

DSPL7

Delivering Special
Provision Locally

Year 6 - 7 Transition Support Pack 2026



DSPL7

St Albans District, Harpenden and Villages
Redbourn, Wheathampstead and Kimpton

Summer 2026

This booklet outlines the courses and services that are being run by external providers over the Summer term 2026 to support parents and families who have a child or children with additional needs. Please visit the relevant websites to book.

Pioneer Transition workshop	3
Young Minds	5
The Bridge	6
The Sandbox	7
Nip in the Bud	11
Neurodiversity Hub	13
Shout	14
DSPL7 Support	15
Who we are	17

Pioneer Transition workshop



FREE **TRANSITION** **TO**
SECONDARY **WORKSHOP**

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD'S MOVE TO SECONDARY SCHOOL

Starting secondary school is an important milestone for both children and their families. It's an exciting step forward, but it can also bring worries and uncertainty, especially for children who feel anxious about school.

To help parents feel more confident and prepared, Vista Support Services and The Pioneer Club are hosting two **Transition to Secondary** workshops for parents and carers of Year 6 pupils.

These free, two-hour sessions will offer practical advice, helpful strategies and reassurance to support your child as they approach this new stage of school life with greater confidence. Each workshop can support up to 60 parents and carers, so advance booking is essential to secure your place.

WHEN? **Wednesday 6th May 10.00am-12.00pm**
Wednesday 13th May 6.00-8.00pm

WHERE? **Pioneer Club, Heathlands Drive, St Albans AL3 5AY**

WHO? **Parents & carers of children currently in Year 6**

**TO SECURE YOUR FREE PLACE HEAD TO BOOKWHEN.COM/THEPIONEERCLUB-YOUTH
EMAIL FUNDRAISING@PIONEERCLUB.CO.UK OR SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW**



**The
Pioneer
Club**

Registered charity number 303455

pioneerclub.co.uk

Vista
Support Services

vistasupportservices.org.uk

Pioneer Transition workshop

WHAT YOU WILL GAIN FROM THE WORKSHOP

These sessions are designed to give parents practical tools and confidence to support their child during the move to secondary school. During the workshop you will learn:

- How parental anxiety can influence children's feelings about school, and ways to manage this positively
- Practical strategies to help both you and your child manage worries and uncertainty
- Techniques such as active listening that help children feel heard and supported
- Ways to encourage resilience, confidence and independence in your child
- Guidance on working effectively with schools during the transition process
- An opportunity to engage in an interactive Q&A session with a trained facilitator

WHAT THE WORKSHOP COVERS

The Transition Workshops run by Vista Support Services are designed for parents and carers of Year 6 pupils preparing for secondary school. The sessions aim to help families better understand the transition and feel more prepared for the changes ahead.

Topics include:

Understanding the Transition

- The key stages of moving from primary to secondary school
- What changes your child may experience in their learning, friendships and daily routine

Supporting Your Child Through Change

- Recognising the emotional, social and academic adjustments children often face
- Practical ways to help your child feel more confident during this period of change

Building Resilience and Independence

- Strategies to help your child develop confidence, problem-solving skills and self-reliance

Supporting Your Child at Home

- Techniques and strategies for support at home - tools and tips for parents to support organisation, coping with change, and reducing transition anxiety

WHO SHOULD ATTEND

These workshops are ideal for parents and carers of children currently in Year 6 who want to help their child feel more confident about moving to secondary school.

They may be particularly helpful if your child:

- Feels worried or anxious about starting secondary school
- Finds change or new environments challenging
- Struggles with confidence or independence
- Has shown signs of school-related anxiety or school avoidance
- Would benefit from extra support during this important transition

Young Minds

YoungMinds is leading the fight for a future where all young minds are supported and empowered, whatever the challenges. They're here to make sure they get the best possible mental health support and have the resilience to overcome life's difficulties.

The activities you are going to complete are part of our national Find Your Feet programme, which is funded by the Asda Foundation.

Find Your Feet is about change and focussing on the transition from primary to secondary school.


Learning about change and how to cope with it will help you with this particular transition, as well as helping you to recognise the strengths you have to deal with and prepare for many other changes and challenges you will face in life.

Today, we'll be focussing on change and how it can affect our mental health and where you can go for help.

It is important for you to have a chance to try out different coping skills and methods and find the ones that work for you.

