

Year 6 to 7: Transition 2024

An Introduction for Parents & Carers



Monmouth | Ysgol Gyfun
Comprehensive School | **Trefynwy**



Welcome

Annwyl Rhieni / Dear Parents,

I am delighted that you have chosen for your child to join us at Monmouth Comprehensive School next year. My name is Alex Griffiths, and I am one of the Heads of Year in the Pastoral Leadership Team. I have been teaching International Languages at MCS since 2018; have been a Form Tutor for six of those years; and more recently Head of Year 11. As Year 11 leave us this summer, I will be saying goodbye to them and welcoming our new entrants as their new Head of Year.

During the transition process, my role will be ensuring that students feel happy, settled and safe in a new environment, whilst also encouraging their independence, developing their resilience and promoting their wellbeing. Throughout their time at Monmouth Comprehensive School, I will be a constant point of contact and oversight. Alongside a team of experienced Form Tutors, we will care for your child's academic progress and personal development.

The transition from primary school is a significant step in a child's educational journey. It can be a challenging time for some students, but it is also a chance to start over and to make the most of this new period in their lives. Differently to their primary experience, they will be taught in a variety of classrooms and spaces, which will require them to move with purpose, eager to learn from our expert teaching staff.

There may be worries during this transition from your child – they may worry about how they fit in alongside tens of other new and unfamiliar students coming from a variety of schools. They may worry about making new friendships and holding on to old ones. The pastoral team will be there to guide and support them with these questions as they encounter them. We will also show them how Monmouth Comprehensive School works and how they can be exemplary students who meet our ethos of **Work Hard, Be Kind**.

As parents and carers, there are many things that you can be doing over the coming weeks to support your child with their transition which will build their confidence and resilience:

- In the short term, discuss the transition with your child. How are they feeling about the move? Are they excited or worried? By talking about it now, they will be better prepared in September.
- We will be visiting schools between March and May in a bid to learn as much as possible about the children joining us so that their transition is a smooth one. Ensure you keep up to date with regular check-in at the MCS website (see p9) and an email information.
- Attend our New Entrants' evening in June. You can meet the pastoral staff who will be involved with your child's education and tour the school. This will help your child to get a feel for the building, meet their new Form Tutor and allow you to ask questions in person.

I look forward to meeting with you at one of our New Entrants' evenings and getting to know your child more during our transition days in July.

Mr Alex Griffiths

Pennaeth Blwyddyn 7, Medi 2024
Head of Year 7, September 2024



Key Transition Events

This document is an introduction to the transition from primary school to secondary school at MCS and seeks to address some of the immediate questions that you may have. There will be further information and an opportunity to visit the school over the coming months. The MCS programme of transition events to support all of our new students consists of:

March - May

Key staff from MCS gather data from primary schools about the students joining in September.

The data covers as wide a variety of aspects as possible, to allow us to get to know the children as well as we can, in order: to understand their experiences, situations and learning needs. This data gathering usually happens both electronically and via in-person meetings with primary school teachers. Wherever possible, MCS staff visit Year 6 in their primary schools.

As this process is running, MCS will 'build' the Year7 form groups (see page 4).

w/c May 20th

Parents, students and staff are informed of the form group allocation at MCS for September.

We recognise that this is can be a source of anxiety at this time; children are still at their primary school with the security and predictability that this holds. We can assure you that these groups are built with care, and that, while change takes time, students nearly always settle into routines quickly.

June 10th or 11th or 12th

New Entrants' Evenings for Year 6 parents and students: three new form groups per evening.

This is a one-hour event hosted at MCS. Parents and Year 6 children will be invited as a formal welcome to their new school, which heralds the start of their transition events. During the evening there is a brief presentation from the headteacher and head of year, before students spend the rest of the time with their new form group and form teacher. Parents have the chance for a Q&A session with a member of the senior team of the school.

July 1st - 2nd or 3rd - 4th

Year 6 Taster Days at Monmouth Comprehensive School

Students spend two days at MCS experiencing a range of lessons with their new form group. The event also allows them to become more familiar with each other, the school building and our staff at MCS.

September 3rd

Official first day at secondary school – Induction day

On this day, only our new Year 7 and Year 12 students attend school. This day is again spent in form groups and provides students with a range of activities to further understand their new school.

