

## **Beginnings, endings and transitions for our more vulnerable or “challenging” pupils.**

New things are exciting for most pupils, but for our more vulnerable pupils changes have a big impact. Even nice new things suggest endings and losses. Each loss brings reminders of other losses. Every transition activates the stress response system, and can lead to overwhelm.

Prepare for changes such as these. Ensure the child will feel safe after the change happens – emotionally and physically. Uncertainty is stressful; do they know what to expect? Support the preparations with visual cues.

Look at our transition plans, including the Early Years plans which can be adapted for other age groups, at <https://www.nyland-pri.swindon.sch.uk/about/semh-support-team>

Empathise with the child – this is a big ask, and they may experience some big feelings, and that’s ok. Ensure they know you’ll get through the changes together.

Make sure they know what is going to stay the same after the ending or transition.

Consider having their ending or transition at a different time from everyone else.

Give the child the best ending possible.

Here are some more ideas for things which my help:

- What are you always going to remember about the Child? Share this with them.
- Make memory cards or books – what will we hold onto?
- One for you, one for me – things we will keep to remind us of each other (transitional objects eg shells you found on a school trip together, plants you planted together – once each to take care of; be creative).
- What is not going to change after this ending or transition? (There’s always something, even if it’s just that the moon will still be there, we’ll both be able to see it, and when I look at it I’ll remember you).
- When will we see each other/communicate again? Maybe you will send a postcard to the new school?
- If you are making a transition book, leave some spare pages at the end so the pupil can put new memories in after the change has happened.
- Therapeutic stories can help the child to process their feelings around transitions, changes, endings and beginnings.
- Create a smaller world for the child while the transition is happening – fewer adults, smaller spaces, less language, fewer demands.