Choose health

Have what others your child.
What makes them grumpy, angry, disconnected.

 Do they need snacks throughout the day?
Do they need lots of sleep?
Do they need to get out and about and do exercise?
Do they need time alone?

Trust that you know your child and give them the basics that they need to cope with difficult days.

Work together

Share ideas about how to:

- create action plans
- have a problem-solving approach
- enjoy achievements
- be forward-looking
- show them that we can all get things wrong



Move on up

Encourage independence

- help them to move positively from child identity towards teen identity
- increase their responsibilities
- be positive whenever they act maturely




Be aware of your child's changing needs. Sometimes it might feel like one step forwards, two steps back.

Be calm

Try to stay calm whilst your child is feeling distressed
Your child may show:

- highs and lows
- blame
- meltdrama
- self-centredness
- anger



Communicate

The small things you do make all the difference.

Keep talking, texting, listening, hearing, hugging, sympathising, smiling, reassuring, checking, sharing, suggesting, encouraging, respecting

Get learning

Be involved, find out more and talk about:

- social media
- internet benefits and dangers
- new music
- language and slang
- current affairs
- what it's like to be young in the current world



Be wise

Is they discuss new things, try to:

- be interested
- be non-judgemental
- guide
- give boundaries
- see it from all sides
- listen to their point of view
- choose your words carefully
- act on warning bells



Be the anchor

In times of change you are:

- constant
- family
- familiar
- routine
- in-jokers
- irritating
- comforting
- home



Have fun

Provide lots of light relief

- be silly
- be embarrassing
- play games
- laugh together
- do stuff together
- make jokes
- make things
- be outside



Look after yourself

Support yourself, to best support your child:

- lean on friends
- offload on other family
- find 'me time'
- see the CB
- relax, exercise, sleep well, eat well
- remember tomorrow is a new day



Ten Ways for parents to help children cope with change



The Bridge



What is The Bridge?

The Bridge is a support group designed for parents, carers and young people in school years 6,7 and 8 who are struggling with school attendance. This includes those who are not attending school at all or on a significantly reduced timetable.

Purpose of The Bridge?

The group aims to provide a safe and supportive environment where families can:

- Share experiences
- Receive emotional and practical support
- Build confidence and resilience

Topics Covered

- Anxiety and worries related to school.
- Friendships and social dynamics
- Health and wellbeing
- Neurodiversity
- The Future

Who is running the group?

The sessions are facilitated by Alison and Karina from the Intensive Family Support Team, working alongside a range of specialist professionals who offer tailored insights and support.

Session Details

Sessions will run for 12 weeks starting on Thursday 16th April 2026—9th July 2026

Time: 12:30pm-2:30pm

Where: Welwyn Garden City Cricket Club, 288 Knightsfield, WGC, AL8 7NQ

Please contact Alison or Karina with any questions:

Alison.cowie@hertfordshire.gov.uk or karina.saunders@hertfordshire.gov.uk

Sandbox



Who Is The Sandbox For?

The Sandbox is for **Children and Young People** who want additional support for their mental health.

Everything on **The Sandbox website** can be accessed **without registering**.

If you need **additional support**, continue reading below where you will find a **self-referral assessment** to access **NHS funded therapy**.



LIFE TRANSITIONS

Transitions are a natural part of life, and they play a significant role in shaping the development of your life.

Primary School

Moving from one stage to another can be both exciting and challenging, as it involves adapting to new environments.

Secondary School

This month we'll look at some key transitions in your life and how to deal with them.

College/
Sixth Form

University

First Job

Grad Scheme

Transitions And Changes

Change can bring about **mixed emotions** like excitement, fear, and sometimes a bit of overwhelm.

Some changes that you might be navigating are: **moving schools, starting sixth form or university, getting your first job, moving out of home**, or even just keeping up with regular **school attendance**.

These moments mark **new chapters** in your life, and while they come with **challenges**, they're also full of **opportunities**.

This month, we're focusing on **helping you navigate these changes** so you can make the best of every new opportunity!

STARTING SECONDARY SCHOOL

It's normal to feel scared when starting at a new school.

Why not check if these are done to make you feel more comfortable before your first day?

