

# *Transition Guide*

From Primary  
to Secondary



THE BRITISH SCHOOL  
OF BEIJING, SHUNYI  
A NORD ANGLIA EDUCATION SCHOOL

*Changes - Making  
a successful  
transition from  
Primary to  
Secondary School*

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## *Big Fish to Small Fish*

By the time a child reaches their final years in primary school, they will be totally familiar with their school environment. They will know their teacher very well, be comfortable with most if not all of the people in their class and will probably know most of the other faces in the school too.

By Year 6, they are the most senior people in their school, they will be used to being given responsibility and they tend to be looked up to by the younger boys and girls in the school.

Within a few short months these same students revert to being the most junior again in a brand new social environment, with a different atmosphere. Change can be a daunting task for any one of us but when you are 11 or 12 – with so many other ‘complications’ in your life – it is a change that takes quite a lot of adjusting to.

The important thing to remind yourself is that children and teenagers are more resilient and adaptable than we are (or give them credit for).

Remember too, that within a few short weeks of the start of term, their new surroundings will become more familiar and they will be running from the gym to the Science Lab and on to the Art room without the slightest stumble.

The first couple of weeks can be difficult though and this book offers both parent and child a survival guide to make the transition as smooth as possible.

## *What are some of the things children worry most about?*



- Making new friends
- Getting lost
- School rules and expectations
- Being the smallest and youngest in a large environment filled with older and bigger students
- Whether or not their new teachers will like them or be nice to them
- Coping with a timetable of lessons
- Having different teachers for different subjects
- Coping with greater academic expectations
- Increased levels of homework
- Detention

## *Great things about moving to Secondary*



- More freedom (what to do and where to go in your break times)
- New and interesting subjects
- Meeting new people
- Being treated as more of a grown-up
- Opportunities to experience new ways of learning with different teachers
- Becoming more independent
- More variety
- Getting to build towards your dreams for the future
- Increasing control over what you study
- More exciting tools and gadgets
- Sandwiches every day!





## *What helps to make a successful transition at BSB?*

Parents are sent a personal letter with information about secondary school at BSB prior to the start of term.

Parents are invited to visit the school campus during various events throughout the year where they attend a Q&A session with the Secondary Senior Leadership Team. A visit will also include a tour of the secondary school.

All Primary students are accustomed to having specialist teachers for

Chinese, Music and Physical Education, and moving rooms for some of those lessons.

As well as having many opportunities throughout the year to take part in activities in the Secondary School, Year 6 students will also have a “moving up to Secondary morning” sometime in June which includes activities and a tour of the facilities.

The focus of the morning is to build bonds and relationships with Y7

team of Form Tutors and other students. During this time Year 6 students will have a question and answer session with Year 7 students about life in Secondary School.

The Head of Year 6 will meet the Head of Year 7 and the Deputy Head of Secondary in late June or August to discuss and review individual students’ attainment, progress and any issues that have arisen in the primary school.

## *Move Up May - Our Transition Programme to Secondary*

They will have lessons with every department and meet the Secondary teachers so they will have a better idea of what it will be like in Secondary.

Then finally there will be a Move-Up Morning close to the end of the Year 6 school year. Below is an example of the schedule:

Time	Event
9.00	Talk and Tour
9.30	Class in Secondary
10.30	Break
11.00	Activities
12.00	Lunch
13.00	Q&A with Head of Year and Pastoral Assistant Head-teacher
13.30	Return to Primary



## *How can you feel confident that both you and your child are well-prepared?*

- Keep up the dialogue between you and your child and be honest about both the positive and negative aspects of transition.
- Support this stage of growing independence in their lives by identifying ways your child can have greater independence at home.
- Spend a little time remembering back to your own move to secondary school and talk to them about it – your child may have a very different experience to you but it will help you to be empathetic and understanding.
- Encourage your child to get involved in clubs and activities in their new school, or get involved in local activities or clubs where they will come across other children who already go to the school.
- Suggest time management techniques to your child or help them set up a study area.
- Make an appointment to talk to the Head of Year 7.

