

Moving Up to Secondary School

Starting secondary school is a big step for every child, and planning ahead can help make the transition smoother.

When Should You Start Planning?

The **autumn term of Year 5** is a good time to begin considering your child's move to secondary school. If your child has an **Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHCP)**, discussions about secondary school can start at their Year 5 Annual Review.

Things to consider include:

- The size of the school.
- Accessibility (e.g., stairs or lifts).
- Distance from home.
- The school's special educational needs (SEN) provision.

Visiting schools will give you a better understanding of their environment and how they could support your child. Keep an open mind, prepare specific questions, and take note of your impressions.

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 deadlines for submission. For advice about appeals, contact **Shropshire SENDIASS**.

Choosing a School

When selecting a school, it can be helpful to:

- **Check the Ofsted report:** Visit [Ofsted Reports](#) or call **0300 123 4234** for a printed copy.
- **Request information:** Ask schools for their SEN policy and anti-bullying policy.
- **Visit schools:** Attend open days or arrange a visit to meet staff, including the school's SENCo (Special Educational Needs Coordinator).

Things 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 other cultures and religions represented?

Questions to Ask During a Visit

- What SEN support does the school provide?
- Who can my child go to if they're worried?
- Are staff trained in additional needs?
- How will my child be supported in school?
- Can the school arrange extra visits before my child starts?
- What support is available for navigating the school (e.g., visual timetables or buddy systems)?
- 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 most likely to be offered. Gather as much information as possible to make an informed decision.

When visiting schools:

- Take your child's EHCP and recent Annual Review reports.
- Make a list of questions about how the school can meet your child's needs.
- Discuss specific arrangements with staff to ensure your child feels supported.

Both your child's primary and secondary schools should work together to plan the transition. This includes sharing information and arranging visits to the new school.

Key Points:

- EHCP provisions must be in place from Day 1 at the secondary school.
- Progress should be monitored, and adjustments made if needed in consultation with the Local Authority.

Sharing What You Know

As a parent, you know your child best. Share information about their:

- Strengths and interests.

- Strategies that have worked well in the past.
- Challenges and how they've been supported.
- Professionals involved in their care.

This information can help the new school's SENCo and teachers provide tailored support.

Special Educational Needs Code of Practice

Schools and Local Authorities are required to follow the procedures outlined in the Government's **SEN Code of Practice**. You can download a copy at: [SEND Code of Practice](#).

Planning ahead and working closely with schools will help ensure a smooth transition for your child. For further advice and support, contact **Shropshire SENDIASS**.

Supporting Your Child's Transition to Secondary School

The move to secondary school can feel overwhelming for many children, but there are lots of practical steps you can take to help them feel prepared and confident in the year leading up to the change.

- **Practice the journey:** Visit the new school together in Year 6 to get familiar with the route and how long it takes. If a friend is going to the same school, they can practice the journey together.
- **Build routines:** Work out a morning schedule with your child so they know what time they'll need to wake up and how to get ready for school on time.
- **Get organised:**
 - Prepare school items the night before to reduce stress in the morning.
 - Use a copy of the timetable to ensure the right books, equipment, or sports kit are ready for the day ahead. Colour-coded folders can be helpful for organising lessons.
- **Plan lunch choices:** If possible, look at the lunch menu together to make decisions in advance.
- **Reassure them:** Remind your child that their peers are also adjusting and may share similar worries.
- **Know where to turn:** Make sure your child knows who they can talk to at school and at home if they have any concerns.

Here's a rewritten version of your text, keeping it clear, supportive, and aligned with your brand voice:

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Settling In

Once your child has started at their new secondary school, it's a good idea to meet with school staff to discuss how they're adjusting and address any issues.

Here are some questions you might want to ask during a meeting:

- How often is my child's learning assessed, and how is this done?
- Has any important information about my child been passed on from their primary school? Is there anything I can share that might help identify the right support?
- How will the support my child received in primary school continue at secondary school?
- How can I stay involved in my child's learning?
- What external agencies or services are available to the school if needed?

Helping your child settle into secondary school is a journey, but by staying involved and maintaining open communication, you can help make the transition as smooth as possible.