Building Form Groups at MCS

At secondary school, your child will be part of a number of different classes. As they progress to later years they are likely to have different classes for each subject that they take. In Year 7, lessons across most of their subjects are with their form group, with only a small number (such as science, computing, design technology) in other class groupings.

The form group is the main class your child will know when joining MCS. Students stay with the same form group throughout, from Year 7 to Year 11. It is their form group that they go to first thing every morning for daily registration. Their form tutor (teacher) will be the first point of contact in most situations, such as regarding students' attendance, preparedness for the school day, concerns and other support, pastoral oversight and general progress through the school.

We have nine form groups to accommodate around 270 students for each year 'cohort'. All Form groups are mixed in terms of gender, primary school background, academic performance and other characteristics. We want every child to feel safe, confident and valued. While their learning is the core of what we do, their growth as a person through these years is just as important.

Form Group Construction at MCS

We are an inclusive, community secondary school with an overall principle of developing inclusive and balanced form groups, allowing for relational and academic progress. This considers the needs of the students gathered from their primary schools and our structures. Our policy is to place students in form groups that meet their learning and pastoral needs; *it is not our policy to place students in forms in friendship groups*. Every child will be put in a form group with at least one other child from their primary school. If they are the only child coming from a primary school, we will try to place them with another child they know, striving to ensure that each student has a familiar face in their form group. Children joining MCS at age 11 are with us for many years, most are still here as they enter adulthood; thus, the form building process is forward-looking. Our aim is to support secure transition, whilst allowing students to develop and build new relationships.

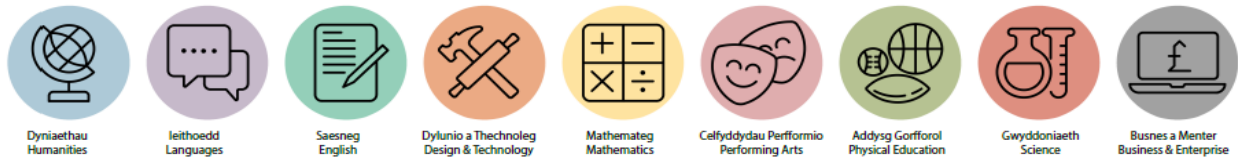
Our 'form building' process can be summarised as follows:

- **Primary school attended**
A fair spread of all primary schools is represented in each of the form groups, avoiding any students being without a known peer
- **Balance across the forms**
Equal numbers of students and, within reason, a balance of academic potential and sex/gender
- **Consideration of specific students or groups that may require additional support**
Ensuring that those students requiring additional support can be catered for effectively.
- **Social, emotional, mental health and behavioural needs**
From data gathered from meetings with primary colleagues, working to carefully balance the range of other needs and the support on offer.
- **Potential positive or negative learning relationships**
This seeks to consider the strongest combination to support the new form groups learning, after previous factors have been considered.

Curriculum – School Day, Organisation, Homework

At MCS, we believe that discrete subjects matter: they have an important body of knowledge; consist of specific skills and belong to a rich tradition that is unique to them. Part of the excitement for students of moving to secondary education is the rich variety of subjects on offer, some of which they will have never encountered before, led by specialist teachers.

Our Year 7 students are taught: Mathematics, English, Science, Welsh, International Languages, Geography, History, Religion Values & Ethics, Computing, Design Technology, Drama, Art, Music, PE and Wellbeing.



Our bespoke Wellbeing lessons are delivered by form tutors in an extended form group lesson once per week. Such time allows the group to build relationships with each other, especially through the first term of transition.

More generally, these lessons focus on a range of areas such as: physical health and wellbeing; decision-making; engagement with social influences; how relationships are fundamental to our sense of wellbeing; relationships and sexuality education; human rights and diversity; careers and education pathways.

School Day Timings

The timetable below gives the *start* times of the sessions through our school day:

8:45 AM	9:00 AM	9:50 AM	10:40 AM	11:10 AM	12:00 PM	12:50 PM	1:20 PM	2:10 PM	3:00 PM
Registration	Lesson 1	Lesson 2	Break 1	Lesson 3	Lesson 4	Break 2	Lesson 5	Lesson 6	End of School Day

There are two breaks for students in the school day, with Break 2 being lunch. The school operates a split break system so that only half of the school are on break at a time.

