils and families about community activities and clubs where they can meet new friends – and potentially others who may go to their new secondary school.

Ideas requiring a more strategic approach

- During Year 6, run a simulated secondary school timetable e.g. modelling equipment expectations, homework, reading a timetable, moving from room to room and teacher to teacher for different subjects/ lessons.
- Offer a 'Big School Programme' to role play the ways things work in secondary schools and to practise using planners, timetables and appropriate technologies (for example, virtual learning environments).
- Develop joint-school activities between Year 6 primary and Year 7 secondary school pupils e.g. sporting or social events, shared trips.
- Establish collaborative working with secondary staff to look at opportunities for after school 'transition' clubs or holiday schemes and projects on the new secondary school site.
- Explore opportunities to visit and use facilities of secondary school – e.g. sports hall or green-space, science lab, dance studio.
- Invite secondary subject staff to teach or lead lessons on the primary school site.
- Offer pastoral support and introduce specific techniques to self-manage anxiety e.g. breathing and relaxation techniques, easy-read or comic strip scenarios to problem-solve common worries they may experience in the secondary school context.



Secondary schools – prior to transfer:



Quick tips!

- Start early – pupils with more significant needs may need a longer, phased transition period that builds over time. Contact primary feeder schools and offer to attend pertinent Annual or IEP Review meetings for students with SEN or additional needs.
- Involve the pupils in all aspects of the transition process wherever possible. Work together with their primary school and their parents/carers to achieve this most effectively.
- Early each year, identify all the young people with SEN who will become new Year 7 students in the coming September - for pupils with more significant needs, perhaps start in Year 5.
- Ensure the secondary school SENCO and TAs visit feeder primary schools to meet young people and their parents/carers.
- Offer sessions for parents/carers of pupils with SEN or additional needs at Admissions Open Evenings, with additional opportunities at later dates for potential pupils.
- Ensure the secondary school SENCO acts as a transitions co-ordinator – to liaise with primary school staff, parents and the young people themselves.
- Ensure the secondary school SENCO prepares notes about each pupil with SEN to share with staff – for example, focusing on their learning needs, responses to disabilities, reasonable adjustments that need to be made – and prepares a ‘student information sheet’, ‘passport’ or a ‘pupil profile’ with photo and information about useful learning strategies to go to all subject teachers and TAs.
- Provide clear and accessible guidance for new students, ensuring that you:
 - summarise rules and expectations
 - explain timetables
 - provide a map of the school
 - remind students about equipment needed
 - set out homework expectations
 - introduce staff and other key people
 - answer ‘frequently asked questions’
 - identify people students can go to with worries or problems (and where to find them)
 - clarify school policy and guidance on use of technology including mobile phones, ‘safe use’ of internet and social networking
 - offer some ‘key’ links to the schools website – e.g. school rules, homework tasks, lunch menus, campus map



Such information could be both paper and web-based so as to be accessed at the primary school and at home. Use easy read formats with photos and images to support information.

Transition map!

Primary School

Year 5 & 6



Identify potential needs of pupils with SEN in Yrs 5 and 6

Liaise with secondary school staff about pupils with SEN

Secondary schools allocate 'traffic light' groupings for new students

Run regular 'circle time' to talk about transition

Have secondary school teacher come and teach Yr6 for one off lessons

Secondary school offer visits for pupils and meeting for teachers of feeder primary schools

Consider friendship groups when allocating tutor/class groups



Secondary schools send out accessible packs to primary schools with info about the school

Offer pastoral support

Share IEPs with parents/carers and invite them for a coffee morning to discuss

Review the induction of Yr7 students after a few weeks and hold a 6 week review for pupils with SEN



Offer places to go and activities at break and lunch times

Ensure that there is good communication between staff and parents/carers

Key:



