



Brookfields School

Transition Policy

Leadership Team
November 2017

Rationale

“Transition is defined as ‘passing or change from one place, state or condition to another.’”

(Transition Toolkit, pg 16, 2005)

Throughout life there are many changes that will involve transitions; these could be minor or major changes in routines, rules and boundaries, procedures and personnel.

Transition within the school setting can be seen as being:

- Change from one lesson to another
- Change from one place to another
- Change from one educational establishment to another, either coming to the Brookfields or moving on to another establishment

Introduction

ASD is a lifelong condition and all pupils with ASD will have difficulties in the following three key areas known as the ‘triad of impairments’ that were described by Wing and Gould in 1979:

- Communication
- Socialisation
- Imagination

In addition to the ‘triad’ pupils may also have sensory issues and motor planning, gross motor and fine motor problems. Sensory difficulties can have an enormous impact on how a pupil is able to interface with other individuals, situations and activities.

‘For many children with ASD transition is always an anxious time which needs sensitive management’ (Jordan and Cornick 2000).

For some pupils with autism a complete change of environment can be more easily accepted than changes to familiar places and routines and therefore moving from one class to another may be more likely to cause anxiety than changing school. Therefore, all transitions must be carefully planned and prepared for if the pupils are to adjust to them with a minimum amount of stress and anxiety. Pupils with ASD find it very difficult to manage change and it can result in extreme anxiety for some. The following areas may have an impact upon the way in which they cope and take ownership of transitions:

- Making choices
- The ability to see the whole picture; seeing only individual parts of situations
- Understanding and communicating what is important to them
- Thinking ahead

- Understanding language related to change and future
- Planning and organising
- Anxiety around change
- Fixed and sometimes unrealistic choices

Aims

At Brookfields the aims of transition plans and practices are:

- To enable pupils to move between one activity to the next in class or within school with a minimum amount of stress and anxiety. (Micro transition)
- To enable pupils to move class or school with a minimum amount of stress and anxiety. (Macro transition)
- To ensure teachers, parents, carers and others have the information they need to facilitate as smooth a transition as possible for each individual pupil. Pupils with ASD can become reliant on familiar people to help them to cope with the challenges they have. Therefore, it is important to ensure the knowledge and understanding of pupils is shared with all those involved in the transition.

Entry to Brookfields

Pupils often start at Brookfields in their Nursery or Reception year and for many of these pupils Brookfields is their first school placement. However, pupils can and do transfer from other schools at any time during their primary school years.

When it is known that a child is likely to come to Brookfields parents and/or carers are invited to visit the school with their child. A priority on this visit is to make the child's initial experience of Brookfields as enjoyable as possible so that the first association with school is a positive one. During this visit the child may stay with their parent whilst they look around the school or spend some time in an appropriate class. Parents/carers and, when appropriate, the children are consulted as to which of these options would be the most appropriate introduction to school. Further visits may then be arranged. If the child is already in a school, it is possible that staff from their current class will accompany them on these visits, as this provides an opportunity for information to be shared.

During their visits to school the child will be given information about the school and their proposed class. This is likely to be in the form of photographs and may include pictures of; classroom and other school staff; class children; classroom activities, and school resources such as the sensory room and hydrotherapy pool. The child, their parents/carers, staff from their current school, and written records may be consulted to enable the teacher to identify the quantity and type of information which should be given.

Prior to their child starting school parents/carers are invited to come into school to meet with the class teacher. This provides a valuable opportunity for parents /carers to share information about their child, and in particular to identify things which may

help to make their first experiences of Brookfields positive as well as completing the schools very detailed admission booklet. If the child is transferring from another school, staff liaise with the school to gain as much pertinent information as possible. It is common practice for the class teacher or member of SLT to observe the child in their current setting to gain further information within a familiar context.

Children can join Brookfields throughout the school year. In addition, part time placements or a gradual build up of days may be considered. When a child first starts at Brookfields arrangements for parents/carers are flexible.

In recent years we have undertaken home visits for pupils joining us in Reception and have run Open Evenings for the children and their families to attend. This has allowed a wonderful opportunity to meet families, share information about school and starting school and allow the families the opportunity to see their child in the setting alongside all the other 'new' children.

Micro Transitions

- **The Morning Routine / Home-time routine**

At Brookfields we recognise that the transition at the start of the day with the journey from home to class can be a difficult one for our pupils. We use many strategies to make this a calm and successful transition. Low level music is played in the entrance hall as the children arrive and photos of the children are displayed on the screen. These strategies help to create a feeling of calmness and aid the transition into school. A familiar adult is always at the door to greet pupils on arrival. Children take part in "calm-alert" activities at the start of and throughout the day which ensures that individual children are calm and alert enough to learn. At the end of the day pupils are taken to 'bus groups' where they are collected and taken to their transport. All teaching area staff are involved in ensuring that this is a calm and organised process. A member of staff is in the entrance hall to say 'goodbye' to the pupils. Training is provided to transport personnel annually to support them in developing their understanding of the needs of the children and the importance of a calm and positive transition into / out of the building.

- **Moving from one activity to another**

At Brookfields we cater for the individual needs of our children and a variety of approaches can be seen when helping the transition between tasks and activities. In all classes a visual timetable is used to help pupils see what lesson or activity is next. The symbols are taken off the timetable and placed in a finished folder/box to help the pupils understand that the activity has finished, and it is time to move onto the next.