During the first several weeks at MCS, our Year7 cohort go to breaks slightly earlier than the other years to allow them the opportunity to get to know the systems and view choices of food available in our dining hall.

MCS operates a two-week timetable consisting of 60 lessons spread over the fortnight. It will be key for students to know which 'type' of week they are following: 'Week A' or 'Week B'. The calendar on the school website shows the weeks. When students begin with us on **Tuesday 3rd September**, that will be a **Week A**.

During the first few weeks it is normal for students to have to ask where to find their classroom or get the weeks 'A' and 'B' confused. All of their teachers understand this. It is a friendly school: if your child can't find their classroom, encourage them to ask a teacher or other students for help.

Organisation



At secondary school, students move from the 'big picture', large-scale learning into the more specific, and then onwards to their first lifelong qualifications.

Students are maturing and entering a more formal stage of their education. They will benefit from being encouraged to become more independent and resilient.

It can feel like a much busier approach to learning, so developing a well-organised approach can be a key ingredient. Things to consider could be:

- Dedicated space at home for school materials and homework. This reduces the stress of students having their school materials scattered in different places and provides a focus area for work.
- Timetable. This is a vital document – what lessons to go to, in which room and when. Ensure your child knows where this is. It's a great idea to have a copy at home to refer to. We recommend that students keep their school planner in their blazer pocket, into which they can stick their timetable.
- Pack school bag the evening before. Use the timetable to check that the correct equipment and materials are packed ready for the next day. This can be done together in the first few weeks.
- Morning Routine. As they get ready for school in the morning, an established routine and predictability can support their morning preparations: finding their school uniform; sorting PE kit; having breakfast; travelling to school arrangements etc.
- Food. Packed lunch or school food? Morning snacks? Ensure your child knows the options and what to do. There is a wider offer of food at secondary school. (MCS uses the cashless *ParentPay* system)

Once school starts, try developing independent organisation: post-it notes listing what's needed each day; boxes to store books and worksheets; and an evening habit of preparing uniform and bag for the next day.

Homework

One change in moving to secondary school is typically in homework. It is a challenge for students' organisation – and also for parents as they look to support their child. There may be a variety of homework to manage, prioritise and complete across several subjects, each with its own requirements and deadlines.

Homework at Monmouth Comprehensive School aims to be authentic, realistic and purposeful. All students are encouraged to discuss their work at home.

Homework is often set via *Google Classroom*, but can sometimes be set on paper or other means. Access to a laptop or other device is required to use *Google Classroom*.



Parents' reflections are that homework is best done when clear work patterns are set up, and the following points have proved helpful for many families:

- Start work when students return home from school, after a break. It is better than doing it later.
- Television, phone calls, the internet and other activities are best set aside and done later.
- Where possible, complete work on the day that it is set – when the details are better remembered.
- Congratulate completion and success often.

Equipment & Uniform

We are proud of our uniform at MCS and all students are required to wear it appropriately. *We recommend purchasing it early in the summer holiday so that new students can try it on several times and become familiar with it.* This can both ease anxiety about the change and help students in look forward to the start at secondary school.









Our school website provides information on all of the required, recommended and optional items of school equipment and uniform. This can be found under the 'Parents' drop-down menu on our website: ([Monmouth Comprehensive School - School Uniform and Equipment](#)).

Note: our uniform and supplier are being updated – check back in June for next year's requirements







We understand that **mobile phones** add to a sense of security and in helping with everyday arrangements. Given this, we accept that phones can be brought to school. However, they are required to be off and away in school bags or lockers during the day. The use of phones throughout the school day is *not* permitted. If phones are seen or heard then they will be confiscated by staff until the end of the school day.

In preparing for the move to secondary school, it can be supportive to include your child in selecting pencil case equipment, school bag and uniform. Participating in the choices can aid to grow their sense of independence and help in the understanding of the coming transition.

Compulsory / Essential Items:

Black or blue pens		Green pen	
HB Pencil		Eraser	
Pencil case		Scientific calculator *	
Highlighter		Ruler	

Recommended Items:

Protractor		Colouring pencils	
Pencil sharpener		Reading book	
Pair of compasses		Solid glue stick	

Growing and Changing: Supporting your Child through Transition

Transition can be an exciting time for children and marks a new phase in their lives, a stage of growing up. It will also be accompanied by questions and, naturally, some anxiety around change.

