

Warrington School Nursing Service - 0-19 team

**Year six - moving up to high school,
a wellbeing guide for parents and
carers**



Moving up to high school

Moving from primary school to high school is an exciting milestone for year six pupils. It can also be a time of worry for children and young people, and their parents and carers.

This leaflet is to help you understand why your child may be worried about going to high school, how to help them and where to get support if needed.

The most common things our pupils tell us they are worried about are:

- Getting lost in their new school
- Not being liked
- Getting lots of homework
- Tests and exams
- Crowds and lots more people
- Being embarrassed by their parents/carers
- The work being too hard
- Not liking their new teachers
- Missing friends going to a different school
- Being the youngest or the smallest in the school
- Having too much stuff to remember and take to school with them.



How you can help your child manage their worries

- Encourage your child to spend time doing things they enjoy, such as going for walks, being active, drawing, painting and being creative! Spending time with friends and family can help lower your child's worries and help them to cope with their emotions.
- Listen to your child - give them your full attention and tell them their feelings matter.
- Reassure them that worrying, feeling nervous or sad is normal when leaving somewhere behind and that those feelings usually pass. Talk to them about how they feel and what they think will be different about their new school.
- Try not to talk about your own worries to them. Be positive and focus on their strengths and new opportunities.

- Make a plan; write down goals they have for year seven and fill in a problem-solving activity for their worries (please see resources at the end of this leaflet).
- Celebrate your child leaving primary school and praise what they have done well. This is an important milestone. Celebrating can help to boost their confidence and self-esteem, which will help them to cope with new situations.
- School transition days are important – try to avoid your child being off school on these days. This is a chance for them to meet their new classmates and staff and get to know their new school.
- Ask for a school map and look at it with your child. If they are worried about getting lost, look at the map together and work out where they need to go.
- Try to get your child ready for their new school over the summer holidays. Do trial runs of the school journey together, take them to get their school uniform and any equipment they may need.
- Enjoy spending time together and be positive about their new school journey. Being organised can help to lower anxiety.
- Start to build your child's independence before they leave their primary school – you can do this by letting them get their own school bag, uniform and sports kit ready for school.
- Let your child meet friends outside of home and, if it is safe to do so, let them go to the local shop on their own.
- If your child has special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) or anxiety, check the primary school has shared this with the high school. You can ask the high school for a telephone call or a meeting with the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO).
- In the first few weeks of your child starting their new school, encourage them to relax, see their friends and do the things they enjoy. Familiar people and routines can lower anxiety.
- Give them time to settle in. It is normal for some children to take longer to settle. Check in with them each day - ask what the best and worst parts of their day were. Try not to ask them too many questions if they seem worried but be there to listen.



The teenage brain

- The changes that happen to the brain can start from 10 years old and continue until a person is in their early 20's. This is the part of the brain that helps us to make decisions and think about the likely result of our actions.
- Brain chemicals (neurotransmitters) have an effect on how we think, feel and act. Given the changes in their brains and bodies, teenagers are especially sensitive to the effect of these chemicals. This is why young people can take risks and can sometimes be impulsive.
- The teenage brain is ready to learn due to growth and new connections the brain is making. This is a time to focus on things they are interested in, such as sports, art, singing, acting.
- They may be easily embarrassed, moody and want to stay up later. These changes can be part of natural brain development.
- Being aware of these changes can help you to understand your child's behaviour and find ways to help them.
- You might notice your child has problems getting out of bed in a morning.
- The chemical messenger that makes us feel tired at bedtime (Melatonin) starts to be released later in the day. This means your child may not be able to get to sleep as early as they used to and can make it difficult for them to get up the next morning.
- Remember, more homework, wanting to see and speak with friends, gaming, and phones can all add to your child getting up later in the morning.
- Make a bedtime plan of when they need to go to bed, include turning off screens at least one hour before they go to sleep. A good night's sleep helps good health.
- Friends are important to young people; they can affect what they do and where they want to go. The influence of friends is highest during your child's teenage years. Getting to know your child's close friends can help to keep them safe.
- Remember to be kind to your teens and pre-teens! It is important to set limits, routines and keep them safe. Try to understand that some of their behaviour may be because of brain development, try to show patience and love.
- Anxiety through the teenage years is normal and you can help to them through it. There is lots of support and links can be found in our 'Where to get help' section.



