



Transition to Secondary School

Children in year 6 have recently been allocated their secondary school places for September 2024. Mrs Hutton and I have begun the transition process, liaising with secondary schools to arrange visits and to share information about all the children but in particular those with Special Educational Needs. Please be assured that if your child has an EHCP or a SEN support plan then this will be shared with secondary schools before the end of term.



I know that many parents of children in other year groups will already be thinking about secondary school. You can apply for a secondary school place from the September that they start year 6. Secondary Transfer tests results are received in October. The deadline for submitting your application is at the end of October. School offer day is at the beginning of March.

If your child has an EHCP then you do not apply for a school place online. An annual review will be held in the summer term of year 5. During this annual review we will make changes to the EHCP to ensure it reflects current needs and is ready for when they start secondary school. Parents will also give their school preferences at this meeting. These can be for specialist and/or mainstream settings. Following the annual review the local authority send out consultations to the parental choices and other schools that they think maybe appropriate. You should find out the results of these consultations and be offered a secondary school place shortly before the national offer day. If your child has an EHCP it is important to visit schools early as you need to give your preferences before they are in year 6 when most of the open days take place.

I have been given the opportunity over the last couple of months to visit a few of our local secondary schools, have a tour and to meet pupils and staff in the SEN departments. As a parent myself I was reassured by what I saw, how calm and quiet the schools were. I saw pupils engaged in lessons and during my visits I saw no concerning behaviours. Staff were very open about the challenges they face however, particularly around staffing. I visited 3 schools and they all said they had less Learning support assistants (LSAs) than they needed 3 LSAs for 600 pupils in one school, 14 for 1200 pupils in another and 18 for 1000 pupils in the last. Staffing difficulties are around recruitment as well as funding. It is important to visit schools with an open mind and be ready to ask questions. Bigger schools can have more funding and therefore more support available.

Spotlight on resources

Sensory Integration is the process by which the brain receives, organises and processes all the information received from the senses (touch, sight, hearing, smell, taste, body position and movement and balance. The information received from the senses helps us to make sense of the world.

A sensory circuit is a form of sensory integration intervention. It involves a sequence of physical activities that are designed to alert, organise and calm the child.

Alerting

The aim of this section is to provide vestibular and proprioceptive stimulation within a controlled setting. This prepares the brain for learning and the demands of the school environment.

Example activities: Jumping/bouncing on a trampoline, skipping, running, rolling and bouncing on a yoga ball, animal walks, step ups, star jumps etc.

Organising

This section includes activities that require motor sensory processing, balance and timing. These activities help improve focus and attention. The child needs to organise their body, plan their approach and do more than one thing at a time in sequential order.

Example activities: Balancing, climbing, log rolls, throwing to a target, wobble boards, weaving in and out of cones, throwing and catching, jumping through hoops etc.

Calming

The calming activities are very important as they provide input to ensure that children leave the circuit and return to their classrooms calm, centred and ready for the day ahead.

Webinars

A reminder that webinars from child and young people therapies are available to access here:

<https://www.buckshealthcare.nhs.uk/cyp/therapy/training-for-parents-early-years-and-school-staff/>