



# TRANSITION INTO SCHOOL POLICY

## 1. Introduction & Objectives

1.1. This document outlines Hartmore School's Transition into School Policy. It is a statement of intent. It reminds us all of what the school is trying to achieve. Its primary objectives are:

- Establishes a clear philosophical and theoretical framework for transition
- To provide a working document that details information about transitions into school
- Provides a useful set of guidelines for teachers, registered managers, carers and parents
- Encourages a common approach within Hartmore School

## 2. Rationale & Common Issues

2.1. As a basis from our practice around Transition into School we understand that 'Getting off on' the right foot is essential to longer-term educational success.

2.2. Our experience suggests that the pupil that we are presented with does not always match the pupil in the paperwork we have received. Our risk assessment and planned strategies to keep a pupil safe based on the paperwork may need to be changed.

2.2.1. This is especially important when assessing the risks of taking pupils off site. The existing group they join will be 'learning outside the classroom' on a number of occasions in a full week (for example PE and outdoor education). Where pupils present a risk of absconding they would immediately be placed at greater risk if we were to take them out before we had built up any kind of relationship with them. This results in a choice of placing them at risk or keeping them in school and them missing out on something the rest of their class is doing straight away. Immediately given the sense that they are not trusted or not fully part of the school. A transition allows us to avoid these sessions and introduce them as we develop our relationship and ability to keep pupils safe.

2.3. Coming into the school gradually allows the pupils to meet pupils and staff without the pressure of the academic work. If the first things they have to do on entry to school is English and Maths before we have built any relationship with a pupil it can 'go wrong' right from the start making it difficult to engage them in academic work in the future.

2.4. New pupils can't form relationships simply sitting side-by-side working in class. They need to chat and ask questions of each other. Transition allows us to do this without huge disruption to the normal lessons for the existing pupils. Positive interactions outside of normal lessons can help pupils support each other in class.

2.5. Transition also allows time for the teachers to work with the existing pupils without the new pupil to answer their questions about them and allows the teacher time to coach the other pupils on the difficulties of starting in a new school of helping them to understand and support the new pupil.

2.6. Transition creates opportunities to develop a pupil as a buddy in school building on observed positive interactions between pupils.

2.7. Transition allows the existing pupils in the school and in the class to adjust slowly to the new pupil (who is not automatically going to settle). This can lead to further problems if the existing pupils take a dislike to the new pupil in these first few days. (A new pupil in class has often resulted in a big increase in number of incidents in a



class. Even a very settled class where all pupils are currently making good progress can become very unsettled and place existing educational success of all the other pupils at risk.

2.8. Other pupils can be very 'over protective' of 'their staff' and any confrontational or negative behaviour from a new pupil (Which we might expect from any new pupil to the school) can result in negative behaviour and attitudes from the existing pupil being directed at the new pupil. This adds even more pressure to the incoming pupil to fit in immediately and can lead to the new pupil feeling unwelcome or even frightened about coming to school.

2.9. Where pupils have been out of school for any period starting with a full week can be exhausting which can result in further difficulties in school and at home.

2.10. Where pupils arrive with little and sometimes no educational levels in their paperwork a transition allows teachers to start to assess where they think a pupil is. Every transaction, every observation allows us to glean vital information to allow us to put work of the right level in front of pupils straight away. Rather than by trial and error. If we get it wrong they immediately get a sense that we are one more school with no idea who they are or how they learn.

2.11. If teachers are guessing at levels or relying on judgements from previous schools we will almost certainly get the levels and/or learning styles wrong leaving us needing to 'dig ourselves out of the hole before we can get back to where we could have been with a successful transition.

2.12. This vital assessment period for the school allows for the class teacher to pull together all their observations and share these with all staff who interact with the pupil at different times to ensure as many new relationships as possible get off on the right foot.

2.13. Leaving much of the academic work to later in the transition allows pupils who struggle with academic work to have lots of opportunities to be successful with us before they have to tackle the work they struggle with. It also allows staff to build relationships with them to allow them to support successfully ... ("I helped you get to the top of a mountain yesterday ... I can help you do this bit of maths").

2.14. Transition allows us to introduce the lunchtimes slowly which present a whole different set of relationships and opportunities and challenges for the new pupil.

### 3. Specific Aims

3.1 This Transition into School Policy has a series of very specific aims:

- To ensure a positive start to a new pupils education at Hartmore school
- To enable the staff in the school to keep the pupil safe
- To allow the new pupil opportunities to build relationships
- To allow existing pupils time to adjust to the new pupil
- To make all initial interactions with staff and pupils as positive as possible
- To allow the new pupil to adjust gradually to the new environment
- To give the opportunity for the pupil to enjoy immediate successes
- To allow staff to assess levels and learning styles
- To allow school to be responsive and reactive to a new pupils needs

### 4. Specific Guidelines

3.1 This Transition into School Policy has a series of very specific guidelines to be followed:

- Transitions will **normally** be carried out over a three week period.
- These three weeks will build the time spent in school from 8 hours (approx.) in week one, to 16 hours (approx.) in week 2, to 24 hours (approx.) in week three ... leading to a full week in week four.



- The school will plan these first weeks very carefully based on the pupils interests/talents/favourite subjects/risk assessment.
- Each pupil will have an individual, personalised transition into school plan within three days of receiving the placement plan and risk assessment from the home.
- This plan will be shared and agreed with the house manager, foster care, parent or placing authority representative before the transition begins.
- Every effort will be made to stick to the plan and changes will be avoided whenever possible. However, there may be circumstances in which either school or 'home' may feel that the plan needs to be changed in which case either party should arrange a meeting as soon as possible to make amendments to the plan to ensure the plan is meeting the pupil's needs and the stated aims of the transition.

## 5. Alternative Plans

5.1. There are circumstances in which the 'normal' transition, as outlined above, might not be appropriate for an individual. (A pupil who has been out of school for a long time or who is school phobic may need a longer transition or for a pupil who has been full time in mainstream school with no issues a shorter transition may seem appropriate).

5.2. If, for whatever reason parent/carer or/or placing authority feel that the '**normal**' transition plan outlined above is **NOT** appropriate for an individual pupil they should contact the Headteacher as soon as possible. They should state, in writing, (letter or email) why they think that the transition (as outlined above) is not appropriate and arrange a meeting with the Headteacher to agree an alternative plan.

## 6. Review

This Transition into School Policy was last reviewed April 2019 and will be reviewed again in April 2020.