

BUDDIES EVENTS



Moving from primary to secondary school can be a very traumatic and unsettling experience for many 10 and 11-year-olds.

National research has shown some pupils slip back in terms of academic achievement in their first year at secondary school - and never make up that lost progress.

Year 6 pupils moving to Year 7 in their chosen secondary schools often become concerned over a number of issues, which can include:

- Switching from having one teacher to having many for different subjects.
- Coping with a much more complex timetable.
- Dealing with the logistics of getting from one classroom to another - without getting lost.
- Finding their way around a much larger building, or sometimes a labyrinth of several buildings.
- Encountering large numbers of other pupils - many of them much bigger than they are.
- Learning the route to school and coping with school transport - often on their own for the first time.
- Playground rumours of initiation ceremonies and bullying.

One of the programmes delivered by Education Business Connections, which supports transition work in local schools, is the Buddies Events.

Year 6 pupils from cluster primary schools are taken to their future secondary school to meet teaching staff well ahead of their first day at their new secondary school (usually during their last summer term in primary).

They benefit from a tour of the school and are then split into smaller groups for a range of activities.

Joining them in their groups, as hosts, are pupils already at the secondary school who also help the younger pupils during the activities. These include:

- Team building
- Group discussion
- Role play
- Questions and answers

The 'Circle of Concerns' question and answer session, in particular, allows the primary pupils to verbalise their biggest fears and then have them quickly dispelled by pupils already in the secondary school they will shortly be attending. These concerns are then 'thrown in the trash can'. The fact that it is other young people - and not teachers - helping to dispel these unpleasant playground myths gives added peer credibility.

In the following September, when the Year 6 pupils finally arrive for their first day at their new secondary school, they are able to settle down quickly to learning, confident and familiar with their new setting and often with special 'Buddies' - the older pupils they met and worked with during the Buddies Events - on hand to help them through the first few weeks in secondary school.

Education Business Connections provides:

- Full event organisation including recruitment of schools to take part, and all related housekeeping, or support for schools hosting their own Buddies Events.
- A portfolio of practical pupil-centred activities.
- Full post event evaluation.