

Dear Parent

The School Transition & Adjustment Research Study (STARS) team worked with 10 secondary schools to find out how pupils, parents and teachers view the move to secondary school. We asked them about how they felt about the transition before (at the end of Year 6), during (at the start of Year 7) and a year later (at the end of year 7). We've written a leaflet for young people, telling them about what the pupils in our study felt about moving to secondary school; your school has given a copy to your son or daughter. We are writing to you with more information to accompany that leaflet, with the aim of helping ensure a smooth and successful transition for all pupils.

Pupil and parent concerns about the move to secondary school

At the end of Year 6, parents and children tend to be concerned about very similar sorts of things including homework, the new routine, bullying and friendships. The differences between children and parents are probably due to parents' greater life experience, and their adult perspective. For example, even though

Top 5 concerns for Children

1. Getting lost
2. Losing old friends
3. Homework
4. Discipline and detentions
5. Being bullied

getting lost was the thing that pupils were most concerned about, their parents realised that pupils would quickly learn to find their way around their new school, whatever the size.

For parents who are worried about bullying, it might help to know that the proportion of young people who said that they had experienced bullying (at school or elsewhere) did not change from Year 6 to Year 7.

In the summer of Year 6, the majority of parents were a little concerned about their child starting secondary school. For most parents and children, these concerns reduced fairly

Top 5 concerns for Parents

1. Bullying
2. Safety
3. The amount of homework
4. Adjusting to having lots of teachers
5. Making new friends

quickly. However, if you have specific concerns for your child or are very concerned, speak to your child's teacher or head of year.

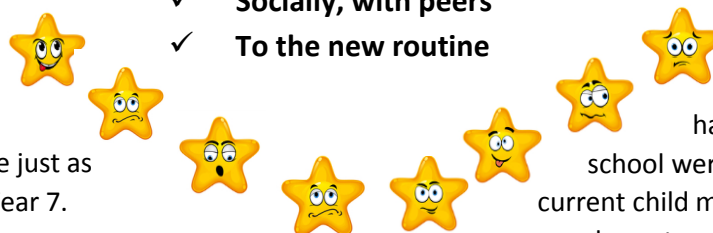
Good news: Within a short time, pupils' and parents' concerns are reduced

Young peoples' concerns about getting lost and being bullied reduce very quickly, within the first term at secondary school. Their worries about losing old friends, homework and about discipline and detentions are also reduced by the end of Year 7.

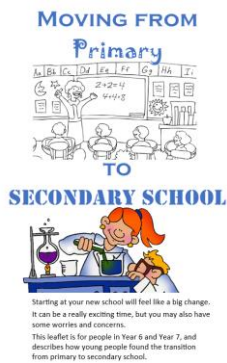
In the same way that pupil concerns reduced once they had started at secondary school, so did parents' concerns. At the end of their child's first year at secondary school, 8 out of 10 parents thought that they had settled in well in all of these areas:

- ✓ **Academically**
- ✓ **Socially, with teachers**
- ✓ **Socially, with peers**
- ✓ **To the new routine**

Even children who did not go to their family's first choice of secondary school were just as settled at the end of Year 7. This is great news!



Perhaps unsurprisingly, parents who had already had a child move to secondary school were less concerned about their current child making the move. Although it can be a stressful time, once parents know what the routine at secondary school is like, they are likely to be less worried.



We did a survey and asked two thousand young people about their move to secondary school. We asked them to tell us about how they felt about secondary school three times – once in year 6 and twice in year 7. Everyone in the survey was much less worried by the time they got to year 7.

getting lost
All the end of Year 6, the thing that most people were most worried about was...
and some people also said they were worried about the size of their new school. But when we asked them again after half a term at secondary school, they were much less worried about this, no matter how big their new school was.

losing old friends
As most people have friends at their primary school that are going to go to different secondary schools, it's not surprising that...
was on their minds at the end of Year 6. However, 6 out of 10 people kept in touch with their really good friends after 1 year. Some people's friendships did change, but they were happy with their new friends at the end of year 7.

homework
As you start your new school, you may be concerned about the...
you're going to get, just like the young people in our study. Some good advice is to make sure that you understand the instructions for the homework task before you leave the lesson, and do your homework early so that you can get help if you have any problems.

being bullied
In our study, girls and boys were equally worried about...
each time we asked them. Your school and every teacher has to take bullying very seriously, and the best thing to do is to tell someone, quickly. By the end of Year 7, most people were less worried.

discipline & detentions
At the beginning of Year 7, while they were getting to know all the rules, and different teachers, lots of people were quite worried about...
But when we spoke to them at the end of the year, they felt less worried, as they'd had a chance to get to know their schools and the rules.

The STARS study showed that everybody is quite nervous at the end of Year 6, but by the end of Year 7 they are used to their new school. Things will probably be OK!

STARS

We are a team from University College London, we did a survey of two thousand young people and asked them what were their thoughts and concerns about starting secondary school. We asked them when they were in primary school and also when they had started secondary school. This project was funded by the Nuffield Foundation.

We've put their answers together to give you an idea of what to expect when you start secondary school.

In summary, what we learnt from all the people who took part in this survey was that nearly everybody at the end of Year 6 has some worries and concerns. But, once pupils start at secondary school, they have many fewer concerns and become much less worried.

We hope it helps you to know that!

This leaflet has covered the most common concerns. If you have any specific worries about anything to do with moving to secondary school, talk to a parent, or ask a teacher. Our research shows that it helps to share your worries.

If you would like more detailed results from our study, please visit our website: www.ucl.ac.uk/stars

Please give us your feedback about this leaflet by completing 6 simple questions at www.ucl.ac.uk/stars

This letter refers to the contents of the STARS Booklet for Pupils, which is available from your school or our website: www.ucl.ac.uk/stars

Helping with the transition

More than half of parents thought that their child would need help with *homework* and *remembering books and equipment*. Pupils also worry about homework and aspects of the school routine for a bit longer than other things. Here are some things you could try if you think this applies to your child:

- ✓ One way to help your child with secondary school homework is by checking their homework diary/planner.
- ✓ Encourage your child to make sure that they understand the instructions for the homework task before they leave the lesson, and to start their homework early so that they can get help if they have any problems.
- ✓ Keep a school timetable and a list of what equipment is needed for each day somewhere visible at home e.g. on the fridge. It could help you and your child settle in to the new routine!
- ✓ Talking to your child about what you are both worried about is likely to help both of you.



Putting it all together

The good news is that concerns tend to reduce quickly once pupils have started Year 7 and the majority of children have settled in well academically and socially by the end of Year 7. If you do have concerns or worries, let your child's school know, and you can work together to overcome any difficulties.



We hope you have found it helpful to hear about the results of our study. This leaflet is based on the experience of other families who recently went through the transition to your child's secondary school.

We hope your family finds the transition to secondary year school a smooth and positive process.

Kind regards,

The School Transition & Adjustment Research Study (STARS) Team

If you would like more detailed results from our study, please visit our website: www.ucl.ac.uk/stars

About the research

The School Transition & Adjustment Research Study (STARS) was carried out by a team from University College London. We did a survey of two thousand young people, their parents and their teachers, during the move to ten secondary schools from around South-East England. This project was funded by the Nuffield Foundation.

Please give us your feedback about this leaflet by completing 6 simple questions at www.ucl.ac.uk/stars