

Transition to secondary school

Overview

In this lesson, pupils explore the transition to secondary school, identify some of the challenges that can arise and where to get support if needed.

Recommended age group

Education providers for ages 10-12 (Year 6/Year 7)

Time

45 minutes approximately

Preparation

Before delivering the lesson:

- familiarise yourself with the film on slides 8 and 11 of this PowerPoint
- read through the classroom tips on the following slide
- consider cross-curricular links and how this could be related to other subjects

This lesson has been designed to be part of the planned programme for PSHE education and should be taught within the context of other PSHE education lessons. It supports the Mental wellbeing strand of the Relationships Education and Health Education statutory guidance. See [Curriculum Links](#) for further information.

Pupils might be learning about growing up and managing change in a variety of contexts, with moving on to secondary school being one part of this.

Resources

- Blank A4 paper and pens

Key vocabulary

New, relationships, transition (change), routine (usual), unknown, challenge (hard), support (help)

Follow up

You may wish to extend pupils' learning with one of the extended learning projects on slides 19 and 20.

Classroom tips

Climate for learning

Read through **Guidance for Learning in a Safe Environment**.

This includes advice on:

- developing and revisiting effective ground rules drawn up with pupils
- familiarity with your school's safeguarding policy and procedures, including Child Protection and other relevant policies
- being prepared in case pupils make a disclosure
- including and protecting vulnerable pupils
- using distancing techniques so that pupils can discuss sensitive issues without being encouraged to make a disclosure
- handling sensitive questions
- involving pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and autism

Note that pupils with autism may find the transition to secondary school particularly challenging but can thrive if well supported.

You may also wish to familiarise yourself with any schemes or offers available in your school, organisation or local area to support young people's mental health. Your local public health team or school nurse should be able to help signpost you to this.

Anonymous question box

Place a question box or envelope somewhere in the classroom. Pupils write down any questions that occur to them during the lesson and submit them anonymously. You can address these questions in the next lesson.

Social distancing

Preparation

Returning to school and managing the changes that have come about in their lives because of Covid-19 will have posed many different challenges for young people. Every young person will have been affected differently and it will be more important than ever before for pupils to have a safe space to explore their feelings and experiences.

Reassure pupils that it's normal to worry about the impact of Covid-19 and that everyone will have had different responses. For example, some may have experienced loneliness, while others may have enjoyed lockdown – for many, there will have been a mixture of different emotions.

This lesson has a scenario related to Covid-19 and this may be particularly sensitive for any pupils who have experienced significant distress, loss or trauma prior to Covid-19 or during this time. There is clear guidance for teaching sensitive issues in the **Guidance for Learning in a Safe Environment** document and it is important that this is read before delivering this lesson.

Adapting lessons to social distancing

- Please refer to the Government guidelines and your own school's advice
- Where pair or small group discussions aren't possible, replace with personal reflections or individual contributions to whole class discussions
- **Making the move activity (Slide 8)** – pupils could draw out their answers individually on A3 paper or mini-whiteboards and then hold them up to share with the person in front or behind them.
- **Transition scenarios (Slide 13)** – the four different scenarios could be placed around the room and pupils could take it in turns to get up and put post-it notes with their advice/strategies/strengths on the scenarios. Each scenario could be discussed as a whole class and pupils could hold up mini-whiteboards showing the number of the strategy they think would work best.

What are we learning?



Key vocabulary

Learning outcomes

- Identify the differences between primary and secondary school
- Describe how it might feel to move to secondary school
- Explain different ways of managing change

Learning objectives

We are learning about the transition from primary to secondary school and how to manage the changes that can arise.