Throughout the school day pupils are required to move from one activity to another, for example, during lesson time when the group session is finished pupils may move to their workstation to complete set tasks. The help given to each child is dependent

on their individual need. Some children may have individual timetables, some may use a "Now and Then" / reward card while others may be shown a "finished" symbol when the task is complete. During lessons symbols are used to aid with transitions between set activities. When children complete activities at their workstations symbols are again used to help pupils carry out set tasks and to promote independence. A wide range of transition resources / strategies are used including music, photographs, objects of reference, labels, verbal prompts etc.

- **Moving within school**

Brookfields is a small school and therefore all the pupils and staff benefit from being in an environment where everybody knows and has regular contact with everyone else. Pupils have opportunities to go into other classes on occasions such as theme days, wet playtimes, and joint or mixed class activities. The pupils also use a range of locations across the school day including the extended learning area, cookery room, sensory room, soft play room and wide range of outdoor areas. If the activity is new to the children, class teams will prepare the pupils using photographs and symbols. These factors facilitate smooth transitions across classes for most pupils. As a school we offer a wide range of opportunities that are provided by external and less familiar adults such as sports coaches, musicians, theatre groups, artists etc. The pupils are prepared for these activities using the visual support systems and countdowns etc.

Macro Transitions

- **School Outings**

At Brookfields pupils go out on weekly educational visits as part of the curriculum. Children are prepared for these visits using photographs and PowerPoint presentations. On the day of the outing the activity is reflected on the visual timetable in class. A social story may be written, information books shared and symbols (as appropriate) may be used during the actual outing. Again, this preparation is provided on an individual's need and will vary from child to child. Some pupils also have the opportunity for out of school opportunities for sports or drama / music activities and again the pupils are prepared appropriately as for their level of need.

- **Moving classes**

Pupils will likely move classes yearly. Changes of class usually occur at the beginning of a school year, when children generally move with most of their class. In grouping classes pupils are kept where possible in their correct year groups. Towards the end of the school year all pupils take part in a transition session, during which pupils spend time in their new classes. Records are passed on at the end of the school year, and discussions take place during staff meeting time with regards to how staff can best help children to settle into their new classes e.g. exchanging communication passports, Listen, Respond, Teach charts etc and a handover of academic

information and individual strategies. A range of strategies may be used including; taking a favourite piece of equipment to their new classroom; a familiar member of staff spending time with a pupil in their new class; a familiar routine being followed in a new class in the first few days/weeks and ensuring that visual supports used in one class are transferred and used consistently in the next class.

- **Transferring to another school**

Pupils transfer from Brookfields to a small number of schools. Children generally move from Brookfields at the end of key stage 2; however, transfers can occur at any time if everyone involved feels that another school would be better placed to meet a child's needs and this process would be managed through the EHCP process.

We aim to ensure an individual and seamless programme is in place for every pupil at the point of transition. Cavendish staff (and staff from other schools as appropriate) are invited to Year 6 Annual Reviews and records including BSquared and P Level assessments, reports etc are passed on. Year 6 pupils whenever possible take part in these reviews. In the Spring and Summer terms all pupils take part in regular visits to their new school during which they tour the school, spend time in classes and take part in lessons. Usually these are class or class group visits, but individual programmes have been arranged and there is at least one full day visit for the pupils to experience the lunchtime system. The Transition Coordinators meet regularly to discuss, plan and review the progress of the transition process and the Transition Coordinator from the other schools and Year 7 staff regularly observes pupils at Brookfields and meet with staff to discuss pupil progress and need. To help children to settle into their new school communication passports are exchanged. When key staff at the new school are identified in the final term they are invited to visit pupils in their current classes. To assist in transition a range of strategies may be used including; a familiar member of staff spending time with a pupil in their new school, ensuring that visual supports are used as part of the process, social stories and photograph albums of new staff and school are also used.

Pupils complete modules on "Moving On" as part of their PSHCE lessons during the Summer Term. Parents are involved in the transition process and are invited to tour the new school and attend coffee mornings. To mark the transition a special assembly is organised at Brookfields. A final meeting for all professions involved in transition is held in July when final arrangements formalised. Other school transitions are arranged in liaison with the secondary provider using a similar format.

Strategies to support successful transitions

Pupils with ASD can become reliant on familiar people to help them to cope with the difficulties they may have. Therefore, it is important to ensure the knowledge and understanding of pupils is shared with all those involved in the transition.

Brookfields aims to provide a clear structure with boundaries that are reinforced by all staff. Transition times throughout the day are carefully managed by staff, and pupils are provided with clear guidelines to support them, aiming to prevent any unnecessary anxiety.

Brookfields uses a wide range of resources and strategies to aid transition for the pupils. The appropriate methods are chosen and adapted to accommodate the pupil's individual needs. These are then used consistently with the child to ensure maximum effectiveness.

School staff provide support for parents and carers around transitions and work with other agencies in wider work with pupils who experience significant difficulty with transition e.g. PBSS, EP.

Dissemination of Policy

The policy will be disseminated widely. The school and Governors should ensure that they have knowledge of the policy and its implications for the school. It is the responsibility of the Head teacher to notify the Governors of any amendments.

Review Date

This policy will be reviewed in November 2020.