



# WAMHS Newsletter

May Issue 3: Supporting Children with School Transition

**Welcome to the May issue of the WAMHS Newsletter. In this issue, we are focusing on how to support your child with school transitions. This is mainly applicable for children about to start Secondary education but some principles can be applied for children in younger years moving classes also.**

## What are Transitions?

Transitions are periods of change, in which a family moves from one stage of the life cycle into the next. Families experience many transitions such as moving house, new siblings, separation and children leaving home.

The secondary school transition marks the movement into a new phase of family life cycles. Moving into a new school year is also a smaller transition. Transitions require change and reorganisation within the whole family and can be difficult for young people.

Children often find it difficult to use words to express how they feel; therefore, they show how they are feeling through their behaviour. This might show up as:

- Temporary regression to younger ways of behaving, requiring more support to complete tasks they could previously do independently.
- Mild hostility/aggression shown by ignoring parents/siblings, being quieter than usual, difficulties concentrating, or complaining about headaches/tummy aches.
- Overcompliance/perfectionist behaviours in order to mask/fit in and feel safe at school. This may lead to difficult behaviours at home as a result.
- Wanting predictability / familiarity in other parts of life outside of school.

**These feelings and reactions don't usually last very long once they have had time to adjust. Successful experiences of school transitions can be a key opportunity to develop your child's emotional resilience.**



# TOP TIPS for PARENTS/CARERS

It is important to be aware that your child could be feeling mixed emotions. Try to focus on positives but also allow space for doubts and concerns.

- Reassure your child about common worries – explaining that they will soon know their way around, homework will be manageable and speak about any worries about bullying.
- Sharing positive stories of your own transitions throughout school and reflecting on times when your child tried something new and it went well.
- Encourage younger children to talk to older friends/siblings who are already in secondary school – encourage older children to share their top tips.
- Look at the school website with your child and give them a chance to ask questions.
- Remind your child that not everything will be changing and that home life will stay the same.
- Prepare for getting back into a routine after a long period of time off – including packing their bag, trying on their new uniform and checking the school route.
- Talk through with your child about what is going to happen – you could use a story book that involves similar changes.

## A Successful Transition to Secondary School Requires:

### Social adjustment

- Confidence/skills/knowledge to deal with new change.

### School adjustment

- Becoming familiar with new routines and expectations.

- Peer and Teacher relationships.

- Bridging between primary and secondary school.

With these things in mind, it's helpful to encourage children to connect with peers and teachers when they start a new school e.g. making friends, joining after school clubs.

Ideas include visiting your child's new school, trying out their new journey, practising the morning routine, trying on their new uniform. Having conversations about similarities and differences between primary and secondary school are helpful too.



## WHAT About YOU?



**Transitioning your child from primary to secondary school can stir up feelings related to our own experiences of school days along with a sense that the end of childhood approaches...**

**It is helpful to be aware of your own emotions at this time:**

- **Have you had difficult experiences of transitions?**
- **Did you find secondary school tough?**
- **Has your child had previous difficult experiences of transitions?**
- **Are these experiences causing you to experience worry or anxiety?**

**Whilst it can be helpful to share your own experiences with children, be mindful of how of holding a '**growth mindset**' with them around their own strengths and abilities. Children tune into how we are feeling, so it's important to demonstrate confidence in your child's ability to manage the transition and succeed in their new school!**

**Follow this link to a news report made by children about common worries associated with secondary school -**

**<https://youngminds.org.uk/resources/school-resources/find-your-feet-transitioning-to-secondary-school/>.**

**The children also share top tips for managing worries.**