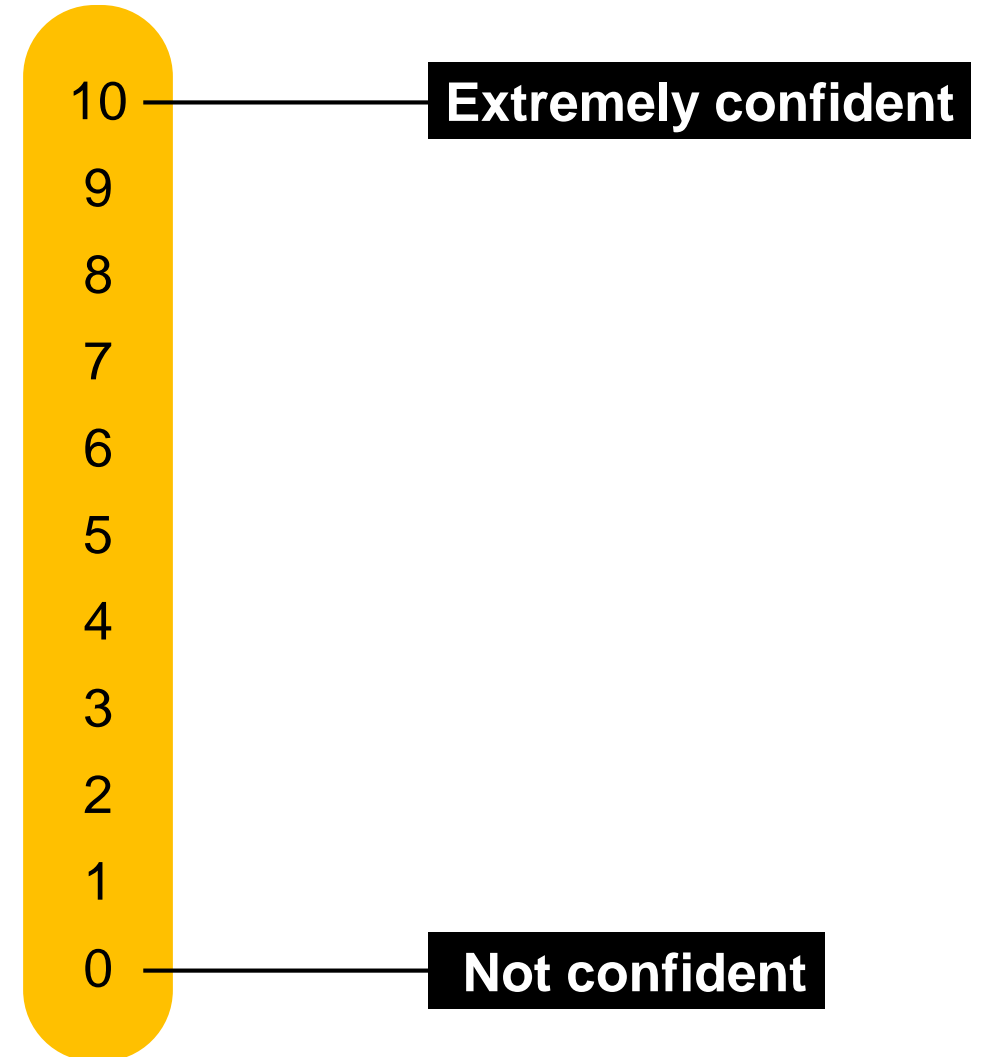
Transition to secondary school

Create a list of words
you associate with
the picture opposite.

