

BRISTOL AUTISM TEAM

# Secondary Transition Toolkit for Pupils with Autism

This Transition Toolkit has been produced by Bristol Autism Team to support secondary schools and parents with children on the autism spectrum in the process of transition from school to college.

The information within the toolkit is offered as a starting point. Some pupils will require little support with their planning and transition whilst others may require more

The information in this toolkit can be used to support pupils on the autism spectrum. However, it is equally applicable for pupils with social communication & interaction needs.

This toolkit has been produced by: -

Mary Murphy and Jackie Melksham

For further information regarding local organisations, groups and advice, please see Bristol City Council “Local Offer”

[www.findabilitybristol.org.uk](http://www.findabilitybristol.org.uk)



# Transition

Transition is most successful when there is good communication between home and school, between primary, secondary school and post 16 establishments and where information is easily accessed and shared between members of staff.

For pupils with autism transition is a time of change and uncertainty which can cause significantly increased anxiety and stress. A well prepared transition can do much to alleviate this and make things more predictable



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Pupils arriving in year 7 **may** require the following:-

- A clear outline (visual) of what the first day(s) will look like as this is often different from their timetable.
- Additional information and practice reading their timetable, with colour coding for easy reference.
- A class seating plan with preferential seating according to need.
- Access to alternative toilet arrangements.
- Access to alternative changing arrangements for PE.



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- Ensure all adults working with the pupil are aware of their challenges, strategies that work and also things to avoid.
- Students with autism may not ask for help so additional adult support may be needed for the first few weeks to support moving between lessons, organising equipment, using the canteen including vending machines and how to get lunch, changing for PE and knowing what to do at break and lunch times.



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- Be aware that access to lockers is likely to cause anxiety if they are situated in a busy area. Consider end lockers or one in a quieter part of the school.
- Consider whether it is appropriate to inform the pupil's tutor group or house about their diagnosis or whether to do some general awareness training on autism. It is important you know whether the pupil is aware of their diagnosis and obtain permission before any disclosure.
- Having a named adult (keyworker) for the pupil to go to when there is a problem

<http://www.thebluediamondgallery.com/wooden-tile/a/autism.html>

### Communication with Parents

Parents may have been used to frequent contact with teachers in primary school and may be very anxious about how their children are going to manage at secondary level. They will need time to adjust to the different ways of communication at secondary school.



These things might help:-

- Having a named member of staff that they can contact via email or phone
- Liaising with the SENCO via email or phone and having planned meetings to discuss progress and concerns.
- Ensuring that parents are familiar with access to school sharing systems ie for homework, independent learning and payments for school meals, trips etc.

## BRISTOL AUTISM TEAM – AUTISM TOOLKIT (SECONDARY)

### Same procedure as every day



Slub Dresden Oct 2016 Same Procedures Everyday. CC by SA2.0

# SAME

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Transition between year groups each year is also very stressful for pupils with autism. It is useful to try and focus on the routines, teachers and other staff that will stay the same as well as preparing for inevitable changes.

- Using a same/different chart – it can be re-assuring that many things will stay the same and this will give perspective.
- Allow the pupil to meet some new teachers if at all possible before the end of term – most department heads will have an idea of who will be teaching classes by the end of term 6.
- Encourage the pupil to familiarise themselves with the location of new rooms.
- Ensure the pupil pen picture is updated and includes information that is useful to support the pupil. Make sure this is shared with all new staff as well as old.
- Where at all possible have the timetable available before the start of term. This can be very difficult to achieve.
- Prepare pupils in advance for what their first day will look like and where they will need to meet. Often this information can be put onto the school website.

### Other comments

In- school yearly transitions are often overlooked but associated anxiety can be significantly decreased with just a little preparation. The first day back to school for many pupils is exciting but for pupils with Autism this is rarely the case. Advance preparation for changes preferably in visual form is key for them to be successfully managed.

## BRISTOL AUTISM TEAM – TRANSITION TOOLKIT

Year 10

Not all students with autism need or will have an EHCP but all will require some level of planning and support to successfully manage the transition from mainstream secondary to college or further education.



