

EIS Advice on Transition Arrangements from P7 to S1

(April 2022)

The importance of planning and supporting children and young people through transition periods is well recognised. Primary and Secondary teachers play a vital role in sensitively supporting children as they move to Secondary school and encounter new arrangements.

The updated [Scottish Government Guidance](#) on Reducing the Risks in Schools now provides that there are no restrictions on visits to school buildings, although visitors will be expected to comply with the school's routine protective measures. Transition visits to support those children, who will be moving from P7 to S1 in the next academic session, can therefore be resumed, **provided they are appropriately risk assessed**.

The guidance makes it clear that 'schools should operate in line with their own circumstances and risk assessments as they do in all areas of school life'.

In devolving more autonomy in decision-making to local authorities, the guidance recognises 'the importance of local dialogue, including with LNCTs and other recognised trade unions, in reaching local decisions'. Collegiate practice should underpin the risk assessment process and the decisions made about the mitigation measures required to manage risk at a local level.

The EIS recommends that decisions about the level and nature of the transition support should, therefore, be made on a collegiate basis, with full involvement of the school staff from both settings. Decisions should follow joint risk assessment, with due regard to COVID prevalence in the locale in which each setting is based.

Transition Visits to Secondary Schools

In planning transition visits, regard should be had to the Scottish Government Guidance on school visits, with the routine protective measures, identified in

the guidance, being adopted, as well as any additional mitigations considered necessary following a thorough risk assessment process.

Given the increased transmissibility of new variants of the virus, we would recommend that careful consideration is given to the arrangements for such visits and to who should accompany children on the day, having full regard to local circumstances. Although the Scottish Government Guidance removes the restrictions on parents, carers and other visitors entering school buildings, Head Teachers will require to review and update suitable and sufficient risk assessments, before finalising arrangements for these visits.

The EIS is clear that decisions about the format of the visits and the nature of transition support, should be based on collegiate discussion, with Head Teachers continuing to work jointly with trade unions to reach agreement regarding the arrangements for such events.

Adults accompanying children on a visit, whether Primary staff or parents/carers, should comply with the Scottish Government Guidance in relation to visitors to Secondary schools. It recommends that they adhere to physical distancing requirements with regards to Secondary school staff and pupils, and wear a face covering while on school premises. Where the visit takes place indoors, the meeting space should be well ventilated and appropriate hand hygiene measures in place.

Where an enhanced transition is necessary to support children and young people with additional support needs, a bespoke risk assessment should be completed and appropriate arrangements made on this basis.

Transition Visits to Primary Schools by Secondary Staff

The Scottish Government Guidance makes it clear that Secondary staff can attend Primary schools as professional visitors, to meet children who are moving from P7 to S1 in the next academic session. These meetings must be risk assessed, with appropriate mitigations for the Primary setting being adopted.

The expectation is that Secondary school staff attending Primary schools should comply with physical distancing requirements with regards to Primary staff and pupils in the setting and where the visit takes place indoors, the meeting space should be well ventilated, face coverings worn and appropriate hand hygiene arrangements in place.

Review of Risk Assessments

Risk assessments should be reviewed regularly and should reflect and be adapted to respond to local issues, such as local increases in cases of COVID-19 or local outbreaks. Schools and local authorities should pay very close attention to any evidence suggesting the potential for emerging bridges of transmission across schools.

Support Materials

Education Scotland has developed a resource to support transitions during COVID restrictions: [Transitions in the context of COVID-19](#).