



KS2-KS3 Progression ideas during COVID-19 lockdown and beyond

This document has been written in May 2020, during the COVID-19 lockdown. These suggestions are for how we can help the transition of Year 6 pupils into secondary school if we have social distancing measures in place and for afterwards, when things may be lifted. They have been collected from people in schools who are thinking through what they will do differently in this time. Not all will be desirable for you, nor all relevant, but we hope that it gives you something to think about and build upon. Students in Year 6 in 2020 will need to feel a sense of belonging and connection even more so than normal; their transition to secondary school is likely to look very different to how they had expected. We want them to not only have the best possible start, but to also feel the excitement and opportunity that moving to secondary school has for them.

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Year 6-7 transition during COVID-19

1. You could create a film about the school (on a phone) to show to Year 6 pupils. This could include what a typical day looks like, exploring key places and routines. The video could be put onto the school website with questions for students to answer. One school 'hid' some prefects and the Year 6 children had to (virtually) find them in the video whilst working out their way around the school.
2. Put together a 'meet your staff' document with photographs and descriptions of staff. Upload it to the school website so that Year 6 can become familiar with them.
3. Some schools have produced a video for their whole school and called it 'Still Your School' and shown them virtually around the buildings. You could also include pictures of activities that were happening before the current restrictions were put in place.
4. Ask your students who are in school to create a video message about how they found their first day and put it onto a Year 6 area of the school website.
5. Ask Year 6 to send in questions (or write the ones you know they will ask) and get your staff and students in school to film the answers to go onto the school website OR do this as a Q and A document.
6. Use the *Be Awesome, Go Big* student/teacher/parent resources to get Year 6 ready for secondary school. They can send you the 'Best of Me' page at the back. For PiXL members, you will find that in the COVID-19 area of our website, but everyone can also find them on the Hachette website.
7. Create your own hashtag like 'your school' or 'can't wait to meet you' and tweet out fun facts about your school and what you have planned for them when they join you. Start creating the community now.
8. Contact some of your alumni and ask them to talk about their time at the school – people *may* currently have more time to do a short video.
9. Best of Me – ask Year 6 to send a postcard into school addressed to their new tutor to tell them the best things about themselves. The tutor could write back to them to say hello.
10. If you have some year groups in school, they could write some postcards to the primary schools welcoming them to their school. These would obviously need checking, but they could be counted out and posted to each of your feeder schools.

11. Meet your tutor or head teacher online. This could take some organising but, with Zoom calls, it is possible for the all of the parents to 'attend' a welcome evening where the Head can address all parents – they can be on mute and not on video whilst the staff are visible.
12. Using Zoom/other platforms, you could work with the primary schools to Zoom each Year 6 class and say a quick hello and take pre-arranged questions. If primary children are back in school, this becomes easier to organise. Record it and then if children miss it, they can still catch up when they are in school.
13. Use the primary staff's knowledge to identify children for whom this COVID-19 experience has been a very tough one. You could write to those children especially, saying that you are looking forward to seeing them. Depending on the context, sending them a book to read with a chocolate bar may just help them feel they are not forgotten.
14. Ask Year 6 students to create a 'Best of Me' folder, in which they collate their best work from all curriculum areas in Year 6 to hand in to their new teachers at secondary school. Some schools photocopy the best presented piece of work and stick it in the front of each book as a reminder of standards (this may be even more important after so many months of disrupted schooling).
15. Ask all Year 6 students to read a book (from a suggested reading list) over the summer holidays between Year 6 and 7 and complete a book review which they will then share with the class on arrival at their secondary school. It may even be helpful to buy the same book, if your budget allows and if theirs doesn't.
16. Give all Year 6 students a T-Shirt with 'Class of 2025' on it so they can see that the next 5 years is a journey (or 7 years perhaps, if you have a sixth form). Instil a sense of belonging right at the start, when they haven't had this experience as they normally would.
17. Provide Year 6 pupils with copies of secondary school site maps which they can use to do a virtual treasure hunt or do challenges to find different places on the map.
18. Encourage Year 6 pupils to use one of their daily walks to rehearse their route to school, if they will be walking. They can discuss with adults what problems they might encounter and how they would overcome them.
19. Create a Year 6 challenge – perhaps a grid of activities that they can work through and complete to be 'secondary ready'. You could award certificates to anyone who sends in their completed 'Best of Me' page. For PiXL members, you will find that in the COVID-19 area of our website, but everyone can also find them on the Hachette website.

20. Provide a 'what to pack in your bag' list, including how many of each item they need to bring.
21. Set up a text service with Year 6 parents now so that you can communicate easily before, during and after the summer.
22. Consider what your policy is on uniform and shoes. Many parents will have lost jobs or have uncertain futures; money may well be tight. Is there anything you can do to relieve the stress at this time? This is particularly an issue if you have one supplier who isn't open at the moment and won't be able to handle the orders all at once (depending on when things get back to a more normal pattern). If you are relaxing rules for this reason, be explicit about what, why and until when.
23. Consider 'branding' Year 6-7. Some schools have a different hashtag for different year groups – think carefully about this one. It is helpful to have a title or values that everyone can get around, whether it is 'be exceptional, be kind' or 'work hard, be kind' or 'aiming high'. Think about what you can do to unite them behind a message.

In September and beyond (depending on social distancing measures)

1. When students are allowed in, you could do a QR code treasure hunt around the school. The QR codes could be scanned and link to some information about the school, as well as providing the next clue. This could help students to learn their way around the school but can also be a team-building exercise. Each clue can give the letters of a key word that they need to 'crack' – it may be the school motto or a place within school.
2. Ask someone to create films of what Year 7 have been doing in their first few weeks and upload these to the website if it is not possible to have parents' evenings or 'settling in' evenings.
3. Consider some Year 7s writing a blog about their experiences. These could be uploaded onto the website.
4. There may be a small number of pupils who have to continue shielding and may not be back when school returns. Consider setting up a pen pal system or a class blog that everyone can contribute to so these young people are not isolated socially and emotionally as well as physically. Ensure tutor phone calls and maybe online tutor times where they can be part of things.
5. Send out a Year 7 settling in newsletter to parents to keep them informed. If you are PiXL members, you could use some of the PiXL Parent Leaflets if you feel these would be helpful.
6. Year 6 will probably have missed out on sports day/end of year productions – it would be nice to try and arrange this for them, when social distancing measures are lifted. Perhaps invite next year's Year 6 to come and watch.
7. Students may not have had the leavers' experience they had hoped for. You could invite the Year 6 teachers to Year 7 (measures permitting) and have Year 7 present what they have done in the last few weeks, or they could show their Year 6 teacher around their new school. Consider anything that may help them to feel the continuation.

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