



GUIDELINES ON TRANSITIONS (Care)

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	Date	By	Changes Made
Most Recent Review	03.05.23	K Chandler	Minor additions – more care specific due to transitions also being covered in Admissions and Careers & Future Pathways Policies

1. INTRODUCTION

Many of our pupils experience difficulty in coping with change, and this challenge is often apparent when they are confronted with transitions. The daily routine of our pupils is punctuated with transitions as they move from one environment to another and from one activity to the next.

Pupils can find it difficult to shift their attention from one task to another and to manage changes to their routines. Due to the difficulties they experience when processing new information and organising their perceptions they are often reliant upon familiar routines and activities. All staff are therefore required to be aware of the strategies and techniques that can be used to support our pupils in reducing transition related anxieties. The purpose of this policy is to outline our approaches and practices in this area. Refer to 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' 2023.

2. TYPES OF TRANSITION

Many of our pupils have severe and complex learning difficulties which means that transitions and change can be very difficult for them. We therefore need to ensure that transitions are planned and managed in such a way as to understand and meet individual pupil requirements. This support is provided from their arrival as new

pupils to the time that they transition to adult (or other) places, as well as being incorporated into their daily routine throughout their care and education at Sheiling School.

2.1. Transition to Sheiling School

The first and most significant transition experienced by our pupils is the move from their previous provision / home / school setting to the Sheiling School. This is a major change, and pupils are supported as much as possible. This initial transition requires careful preparation in close collaboration with parents and carers, current teaching staff, respite care staff (where relevant) and any other professionals involved in the pupil's care and education.

Once a referral has been made, the prospective pupil's parents / carers visit Sheiling School, accompanied by the young person (where appropriate). Other key staff such as social workers, current class teachers and educational psychologists are welcome to accompany them on the visit. Staff from Sheiling School meet with the prospective pupil prior to acceptance of a placement to help assess whether we would be a suitable provision and, if so, to assist in our understanding of how to best meet the pupil's needs during the transition period. Depending on the individual needs of the young person this meeting may take place during a visit to Sheiling School or in the child's home or school.

If the decision is made that Sheiling School can meet the pupil's needs a suitable house (if the placement is residential) and class will be allocated. Decisions regarding suitability are made taking into account a variety of considerations such as noise levels, class size and peer compatibility.

Following an offer of placement we send out the following documentation:

- **Welcome pack:** this document contains photos of the school, the new pupil's classroom, teacher and key workers etc. along with names and a Social Story to assist in familiarisation prior to their arrival. If the child is also moving into our residential care provision, the care team will send an additional Welcome Pack, relating to the house they will be living in.
- **Online parent / carer Questionnaire:** this document helps us to identify specific needs in order to compile a Positive Behaviour Support Plan and Risk Assessment which will be used, in part, to assist in transitions.
- **Pre-admission Information Form:** this document provides useful overview and context regarding the young person's medical history, childhood development and needs and is used to help build a picture of their requirements around, among other things, transitions.

Once all of the requisite documentation has been completed and returned, a Placement Finalisation Meeting is arranged and a provisional start date agreed upon. The meeting offers the opportunity for everyone involved in the pupil's care and education to come together and ensure that everything is in place for when they start. Participants may include care staff, former teaching staff, parents / carers, social workers, key workers, local authority representatives and other relevant professionals. During the meeting, as well as during ongoing discussions between relevant parties, the following will be discussed and agreed:

- The length and nature of the transition required by the individual pupil
- The number of visits to be made by Sheiling School staff
- The number, days and times of visits to be made by the pupil
- Full details of the transition in terms of: timetable, staffing, shared resources etc.

A detailed plan with the above details will be agreed on and overseen by the admissions coordinator.

2.2. Transitions within Sheiling School

A variety of transitions take place throughout the school day. Examples include:

- **Arrival at school in the morning:** this could either be from the residential houses or via taxi or parent / carer transport.
- **Within the house:** going from room to room
- **In school:** going from the classroom to Swimming, Craft Workshops or Therapies; moving from one room to another within the same building or into another building.
- **Between home and school:** pupils move from home to school and back twice every day, and for some this can still be a difficult transition.
- **Going offsite:** most pupils frequently go off site to go for walks, visit the shops, or access a variety of community facilities.
- **Going home:** some residential pupils go home for holidays and some weekends.

