**Neath Port Talbot Looked After Children Education Service (LACES) Transition Intervention**

As we know any transition and indeed any significant change can be difficult for children especially those with unmet attachment needs.  The transition may trigger feelings of high anxiety and fear.  When managed well a positive experience of change provides a valuable opportunity for learning.

The Neath Port Talbot LACES Transition intervention was first created to help support year 6 pupils and their move-on to secondary school.  This work is extremely adaptable and can also be used when children begin school, move year group or change school.  Schools are able to refer pupils ‘care experienced’ who they believe would benefit from this more sensitive form of transition support.

The LACES ‘transition intervention’ is generally delivered during weekly sessions over a six week period. The aim is to fully prepare all pupils to make the transition as confidently and smoothly as possible.  The LACES member staff maintains contact with each pupil throughout years 6 and 7 to ensure they know and feel that they are ‘held in mind’.

Each “LACES Transition Intervention” is bespoke as it is led by the individual child’s need and ability.

The interventions run for a block of 6 sessions, and can last anywhere from 40 minutes to an hour. During the first session the LACES Teaching Assistant (LACES TA) explains to the pupil who their role in supporting them prior, during and after their transition to secondary school.

A selection of relationship building games are played to enable the pupil to relax and feel comfortable.

The intervention has three elements:

* a primary school memories book is made
* a secondary school information pack created
* and a visit to the chosen secondary school is made

The primary school memory book enables the pupil to record their favourite memories such as their favourite school trips, school dinners, funniest memories and best friends. It has a section where the pupil can write what questions they have about their new school; and a section to put their new school ‘worries’. It also enables them to set targets and goals that they can achieve during the summer holiday etc. The pupil has the opportunity to take lots of photos to go into the book.

Each pupil will research their chosen secondary school’s uniform policy, route to school, school details such as telephone number, email address, website etc. The pupil’s worries are discussed; the worries determine what is planned and focused on each week. The amount of work can be as extensive as required, the intervention may cover:

* secondary school questions
* getting organised – what equipment will be needed
* organisation of the school day – start time, breaks etc
* money management for lunch and travel
* homework help
* morning routine
* making new friends and how to be a good friend
* joining in
* asking for help
* teasing and sarcasm
* bullying
* Solution - focused approaches
* looking after yourself – keeping fit, keeping clean etc

Half way through each intervention the pupil is taken on a visit to their new school so they are able to ask a prearranged member of staff (perhaps the designated teacher and/or a current pupil) the questions they have prepared.

Each parent/carer is supported by providing them with a copy of the Parent Engagement Network’s booklet: ‘Moving Up’ (2015). This provides many relevant ‘transition to secondary school’ family activities to do over the summer holiday period.

The LACES TA endeavours to ‘check in’ with each new, year 7 pupil, during the beginning of the new term by visiting them in their new school. They offer support and discuss any new worries the pupil may have. They also have the opportunity to go through their timetable and planner to ensure that the pupil feels confident. Future pupil progress and potential need for support, continues to be monitored by the school and LACE team.