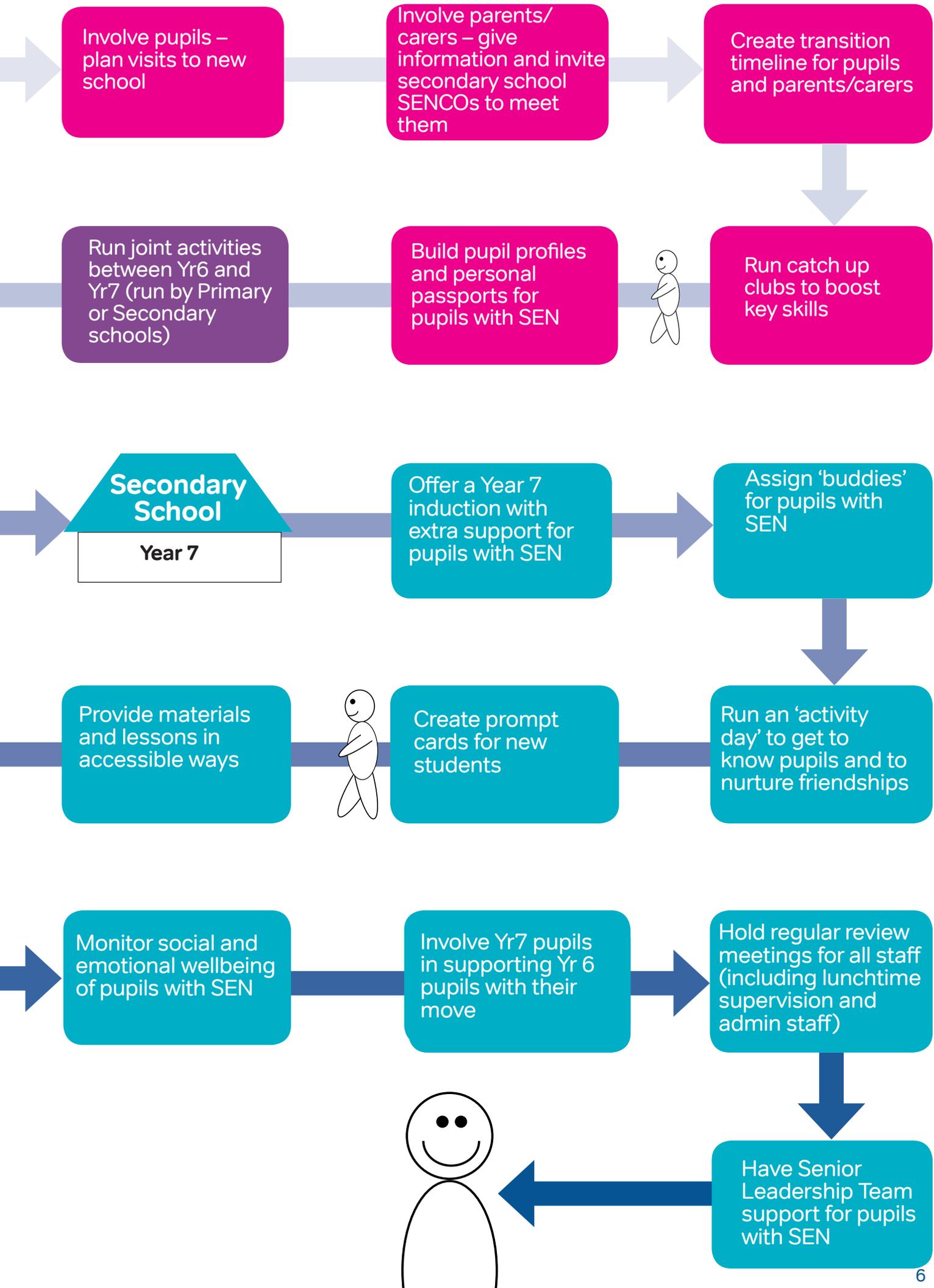
Actions for primary school staff



Joint actions for both primary and secondary school staff



Actions for secondary school staff



- Share a timeline of key dates and events with primary schools and parents/carers e.g. visits, parent meetings.
- Offer a working lunch for feeder primary school SENCOs to discuss new pupils and share the school's information and guidance for new students.
- Invite parents/carers of identified Year 6 pupils to an informal coffee and cake meeting to meet key SEN and support staff at the new school and to share an overview of transition plans and key dates for the coming year.