- I've visited the school I'm moving to
- I've spoken to my friends also going there
- I know how I'll get to the new school
- I've chatted to someone I trust about it
- I planned time to do my school work
- I know which clubs I'd like to join
- I know what time I'll need to leave home



Sandbox - resources

INTRODUCING MYSELF

Going to a new school and making new friends can be a scary process!

One way to make it easier is to think about some interesting things about yourself that you can use to talk with your new school mates.

In my free time I love to...

My favourite series/
film is...

My favourite subject at
school is...

When I grow up, I want to
be a...

My favourite holiday was
when I went to...

The coolest thing I've ever done
was...

If I had a superpower,
it would be...

The Sandbox | @sandbox_kai



HOMWORK AND ACTIVITY PLANNER

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

SUNDAY

READING

Time:

Title:

Time:

Title:

Time:

Title:

Time:

Title:

Time:

Title:

Time:

Title:

Time:

Title:

HOMework

Time:

Subject:

Time:

Subject:

Time:

Subject:

Time:

Subject:

Time:

Subject:

Time:

Subject:

Time:

Subject:

CLUBS/ ACTIVITIES

Time:

Activity:

Time:

Activity:

Time:

Activity:

Time:

Activity:

Time:

Activity:

Time:

Activity:

Time:

Activity:

The Sandbox | @sandbox_kai

KAI'S CORNER

- **"Moving Up! The transition to secondary school"** – YouTube video
- **"How to Prepare for Secondary School"** – YouTube video
- **"Study To Success"** YouTube channel – different videos on studying and cute stationery
- **"Udoka Fintelmann"** YouTube channel – YouTuber sharing his experience throughout GCSEs and A Levels
- **"What I WISH I Knew Before Starting Year 12"** – YouTube video





Managing Anxieties Around School

Here are some suggestions for parents if children are struggling to go to school or feel anxiety in the lead up to going back to school after holidays or are anxious about moving to a new school or class.

Giving time and space to your child

Create a culture in the family where emotions are talked about. Make time daily to be with your child without other distractions, to enjoy time together and to have conversations. This opportunity sometimes leads to a child sharing concerns.

Modelling calmness

Parents may be struggling with their own worries. Be aware of how you model your own anxiety.

Listening and validating

Listen to your child. Hear what their concerns are. Acknowledge their feelings and let them know that you know it's tough for them.

Limit reassurance

Asking questions is helpful but giving excessive reassurance is not. It's very tempting to give lots of reassurance to your child, as it may relieve anxiety in the short term. In the long term it keeps it going. Instead listen and ask them what they think, and what they think will help.

Deferring worries

Children can be encouraged to make a list of worries and have an agreed deferred time to worry about things on their list. For example, at 4pm spend 30 minutes discussing the worrying. This can help to contain worries, and often the worry feels less distressing at this deferred time.

Encourage a growth mindset

Help children to recognise that building tolerance of uncertainty can help them manage their anxiety and develop their growth mindset. It is like building up 'mind muscles'. Encourage children to ask questions, and support skills in problem solving so they can consider their own solutions.

Rewards

Use rewards to help children manage their anxiety about getting to school and managing at school. This should be age appropriate and not too expensive.

Taking care of self and others

Encourage children to think about their own mental health including eating healthily, exercising, doing things they enjoy, spending time with others. In addition, practice being kind to self and others.

Dr. Jess Richardson

Nip In The Bud

Anxiety

It's important that you can recognise the symptoms of anxiety in children, and understand how this might affect learning in a classroom environment. Symptoms of anxiety in children vary, but it is becoming increasingly common that young people in your school or classroom may be diagnosed with anxiety.



Strategies for Schools to help children after long holidays and key transitions

NHS latest statistics show that 1 in 5 children had a probable mental disorder in 2023. It is more important than ever for teachers to be aware of the emotional wellbeing of the children in their class. Educational Consultant, Alis Rocca shares some strategies that might help teachers be aware of children's emotions and deal with possible anxiety around children returning to school. Read our [Strategies to Support Children's Wellbeing fact sheet](#) to find out more.



Managing Anxiety around School

Do your children sometimes feel anxious about going back to school especially after longer holidays like Christmas, Easter and the Summer. Listen to this under 5 minute video in which Dr Jess Richardson, Senior Clinical Psychologist, shares helpful tips for Parents. Find out more by reading our [Managing Anxieties Around School Fact Sheet](#).

