



## Effective Education Transitions Research Report

### Title

**Parent Survey – Effective Education Transitions  
November 2024**

### Author and contributors

Learning Ambition Priority Area 2 core group

### Aim(s)

To understand the views of parents and carers in relation to school transitions across all phases, sharing strengths and identifying potential gaps in support and provision, with considerations for further enhancements.

### Summary

In general, parents are very positive about the experiences of transition that they and their children have had. Information has been provided, there have been visit opportunities and transition events, and many parents expressed gratitude for the efforts that individual settings, schools and colleges have made in order to support children through these challenging periods. Any suggestions made for improvements were mostly expressed in positive terms.

There are always lessons to be learnt but there was little indication that elements of transition have been ignored, rather a request for more of what is already provided. Of course, the provision for transition has to be weighed against the loss of learning

time in the current setting. One suggestion reflected that experience elsewhere in the country saw each new school year begin prior to the school holidays so that the long summer break was not a time of increased anxiety prior to a change.

- A good response to this electronic survey was received with 500+ overall and more than half of those fully completed questionnaires.
- It is clear that a range of sources of information is provided for parents, although a large group indicated they would like more, particularly in the form of a booklet or welcome pack.
- It seems that less information is shared in relation to providing details about staff, clubs and behaviour/anti-bullying expectations. Requests for further information reflected this as well as timetable details, homework expectations and parent pay instructions.
- Transition days and visits are deemed to be the most effective transition activity at all ages and many parents expressed the view that their child(ren) would benefit from more.
- Parents value the opportunity to visit their child's new setting/school/college prior to joining, although many of these also indicated a desire to meet the teacher or a key staff member at this stage. As children get older, parents said they can feel they are not involved or are excluded from their child's education and transition.
- For many children, there is anxiety about the unknown around transition.
- Home visits for children joining school for the first time are seen as positive.
- Children travelling by bus would benefit from trying this out prior to the start of the new school year.
- There is a clear view that children with additional needs require (and are often provided with) greater support around transition but this is currently not consistently well provided.

For further consideration:

- How could children's anxiety around transition be further reduced?
- Could information for parents be collected in one place/pack for sharing? When is the optimal time for sharing this information?
- Could transition events be increased, for children and for parents or are there other ways of sharing information e.g. video tours, online staff information, virtual engagements?
- What is available for support with making school bus journeys and how could specific need be identified and targeted?
- How could current transition arrangements for children with additional needs be increased/enhanced?

## Methodology

Electronic survey advertised through Management Information sheet and direct contact with a range of organisations. Links to the survey shared via school newsletters. Survey open from 5<sup>th</sup> June to 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2024.

Survey included as Appendix 1

## Results/Analysis/Evaluation



510 responses (260 fully completed and 250 partially completed)

Question 1: Which transitions have you experienced (now or in the past)?

Pre-school to Reception year	202
Infant School to Junior School	98
Primary School to Secondary School	130
Secondary School to Post 16 (e.g. Sixth Form, College or Apprenticeship)	31
Class to class	120
Other e.g. mid-year move, school change	34*

\*Most of these were school changes

Question 2: Does your child have any identified additional needs?

Yes		30.35%	78
No		69.65%	179

Question 3: What have you been able to access in relation to transition?

Access to information was spread fairly evenly across the whole range of sources, with the notable exception of 'social media' which was by far the smallest proportion (5%) of the overall entries.

Source of information	% of overall entries
Information on the website of the current settings/schools/colleges	10.4
Information on the website of the new settings/schools/colleges	10.2
Information from social media sources	5
Friends and family	9.8
Information shared through your child	9
Communications sent out from the current settings/schools/colleges	11.4

Communications sent out from the new settings/schools/colleges	10.4
Events hosted by the current settings/schools/colleges (with or without your child)	9.1
Events hosted by the new settings/schools/colleges (with or without your child)	10
A document to complete providing information about your child (paper or electronic)	10.4
A face-to-face meeting with a staff member	7.6












It was interesting to note that there was variation across the points of transition. A face-to-face meeting with a staff member is most likely to happen when children first join school; of all entries for this category, almost half were for pre-school to Year R transition. For secondary to post-16 transition, this dropped to less than 5%.

Parents indicated that they were required to provide information relating to their child when they were first joining school and at the transition between primary and secondary.

As children move from class to class in the same school or college, it's perhaps not surprising that information sent out by the organisation and information shared through children themselves are more significant sources.

The greatest source of information for young people moving on from secondary to post-16 provision was reported to have been sent out by the new organisation.

#### 4. What practical information did you have/have you received that was useful in supporting you as a parent of a child going through a process of transition?

		% of the 247 responses to this question
Term dates		85.02%
School day information		77.33%
School meals		72.87%
Contact information (during and out of term time)		58.30%
Staff details		47.77%
Uniform		84.21%
Homework expectations		52.63%
Clubs		48.18%
Key dates		69.23%
Behaviour/anti-bullying expectations		49.80%
Attendance information		54.66%

## **What, if any, additional information would have been useful for you as a parent?**

In the order of the number of times these were mentioned:

- Weekly timetable information
- Contact details for the teacher or a link member of staff
- Homework expectations
- Anti-bullying information
- Details relating to transition day content in advance
- Parent pay
- Curriculum topic information
- After school clubs
- Exam information
- Support for parents to help them support their children
- Mental health support

## **What has been the most valuable transition activity for you and your child?**

193 respondents provided additional information in response to this question. Overwhelmingly, transitions days and sessions were viewed as the most positive activity for children, and events for parents to attend the new school closely followed this. Other things of note:

- A home visit (for children joining Year R)
- A Welcome Pack or Folder of Information collected into one place for parents to refer to over time
- Stay and Play sessions (for early years)
- Summer School provision

## **What information and/or opportunities would you like to be/have been offered prior to your child's transition?**

133 written comments were made. The greatest number related to a desire for parents to meet the teacher(s) during a visit to the school prior to transition.

