



**CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & LEARNING SERVICES**  
**Special Educational Needs (SEN)**



**Transfer to  
Secondary School  
for children with  
Statements of SEN**

# **Secondary Transfer – Guide for Parents of Children with Statements of Special Educational Needs**

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Please note that the secondary transfer procedure described in this booklet is only for children who have Statements of SEN.

**The Pan-London Co-ordinated Admission System does not apply and you should not use the Common Application Form if your child has a Statement of Special Educational Needs**

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# Transfer to Secondary School

**For many children, particularly those with special educational needs, the prospect of moving to secondary school can be daunting. We also appreciate that many parents will find the secondary transfer process stressful and that they will be anxious about whether their child will be happy at a new school.**

We hope that the information in this booklet will help to guide you through the secondary transfer process for children with Statements and help to alleviate any anxiety.



To supplement the information in this booklet we will also arrange some information meetings to go through the process and to give parents an opportunity to ask any questions they may have. These meetings are held either late in the Spring Term or early Summer Term.

Our Team of SEN Assessment Officers is available to answer individual queries about your child. Contact details for the Assessment Officers are enclosed with this booklet. We are always happy to make an appointment to meet with you if that would help. (If you live outside of Sutton and your child has a Statement of special educational needs, please contact the SEN Team within the LA (Local Authority) in which you live.)

## Sutton Parent Partnership Service



You may wish to contact the Sutton Parent Partnership Service. This Service is part of Sutton's Children, Young People and Learning Services, but offers impartial information and support for parents and carers of children and young people with special educational needs. They can be contacted at:

Sutton Parent Partnership Service, Stonecourt, 2 North Street, Carshalton, Surrey, SM5 2HU

Telephone : 020 8640 4541 or Email : [spps@suttonlea.org](mailto:spps@suttonlea.org)

## Timescales for SEN Secondary Transfer

It is important to plan ahead for children with Statements of SEN and in the Local Authority we begin to think about possible options for secondary schools when pupils are in Year 5. We have set out below some key stages in the process, which we hope will help to clarify the timescales involved



### Year 5

#### April/May – Parents Information Meetings

We arrange two information meetings (one day, one evening) for parents with children in Year 5 who have SEN Statements. Although we cover the information contained in this booklet, it will give you an opportunity to meet other parents and ask any general questions that you may have.



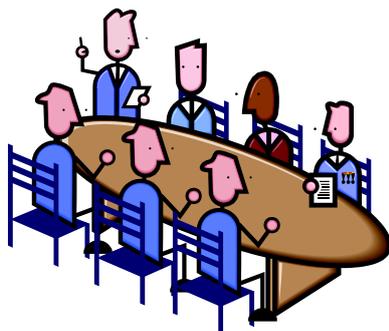
We cannot deal with queries about individual children but if issues arise, we can take details and contact you later. We will write to parents with details of the date and time of these meetings.

#### February to May - Year 5 Annual Review

Schools are requested to arrange Year 5 Annual Reviews before the end of May so that the review report can be sent to the Local Authority before the half term. This report is considered at a Year 5 Panel.

### **June – Year 5 Panel**

The Local Authority considers the Year 5 Annual Review Reports at a special ‘Year 5 Panel’. This Panel helps the Local Authority to identify the type of secondary school that children may require and assists with planning ahead for the number of specialist placements that may be needed.



Following this Panel, we may make a preliminary approach to particular secondary schools to find out whether they feel they could meet your child’s needs. We may have to make this early approach if there is pressure on places at a particular school or if there is an early deadline for applications as with some out-borough schools. We will let you know if we do this, but it is important to note that no final school placement decisions are made at this stage.

### **June/July – Sutton Secondary School’s Visit Days**

During the second half of the Summer term, a number of secondary schools in Sutton will set aside some days for visits by parents of pupils who have Statements of SEN.

We will write to parents with specific details of the dates and times. We hope this will give parents a better opportunity to meet with staff and ask about SEN provision, than would otherwise be possible at the more crowded school open evenings in the Autumn.

### **June/July – Response to Year 5 Review**

The Local Authority (LA) will respond to the Year 5 Annual Review after the Year 5 Panel and we will let you know what type of provision we think would be suitable for your child. Again, it is emphasised that no final decisions are made at this stage.