[Nip in The Bud Video Link](#)

Neurodiversity Support Hub



Neurodiversity Support Hub

For Parents, Carers and Professionals across Hertfordshire

 **01727 833 963**

 **supporthub@add-vance.org**

Whether you need practical advice, emotional support or simply a listening ear, we're here for you.

Helpline hours:

Term Time: Mon, Wed & Fri: 9am - 1pm

Tues & Thurs: 9am - 3pm

Wed evenings (by appointment): 7pm - 9pm

School Holidays: Mon - Fri: 9am - 1pm

All our helpline team are parents/carers of neurodivergent children.



[Add-Vance Website](https://www.add-vance.org)



About Shout

Shout is the UK's first and only free, confidential 24/7 text messaging service for anyone struggling to cope.

Shout is powered by the charity:

[mentalhealthinnovations](https://www.mentalhealthinnovations.org/)

About Shout

Shout is the UK's first and only free, confidential, 24/7 text messaging service for anyone who is struggling to cope.

As a digital service, Shout became vital during Covid-19, as one of the few mental health services able to operate as normal at this time. We have seen the need for our support remain high through the UK's cost of living crisis.

Shout is powered by the charity [Mental Health Innovations](https://www.mentalhealthinnovations.org/), which also powers [The Mix](https://www.themix.org/), a service providing free, anonymous online advice about the important issues in young people's lives.



DSPL7 Transition Support

DSPL7 supports parents and carers, school staff and the young people with transition to Secondary School:

For transition to Secondary school we are:

DSPL7 are hosting two SENCo handover mornings for both Harpenden and St Albans schools. Booking sheet sent to school SENDCo's.

We are compiling a Y6 'At Risk' list for follow up in Autumn term (including those out of the DSPL7 area, though parental permission needed). Appointments can also be made with Hannah McNally at the handover mornings to discuss any of these specific Y6 pupils.

DSPL7 offer - KS3 mentor support:

Referrals will be triaged:
Group support from Mike
1:1 support from Mike
1:1 support from Hannah

- SEND transition information sessions for parents

DSPL7 Transition Support

Other phases

- **EY transition morning**
- 9/6 in the Hub (invite only)
- **Y2 'At Risk' list for separate infant/junior school transition**
(use same link as Y6 'at risk')
- **Transition page on website – see quick links**
- **Transition information booklet**

5. Preparing for the Future

Planning for What's Next

We're working with schools, families, and professionals to make sure transitions into settings, between phases and into further education, employment or training, are well prepared, consistent, and child-centred. We know how important this step is and we're strengthening support for families so that children feel ready for this transition. We're also making sure that Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) reflect each young person's goals for the future. These plans are shaped by the young person's voice, their choices, and what matters most to them.

Working Together to Improve Transitions

Health, education, and social care teams are reviewing how they support young people during big life changes. Mental health services are working with schools and early years settings to help children move smoothly through different stages, especially for those aged 18-25.

Preparing for the Future

We're encouraging all eligible young people aged 14-25 to join the learning disability register and to get their annual health check. We're working with colleges, training providers, and local employers to create more education, job, and training opportunities. We're also reviewing our Short Breaks offer to make sure it meets future needs.

What this means for you and your child:

When your child is ready to take a next step, services that support them will have planned for it. As your child gets older, they are supported to think about the future and what options are available to them.



“Moving from primary to secondary school was a really difficult time for us as a family.”
Parent Carer - Pre-Summit Survey Summer 2025

“It can feel really scary for families when their teenager is finishing school, they want to know what options they have and this can feel really limited.”
Social Care Professional - Listening Event Summer 2025

“Transitions between primary, secondary and further education, all in Stevenage SEND settings, have been brilliant. The settings know each other and the transition programs are great. We felt known and well looked after.”
Parent Carer - Pre-Summit Survey Summer 2025

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE



Delivering Special Provision Locally

Who are we?

DSPL7 supports parents and carers, staff in early years settings, schools and further education colleges by ensuring there is a range of provision and support services within the St Albans and Harpenden area for children and young people with additional needs.

Contact Us



DSPL7, The Hub, 228 Hatfield Road, St Albans, AL1 4LW



01727 519229



admin@dsp17.org.uk



www.dsp17.org.uk



dsp17_stalbansandharpenden

