

A 'Tiered approach to secondary transition in Dacorum'

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Why?

Responding to a SHARED concern...

The feedback (July 2025) below shares the views of primary and secondary headteachers on the effectiveness of transition arrangements in Dacorum.

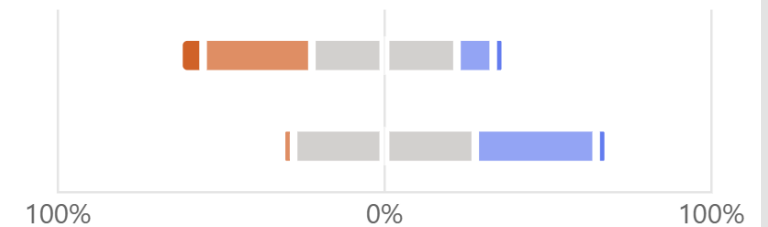
Prior to the resources being shared, only 60% of school leaders* felt the transition arrangements were good or better.

NOW 96.3% of school leaders* believe the arrangements to be good or better!

● Inadequate ● Required improvement ● Good ● Very Good ● Excellent

Transition approaches **BEFORE** the materials were shared.

Transition approaches **SINCE** the project materials have been shared



*27 responders

Idea- link to:

'Tiered
Approach to
Emotional
Wellbeing and
Behaviour
Strategy'

Working in partnership to benefit from:

- shared language
 - awareness of what to do sequentially
 - recognition of different levels of support
 - 'bespoke' signposting
-
- exemplars of good practice
 - Increased partnership between schools for transition/ post transition
 - a 'shared understanding' ...

Tiers

- Universal
- Universal +
- Targeted
- Targeted +

Universal

- visit from year 7 lead to primary group
- summer school opportunities
- transition day for all
- secondary school parent meeting new parents
- taster evening for parents after school allocation
- September start in school with just year 7
- monitoring of engagement from parents for transition activities
- Autumn visit from primary lead/ head to secondary to speak to pupils (cohort dependent)
- ongoing named person at secondary (eg form tutor)

Universal +

- extra transition day for targeted pupils
- enhanced signposting for support
- additional transition opportunities of lone movers
- secondary school coffee mornings for parents in advance of year 7
- visit with primary member of staff
- sharing of phone support between primary and secondary

Targeted

- supported visit to secondary with SENCo/ INCo
- secondary SEND visit TO primary setting
- home visits when required
- additional specialist contact (pastoral) for family

Targeted +

- structured meeting with secondary lead and family* (*with advocate if required)
- meeting between primary and secondary leads/ DSLs (professionals meeting)
- -creation of agreed transition targets and actions (formal)
- weekly/ monthly meeting for family and secondary member of staff/ lead
- -where EHCPs are in place, secondary school to attend year 6 EHCP review

Extra tier? 'Specialist'

- -DESC transition support*

*previously identified pupils

Tiered approach to secondary transition for Dacorum

The following table shares the *suggested* activities for children and families during the transition from year 6 to year 7.

Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4
<p>Universal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -visit from year 7 lead to primary group -summer school opportunities -transition day for all -Secondary school parent meeting new parents -Taster evening for parents after school allocation -September start in school with just year 7 -Monitoring of engagement from parents for transition activities -Autumn visit from primary lead/ head to secondary to speak to pupils (cohort dependent) -Ongoing named person at secondary (eg form tutor) 	<p>Universal +:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -extra transition day for targeted pupils -Enhanced signposting for support -additional transition opportunities of lone movers -Secondary school coffee mornings for parents in advance of year 7 -Visit with primary member of staff -Sharing of phone support between primary and secondary 	<p>Targeted:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -supported visit to secondary with SENCo/ INCo -Secondary SEND visit TO primary setting -Home visits when required -Additional specialist contact (pastoral) for family 	<p>Targeted +:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Structured meeting with secondary lead and family* (*with advocate if required) -Meeting between primary and secondary leads/ DSLs (professionals meeting) -Creation of agreed transition targets and actions (formal) -Weekly/ monthly meeting for family and secondary member of staff/ lead -Where EHCPs are in place, secondary school to attend year 6 EHCP review -DESC transition support* <p>*previously identified pupils</p>
<p>MHST support (at all tiers)</p>			

Tiers

(and how many children in a class of 30 'could' be in each one?)

Whilst cohorts **can certainly differ** with each year, it is appropriate to share some general guidance on the 'likely' numbers for each tier. Both primary and secondary schools will only have a limited capacity to respond. This project is about **effectively and efficiently identifying** those higher levels of need:

- **Universal** - the vast majority of children 20-25 per class
- **Universal +** - 5-10 children per class
- **Targeted** - 1 or 2 per class...
- **Targeted +** - 1 per class... or maybe even 0!

