



Moving from Year 6 to Year 7 – Transition for Children with SEND and EHCPs

RANi Need to Know Guides | Transition Phases Advisory sheet 2

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The move from primary to secondary school is a major step for all children—but for children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), and particularly those with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP), it's essential that the transition is carefully planned and properly supported.

This guide explains what should happen, when, and how you can help ensure your child's needs are met during this important phase transfer.

Why the Year 6 to Year 7 Transition Is So Important

Children with SEND may find the move to secondary school challenging for many reasons:

- Larger and more complex school environments
- Increased expectations for independence and organisation

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- Changing classrooms and teachers
- Social pressures and new peer groups
- Sensory or emotional overload

Planning ahead and involving the right professionals can make this transition smoother, more positive, and more successful.

The Legal Framework for Phase Transfers

If your child has an **EHCP**, the local authority (LA) has **legal duties** under the Children and Families Act 2014 and the SEND Code of Practice.

Key Duty:

The LA must **review and amend** the EHCP and ****issue** the final amended plan naming the secondary school by **15 February** in the year of transfer (Year 6).

This duty is **not optional**, and it applies even if:

- An appeal is ongoing
 - The school hasn't formally confirmed the place
 - You're considering or applying to independent or specialist provision
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The Transition Process – Step by Step

Step 1: Annual Review in Year 5 or Early Year 6

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- Ideally, the EHCP should be reviewed in **Year 5 (Summer term)** to start planning for secondary.
- Alternatively, an **early review** should happen at the start of Year 6.
- This is known as a **Phase Transfer Review**.

Step 2: Expressing a School Preference

- You have the right to request a particular school, such as:
 1. Mainstream secondary schools
 2. Special schools or units
 3. Academies or free schools
- The LA must consult your chosen school and **must name it** in the EHCP unless:
 1. It's unsuitable for the child's needs
 2. It would negatively affect others' education
 3. It would be an inefficient use of public resources

You can express your preference during the EHCP review or by writing to the LA separately.

Step 3: Local Authority Consultations and Amendments

- The LA must consult with your preferred school(s) and take their views into account.
- The LA must send you a **draft amended EHCP** before the final one is issued.

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Step 4: Final EHCP Issued

- By **15 February**, the LA must issue the **final amended EHCP**, naming the secondary school in Section I.
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Preparing for the Move – Supportive Transition Planning

Even if the legal paperwork is in place, a successful transition also depends on **practical and emotional preparation**.

What Good Transition Planning Includes:

- **Visits to the new school** (extra visits if needed)
 - **Transition meetings** between the current and new SENCOs
 - **Child-friendly resources**, such as visual guides or photo books
 - **Key adult identified** at the new school
 - **Plans to transfer information**, routines, and strategies that support your child
 - **Gradual visits**, especially for children with autism, anxiety, or learning difficulties
 - **Use of social stories** or personalised transition booklets
 - **Therapists' or specialist input** as needed
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What Schools Must Do

Primary Schools:

- Share information with the new school
- Work with the secondary SENCO to understand your child's needs
- Support the child emotionally during the build-up to transition

Secondary Schools:

- Prepare to meet the EHCP requirements from Day 1
- Ensure reasonable adjustments are in place
- Provide training to staff as needed
- Involve the young person in transition planning

What If You're Unhappy with the School Named?

If you disagree with the school named in Section I of the EHCP:

- You can appeal to the SEND Tribunal
- You must consider mediation first (unless the appeal is only about placement)
- Deadlines apply (usually within 2 months of the decision letter or 1 month from the mediation certificate)

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Checklist for Parents and Carers

- ✓ Attend the Year 5 or Year 6 review
 - ✓ Research and visit possible secondary schools
 - ✓ Submit your school preference in writing
 - ✓ Ensure the amended EHCP is finalised by 15 Feb
 - ✓ Ask for a transition plan that includes your child's input
 - ✓ Liaise with both primary and secondary SENCOs
 - ✓ Request additional transition support if needed
 - ✓ Prepare your child emotionally for the change
 - ✓ Raise concerns early if you feel the new school isn't ready
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Practical Tips

- **Keep communication open** with both schools and the LA
 - **Document everything**—emails, meeting notes, decisions
 - **Ask questions** and raise concerns early
 - **Involve your child or young person** as much as possible—they should feel part of the transition, not like it's happening *to* them
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Summary

The Year 6 to Year 7 transition is a critical phase for children with SEND. If your child has an EHCP, the local authority has legal obligations to review and amend the plan—and name the next school—by 15 February. With good planning, joint working between schools, and a focus on your child's individual needs, the transition can be a positive and successful step.

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Support and Resources

You can get further support from:

- **RANi** – Help with advice, support and impartial information
- **Local Offer** - Help with advice, support and impartial information
- **SENDIASS** – Local impartial information and advice service for parents and young people www.iasmanchester.org
- **IPSEA** – Independent Provider of Special Education Advice: www.ipsea.org.uk
- **Contact** – A national charity supporting families with disabled children: www.contact.org.uk

If you'd like help preparing your request or understanding your appeal options, RANi can provide guidance and templates.

Remember:

Always keep a copy of all correspondence you send, along with proof of postage or delivery. If you send documents by post, we recommend using a **signed-for** service. If sending by email, request a **read receipt** if possible.

Get in Touch

If you need more information or have a question, we're here to help.

Email us: info@rani.org.uk

Please include:

- Your name
- Your child's name
- Your child's date of birth
- Your query

Or, if you prefer, you can fill out our online **contact form** and we'll get back to you as soon as possible.

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