### Things to think about in year 10

- Signpost college and post 16 information evenings in school
- Give Information of open days/ evenings at college
- Liaise with parents and college about possible taster courses and trial sessions before application deadline..
- Plan and consider supporting Individual visits to specific departments when it is quieter.
- Help students Identify possible realistic courses they might like to study. It is better to have a plan A, a plan B and even a plan C

Some useful sites and links you can access to help you with career ideas and pathways.

- [www.careerpilot.org.uk](http://www.careerpilot.org.uk)
- [www.careersbox.co.uk](http://www.careersbox.co.uk)
- [www.futuremorph.org](http://www.futuremorph.org)
- [www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk](http://www.nationalcareersservice.direct.gov.uk)



## BRISTOL AUTISM TEAM – AUTISM TOOLKIT (SECONDARY)

**Useful College links** (a full list can be found in the post 16 directory in Findability at the link below)

[https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/239525/Bristol+Post-16+Directory+for+Sept+2016\\_0\\_0\\_0.pdf/62b0ebfe-cbf8-4a93-9035-886d3297d812](https://www.bristol.gov.uk/documents/20182/239525/Bristol+Post-16+Directory+for+Sept+2016_0_0_0.pdf/62b0ebfe-cbf8-4a93-9035-886d3297d812)

Each college web page will have information about courses, open days and evenings

### **Year 10 checklist**

What	Where can I get help or information?	Outcome	Next step
Find out who your college SEND link person is	College		Make student known to this person
Advertise and signpost a college and post 16 information event in school	School website or newsletter Form Tutor or Head of House	Make student aware of courses and venues possible for post 16	
Check that pupil has attended an open evening or information day at college	College website College handbook School SENCO	Want student to be thinking of realistic post 16 options	Consider giving additional support and mentoring. Pupil premium might be used for this.
Find out and signpost taster sessions that colleges and post 16 provisions are arranging.	School SENCO College SENCO College subject department head	To ensure pupils have a realistic idea of what they are applying for	Discuss options and signpost to further options if necessary
Liaise with parents re additional visits to college when quieter	College SENCO contact College subject department head	To give the pupil the opportunity to experience college without too many distractions	Consider potential challenges or barriers to attending college
Consider signposting pupils to options for work based learning or apprenticeships	Findability <a href="https://www.gov.uk/apprenticeships-guide">https://www.gov.uk/apprenticeships-guide</a> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/find-traineeship">https://www.gov.uk/find-traineeship</a>	Ensure pupils are made aware of all possible options	



## BRISTOL AUTISM TEAM – TRANSITION TOOLKIT

### Year 11

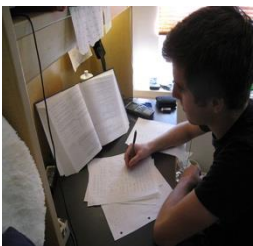
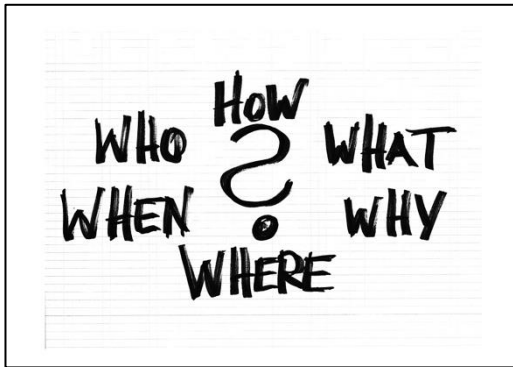


- All of the above if they have not been possible in year 10.
- Encourage pupils to ideally fill in college applications before Xmas as some courses are popular and may fill up quickly. They can apply even if they are not sure or it is their second choice. Make sure that they check what qualifications they need to gain access to the course they have chosen.
- Encourage pupils to talk to others who are doing the course they want to apply for and to ask about how much work is involved and what this looks like (writing, practical, time in lectures/lessons, amount of independent study needed, programme of study and topics covered)
- If pupils have to attend an interview to access the course they have chosen, have a practice run with them. Think about possible questions they might be asked and help them to prepare some answers. Role play is a really