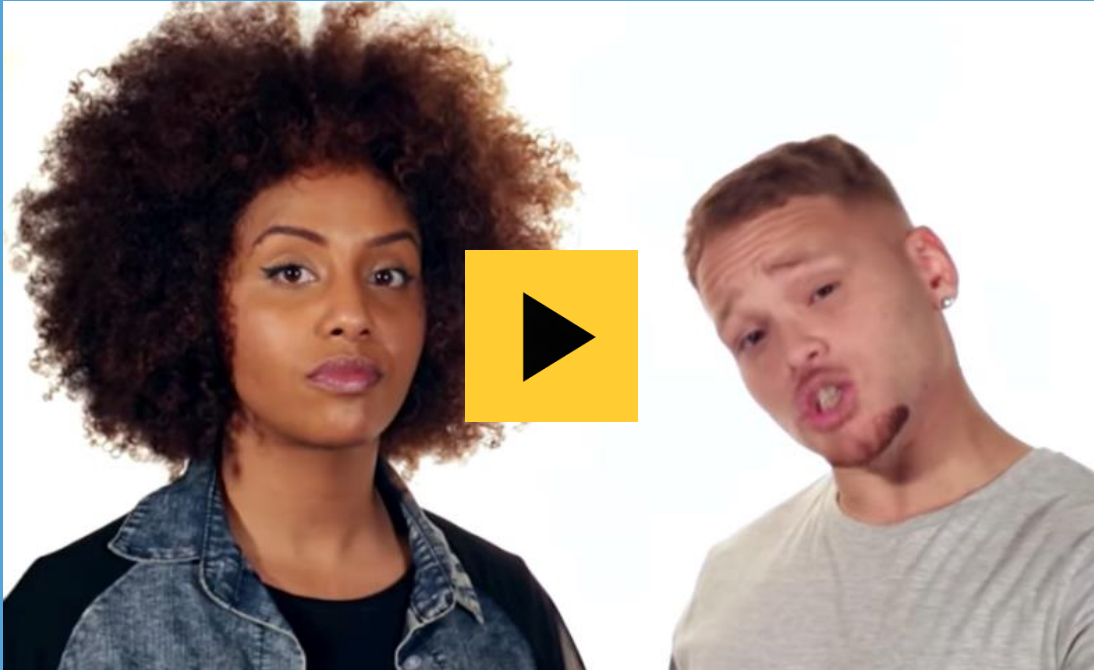


How confident are you in...

- identifying the differences between primary and secondary school?
- describing how it might feel to move to secondary school?
- explaining some ways to manage change?



Making the move



Let's talk about change

- What will the similarities be between primary school and secondary school?
- What will the differences be between primary and secondary school?
- What are the most important things a Year 6 pupil needs to know about secondary school?

Challenge



What extra support or knowledge might a pupil need if they have moved to a secondary school during the Covid-19 outbreak?

Making the move



Head

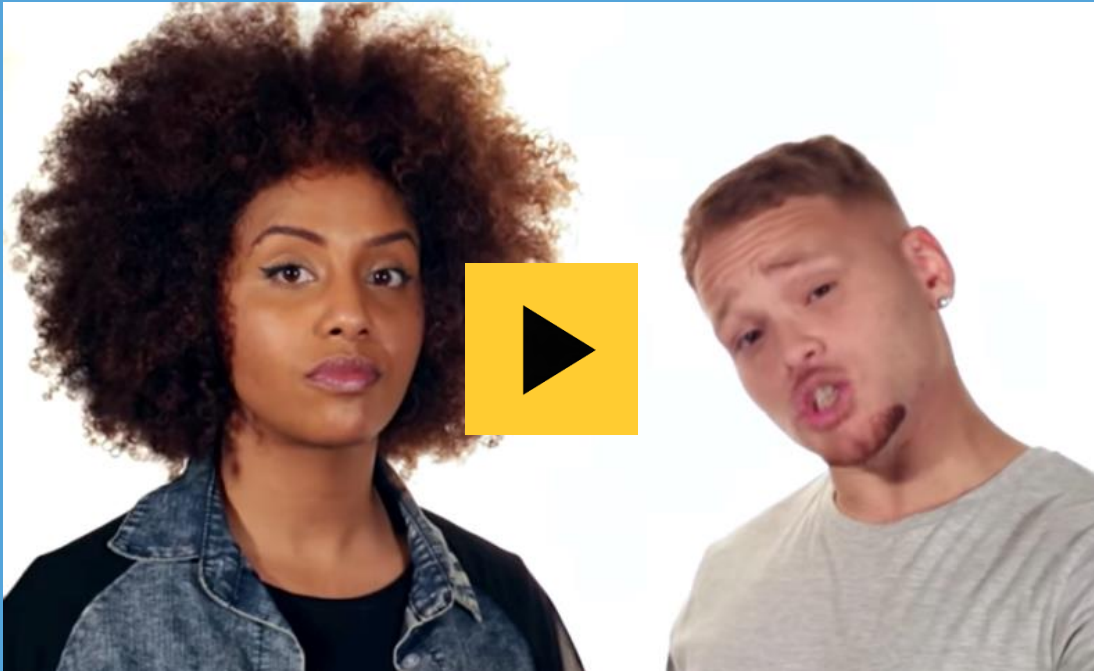
What might new Year 7 pupils be thinking on their first day of school?