Additional strategies requiring more planning:

- Send out packs to feeder primaries to introduce secondary school staff, campus map with key buildings, timetables etc .
- Ensure the secondary school SENCO visits all feeder primary schools to meet pupils with SEN and their parents prior to transfer.
- Hold an initial 'Primary Day' when all the young people from feeder primary schools can visit the secondary school – the timing of this is crucial – see below.
- After the initial 'Primary Day' visit, carry out a review to identify those young people who need more support for their transitions e.g. extra visits, phased move, resource needs etc.
- For pupils with additional needs, run a series of 'Primary Day' visits – for groups and individuals where needed, including 'taster' days with sample lessons, lunchtimes, social activities etc – for some students, this might mean up to a day a week for a term or longer.
- Take account of young people's friendships to ensure that every pupil with SEN joins a tutor group with friends or create new peer groups to nurture friendships for those who have moved alone from their primary school – this can begin on the 'visit days'.
- Provide clear and accessible guidance for Year 7 tutors to summarise transition and induction processes running between primary and secondary schools – for example, 'What does a Year 7 tutor do to help students make a good transition from KS2 to KS3?' and 'Strategies for Primary – Secondary liaison'.
- Allocate young people to 'traffic light' groupings – 'green' for 'no special provision'; 'amber' for monitoring or minor needs or group responses; 'red' for full support from SEN team and personalised provision.
- Develop Personal Passports with individual pupils, including their parents/carers in the process. These 'living' documents note essential information including key details of preferred access and learning styles and on the most successful strategies. A one-page profile or summary of essential information can valuably be shared with all staff.
- Alert subject staff to the very specific needs/strategies required by some pupils, e.g. 'prompt /alert cards' for pupils who may need to leave the classroom during lessons (e.g. for timed medication, to self-manage condition or to use the toilet frequently or at quieter times). Pupil hands card to teacher and leaves room without disrupting lesson.

Secondary schools – after transfer:



Quick tips!



- Run a Year 7 'Induction' to introduce or revisit the school expectations, rules and procedures. Review this induction with pupils (and others) towards the end of the year to improve practice the following year.
- Offer quick 'prompt cards' for essential things that students have to remember e.g. '5-a-day' equipment rule for pencil case (pen, pencil, ruler, rubber, calculator); subject-based equipment needs, homework dates that can be tucked into a pocket, planner or bag.

- Ensure resources and learning materials are differentiated to allow practical, hands-on, multi-modal responses that meet the learning styles and needs of each pupil.
- Consider friendships in setting up new class groupings for pupils with SEN.
- Link every pupil with SEN with a secondary school 'buddy' - begins from early visits.
- Two or three weeks into Year 7, review the 'Year 7 Induction' in tutor groups or via a pupil questionnaire to identify any difficulties that are emerging.
- Ensure IEPs are shared with each pupil and with their parents/carers. Include a small set of targets (around three) in key skills and wider issues. For example, self-management, using equipment, managing homework etc – promote gathering of comments from parents and in-class support staff.
- Ensure TAs also communicate with parents via daily messaging systems if needed. Consider key-working for those with significant needs.
- Hold regular review meetings for staff to alert them to issues or concerns.
- Ensure year group tutors monitor the social and emotional well-being of students with SEN – year group tutors are likely to be the first to pick up any emerging problems.
- Promote 'whole person' attitudes among all staff – ensure there is a focus on the pastoral as well as the academic.
- Offer a 'safe place' or 'base' or 'chill out zone' for pupils to use if they cannot cope with the rigours of secondary school experiences.