- Liaise with parents to consider how the pupil will get to college. You might need to support them to practise catching a bus or train and know what to do if they miss it. It might help to have a script on their phone to remind them and a list of speed contacts..
- Liaise with the college to identify a key person or mentor whom the pupil can meet at college on a regular basis and ask any questions or ask for further information such as location of the canteen and know how to use the system, where the toilets are or where they can go if they are feeling unwell.

**Support the pupil to complete a person centred student profile to provide information about them and how best to support/teach them in college**

## BRISTOL AUTISM TEAM – TRANSITION TOOLKIT



### Nearer the time

Explain to the pupil what college registration looks like, what they need to take and what it will entail. This usually happens at the end of August. They will need to take proof of their exam results and may need to sit online numeracy and literacy assessments.

- It will be helpful to advise pupils to ask beforehand what their first few days will look like, where they will need to go, who they will meet up with and where, how long they will be in college. There can be quite a few changes at the beginning of the term. Pupils and parents should be made aware that college is not as full time as school will have been and days might look very different.
- Make sure college is aware that the pupil may need extra support to organise their unstructured time. Students may need support to structure their timetables where there are significant gaps. Planned study and recreation times will help them get a work/life balance whilst also staying on top of their work load.
- Liaise with parents to ensure the pupil can contact family/carer in an emergency or if something unexpected happens that they cannot manage. Advise that they practise doing this so that it is easy to do when they are stressed.



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## Year 11 Checklist

What	Where can I get help or information	Outcome and next steps
Have review of EHCP if applicable in term 1 or 2. Invite the College SENCO to the meeting and someone from the preparation to adulthood team. (Only if EHCP)	School and college SENCO	
Support student to complete college application preferably before January but it can be later	Parents, school form tutor, SENCO	
Provide opportunities for students to talk to others doing a similar course	During a college visit	
Practice for an interview if they have one	Form tutor, parent or carer, SENCO	
Liaise with parents re: Practice getting to college – catching the bus, walking or other – <b>Might they need some travel training?</b>	Parent or carer, SENCO <b>Travel Training – The Brandon Trust</b> <a href="https://www.brandontrust.org/information-and-support/travel-buddy-project">https://www.brandontrust.org/information-and-support/travel-buddy-project</a>	
Liaise with college SENCO to Identify a key person or mentor for college	College SENCO	
Support the student to complete a person centred 1-page profile and ensure college have it in advance of starting their course	School SENCO or form tutor Parent or carer College SENCO	See information on one page profile. College need to ensure that this information is shared with all staff who teach the YP.
Find out what will be the same for college and school and what will be different. Support student to make a list of questions to ask their mentor or keyworker. <b>Ask about lunchtime arrangements.</b>	Other students, college visit, college SENCO or course leader, college handbook.	
Signpost to what registration onto the course will entail, where they need to go, what they need to bring	College website, handbook College SENCO	Remind Students that evidence of Exam results will be required prior to registration
Encourage the student to find out what their first few days will look like in college, what to expect and where they can go if they are unsure. Have a visual plan of this to refer to – a to do list or outline	College SENCO College key person or mentor Reception	
Find out what they can do during my 'free time 'in college. Add this information to your timetable.	Parents or carer College SENCO Keyworker or mentor	



### Example of a one page profile

#### What others like and admire about me

- Kind and caring – good with younger children
- A good and loyal friend
- Can be relied on to tell the truth
- Hardworking and focused on the things I enjoy.



