

# Vision Team

## Top tips for transition Year 6 to Year 7 – for Schools

- **Communicate** early with parents / carers, child, primary school and STePS VI teacher. Find out about the child's needs and their personal worries and expectations about transition. This might include additional concerns this year if the child hasn't been in school during closure. Share this with all staff who will come into contact with the student – teachers, teaching assistants, cover supervisors, reception / office staff and mid-day supervisors.
- **Familiarity aids confidence** – have information for new students on your website. Ensure this is clear and visually accessible – think about font style, visual clutter and colour contrast. This could include information about what to expect in each subject (what will we be doing / learning about) as well as information about routines and expectations (form groups, assemblies, break / lunch times, behaviour, rewards and sanctions). Consider making this interactive to allow new students to ask questions.
- **New environments are challenging** – if possible, consider arranging a 'socially distanced' visit to school when current students aren't on site. If this isn't possible, provide a virtual tour by video call (interactive / live) or recorded and shared on the website. Again, consider how visually accessible this is – don't move too quickly, use a clear concise commentary and consider lighting conditions. Focus the tour on the key areas year 7 will use – entrance and exit, form room, toilets / cloakrooms, dining hall. Follow the routes the student will need, for example how to get from the entrance to your form room, pointing out any 'landmarks' along the way. When the student starts, agree a safe place they can go for help if they get lost, such as back to their form room or to reception.
- **Audit your environment** - Ensure any new signage is clear, uses good colour contrast and is at student's eye level. Consider marking of steps / stairs and potential trip hazards. Think about lighting conditions. Choose the student's form and subject classrooms to be the most visually accessible.
- **Knowing the new staff also aids confidence** – form tutor, key person / TA or SENCO can call home, speak with the student (with parent present) or can record a message which the student can listen to repeatedly. Often the student will identify people by voice more than by face. Identify a named member of staff to support the student and to check in with them regularly. Have a clearly agreed system for communication and / or meeting with the student.

- **And making new friends is even more important** – consider a buddy system where the student can link with an older student before transition to ask questions. If appropriate, the current student could meet the new student on their first day to ensure they can find their way to their first timetabled session. Consider placing the student in a form with at least one friend from primary school.
- **Ensure resources are accessible** - provide a clear, easy to follow map, timetable and menu well in advance in the student's preferred format. Use colour coding (with good text to background contrast) where this aids understanding. Check student diaries / homework record books to ensure these are accessible – a large print version may be needed.