

Transitioning to Post-Primary School-Information for Parents

Starting post-primary school is an exciting time, but it also can be challenging, especially for young people with special educational needs.

One way to help the start be successful is early planning.

The first step is to choose a school.

Most parents will choose a local mainstream school.

In a mainstream post-primary school, students with learning needs are supported by subject teachers and a special education teacher.

Students have a different teacher for up to ten subjects, and students with significant care needs may have the support of a special needs assistant (SNA).

If a student has more complex special educational needs, you may want to choose a special class or special school. Enrolments for these are supported by the relevant diagnosis and professional recommendations. They will have smaller class sizes and have the support of a teacher and a SNA.

Special classes are for students with very complex learning needs who need the class for the majority of the day.

They also give students the opportunity to attend mainstream classes based on their abilities.

Exploring the curriculum options, the subjects offered, the extra-curricular activities help give a sense of the school.

Visiting them for open days and parent evenings or doing website walkthroughs from home are great ways to learn more.

Once you've reached a decision on the school, the next step is to complete enrolment applications.

All school should publish their enrolment policies and admission notices. These will include the number of places being offered.

Most deadlines are the autumn of sixth class.

Once you and your child accept a school place, the next step is to share information.

Sharing information such as your child's strengths and needs will help the school get ready for your child.

The more informed the school, the better prepared they are to support your child.

You should meet with them to help them to develop a transition plan or ask others to share information on your behalf.

Your child's primary school teachers and others may be consulted with your permission.

The post-primary school will use this information to decide on the most appropriate supports and strategies for a successful transition.

Post-primary school is the start of new adventure. School staff will be there throughout your child's journey.

For advice and information, contact your local special education needs organiser (SENO), visiting teachers for students who are deaf or hard of hearing or visiting teacher for students who are blind or visually impaired or other professionals.