Transitions also occur within structured routines, such as moving from one activity to another. Here the pupil is confronted not only with a change of environment but also with a different activity. Pupils may experience many changes in routines and timetables on a daily and weekly basis. Some are familiar and form part of their daily routines, but others may be unpredictable due to unforeseen circumstances, such as the swimming pool being out of order. These are often more difficult for the pupil with ASD to cope with.

2.3. Transition from the Sheiling School

Pupils experience another major life change when the time comes for them to leave Sheiling School and join an adult or alternative placement. This can present a great challenge for all pupils, particularly those with ASD.

Pupils are encouraged to be aware of, and to be actively involved in, their progress towards their future placement. This is implemented through individual Pupil Progress Reviews with the class teacher and pupil attendance and contributions at annual reviews, as well as being supported within the Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural (SMSC) curriculum. Pupils also receive careers guidance, including input from an external advisor.

From the age of 14 transitions are discussed as part of the Annual Review process. The process is undertaken with great care and allows plenty of time to enable all involved. As the time to transition approaches, further Transition Meetings are held to agree a strategy to suit the individual's needs. This is in line with the Special Educational Needs and Disability Code of Practice 0-25 years (2014).

If living in one of our residential homes, a bespoke 'Preparing for Change' plan is developed and followed, to ensure a successful move for the individual.

2.4. Transition to Adult or other new Placements

Once a new placement has been identified and a leaving date has been agreed, the pupil (where appropriate), their parents / carers and school staff will visit the prospective placement. A visit will also be arranged for staff from the new placement to meet with Sheiling School staff, during which a copy of the pupil's Care Plan, school reports and therapy passports will be shared. A plan for the transition will be agreed between Sheiling School staff, parents / carers, social workers and the new placement which will state:

- the length of transition required by the pupil
- the number of visits to the new placement that the pupil should make (if appropriate)
- how long new placement staff should 'shadow' key workers
- whether the pupil is to have any overnight stays / who is going to support them
- whether, on the day of the move, parents / carers, key workers are to accompany the pupil to help settle them in.

All relevant staff are informed of the transition date to allow time for the preparation of all the necessary documentation and arrangements. Sheiling School ensures that new placements receive as much helpful information as possible to support a smooth transition whilst ensuring that appropriate permissions and consent are in place.

Documents shared with ongoing placement may include:

- Speech and Language Report
- Occupational Therapy Report
- Current education /care reports
- Positive Behaviour Support Plan and Risk Assessment (PBSPRA)
- Care Plan

3. TRANSITION STRATEGIES

It is inevitable that pupils encounter transitions, so strategies can be designed and implemented which maximise pupil support and help create predictability and positive routines around change.

When Transition Strategies are used:

- Before a change takes place (in preparation for change)
- During transition (e.g.: using a transitional object)
- After transition (e.g.: placing a transition card at the entrance to a room)

What Transition Strategies are used:

- Clear verbal instruction accompanied by signing can be sufficient in supporting a pupil to progress to the next activity. It may need to be repeated during the transition.
- Visual timetables: these help pupils to make sense of time sequences and to adjust to the beginning and end of activities.
- 'Redline' or 'strikethrough' cards are used as part of a visual timetable and can also help pupils to adjust when a planned activity is cancelled unexpectedly.
- Visual timetable pictures and photos can also be used as 'transition cues', where the pupil can take an activity card off the schedule (e.g. folk dancing symbol) and match it to a card outside the area where the activity takes place (e.g. Thorn Hall). This practice also helps pupils become more independent and gain confidence with transitions.
- Many pupils carry a karabiner showing symbols or photos for their daily timetable. These can be shown throughout the day to convey what is happening 'now' and what will be 'next'. This helps them to prepare for transitions.
- Objects of reference (OoR): an object representing an activity can be shown or given to a pupil to help prepare them for transition to the next activity. The object can then be carried during the transition.