Please continue to note that the transition tiers are NOT necessarily related to SEND. Let's ensure we use that detailed knowledge/partnership/ understanding that we have been able to build over an extended period of time with the children and their families.

Examples of strong practice- exemplars...

Support	Additional guidance
Structured meeting with secondary lead and family* (*with advocate if required)	<p>Family of child is invited to a meeting with an appropriate leader from the receiving school. If possible, a leader from the primary school will also be present. The family will feel enabled to share concerns/ issues that they are experiencing due to the transition process. They can also request for certain items to be on the agenda. Such meetings can also be used to help agree what actions may be in place during transition. Depending on the timing of the meeting, the parents will also be provided with additional opportunities (listed in other tiers) that they can take advantage of.</p> <p>This meeting could also help formulate an agreed plan of actions that the secondary school and family agree together.</p>
Meeting between primary and secondary leads/ DSLs (professionals meeting)	<p>Similar to above. This is a more formalized meeting to ensure that there is transparency about the needs of the family/ child as well as discussion on how the schools can work together in partnership to support the child moving to secondary school. This could take place before/ after any additional meeting with the family.</p>
Creation of agreed transition targets and actions (formal)	<p>When required, a transition support plan with agreed actions can be created. All parties would need to be able to agree to the plan which needs to be achievable for all parties. For the family and the school, this will help build confidence in the process and ensure that commitment from both sides can be monitored.</p>
Where EHCPs are in place, secondary school to attend year 6 EHCP review	<p>During the review/ update of any EHCP in year 6, the secondary school is able to be represented. The timing/organisation of this meeting would need to ensure that all stakeholders can attend and be part of the meeting. This is most likely to be in the late spring/ early summer term.</p>
Weekly/ monthly meeting for family and secondary member of staff/ lead	<p>To help monitor engagement (as well as consistency of involvement from the family and school) a structured approach to communication can be put in place. This can be sorted via email/ phone or in person. This may need to be put in place depending on when issues have been identified. This is not simply related to the transition period.</p>

Making it work...

Primary schools to identify appropriate tier for transition of children in 2026:

- Primary and secondary leads to use the language/ tiers when identifying pupils/ sharing information for 2026 transition (there is no expectation to use any specific/ additional proforma or paperwork)
- Primary and secondary schools to provide appropriate capacity for supporting children/ families to benefit from approach
- A commitment to an appropriately enhanced focus on those children/ families who will benefit from additional support/ intervention
- Discuss more efficient/ effective/ consistent approaches to sharing of key information
- Support parents to understand/ recognise what they could/ should expect. Encourage investment from families in regard to their allocated, **even if family is awaiting appeal/ awaiting different allocation**
- Develop some approaches to moderation of level of need for 'tier descriptors'
- A **renewed commitment*** to more interaction/ discussion/ support between primary and secondary headteachers post transition.

*July 2025 evidence indicates improved engagement between schools post transition remains a focus.

Even better when...

(Feedback from previous transitions)

- Feeling enabled to challenge when the expectations are **not** being met (contact secondary head/ transition lead)
- Challenging inappropriate demands from primary schools. EG- schools asking for transition support for a complete year group
- Clear identification of those children/ families on Targeted/ Targeted + and having these PRIORITISED in transition meetings (challenge when schools work through a 'list')
- Recognise the limited capacity we all have. Focus on what is NEEDED
- **Get the right people in the room:**
 - Having the headteacher/ senior leader present in the transition meetings- especially when discussing the targeted/ targeted + children and families
 - Recognising that the year 6 teacher may not necessarily have all the required knowledge
- Sharing a willingness for continued dialogue/ conversation/ partnership with the secondary school post transition
- Engaging in transition support activities offered by the secondary school

Thank
YOU...

This project has been put together to support the children and families of Dacorum.

All those involved in the development of the approach appreciate anything you can do to support it. Thank you.

Project contributors

- **Dacorum primary headteacher support group**
- **Helen King**- Team Leader at Dacorum MHST (Mental Health Support Team)
- **Graham Cunningham**- Headteacher
- **Debbie Bailey**- Deputy Head
- **Kathryn Girdlestone**- DESC- Outreach and Therapeutic Services Lead
- **Jenny Bramley**- DESC- Outreach support worker
- **Katharine Ellwood**- Headteacher
- **Ruth Mason**- DSPL 8 Manager
- **DSPL8 board**
- **DHC and DASH**
- **Lucy Williams** – AHT Tring School
- **Rob Weightman**- Headteacher