### **July – Statements Updated**

During the Summer, we will begin to update your child’s Statement in preparation for transfer to secondary school. We will use the Year 5 Annual review information to help to ensure that the Statement reflects your child’s current needs.



Because of the numbers involved, we cannot update all Statements at the same time, but as soon as we have completed your child's update, we will send you a 'proposed amended Statement' for you to comment on.

## Year 6

### September / Early October – School Open Evenings

Mainstream schools hold their general open evenings during this period. Dates and times for Sutton Schools are available in the general booklet published by Sutton for secondary transfer.



### September / October – Parental Preference

When the schools return after the Summer holiday they will have received the SEN Secondary Transfer Forms from the LA. Your child's school will then contact you to arrange a meeting with the Headteacher and/or the SENCO for you jointly to complete this form. A blank copy is enclosed with this booklet – this is just for information.

You will see that the form asks you to state your First and Second preferences for a secondary school for your child. **You should NOT use the Common Application Form which is part of the Pan London Co-ordinated Admission Process.**

### Mid October

### SEN Secondary Transfer Form to be returned

Once you have had your meeting with the Headteacher or SENCO, your child's school will return the completed SEN Secondary Transfer form with your school preferences to the LA. We will inform schools of the final date for submission of these forms but it is usually around the middle of October.



### **Mid October – Consultation with 1<sup>st</sup> Preference School**

As soon as we receive your school preferences, we will begin the process of formal consultation with schools for a place for your child. If your first preference school is a Sutton maintained (state) school, we will consult with that school. If your preference is for an out-borough maintained school, we may still wish to consult with suitable schools within Sutton. If we have any concerns about your first preference school, we will let you know. For example, if your first preference is for an independent school, we will not consult with this school unless all options for placement within Sutton have been fully explored. We will use your child's proposed amended Statement to consult with prospective schools.

### **Mid November – Meeting with Secondary Headteachers**

During November we will meet with Sutton Secondary Heads to discuss admission of children with SEN Statements to mainstream secondary schools and bases. In many cases admission is agreed without any difficulties but in a few cases further issues may need to be resolved before placement can be confirmed.

### **November/December – School places confirmed to LA**

Once we have received responses to the school consultations, assuming there are no issues to resolve, we will confirm the offer of placement with you without delay. If there are any problems, we will let you know, at which point we may consult with your second preference school as an alternative.

We will also let you know if, for any reason, we are unable to agree with your first preference school. In these circumstances, we will let you know why we do not agree and inform you of our proposals for your child's secondary placement. If this situation arises, we may ask to meet with you to discuss the issues involved.

### **January/February – LA confirms placements to parents**

As placements are agreed by schools, we will send out formal offers to parents. We will ask you to confirm your acceptance and once this is received we will make a final amendment to your child's Statement to name the secondary school agreed for the following September.

### **15<sup>th</sup> February – Deadline for issue of Final Statement**

We are required under the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs to issue all final Statements for secondary transfer by the 15<sup>th</sup> February prior to transfer. In most cases, parents will have received the final Statement well before this date.



Sometimes, if we have not been able to agree with you the school to be named, we may issue a final Statement naming the school proposed by the LA. In these circumstances you will have right of appeal to the Special Educational Needs & Disability Tribunal (SENDIST). We will give you information about your appeal rights and there is also further information about the appeals process in this booklet.

In a very few cases there may be unforeseen circumstances that prevent us from naming a school on a final Statement by 15<sup>th</sup> February; if this happens we will keep in touch with you to let you know what is happening and we may issue a Statement naming a type of school.

### **February/March - Secondary Schools invited to Year 6 Reviews**

Your child's primary school will invite a representative from the named secondary school to attend the Year 6 Annual Review. This will give an opportunity to deal with any concerns about transition to secondary and for the new school to plan ahead to meet your child's special educational needs.

It will also give you an opportunity to ask any questions that you may have about support in the secondary school, which is often arranged very differently from the primary sector.

### **March/May – Year 6 Reviews returned to LA**

The report from the Year 6 Annual Review is returned to the LA for a response.

### **March/June – LA responds to Year 6 Reviews**

The LA respond to any queries raised in the Year 6 Annual Review to ensure that everything is in place to support you child when she/he starts at the new school in September.