Heart

How might it feel to start a new school?

Changes



Discussion questions

- What do you think are the most exciting things about starting secondary school?
- What do you think some pupils are nervous about when starting secondary school?
- How do you think pupil's feelings might change over the first year at secondary school?

Individual Reflection

Think about a time you had to manage a change in the last year.

What helped you manage this change?

Discuss

- Which strengths are most important when managing change?

Organised
Being prepared by making a plan and finding what you need

Honesty
Talking about how you feel and being able to ask for help

Kindness
Looking out for and helping other people

Fun
Finding time for things you enjoy

Courage
Being brave and having a go even when things are tricky

Hope
Staying positive and looking for the best in a situation

Scenarios

Scenario 1

“I’m worried I have fallen behind from missing so much school last year. I hope the work isn’t too hard and that I get to know my new teachers quickly.”

Scenario 2

“I’m going to a different school than most of my friends but my sister loves her new friends from secondary school, so maybe this will be the same for me.”

Scenario 3

“I have dyslexia and had brilliant support from my primary school, I hope it is the same in secondary school.”

Scenario 4

“I find changes hard to start with, but my cousin got extra help and it went OK for her.”

Possible strategies

- Find out who you can speak to in school if you're finding it difficult
- Take your time getting to know people
- Ask teachers for help if you are finding the work difficult
- Ask someone you trust to do the journey to school with you before doing it alone
- Talk to a trusted adult about your worries
- Make a homework timetable
- Remember what you are good at
- Think positively (I can do this!)



Further Challenge:
Can you think up other strategies that could help in each of the scenarios?
Explain why.