## *What can you do if your child experiences any difficulties or problems?*

If you think your child is overly anxious about going to secondary school, or they are not settling well, it is important to tackle the situation as quickly as possible. Talk to your child and try to find out what the problem is.

Often it is better not to ask directly but to make opportunities where they feel comfortable to open up about what is going on for them, perhaps during a family meal or whilst doing some kind of activity together.

If they do not open up, or don't feel able to talk to you, arrange to talk to their primary school teacher. If they are already at secondary school you could arrange to talk to their form.

## Constant Routine becomes Constant Change

The biggest change when entering the secondary school system is probably the constant change in the day-to-day routine.

In primary school, they had one teacher all day in the one classroom. In secondary school however, that routine completely changes. There is a subject change approximately every hour, and with this subject change there is a change of teacher.

It is not unusual for a student to encounter eight or nine different teachers during a typical school day. A tip to help your child cope with this is to advise them to write down the

name of each new teacher beside the name of the subject.

Some subject changes will involve a change of classroom, so the second big challenge that the new Year 7 students must cope with is the movement between classrooms throughout the day. Depending on their subject choices, students will be moving all around the school. Getting lost during the first few weeks will be inevitable for some. A good tip is to advise your child to always stay with at least one other person from the class... there is definitely safety and confidence in numbers! Staff and

students in other year groups will also be able to point your child in the right direction, all they need to do is ask.

All of this 'new-ness' is bound to have some effect on the students. In these early days of adjusting, parents should try to be supportive, understanding and encouraging, ensuring their child eats well and gets plenty of rest and 'down time'.

Another big adjustment is the number of specific subjects your child is studying. In Year 7, our students can cover anything up to 15 different subjects.

## The Subjects in Secondary School

Mathematics

Mandarin

Science

English

Physical Education (PE)

Art

Geography

History

Music

Design & Technology (DT)

Modern Foreign Languages (French, Spanish or German)

Information Computer Technology (ICT)

Drama

Personal, Social and Health Education

As you can see, from Year 7 our students study a diversity range of subjects. It is therefore important to help them to develop a methodical approach to learning at an early stage.

Discuss all the subjects at home. Asking your child to explain what they have learnt so far in a particular subject will

have two beneficial effects; it will help you to better understand a subject and it also helps your child to summarise a subject - an exercise which helps to highlight in their mind where they are with it.

It is important to try to encourage a balance between all subjects. Everyone will have their

favourites and will excel at certain subjects. Problems occur when a subject is neglected in the early stages. This may happen because of perceived difficulty of the subject or maybe a personality clash with a teacher and it may have an impact on subject choices in future years.



## The School Bag

Their timetable will take a lot of getting used to. Part of this new routine will involve the organisation of the schoolbag the night before each day. This is a new skill that some may struggle with and a little help in the early days will ensure they bring the right books and the right homework on the right day!

A few things that are essential to the secondary schoolbag:

- A comfortable schoolbag, and bag for PE kit
- A scientific calculator
- A Mathematics set; a set square, protractor and compass
- A pencil case with pens (red, green, blue and black), pencils, coloured pencils, a glue stick, a ruler, a sharpener and an eraser



## Homework, Communication and Extra-curricular activities

### Homework

Homework time is obviously going to increase and with it comes several new adjustments from the primary school homework routine. In Year 7, students receive homework in up to 3 subjects per night.

One of the best skills you can help your child to learn is that of effective time management by encouraging them to develop a homework timetable and organising and prioritising their time.

Your child will be given a planner to record homework; this will need to be signed by you on a weekly basis.

Your child will take responsibility for recording homework tasks in their planner; we encourage you to monitor this and sign their planner on a weekly basis.

### Communication

As in the primary school you will receive regular updates from your child's form tutor. Aside from the school reports, you will receive a daily email detailing the classes your child has taken and any homework requirements for that day.

### Residential and Trips

Every year, students in Secondary take part in a week-long residential trip. These residential give Year 7 students the opportunity to work in a completely different environment and practice skills outside of the curriculum.

It enables them to challenge themselves and create a strong bond with other students and teachers.

### After school activities and lunchtime activities

Taking part in after school activities (ASAs) is a great way of getting to know more students in the School.