### **July – Pupil records forwarded to Secondary School**

Your child's primary school will forward the pupil record folder to the secondary school in time for the new term.





## Options for Secondary School



**Early in Year 6 you will be asked to let the LA know your preferred secondary school for your child. For many, the nearest mainstream school will be the obvious choice, but you should consider other possibilities as well. To find out about other options, you should do some homework, but where do you begin.....**

### **The Year 5 Annual Review**

The process begins with the Year 5 Annual Review held by your child's current school. This will probably be held late in the Spring Term or early Summer Term. It is important that you try to attend this review, as this is when secondary provision for your child will first be considered.

School staff will be happy to discuss the type of secondary school that would be appropriate for your child's needs, although they can not make recommendations about individual schools. If it is impossible for you to attend on the proposed date, ask the school if it would be possible to arrange an alternative date for the review.

The LA will try to send a representative from the SEN Team and other professionals may also be present, or have sent in reports to be considered. This is your opportunity to seek the advice of those involved with your child's education on the type of provision likely to be needed for the secondary phase, and you can ask about the range of options that you can consider before you decide on your particular preference for a secondary school.

## **Mainstream Schools**

The majority of children with Statements of SEN are educated in mainstream schools and the law assumes that with the right strategies and support most children with special educational needs can be included successfully at a mainstream school. For a minority of pupils, mainstream schooling may not be appropriate.

## **Denominational (Faith) Schools**

You may wish to nominate a Denominational School as your preference for a secondary school. In Sutton there are two Catholic comprehensive schools (one boys, one girls) and one selective Church of England school.

There is no legal requirement for you to be a practising member of the relevant faith to seek a place for your child in a Denominational School, but you should bear in mind that the curriculum is delivered within the framework of a religious ethos and you and your child would need to be comfortable with this.

## **Selective Schools**

If you are considering a selective school for your child, it would probably be helpful to seek views from your child's current school SENCO on whether the level and pace of work would be appropriate.

All applicants for selective schools, including those with Statements of SEN, must meet the admission criteria and sit the appropriate admission test.



**It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that children are entered at the correct time for tests for selective schools.**

Information about the tests is contained in the general brochure for Secondary Transfer. If you need further advice about this, please contact the school(s) concerned.

## **Independent Mainstream Schools**

Some parents may prefer to send their child to an independent (fee paying) mainstream school. The LA will not meet the cost of the fees for such a placement as it is likely that your child's needs can be met in a maintained (state) school.

## **Specialist Bases in Mainstream Schools**

Some mainstream schools have specialist bases which enable the provision of specialist support within the context of a mainstream school.

Information about mainstream schools in Sutton and the specialist bases is enclosed.

## **Maintained Special Schools**

Some children may benefit from a place in a special school rather than a mainstream school. Special schools generally cater for a range of different needs and many now admit children with more complex needs than in previous years and some have additional specialist provision.

Sutton LA has three special schools, details of which are enclosed. Other neighbouring authorities also have their own special school provision. Like other LAs, Sutton will wish to consider options for placement within our own special schools before considering schools in other areas or those in the independent sector.

If your preference is for a maintained special school in another LA area we will consult with both the school and the LA (as we are required to do) but places are often allocated well in advance to children who live within the area of the maintaining LA.

## **Independent and Non-Maintained Special Schools**

Parents have a right to make representations for an independent or a non-maintained special school. These two types of schools have a different legal status but both are fee paying schools. If your preference is for a fee paying special school, we will also wish to consider whether any local maintained schools could also meet your child's needs, since the costs involved are likely to be much lower. We will only approach a fee paying school if we are satisfied that no local maintained school can meet your child's special educational needs.

We will not agree to a fee-paying placement if your child's needs can be met at a maintained school and this is a more efficient use of the Local Authority's resources.

## **What if your Child already attends a Specialist School?**

If your child already attends a special school where the provision continues into the secondary age range, it may be appropriate for your child to continue at the same school. However, we will consider whether there are options for a change of school in Year 7 and whether this would be beneficial.

## **Visiting Schools**

There are a number of opportunities to visit prospective secondary schools. Some mainstream schools in Sutton are able to offer specific days for visits during the Summer Term.