Additional strategies requiring more planning:

- Run an activity day in Term 1 of Year 7 to enable students to meet staff, to form friendship groups and bond in teams.
- Ensure TAs prioritise Year 7 students for the first two weeks of term – focusing on their needs, problem solving with them, ‘shadowing’ them around school until they are settled.
- Run a ‘Six Week Review’ in Term 1 of Year 7 for students with SEN – hold ‘parent teacher’ meetings to review any difficulties and explore responses. Home-school diaries can support this strategy.
- Ensure pupils with SEN are spread evenly across tutor groups but ensure they are with established friends (especially if they come from schools with a small group moving to secondary).
- Use Year 7 to monitor evolving friendships and review tutor groups prior to Year 8 (when subject-orientated timetabling begins) – this review should be carried out by the secondary school SENCO working with Head of Year and Pastoral Manager.
- Run ‘catch up clubs’ for students experiencing any difficulties – these may be subject focused, address learning problems, support issues in dealing with homework etc.
- Offer breakfast clubs that provide a ‘kickstart’ or boost to focused groups of pupils. For example, sensory or physical/motor circuits, paired reading for extra support, or the local coaching of practical skills such as using the school website, and the library.
- Have a Year 7 playground/area – a ‘safe’ venue or supervised place for Year 7 pupils only.
- Ensure Year 7s eat their lunch first or designate Year 7 tables in the dining hall.
- Run lunch time opportunities for pupils who struggle to cope with secondary school break times – clubs or open library to invited pupils only.
- Colour code subject areas of school – and reflect these colours in accessible timetables (and prompt cards of subject equipment needs).
- Promote discussions between ‘new students’ and ‘more experienced’ students – e.g. on ‘Primary Day’ and again at start of new Year 7.
- Design some problem-solving scenarios for students in an easy read, comic strip or social stories format to address common dilemmas – feeling worried, getting lost, forgetting homework or equipment, missing the school bus.
- Offer pastoral support drop-in and sessions on specific techniques to self-manage anxiety – breathing and relaxation strategies.

Ideas requiring a more strategic approach

- Acquire support of the Senior Leadership Team to prioritise and fund development work and support for pupils with SEN and additional needs – with both an academic and pastoral focus.
- Establish school clustering with staff from local primaries – collaborative working can be key.
- Fund extra SEN support and TA ‘boost’ in the early weeks of the school year for the new Year 7 intake.
- Establish a ‘base’ for pupils – their first port of call for help and support or at break/lunchtimes.
- Develop clubs at lunchtimes to reflect pupil interests and to nurture strengths and roles of responsibility. For example, a chess club could offer opportunities for students with autism to share their talents and make friends. Specialist or adapted sports, such as Boccia and indoor curling, can provide new leisure pursuits or, for those who are experienced, a chance to lead and succeed alongside their non-disabled peers.
- Provide every pupil with SEN with a ‘sixth form buddy’ on transfer to secondary school. Sixth form buddies who are trained by their school counsellor to work with small groups of pupils in Year 7 can be a really effective way of supporting new pupils.
- For parts of the timetable in Year 7 (for example, for all subjects except for science and mathematics), run ‘mixed ability’ whole class teaching in tutor groups (in a primary school style).
- Consider keeping Year 7 as a year group for tutoring, joining whole-school tutor groups later in the year or in Year 8.
- It may be beneficial to have a Head of Year solely for Year 7 and also consider having a dedicated staff team with particular responsibility for Year 7.
- Run a ‘Nurture Group’ style intervention in Year 7 for those pupils who need this form of intensive and alternative provision during a ‘settling in’ period.
- Consider running a modified, alternative or additional timetable of subjects for some pupils with SEN to reflect their needs in terms of, for example, life skills, personal, or social and emotional development.
- In the summer term, involve Year 7 pupils in supporting Year 6 pupils to prepare for their future transition – sharing their experiences of then and now.
- Develop activities and events for Year 6 pupils during the summer term or summer holidays. For example an after school ‘transition club’ or a holiday ‘play scheme’, reading project or buddy club – getting to know the new school and each other. This could also involve Year 7 pupils.
- Consider hosting community clubs and activities on the school campus that are open to pupils from Year 6, such as scout group or sports clubs.

This guide was written by Richard Byers, Ann Fergusson and Jill Davies and was designed by Kate Ball. We could not have written this without the help of the pupils, families and staff from the schools who took part in the 'Moving On to Secondary School' project.

Also available are guides for parents and teachers. To find out more about this work or to download these free resources please visit our website www.learningdisabilities.org.uk/moving-on



The map is also available to download as a separate poster from this site.



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