

Safeguarding in Transition: Supporting Students Who Move, Arrive, and Stay



What can your school do?

Reflective Questions for Safeguarding Teams and Leaders

Use these prompts in team meetings or review sessions to strengthen transition-sensitive safeguarding:

Arrival & Admissions

- What safeguarding questions are included in your admissions process?
- Are new families asked about past support, concerns, or professional involvement with their child?
- How are EAL (English as an Additional Language) and cultural transitions supported alongside safeguarding?

Departures

- What are parent's expectations and control over Safeguarding information that you believe should be passed on to the new school? How can you mitigate any concerns?
- Is the new school (if known) alerted to any ongoing or historic concerns appropriately and securely?
- How are students supported emotionally during farewells?

Students Who Remain

- Are changes in peer dynamics monitored after high-turnover periods?
- Do we check in with students who have lost key friendship bonds or trusted adults?

Do staff understand the social-emotional impact of being “left behind”?



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Practical Tools and Strategies for Schools

1. Transition Safeguarding Checklist

- Create or review your checklist to include:
- Flagging known safeguarding concerns for secure handover
- Alerting relevant staff (counsellors, Heads of Year, homeroom teachers)
- Scheduling wellbeing check-ins with students during high-transition months

2. Circle of Support Mapping

Use this exercise with new students:

Ask them to map out who they would talk to in different scenarios – at school, home, or in their community. Notice any gaps and work to fill them.

3. Transition Buddies & Anchor Adults

Pair new arrivals with a peer buddy who is trained in inclusive, welcoming behaviours (choose carefully, as buddies can make or break the new student's whole year!).

Assign a nominated adult (who isn't the tutor) who will check in weekly for the first 6–8 weeks.

4. End-of-Year Impact Reviews

Ask safeguarding leads and wellbeing staff to identify students most affected by the departure of peers or staff. Plan targeted wellbeing interventions at the start of the next term.

5. Parent Transition Workshops

Offer optional sessions for departing and arriving families focused on:

- Supporting children through change
- Recognising emotional and behavioural signs of struggle
- Ways to connect with others in your new community
- Knowing who to contact if concerns arise