Smooth Moves:  
Making the Transition

Twenty ideas to help parents/carers support their child as they move from one school to another.

call: 01244 550217  visit: www.elfedhs.co.uk
Introduction

At Elfed High School our students benefit from our ‘Smooth Moves’ Transition Programme that encourages positive attitudes to learning in High School and builds confidence.

We enjoy working with children, families and our cluster of schools through the transition process.

This booklet will encourage and reassure parents and carers as they and their children prepare for their next step on their learning journey.

Rosemary Jones
Headteacher
Highlight the positive things about starting a new school.

Talk to your child about looking forward to:
• making new friends
• learning new subjects
• choosing their own food at lunchtime
• becoming more independent
• enjoying after school clubs

Talk to your child about more positive things to add to this list. Help your child to look forward to the positive things about changing school and avoid dwelling on worries.

‘Positive parenting’ is getting the right balance between the love we show for our children and giving them what they want.

A positive parent/carer:
• talks and listens
• is predictable and consistent

• sets clear boundaries
• rewards good behaviour
• deals with problems positively
• has realistic expectations
• builds self confidence
• understands changes as their children grow
• has the right balance between affection and control.

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What sort of role model are you providing for your child as they prepare for transition?

It’s not just about what you say, it’s also what you do.

Your child watches everything you do. The way you react to situations, and your attitude to school affect the way they think and behave.

Your actions and words don’t match up if, for example, you keep telling your child to make sure their school bag is packed and to be ready on time but are disorganised yourself.

As a parent/carer you are the most important role model for your child.

Actively listening is important to keep open communication between you and your child.

Give your child the opportunity to talk to you about the good things they are thinking about as well as any anxieties.

Keep talking with your child about how they are getting on, asking specific questions as well as general ones.
It is important to set aside time to spend with your child. ‘Quality time’ is time specially put aside for parents and children to spend together. As your child matures, this time will become less as they spend more time outside the family.

The best communication happens when you and your child are comfortable and enjoying activities together. As your child matures, this time will become less as they spend more time outside the family.

Children learn to express themselves when you create a positive atmosphere where feelings are shared. As children grow they become more independent as they are given more personal responsibility.

You will still be needed but your relationship with your child will begin to change. The transition to another school is a milestone in this move to independence. It is important that you continue to support your child to manage themselves and their belongings. Although they might appear to be more grown up they still need your emotional support and guidance.
Expectations and boundaries have changed as your child has grown up and will continue to change as your child becomes more independent.

We feel safe living in an environment where there are clear boundaries and expectations. By agreeing the boundaries with parents/carers children can help take ownership of them and feel responsible for keeping to them.

Your child will feel positive about boundaries if they are:

- clearly there to support and protect them
- appropriate to their age
- consistently supported by parents/carers

Your child will benefit from consistency and will respect this as the norm.

When changes occur your child will need reassurance and some time to adjust. It is important that you are positive in your approach to managing change.

It is important that your child has the same message from all the adults who influence them. This might mean that you need to discuss and agree the boundaries with other family members and friends.
As a parent/carer you will be aware of the changes that puberty brings to body shape, hair growth, sleep patterns and brain development.

This happens throughout adolescence and can affect young peoples’ behaviour, mood and outlook on life.

Your child’s new school will provide you with the information you need to support transition.

Things you will want to know about might include:

- subjects they will learn
- contact information for key staff
- uniform and equipment
- expectations and rewards

- homework
- after school clubs
- holiday dates and calendar of events
- instructions for the first day

There is also plenty of information available online to parents/carers from agencies outside school to help you make the right choices for your child.
Buy uniform and equipment in good time

Find out about the uniform and equipment needed for the new school and buy the items you need in advance.

Reassure your child that they have everything they need.

Ask the school about how to apply for a uniform grant and where to find second hand equipment.

Plan the journey to and from school

Plan the journey to school and make a practice run before the term starts.

Here are some things to find out before term starts:

- What are the times for the beginning and end of the school day?
- How will your child contact you if they are going to be late?
- Will they travel with a sibling or friend?

Walking
- What is the best route and how long will it take?

Car
- Where can we park near the school?
- How long will the journey take at peak times?

Train / Bus
- Where will they catch the train/bus?
- What is the timetable?
- How much does it cost? Do they have a pass?
Talk to your child about positive friendships.

Encourage your child to be involved in local clubs and activities to meet new friends. Avoid judging their friends.

There are easy steps to reassure your child and to take a positive approach to building new relationships.

Here are some tips you can share with your child:

- Be friendly, talk to people, go to clubs and make friends
- Be confident as you walk around the school
- Don’t get involved in arguments with people who don’t share your views
- Keep calm and avoid conflict
- Keep your sense of humour
- Tell a teacher or talk about it at home if you feel something is wrong that might be to do with bullying.

There are lots of excellent resources about avoiding bullying online and elsewhere.

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It can be very helpful for your child to have an older brother or sister at the new school.

Be aware that the older brother/sister might feel that having a younger sibling at school might ‘cramp their style’. It will be helpful to talk about this possibility with your children. Try not to force support because this might put pressure on the relationship between your children.

Discuss with your child when homework should be done.

Keep to a routine and organise a space at home where your child is undisturbed, with access to a computer with internet along with paper, pens and coloured pencils.

Make sure that you know when homework is given. Spend time helping your child with homework but avoid doing it for them.

Showing an interest in what children are learning can be very encouraging.

There will be more homework than in the past and it might be more challenging. Let the school know if you are concerned about homework to avoid any unnecessary pressure.
Having a healthy breakfast will set your child up for the day ahead and help concentration until break or lunchtime.

You might like to take advantage of the school Breakfast Club if there is one. Your child might be eligible for free school meals and details of how to apply are available from the school.

The school will provide a good range of meals including vegetarian options. Children have a choice of food and take responsibility for what they eat. Discuss healthy food choices and encourage a healthy diet.

Packed lunch allows you to have more control over what your child eats. It takes more planning and preparation.

Agree what happens if things don’t go as planned.

For example:

- Alternative ways home if you miss the bus
- How to pay if you lose your bus pass
- Who to ask if you get lost in school
- What to do is you lose your dinner money
- Who to tell if you feel that someone is being unkind
- Where to go if you feel ill at school
- What happens if you forget PE kit or other equipment
- What to do if you want to stay for an after school club.

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This is a very special day that will go better if you and your child have planned for it in advance.

Encourage your child to get plenty of sleep and eat a good breakfast. Set off in plenty of time. Be positive.

Make planning fun and have a relaxing and enjoyable summer holiday.

Useful Contacts

For more information visit www.castcymru.org.uk or elfedhs.co.uk