#### What's important to me?

- Getting to know the college quickly
- Knowing where to go if I need help
- Having time to just be with friends and relax
- Access to a phone to call mum when stressed
- Taking classes that are fun but also help me to work toward a career in child care
- Getting through compulsory courses
- Help with maths when I need it – it's my weak spot
- Staying away from situations where I may be influenced to make poor choices
- That both of my parents are involved in my education
- I have a consistent person to go to for emotional, stress management
- Learning good study habits

#### How best to support me?

- I don't like to ask for help; please offer it if you feel I need it
- After a visit to my dad's house, it takes me some time to get into the swing of things, be patient and offer your support
- If I get overwhelmed I tend to give up, please help me to stay on track
- I like to write stories or in my journal when I am frustrated or sad, sometimes I need the freedom to do this
- I like to be a leader but sometimes get caught up in the drama of a situation; I might need a motivational reminder
- I like to eat in a quiet space and become easily overwhelmed by too much choice
- Stress is not my friend. My anxiety raises and I need reassurance or comfort from someone I love or am comfortable with
- Public speaking makes me physically ill, my anxiety level rises until I am physically sick and cannot function. Please limit that where possible.

## School/College to University

**The transition process between** college or school and university requires a great deal of thought, planning and practice.

Unlike other transitions consideration and preparation for living independently needs to be undertaken.

Many students with autism may find the social and independent living aspect of university way more challenging than the academic part. They will need to consider whether a placement that enables them to live at home whilst they study is a more realistic goal.

It is important to start planning early.



Support students to identify possible courses for further study as early as possible to ensure you they are taking appropriate A levels or equivalent level 3 courses.

Check whether there is a requirement for them to do work experience or voluntary work as prerequisite for the course they want to do. Liaise with parents and carers to support with this.

Encourage students to consider whether an apprenticeship might be a better option than further education. A useful link is

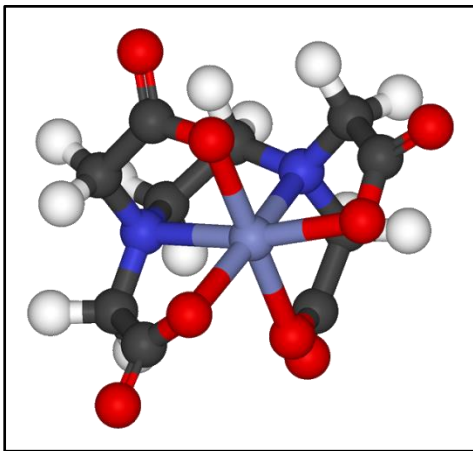
<https://www.gov.uk/apply-apprenticeship>

Many universities have autism summer schools for pupils in year 12 so they can have a full taster of university life before making an application. It does not have to be the university you finally apply to.

<http://network.autism.org.uk/good-practice/case-studies/bath-autism-summer-school>

Support students and liaise with parents to apply early for these available places and opportunities. It will give a realistic idea about how university life operates.





[stubblepatrol.com](http://stubblepatrol.com).

### Year 13

Support student to complete UCAS application form before January. The personal statement that supports this application may be very challenging to write without exemplars from previous applicants. Students with autism are often poor at asking for help or recognising when they need help. It is a good idea to ask to see a first draft rather than waiting for the student to ask for help or guidance.

<https://www.ucas.com/file/4256/download?token=gqbFY4ph>

is a link for a personal statement timeline which may be helpful to show the degree of planning needed and when that needs to be done by.

Exemplars can be found

at <https://www.studential.com/university/applying/UCAS-application-guide/personal-statement-examples>

Applications for student finance need to be made well before starting the course you want. The application can be completed on line. Usually deadlines for application are at the end of May. Details can be found at

<https://www.gov.uk/apply-for-student-finance/when>

<https://university.which.co.uk/advice/advice-for-parents/parents-what-you-need-to-know-about-student-finance>.

Students with autism can apply for DSA – disabled student grant. This is to cover the extra costs of being a student with a disability and does not need to be repaid. If agreed students will be sent for a needs assessment.

Students who do not have an EHCP will need to have an up to date confirmation from a medical professional about their diagnosis and the impact it has upon them. For further information see

<https://www.gov.uk/disabled-students-allowances-dsas>