Whether it is in the school play, the computer club or as part of the sports programme, each student should find activities which they enjoy.

Taking part in such activities builds confidence; they get to mix with other students from other years, and as a result, they settle into the school environment a lot quicker. Students should be encouraged to try out new activities.



## Support Network:

As previously mentioned, most children take the transition from Primary School to Secondary School in their stride and in our secondary school students are supported by their Form Tutor, the pastoral care system and our Y12 Peer mentors.

Where possible new Y7 students will be paced into

a Form Group with people they know, or if a student is new to the school or joins BSB midway through the year, they will be buddied up with a student in their Form Group who will look after them and show them where to go around school until they settle into Secondary life.

As parents, we can often feel a little helpless– our role is to be supportive, interested and encouraging. If you have any concerns about your child, the advice is to contact us.



## Transition Day to Secondary

### Mylene Rancuret, Year 7

Last year I came to Beijing to study in Year 6 and in June, we were allowed to be a secondary student for one day, to see what it would be like being in the secondary school.

The difference was that you will have different teachers for every subject and you will be allowed to eat sandwiches every day if you like!

I enjoyed science a lot, because in the primary school you couldn't work with fire and do exciting experiments with bunsen burners.

In Design and Technology class we made our own bug lights, it was amazing! It was also my first time studying French that day.

We learned basic stuff (animals, numbers, colours etc.) and after every theme we also played games.

After this Transition Day, I couldn't wait to be in Year 7!

Now that I am in Year 7, we also have tutor time first thing in the morning and we do fun activities to start the day, for example Family Fortunes or answering riddles and quizzes.

In secondary, you also have sets in English, Math and Science, which I think is amazing because all the sets have different students, which means you can get to know others better.



We even have a Head of Year with whom we do LL (Life and Leadership). In LL we learn about cooking and nutrition, make videos and do other fun things!

I can't wait to go to Year 8 and learn other things and meet other new students!

## *Transition to BSB from another Nord Anglia School*

**Chris Wang, Year 7**

Last year I came to BSB Shunyi with my family. My old school was also a Nord Anglia School (The British International School Abu Dhabi) so I knew things like house points and different house systems. Even though I knew most of the rules, coming to BSB Shunyi was still a great shock for me.

First of all, in secondary I was treated like an adult. In primary, during break and lunch, we couldn't go anywhere except for the lunch hall and the pitch however we can go anywhere in Secondary! We can go to the library, the IT room and even some classrooms!

It seems like the secondary system is completely different than the primary system.

In primary, only our class teachers teach us all the topics and we often stay in the same classroom but in secondary, we get to go to a vast amount of classrooms and meet a lot of teachers. Students are responsible to be on time for every lesson.

Lastly, it was the atmosphere. Literally, almost every student was extremely kind and gentle. I felt welcomed in this new school and I always make new friends.



In general, I am very happy about my new friends and BSB.

I felt much more independent in secondary even though I really miss my friends in my old school.

I think that secondary is much better than primary school and I am ready to start my new school life!

## *Differences in Primary & Secondary*

**Charlotte Pawlukiewicz, Year 7**

The British School of Beijing (BSB) has treated me with respect since the minute I arrived. The teachers taught me great skills and helped me with academic and personal problems.

On transition day in Year 6, secondary was introduced to us for the first time. Although I felt really, really nervous at first, I quickly got used to the secondary school.

We got way more opportunities in the secondary school, for example participating in school plays, competing in sports events or just enjoying a field trip.

Despite all the fun activities in which we got to participate in, we learnt discipline, courage and most importantly, confidence.

In addition to happy students, staff members of BSB are fantastic. The lunch food surprised me because schools usually aren't well known for good food. The Ais do an amazing job at keeping the school clean and our security system is also extremely safe.

The subjects, such as Design & Technology, English, Science, Art, and Life and Leadership, made us think creatively.

BSB has a big selection of After School Activities (ASA) which are optional. ASAs gave me great opportunities to socialise with people from other years and learn new skills.



Some of the differences I found out about Secondary and Primary were:

1. Teachers expect you to be very responsible
2. Our subjects changed
3. We got more homework and started writing tests

I am excited for future experiences I will have in BSB!

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