Early in the Autumn Term, schools will have their general open evenings for parents considering secondary placements. The dates for the coming year are listed in the Transfer to Secondary School brochure.

If you are considering special schools, contact individual schools to find out what arrangements they have for visits. You can also obtain individual school prospectuses which will contain helpful information.

When you visit a school, take a notebook to keep track of the details. Take relevant information about your child, eg Statement and other reports. Make a checklist of things that you want to ask about. This will help you to compare schools when you have completed your visits. You may want to ask about the following:



- The school's SEN Policy
- The school prospectus
- Behaviour Policy and Anti-Bullying Policy
- How SEN provision is organised and arrangements for support
- How teaching is organised and group sizes
- SEN support services available to the school
- How the school works with parents

## Other Sources of Information



The Sutton Parent Partnership Service can provide impartial support for parents looking at secondary transfer. Contact details for Parent Partnership are shown on Page 2.

Many schools have their own website where you can download a prospectus and other information. OFSTED reports can also give further information about schools. These can be accessed on line via <http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/> but do remember that reports are a snapshot and summarise findings only at the time of the inspection.

Other parents may offer their opinions about particular schools. Whilst this can be helpful, be open minded, as the experience for one child may not be representative or relevant to your child's circumstances.

## Other Considerations

You will need to consider how your child will get to your preferred school. Home to school transport is not automatically offered to children who have Statements of SEN.



Bear in mind, that transport is not normally available to children attending mainstream schools. You have the right to express a preference for a school in another area, but if a local school can meet your child's needs, you will not be eligible for transport. In these circumstances you will need to consider whether:

- Your child can use public transport independently
- You can do some travel training with your child
- There is a direct bus/train route
- You can take your child to and from school

Think also about your child's current school friends. It is likely that most will be transferring to local mainstream schools; will it more helpful for your child to start secondary school with some existing friends and to make some new friends in your locality?

## Your School Preference

Soon after your child returns to school in September of Year 6, you will be invited to a meeting with the Headteacher and/or the SENCO to complete the Secondary Transfer Form for Pupils with SEN Statements.



### Completing the Secondary Transfer Form

When the schools return after the Summer holiday they will have received the SEN Secondary Transfer Forms from the LA. Your child's school will then contact you to arrange a meeting with the Headteacher and/or the SENCO for you jointly to complete this form. A blank copy is enclosed with this booklet – this is just for information.

You will see that the form asks you to state your First and Second preferences for a secondary school for your child. The Form should reach the LA by the published cut-off date. **You should NOT use the Common Application Form which is part of the Pan London Co-ordinated Admission Process.**

Once your Secondary Transfer Form is received, the LA takes the following steps:

### Responding to Your Preference

The LA will always try to agree with your preferred school (see also the Section on The Law) if it is a maintained (Local Authority) school. When we receive your Secondary Transfer Form, we will write to your first preference school to ask if the school can meet your child's special educational needs. If this is a maintained school in another area, we must also write to the school's home LA.



We ask schools to respond within 15 days, but sometimes responses are delayed. We send the school your child's updated Statement, the appendices and the most recent annual review report so that the school can consider whether your child's special educational needs can be met.

If the LA has an alternative school in mind, we may also consult with that school at the same time that we contact your preferred school. This is to ensure that when a final decision is made we are able to take a balanced view of the options available. If your first preference school is an independent or non-maintained special school (ie a fee paying school) we will only approach this school if no local maintained school can meet your child's needs.

### **Discussions with Sutton Headteachers**



Around mid-November each year, we meet with Headteachers of Sutton mainstream secondary schools to consider the applications that have been made for places the following September. Most are agreed with no difficulty, but in some cases further discussions are required.

### **The Role of the SEN Panel**

The SEN Panel is a multi-disciplinary Panel which makes recommendations to the LA about individual cases. In cases where there is more than one option for secondary school, eg where the LA has approached both your preference and an alternative, the SEN Panel may be asked to consider the relative merits of the options available.

### **Secondary Place Offers**

If we are able to agree your first preference school without difficulty, we will send you a formal offer of a place as soon as possible. In many cases this will be before Christmas.



### **What if you change your mind?**

If you change your mind about the school you prefer for your child, we will always consider whether we are able to agree to look at another option. This will very much depend on the time available and the vacancy position at the alternative school, but we will do what we can to help.