Puberty

Puberty is the time in life when a child becomes sexually mature. It causes physical changes and affects children differently.

Puberty can start from age eight but is usually later and can continue until age 18.

Your child will have received information about puberty in primary school; this is usually in year five.

Dealing with body changes

As your child grows, body and hormone changes can make them worry more about how they look.

Your child may also feel pressure from their friends, television and social media to look or dress a certain way.

Try and encourage your child to notice the amazing things their body can do and the things they like about themselves.

Tell your child how loved and special they are. Spend time together, encourage them to be themselves and be proud of who they are.

Often adults will worry about how they look too. Be careful not to talk about these worries around your child. Focus on the things you like about yourself and let your child see you being positive.

Self-esteem

Self-esteem is how we feel about and value ourselves as people. Low self-esteem can happen when young people are going through big changes such as moving school. They may feel less confident than before.

Signs of low self-esteem include saying negative things about themselves, wanting to be alone, being low in mood or anxious, and comparing themselves to others.

If your child is saying negative things about themselves, point out the things they are good at and what they do well.

Keeping your child safe online

Your child may already be using the internet at home or on their mobile phone. On average, 12–15-year-olds spend 20 hours per week online.

You may find your child is using their phone and social media even more now they have new high school friends. Spending more time online can also increase the risk of problems such as bullying and harassment.

It is therefore important that you have parental controls set up on your home internet and your child's electronic devices. This can protect your child from unsuitable websites.

Online activities like watching YouTube, gaming, group chats, video chats and online challenges are popular with teenagers. The influence of online friends and YouTubers can be just as important as their school friends and friends in local area.

Talk to your child about apps and games and how they are designed to make them stay online for longer. Tell your child that information online is not always true.

Teach your child how to report and block people and pages online, and on social media apps and make sure they know **NEVER** to share their personal information and passwords with others online.

Check-in regularly with your child about what they are doing online and encourage them to be open with you.

Keeping your child safe in the local area

- Ask your child to make sure their phone is charged before they take it out with them.
- Make sure your child knows how to make an emergency call.
- Encourage your child to walk with friends if they walk to and from school.
- If your child wants to go out, ask where they are going and who with.
- Give them a time they need to be home by.
- Tell them to stick to main routes and not to take shortcuts.
- Tell them to stay with friends even if they fall out.
- Check your child knows not to talk to strangers.
- Check your child knows not to accept a ride from anyone unless they have asked for your permission first.



Looking after yourself

Being a parent or carer is both rewarding and testing. You can be so busy taking care of your children that you forget or do not have time to care for yourself.

Supporting your child through difficult times can be even more stressful.

- Try to take at least 10 minutes each day to sit down and relax with a hot drink.
- Do things you enjoy, read, listen to music, be creative.
- Be kind to yourself. Think about how you would comfort a friend or relative going through a hard time and be comforting to yourself.
- Make a to do list.
- Your health is important - try to take walks or exercise, eat well, and get a good night's sleep.
- Ask for help. There is support out there for parents.

Please see the link below for advice on self-care for parents:

UNICEF Self-care for parents:

<https://www.unicef.org/parenting/mental-health/parent-self-care-tips>

Action for Children – online parent support:

<https://parents.actionforchildren.org.uk/chat/>

Stopping stigma: facts about mental health services

- One in four people will experience a mental health problem in their lifetime.
- YOUNGMINDS mental health charity's research found that:
 - 33% of young people felt too embarrassed to ask for support
 - 6% of young people said their families did not want them to ask for support
 - 48% of young people said they could not find the right support when searching online.
- It is important that parents and carers support their children to access help if they need it.
- The stigma or 'shame' related to mental health is getting better, but it still exists. Talking about mental health openly helps to reduce stigma.
- Mental health and getting support are just as important as looking after your physical health.
- It is OK not to be OK.

Where to get help: local and national support

There is local and national support available if you feel your child needs help.

Local support

The School Health team are part of the Warrington 0-19 Service. We work with children and young people aged 5-19 years (up to 25 years with SEND) and their families.

- We help with health and wellbeing with a focus on early help and support.
- Young people can refer themselves.
- Referrals can also be made by parents/carers, schools, health professionals, social care, and children's services.
- The referral form can be found on the Bridgewater Warrington 0-19 integrated service webpage:

<https://bridgewater.nhs.uk/warrington/0-19-services/>

- Young people in secondary school can see a school nurse for any health need, including emotional health. Your child's school will advertise the school nurse drop-in day and time in school.



