

# **School Transitions For Young People**



**Relate NI**



Transitions for young people can be a hard and emotional time and some young people can find it difficult to communicate this effectively. Unfortunately, when it comes to moving from one school to another, this transition cannot be avoided. Consideration to our confidence, self-esteem, and self-worth, to name a few, can be impacted by this transition as we try to navigate through this new beginning. Along with this can come pressure to achieve certain goals, and this is where our friends and family can be really helpful, supportive, and a great motivational influence while keeping a healthy perspective.

I discussed this with a young person recently, who is moving from Junior High School to College, they opened up about what they felt and what it was like for them in 2023 to be going through this. Here's what we talked about...

### **1. How are you feeling about this school transition?**

I don't feel like I really belong to a school, I am in a middle ground between Junior High and College. When people ask me what school I go to, I don't know what to say, and it feels scary to not belong to a school anymore.

### **2. What do you think other kids might be feeling?**

Some kids might feel really scared going to another school and overwhelmed. I am going to feel nervous to start a new school.

### **3. How did you feel on your last day of Junior High School?**

I definitely felt sad to leave my Junior High School, I was sad to leave behind some of the teachers. Some of my friends are going to a different school, it'll be hard to keep in touch. We are all friends on social media, but we won't see each other every day anymore.

### **4. What are your thoughts about the new school?**

I am excited about my new school, it'll be a new adventure, and I'll get to meet new people, and make new friends. At College or Senior High School stage, we get to do subjects we like and drop the ones we don't, so I really like that part of going to college.

### **5. Do you have any worries about the new school?**

There might be times when I get lost in the new school, thinking about it more, I might not like the new teachers, and might not know where things are e.g., toilets, canteen, etc.

### **6. Do you have anything you are looking forward to?**

Definitely, I am looking forward to more freedom and independence in the next school because they let you walk about the school during break times which feels more grown up.

### **7. Do you have any other thoughts/comments/concerns?**

There will be new rules to follow, so that will take time to adjust to and we will be the youngest year there when I have been used to being the oldest year.

### **8. Do you have any advice you could give to kids going through the same thing?**

It's OK to be nervous the first few days, but I feel like, eventually you will feel better about going to a new school because you will get used to the new school. If you are feeling sad or upset, talk to someone, a friend or someone your trust.



It's good to take time to talk to your child(ren) about an upcoming change, and ask them questions about what they're excited about, how they're feeling about it, and what they're least looking forward to experiencing...you may find this opens the communication more between you and your child(ren) which is never a bad thing! I found I got to know this young person more through this conversation, I asked minimal questions to let them think and then verbalise their thoughts.

This could help your relationship with your child(ren) while letting them know it's good to talk through what's happening in your life and to express how you are feeling. By doing this you normalise this and give an opportunity to inform your child(ren) what they are going through is natural!



# Some Preparation Tips For Parents The First Day Of A New School...

- Do a mock school run to time how long it will take to get to the new school and back.
- Run through scenarios of if the school bus is missed, if parents are in work meetings etc.
- Go to bed earlier and get up earlier in the week leading up to school beginning so as to get used to that routine again.
- Make note of where drop off and pick up spots (if needed) are going to be each day.



- Go through letters from the school together so everyone feels included and informed about the school.
- Note on the calendar holiday dates and other important dates so everyone is aware of upcoming events.
- Ensure to note emergency numbers in your child's phone and/or note them down.
- Get organised early with uniform, shoes, stationary, etc.
- Give your child(ren) cash just encase they need some for break time or after school.
- **STAY CALM** – if you are stressed, your child(ren) get stressed. Even if you don't feel calm, put on that brave face until your child(ren) is out of sight. Your child(ren) can go to school calmer and more confident this way.