### **Issuing the Final Statement**

Once you have confirmed acceptance of an offer, we will amend your child's Statement and send you the final version naming the new school in Part 4. We are required to issue all final Statements by 15<sup>th</sup> February. If for any reason we have been unable to secure a secondary school place for your child by 15<sup>th</sup> February, we may issue a final Statement naming a type of school in Part 4, but we will continue efforts to locate a vacancy in a suitable school.

### **What if we cannot agree with your Preferred School?**

Section 6 of this booklet deals with arrangements for resolving disagreements. We will let you know as early as possible if we have any concerns about your first preference school and we will tell you if we are looking at alternative schools.

If has not been possible to resolve differences between us by early February, we will issue the Final Amended Statement naming the school preferred by the LA in Part 4 by 15<sup>th</sup> February. This will ensure that you have time to lodge an Appeal with the Special Educational Needs & Disability Tribunal.

**SORRY!**

## What the Law Says

The arrangements for identifying schools for children with Statements of special educational needs are covered by a number of legislative provisions, in particular the Education Act 1996, The Special Educational Needs & Disability Act 2001, the SEN Code of Practice and the Inclusive Schooling statutory guidance.



### Mainstream Schools

Section 316 of the Education Act 1996 says that the LA must make sure that a child with a Statement is educated in a mainstream school unless a parent says they do not want their child to go to a mainstream school.

Mainstream schools can only refuse a child if they can prove that a child's attendance at the school would be incompatible with the efficient education of the other children and that there are no reasonable steps that they or the LA could take to prevent this.

### Parental Preference

The Education Act 1996 also says that parents have a right to say which particular maintained school they would prefer for their child. The LA must agree to a parent's wish unless:

- The school is unsuitable to the child's age, ability, aptitude or special educational needs
- It would be incompatible with the efficient education of the other children being educated with the child
- It is not an efficient use of the LA's resources

## What happens if the Local Authority does not agree with your preference?

The majority of children who have Statements of SEN are offered their first preference secondary school. However, there are some cases where the LA does not agree with the parental preference. What will happen if this situation arises?



### Why we may not agree with your preference

There are a number of reasons why we may not be able to agree with your first preference; here are a few:

- The school may not have any vacancies in Year 7
- The school may not be able to meet your child's special educational needs
- The cost of the school place may be much more than an alternative school that is able to meet your child's special educational needs

### Informal Arrangements to resolve issues

If we do not agree with your preferred school, we will write to let you know why and offer a meeting to discuss this further with you to explain why we are suggesting an alternative. We will do this as soon as possible so that you are aware of our views without delay.

If you have nominated a second preference school, we will explore this if we cannot agree with your first preference, and we may also explore other potential school placements.

If you have any new information to support your case for the first preference, we will always consider this and we may ask the SEN panel to review the case in the light of any new evidence or reports.

### Sutton Parent Partnership Service



You may wish to contact the **Sutton Parent Partnership Service**. This Service is part of Sutton's Children, Young People and Learning Services, but offers impartial information and support for parents and carers of children and young people with special educational needs. They can help to arrive at acceptable solutions to a disagreement. They can be contacted at:

Sutton Parent Partnership Service  
Stonecourt, 2 North Street, Carshalton, Surrey, SM5 2HU  
Telephone : 020 8640 4541  
Email : [spps@suttonlea.org](mailto:spps@suttonlea.org)

## **Mediation / Disagreement Resolution**

Sutton subscribes to the London SEN Mediation Service which provides an independent disagreement resolution service as required by the SEN Code of Practice.



Mediation is an informal, voluntary process which involves an independent third party (the mediator) helping those in dispute to negotiate solutions that are acceptable to all parties. The mediator is impartial, does not take sides, nor put forward suggestions or possible solutions to the dispute.

The mediator is in control of the process but not the outcome of the mediation. It is the parties themselves that find solutions and decide the outcome through participating in the mediation process.

We are always happy to consider mediation as an option, although it is important for both sides to consider whether there is scope for agreement on any of the issues causing disagreement.

Referrals to the London SEN Mediation Service can be made via their website <http://www.londonsenmediation.org.uk/> or by telephoning 020 7837 2900.