Some of the reasons why students worry about moving to secondary school are often:

- uncertainty of 'the unknown' following the predictability of primary school
- the journey to and from school will be new and perhaps unfamiliar
- making new friends, not fitting in, being bullied
- getting lost and not finding their correct lesson
- apprehension of new teachers and staff
- concern with their ability to do the work

There are a range of groups that provide parenting advice, including on transition from primary to secondary school. While these do not reflect the specifics of moving to MCS, many have common tips for parents:

Give it time

This is a *process* of change and things will take a little time. Settling in may take longer than you expect and it may not be a completely smooth process. Too much change at once can be overwhelming – great if they throw themselves into everything from the start, but don't worry if they don't. They need time to adjust and space to relax: transition can be exhausting! Familiar activities and people can keep them support while this change is happening. Remember, it is going to be a change for parents too.

Talk & listen

Ultimately, the greatest source of strength for any child is knowing that they can fall back on parents or carers for support. Chat about how they are feeling and how it will be different from primary. For instance: a larger school; being the youngest year group again; being surrounded by (awkward) teenagers; so many new faces and social norms; greater independence and the required maturity; changing teachers and rooms for subjects; more homework. Reassure them that nerves about starting something new are normal, as is some sadness at leaving familiar things, and that these feelings subside. Focus on exciting opportunities too: the new subjects they will learn from specialised teachers; the chance to discover new activities and friends; celebrating the milestone of finishing primary school, and all the ways they have grown. Keep talking when they start the new school and show interest in the detail of every day: what lessons did you have today? How was that homework - do you want me to look it? What is your favourite subject so far?

Growing Independence & Resilience

You can use the summer break as a time to undertake activities that can help ready and support them to become increasingly independent and self-organising. Some examples could be: selecting their new stationary equipment, help to write shopping lists or even doing a shopping errand, making a packed lunch, helping to plan a journey or packing their bags for a holiday.

Resilience in learning will be a key ingredient for all students. Reassure your child that this is the beginning of a long journey. Understanding that the vast majority of bumps and troubles they face are quite small in the bigger scheme: they can get through these and they have a range of support networks (home/family, friends, pastoral support team at school, teachers). Everyone is in the same boat and many will have the same worries and thoughts. Encourage them to focus on themselves and their own learning: digging deep and getting through the challenging times.

Making friends

You could encourage your child to join clubs at their new school. Secondary schools usually offer a wide variety of clubs and activities, which not only help kids find new interests but vitally, they introduce them to new like-minded friends. It's also a positive way to spend their free time at school, gain new skills and build confidence.

Students in Year9 had this to say about making friends: don't judge people too quickly, spend the time to get to know people; don't isolate yourself, put yourself out there with a smile; remember that most people will also be looking to get to know others and find friends; changing school can feel like moving from knowing everything to knowing nothing, just focus on getting used to things – you will get there!

Journey to school

Encourage your child to discuss their journey to school – maybe practise it with them before starting in September. Talk through different scenarios, both travelling to school and back home, and what to do when plans change. Some of the questions regarding home-school transport can be found on pages 3-5 of this document: [Home School Transport](#)

Get to know the new school

Learn about the new school by visiting the website or talking to children and families that are already there. Encourage your child to make a list of questions, e.g. what their daily routine be like, how many teachers they will have, how many people will be in a class, where are the toilets etc. You could discuss the similarities and differences between their current and new school.

MCS useful links:

Mr Griffiths, Head of Year, Welcome video for students:

[Mr Griffiths Transition 2024 \(youtube.com\)](#)

MCS website for Year 6 Transition:

[Monmouth Comprehensive School - Year 6 Transition to MCS](#)

Year 7 Student council video – reflection on Transition:

[Yr7 Council Q & A Session \(youtube.com\)](#)

MCS Sixth Form Leadership Team – short school tour video:

[Transition video \(youtube.com\)](#)

MCS website for Uniform & Equipment *(to be updated in June)*:

[Monmouth Comprehensive School - School Uniform and Equipment](#)