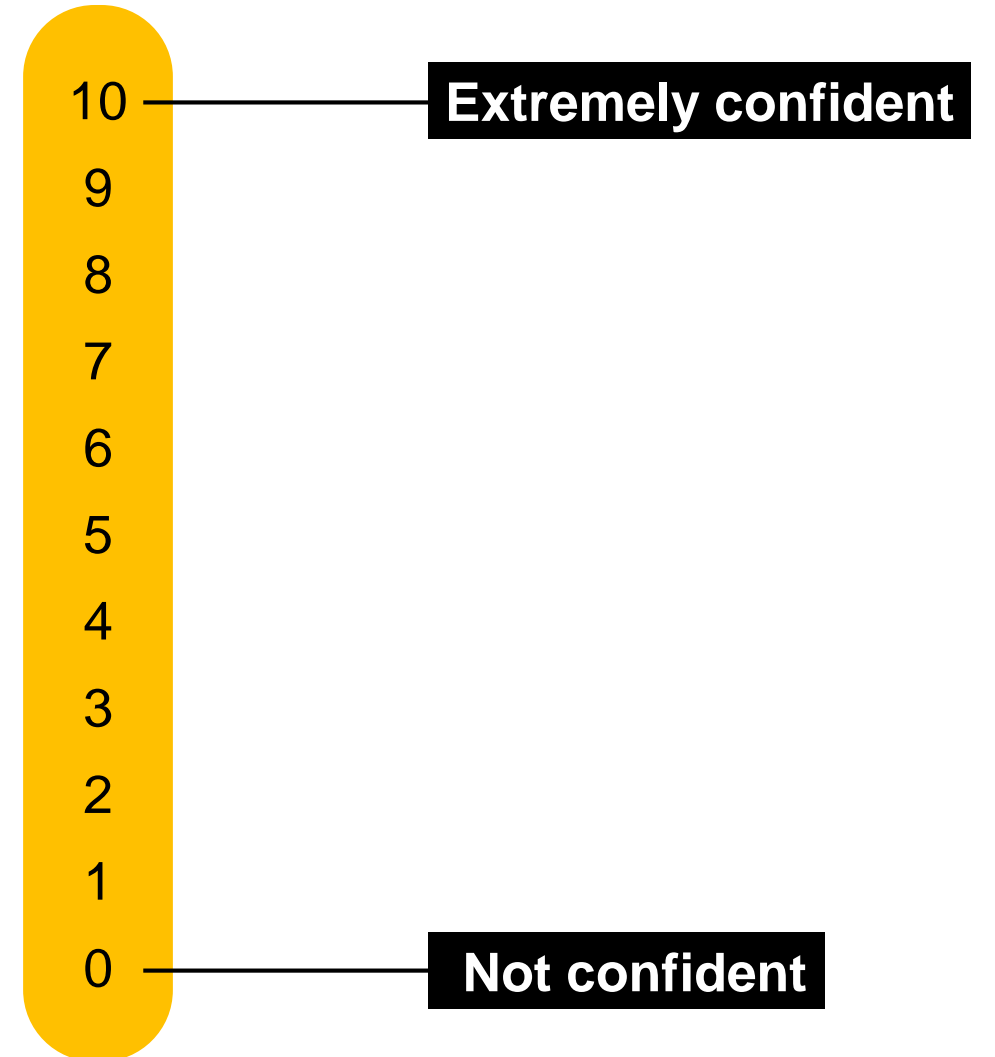
Handy advice!



What can pupils do to manage the changes in secondary school?

How confident are you now in...

- identifying the differences between primary and secondary school?
- describing how it might feel to move to secondary school?
- explaining some ways to manage change?



Reflection

-
- **What could a pupil pack on their first day of secondary school to help them manage the change ahead?**



It's normal to have different feelings when change occurs.

- **If you are worried about changes affecting you or a friend, you can always speak to a trusted adult, perhaps at home or at school, and get some more help.**
- **Childline: [childline.org.uk/info-advice](https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice)
Or call 0800 1111**
- **Shout:
Text 85258**



Extended learning projects

Dear diary...

Ask pupils to write 3 diary entries from a pupil on the night before their first day at school, half way through the year and the end of the year.

Create a class 'change collage'

Everyone in the class is given a torn piece of paper (roughly A5 size) and they have to decorate it with an image that represents a strength they bring to the class that they can take forward with them to secondary school. The pieces can then be stuck down to make a large class collage.

Letter for the end of the year

Pupils write themselves a letter outlining three realistic goals they would like to achieve in their first year of secondary school. Pupils can seal the letters and open them later in the year to see if they have achieved their aims.

Create a board game for secondary school

How would the board look? How do you succeed in the game? What are the challenges in the game? Which year group would it be suitable for?

Extended learning projects

Create an assembly presentation

Aim it at Year 6 pupils about their transition into secondary school. Pupils should include:

- one thing you know will change in secondary school
- two challenges that may occur as a result of this change
- three ways to manage this change and seek support.

Assembly success criteria

No longer than five minutes, use pictures, a PowerPoint, or create a role play, rap or song, groups of five or less, everyone in the group should contribute.

If time allows, pupils can present their assembly ideas to each other and feedback 'P's and I's' – positive things they have learned or ideas they thought were interesting. (NOTE: you can provide a list for pupils to choose from for their change, or allocate the changes to specific groups, such as: Friendship, Workload, Rules, Orientation, Teachers, Routines.)

Write a letter to a Year 7 class in a local secondary school

Invite them to write to you about their experiences of moving to secondary school and ask them any questions you might have. You could also ask if they could come and do a presentation on transition in your school.