A much smaller number of parents mentioned aspects such as transition days and booklets of information, suggesting that provision in this regard is in general sufficient. A trial run for bus journeys and a single login for all school-related online access were identified as being potentially helpful.

## **What one thing would you change?**

There was a clear view from parents across the transition points that they would like to receive information earlier and for there to be better communication from schools, settings and colleges. Information relating to the expectations of students from their new school in general and from teachers in particular was mentioned frequently, as was the desire for children starting school for the first time to have full days rather than half days, reflecting that many had already been attending pre-school settings full-time. A number of respondents expressed the view that the new academic year

should start before the summer holidays as this would reduce anxiety during the long summer break.

### **If any, what do you consider to be the barriers to positive transition?**

Communication was again mentioned frequently. The need to share information was exemplified through one plea in relation to PE kit: 'tell us if kit isn't needed for the first week, tell us what kit will be needed in each lesson, sending a small 11-year-old off on the bus with a heavy school bag and full PE kit (including 2 pairs of trainers/boots) is not a nice experience'.

The question also elicited responses referring to children's anxiety about the unknown. Some parents expressed the view that they felt excluded from or uninvolved in their child's education, increasingly as children got older.

## **Conclusion**

In general, parents are very positive about the experiences of transition that they and their children have had. Information has been provided, there have been visit opportunities and transition events, and many parents expressed gratitude for the efforts that individual settings, schools and colleges have made to support children through these challenging periods. Any suggestions made for improvements were mostly expressed in positive terms.

There are always lessons to be learnt but there was little indication that elements of transition have been ignored, rather a request for more of what is already provided. Of course, the provision for transition has to be weighed against the loss of learning time in the current setting. One suggestion reflected that experience elsewhere in the country saw each new school year begin prior to the school holidays so that the long summer break was not a time of increased anxiety prior to a change.

The recommendations are matters for consideration based on the volume of responses for that particular aspect of transition.

## **Recommendations/Next Steps**

For further consideration:

- How could children's anxiety around transition be further reduced?
- Could information for parents be collected in one place/pack for sharing? When is the optimal time for sharing this information?
- Could transition events be increased, for children and for parents or are there other ways of sharing information e.g. video tours, online staff information, virtual engagements?
- What is available for support with making school bus journeys and how could specific need be identified and targeted?

- How could current transition arrangements for children with additional needs be increased/enhanced?

## Appendices

### Appendix 1 – Survey questions

## It's your move!

### School Transition for Children (and Families)

Whether children are moving into school, between classes or schools or into colleges and beyond, families will be affected. There is already lots of support to ensure that these points of change are as smooth as possible. But we understand that improvement is always possible and we want to make sure that resources are used in the best way. In order to help us understand the views of parents and carers, we invite you to contribute through completing this survey.

Schools, academies, colleges, early years providers and the local authority have come together to look at a number of important areas linked to education in Norfolk and one of these is transition.

The responses you provide will be anonymous, unless you chose to provide contact details at the end. In parallel with this, we will also be consulting schools and other education organisations to understand their views. The survey should only take a few minutes to complete. Should you have any question about this survey, please contact [norfolklearningambition@norfolk.gov.uk](mailto:norfolklearningambition@norfolk.gov.uk)

Thank you for your support.

Which transitions have you experienced (now or in the past)?

Pre-school to Reception year

Infant School to Junior School

Primary School to Secondary School

Secondary School to Post 16 (e.g. Sixth Form, College or Apprenticeship)

Class to class

Other e.g. mid-year move, school change

Does your child have any identified additional needs? (e.g. SEND, emotional, physical needs)

Yes/No

What have you been able to access in relation to transition? Tick all that apply

Could this be in a grid so that each stage from above is across the top and then the following are choices are down the side?

Information on the website of the current setting/school/college

Information on the website of the new setting/school/college

Information from social media sources

Friends and family

Information shared through your child

Communications sent out from the current setting/school/college

Communications sent out from the new setting/school/college

Events hosted by the current setting/school/college (with or without your child)

Events hosted by the new setting/school/college (with or without your child)

A document to complete providing information about your child (paper or electronic)

A face-to-face meeting with a staff member

Other (please provide details)

What practical information did you/have you received that was useful in supporting you as a parent of a child going through a process of transition?

Term dates

School day information

School meals

Contact information (during and out of term time)

Staff details

Uniform

Homework expectations

Clubs

Key dates

Behaviour/anti-bullying expectations

Attendance information

What, if any, additional information would have been useful for you as a parent?

What has been the most valuable transition activity for you and your child?

What information and /or opportunities would you like to be/have been offered prior to your child's transition?

If you could change one thing about the transitions process, what would it be?

If any, what do you consider are the barriers to positive transition and do you have any suggestions about how these could be overcome?

What was most effective in helping your child to settle following transition (if this has previously happened)?