### ****Choosing a Secondary School****

Starting secondary school is a big step, and choosing the right school is an important part of the process. Here’s how you can plan ahead:

#### **The Application Process**

* In Year 6, you’ll receive a preference form to list your chosen schools. The deadline for returning this form is typically in November.
* If you don’t get your preferred school, there’s an appeals process with clear deadlines. For advice about appeals, contact Shropshire SENDIASS.

#### **Things to Consider When Choosing a School**

* **Check the Ofsted report**: Visit the Ofsted Reports website or call 0300 123 4234 to request a copy.
* **Request policies**: Ask schools for their SEN and anti-bullying policies.
* **Visit schools**: Attend open days or arrange visits to meet staff, including the SENCo (Special Educational Needs Coordinator).

#### **What to Look for During a Visit**

* Are you made to feel welcome?
* Do staff show an interest in your child’s needs?
* Is the school calm, well-organised, and inclusive?
* Are different cultures and religions represented?

#### **Questions to Ask During a Visit**

* What SEN support does the school provide?
* Who can my child talk to if they’re worried?
* Are staff trained to support children with additional needs?
* What support is available for navigating the school (e.g., visual timetables or buddy systems)?
* Can the school arrange extra visits before my child starts?
* Can my child access after-school clubs?

#### **For Children with an EHCP**

If your child has an EHCP, their Year 5 Annual Review should include discussions about secondary school options.

* Focus on local schools, as these are the most likely to be offered.
* Take your child’s EHCP and Annual Review reports to visits.
* Ask specific questions about how the school will meet your child’s needs and discuss any necessary arrangements.

Key points to remember:

* EHCP provisions must be in place from Day 1 at the new school.
* Both primary and secondary schools should work together to share information and ensure a smooth transition.