ChatHealth (provided by the School Health team) offer confidential and anonymous advice and support on any issues you may have.



- Text 07480 635994 if you are the parent or carer of a child aged 5-19 years old.
- Text 07507 330101 if you are a young person aged 11-19 years old.

Happy? OK? Sad? - provided by Warrington Borough Council and working together with the NHS and charities and voluntary organisations:

<https://www.warrington.gov.uk/happy-ok-sad>

If you or someone you know is struggling with their mental health, we want you to know that you are not alone. There are places you can go to get help.

Visit 'I need help right now' or the support directory to get the most suitable mental health advice for you or a loved one.

Warrington Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) offer emotional and mental health and wellbeing support to children and young people up to age 18. Parents or carers can call CAMHS too.

Call CAMHS on 01925 575 904, between 9am and 5pm, Monday to Friday.

There is a 24-hour Crisis Response team for young people up to the age of 18 experiencing a crisis and needing an emergency response. Telephone: 01744 415640.

Those over 18 can contact the crisis line on 0800 0511508.

If you need immediate medical attention, please go to your local accident and emergency (A&E) department.

Youth in Mind at Warrington Youth Zone is a free and discreet drop-in service for young people aged 7-19 (up to 25 with additional needs) who are experiencing problems relating to their emotional wellbeing. Young people do not have to be members of the Youth Zone to attend.

- The service is open 7 days a week from 3.30pm to 7.30pm - no appointment or referral is necessary.

NHS and school support

- You can contact your general practitioner (GP) practice for mental health and wellbeing advice.
- Your child's teachers, pastoral lead, learning mentor, mental health lead or SENCO staff are there to help with any concerns you have.
- Warrington schools are supported by either the NHS Mental Health Support team in Schools (MHST) or the Schools Link Mental Health team (SLMHT). Your child's school can make referrals to these services and will talk about this with you if a need is identified.

National support

Childline offers help to anyone under 19 in the United Kingdom. Young people can talk about anything, big or small, to trained counsellors who are there to offer support. It is free and confidential, and is available any time, day or night.

Telephone: 0800 1111 or email through the 1-2-1 counsellor chat:
<https://www.childline.org.uk/get-support/contacting-childline/>

Kooth offer online support for anxiety or depression, bereavement, drugs, and alcohol, eating disorders, exams, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer/questioning plus other terms (LGBTQ+), loneliness, self-harm, social media and mental health, suicide.

Website: [kooth.com](https://www.kooth.com)

Facebook: [facebook.com/koothUK](https://www.facebook.com/koothUK)

Youngminds can help if you are struggling with how you are feeling, want to know more about a mental health condition or medication, or want to find support.

- Use their helpfinder to find advice on how to look after yourself and where and how you can get the support you need.
- Youngminds have a dedicated parent's section on their website called Parents Mental Health Support | Advice for Your Child: <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/>

Resources

Animation for children and young people: <https://youtu.be/thnoUraeoGs>

Video explaining the teenage brain: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/articles/zckbsk7>

Parent video about cyberbullying:

<https://youtu.be/ynRBxjblxn4?list=PLJSbhHkqYnrTp6ipJUCzQj5YkYpt7K9S8>

Talking about mental health leaflets

Primary school: <https://d1uw1dikibnh8j.cloudfront.net/media/11396/tmh-parent-leaflet-final-web-updated-by-ed-april-2020.pdf>

Secondary school: <https://d1uw1dikibnh8j.cloudfront.net/media/11398/secondary-parents-leaflet-final-proofed-april-2020.pdf>

Moving up! The transition to secondary school activity sheets

Download and print the following activity sheets using the link below:

- Activity one: Embracing change
- Activity two: Finding support
- Activity four: Identifying strengths and goals

<https://www.annafreud.org/resources/schools-and-colleges/moving-up-the-transition-to-secondary-school/>

With special thanks to year six at Sacred Heart Catholic Primary School Warrington, NHS MHST, SLMHT at Culcheth High School, Warrington, and Warrington Youth Zone.

For impartial and confidential advice or information on the services provided by Bridgewater or to receive this leaflet in an alternative format call our Patient Services team on 0800 587 0562.