

Integrated Community Paediatric Services **Paediatric Occupational Therapy Services**

Worksheet L

Supporting Children with Motor Coordination Difficulties in Secondary School

Moving to secondary school is a big step and the demands and expectations change. You no longer remain in one class all day but are required to move around the school. You must learn to deal with timetables and a wide variety of subjects and are expected to independently organise yourself for the school day. The following tips will hopefully help to make the transition to High School more manageable.

Plan and Prepare for Transition

- Transition days are a good opportunity to become familiar with the new school layout and meet new teachers.
- Discuss any worries or anxieties you may have with your parents and current teachers, they can help you to identify questions to ask when visiting your new school.
- There are resources on <https://suffolkseniass.co.uk/education/child-young-persons-voice/person-centred-planning/> which can help to document the important information you would like your new teachers to know.
- Identify a key contact person at your new school (normally the SENCO) for any questions or concerns you may have.

Getting To and From School

- If walking a new route to school, make sure you have a few practise runs to become familiar with the route, identify safe crossing places and know how long it takes so you can plan to leave on time. Identify if there is a friend you can walk with to help your confidence initially.
- If taking the bus, have a practise run to help reduce any anxiety and ensure you know where the bus stops are. Make a backup plan so you know what to do if there are any issues e.g. if the bus does not turn up.

Getting Around School

- Use a map of the school and keep this safe in your homework diary or pocket of your school bag. Colour code and highlight the rooms used the most.
- Identify a friend who you can move between lessons with.
- Discuss a plan as to what you will do if you get lost e.g. ask for help from the office.

Organisation

- Colour code lessons on your timetable and match the colours to the colours on your school map.
- Have a copy of the timetable at home to help plan and pack your school bag each day. you could stick this to a whiteboard or noticeboard so you can add reminders when needed.
- Cover books in the same colour used for each subject on the map and timetable
- Talk through the timetable and look at your map with your parent/carer each morning to help prepare for the day ahead.
- Have a dedicated space at home to keep your school items e.g. on a hook on the back of your bedroom door. If possible have storage for your extra books etc in your room.
- Complete homework in a dedicated space so there is less risk of it getting lost somewhere in the house.

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- Use written or picture checklists to remind you what you need to pack in your bag and what you need to bring home again.
- Use a bag with pockets and have dedicated pockets for certain items.
- Pack your bag the night before so you don't have to rush in the morning.
- Use a rucksack with straps for each shoulder as this will be better for your balance and posture.
- The inside door of a locker is a good place to keep reminders, to do lists, maps or an extra timetable.
- Use a clear pencil case so you can easily find the items you need for each lesson.

Homework

- Use a homework diary and ideally ask the teacher to give homework at the beginning of a lesson so there is time for you to record it. If you struggle to note down your homework, ask your teacher for a written explanation of your homework so that you can stick in your diary.
- Get into the habit of emptying your school bag each day to make sure you don't forget anything important and you can organise any loose bits of paper that may be in your bag.
- Use a homework 'to do' tray on your desk at home or make a note on your noticeboard/whiteboard.
- Use a homework folder in your bag so it doesn't get lost or crumpled.

Dressing

- Label everything, including shoes, so they can be easily returned if lost.
- Take time in the summer before you start high school to practice tying a tie. Refer to our 'How to Fasten a Tie' advice sheet for info.

Lunchtimes

- A packed lunch may be an easier to manage than organising money, standing in a queue etc to buy school dinners.
- Make your packed lunch the night before and consider using easy to open zip lock bags and boxes.
- Make a plan with your parents/school staff as to where you will spend break and lunchtimes, e.g. form room, library, lunch club, canteen.

Recording Work

- The pace and quantity of work increases when you move up to secondary school. Refer to our 'KS2 and Above Handwriting' advice sheet for advice and strategies.
- School to consider purchasing 'Handwriting in the Secondary School... not a secondary skill' from <https://nha-handwriting.org.uk/shop/handwriting-in-the-secondary-school/> for further advice and strategies.

Exams and Revision

- Create a plan on what needs to be covered and add this to your whiteboard/noticeboard.
- Revise in short, concentrated bursts and then have a complete change of activity.
- Where necessary, discuss exam access arrangements (e.g. extra time, rest breaks, scribe, laptop) early on with your parents/teachers