## **Constraints of 15<sup>th</sup> February Deadline**



We are required to issue your child's Final Amended Statement naming a secondary school by the 15<sup>th</sup> February in the year of transfer. This deadline is to ensure that if you wish to make a formal appeal to a Tribunal, there is sufficient time to resolve any disputes about the Statement or the school named well before the start of the Autumn Term in September.

If we have been unable to agree your preferred school, we will issue your child's Statement by 15<sup>th</sup> February naming either an alternative school or a type of school. If you still disagree with the Statement or the school named, you can make a formal appeal to the Special Educational Needs & Disability Tribunal (see below).

There are time limits for making an appeal, but even if you do appeal, it does not mean that we will not continue to seek ways to resolve any disagreement. We will also continue to consider any new information that becomes available.

## Appealing to the Special Educational Needs and Disability (First Tier) Tribunal



If you disagree with your child's Final Amended Statement (either parts 2, 3 or the school named in Part 4) you can lodge a formal appeal to the Tribunals Service – Special Educational Needs & Disability. **You must lodge your appeal within two months of the date of our letter sent to you with the Final Amended Statement.**

Information about how to Appeal can be obtained from:

Special Educational Needs & Disability  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Old Hall  
Mowden Hall, Staindrop Road,  
DARLINGTON, DL3 9BG

Telephone: SEN helpline 0870 241 2555

Email: [sendistqueries@tribunals.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:sendistqueries@tribunals.gsi.gov.uk)

Website for further information: <http://www.sendist.gov.uk/>

The right of appeal to the Tribunal is not affected by any involvement in local resolution arrangements, which can run at the same time as an appeal.

The Tribunal will consider both sides of the case and make a decision which is binding on both the LA and parents. The Tribunal is part of the SEN system in England and Wales and will make a judgement based on the needs of the child. You may wish to seek independent advice to assist you with your Appeal. The Parent Partnership Service can give some advice but would not be able to represent you at an Appeal hearing.

We will do all that we can to resolve disputes without recourse to the Tribunal which can be time consuming and stressful for both parents and the LA.

## Getting Your Child Ready to Start Secondary School



The transfer from primary to secondary school is a big step for most children and can be an especially anxious time for those with Statements of SEN. Primary schools will do some work with children to help the transition to secondary school, but parents can also help to prepare children for the transfer.

### Talk about the Changes

Talk to your child about the changes that he/she will experience in secondary school. They will probably already have a good idea about what to expect, and may already have been on a pre-transfer visit, but talking will give an opportunity to discuss any worries. Think about:

- Moving from being the oldest to the youngest group in the school
- Finding the way around a large school
- Having different teachers for different subjects
- Tackling new subjects
- Having to remember books and kit and carrying them from room to room
- Having a timetable and completing homework on time
- Meeting new people
- Understanding school rules
- Managing money for lunch and/or fares

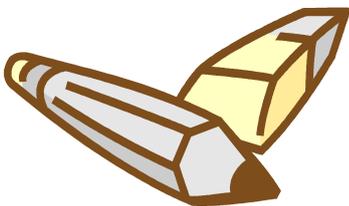
## Friendships



Some children may worry about not knowing anyone at their new school and not making friends, but in most cases children are very adaptable. Some schools will help new children get to know one another and friendship groups will begin to form soon after the start of term. However, if your child is worried, you could encourage your child to:

- Keep in touch with old friends who are going to different schools
- Get to know as many new classmates as possible
- Invite/visit friends out of school if circumstances permit
- Talk to your child about new friends if he/she wants to
- Accept that there may be some falling out between children as friendship groups are established

## Clothes and Equipment

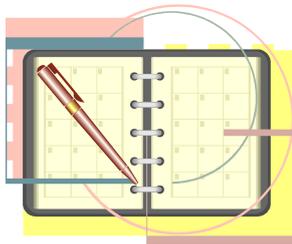


Try not to leave it until the last minute to acquire any uniform and equipment required for your child's secondary school as shops can run out of stock of school specific items. Once you have everything, have a trial run of getting ready for school to make sure everything is in order.

