

If you are thinking about transferring your child to another school in Suffolk, but are not moving house, then please read this guidance.

Changing your child's school can affect your child in many ways and the decision should not be taken without careful thought. Parents are sometimes of the view that a different school will offer better outcomes, has more resources and will be more suited to their child's individual needs, but this isn't always the case. Moving a child to a different school has a big impact on their education and needs to be thought about carefully. You may find it helpful to consider the following issues.

Teaching and School Organisation

For children of any age, every school has its own special way of doing things and of teaching the National Curriculum in different ways at different times. Each school also has a behaviour policy although expectations can be the same at different schools.

How will your child cope:

- with learning new rules?
- doing things in different ways?
- if he or she has done the work before or has missed important earlier work?
- if he or she finds the work new or strange?

Older children who transfer school after exam subjects have been chosen in Year 9 may find that:

- they can't do the same subjects in a new school; or
- the exam boards and the courses are different.

Have you thought whether:

- your child can take the same subjects at a new school?
- the courses will be the same?
- your child will be comfortable taking a new subject or exam courses?

Relationships

Children need to feel happy at school; relationships with the right friends and with teachers are an important part of this.

Have you thought whether:

- your child will be able to settle in and get to know new people quickly, so that his or her learning does not suffer?

Family Links

If your child has brothers or sisters at the same school, a move to another school may need careful consideration.

Have you thought whether:

- it will be a problem for you to have your children attending different schools? There is no automatic right for your other children to transfer to the new school, either now or in the future.

Uniform

You might need to buy a completely new uniform, including PE kit, if your child changes school.

Have you thought:

- about the cost involved?

Travel to school

Your child needs to be able to get to school easily, safely and on time.

Have you thought:

- how your child would get to a new school?
- what the cost will be? In most circumstances you are unlikely to be eligible for travel assistance to another school.

Resolving Difficulties

Many matters that worry parents and children can be sorted out without the need to move schools. Moving schools may not resolve the difficulties and can even have a negative effect on your child's education by disrupting his or her schooling.

Before coming to a final decision, you may find it helpful to ask yourself the following questions:

Have I ...

- sat down with my child to talk about the points in this document and to discuss how he or she really feels about moving to a new school?
- found out the real reason why he or she wants to move schools?
- spoken to the teachers who teach my child (if there are worries about certain subjects) to find out what they think and how they could help?
- spoken to the teacher in charge of Special Educational Needs (if my child needs extra help)?
- spoken to my child's Tutor or Head of Year (if he or she is being bullied or not getting on with other children)?
- made an appointment to speak to the Headteacher (if you are still concerned about your child)?

If you have spoken to the Headteacher and are still not satisfied with the way in which the school has responded to your concerns, you can ask for the matter to be investigated in accordance with the school's Complaints Procedure.

These steps are aimed at making sure that a transfer is fully discussed between parents and schools and properly managed. It is important that a change of school is in the best interests of your child and that a transfer to a new school goes smoothly. Since the process may take some time to complete, you must ensure that your child **continues to attend his or her present school** while the necessary arrangements are being made.