## Establish a Routine

Creating an everyday routine can help your child settle into their new environment and ease their worries about adjusting to secondary school. This may include:

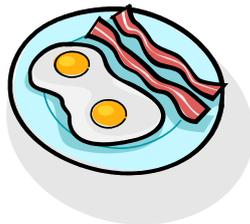
Encourage them to pack everything they need for school before they go to bed, such as homework, books, lunch money, sports kit and any other equipment.



Make sure you know your child's timetable, so that you can remind them about things like packing their sports kit. Display a copy of the timetable at home and perhaps colour coding each subject may be helpful.

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Establish a reasonable bedtime so that your child has enough sleep



Making sure they have a good, balanced breakfast before they leave for school. This will give them the energy they need and will also help them to concentrate better in lessons.

Make a copy of their homework timetable and check they're following it.



Set up a system to ensure that you receive any letters or other information that your child brings home from school so they don't get lost. For example, make it a rule that you child sticks all school letters to the fridge or a kitchen notice board as soon as they get home.



Attendance and punctuality at school is very important; make sure that your child arrives at school on time.

## Lunchtimes



Discuss arrangements for school lunches with your child. Most secondary schools have cafeteria style facilities and many have cashless systems for paying for food. Find out what happens in the new secondary school. Alternatively, you may wish to provide your child with a lunch from home.

## Getting to School

Use the Summer holiday prior to starting at secondary school to help your child become familiar with the journey to school. How will they get to school?

It may be walking distance or possibly a longer journey using public transport or perhaps a bicycle. Practise the journey a few times to make sure that you child knows the route, bus stops and timetables and anything else that will make the journey easier. Perhaps some school friends are going to the same school and could travel with your child.



If the route involves a bus journey, make sure you apply to Transport for London for an Oyster (Zip) Card for free travel.

Make sure your child knows the importance of the Green Cross Code, whether they're walking all the way to school, or simply to the bus stop. If your child cycles to school, make sure they study the latest edition of the Highway Code. A helmet, front and rear lights (and spare batteries for them) are also essential.

If your child qualifies for assistance with transport from the LA, we will let you know shortly before the start of the term, the name of the contractor, where the transport will meet your child and the pick-up and drop off times.

## Staying Safe

As your child grows up, they will become more independent. However, it is important to establish a few simple rules to make sure that they're safe:



Make sure your child knows:

- their home phone number
- you or your partner's work number
- the number of another trusted adult
- how to use 999 for emergencies
- Who to contact in school if there is a problem
- The number of a local licensed taxi company for use in an emergency

If your child will arrive home after school to an empty house, establish rules about locking doors, answering the door or phone and inviting friends over. If you provide a mobile phone for your child, make sure he/she knows and follows school rules about its use.

If your child is transported by the LA, you or a responsible adult must be at home at the designated time to receive your child.

## Homework



Homework will be a part of life in secondary school but teachers should take account of your child's needs and make any necessary adjustments. Try to make sure that your child has somewhere quiet to complete homework without distractions such as television.

Many secondary schools have homework clubs. Find out what is available at your child's school and encourage him/her to take advantage of what is on offer.

You may find that your child has difficulties with some tasks set for homework. Give support and encouragement and allow a reasonable time for completion, but call a halt if no progress is being made and explain the difficulties in a note to the school. Tears before bedtime will not help.



Try to make homework a part of their routine; doing some every evening is better than letting it all pile up. Talk to your child about the homework they have to complete; this will show them you're interested and may help them meet their deadlines.

## Share what you know about your child

You know your child best and will have important information that you can share with the new school to help your child settle. Contact your child's new Form Teacher or the School SENCO with information such as:



- Your child's strengths and interests
- Support arrangements that have worked previously
- Who else is involved with your child, eg health services, social workers etc
- Information about any medical condition or allergies
- Any other information that would be helpful to staff at the new school

**Finally, try not to show your own anxieties too much. It is natural to worry about how your child will cope in secondary school, but if you are positive, it will help to re-assure your child.**



## **Appendices – Additional Information**

**We have enclosed some additional sheets with information that you may find helpful. The sheets enclosed include the following:**

- Mainstream Secondary Schools in Sutton
- Specialist Bases in Mainstream Schools in Sutton
- Special Schools in Sutton
- SEN Caseworkers – School Links and Contact Details
- Secondary Transfer Preference Form (SEN) – Sample Copy

