

MY CHILD IS STARTING SECONDARY SCHOOL

Our new routine



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INTRODUCTION

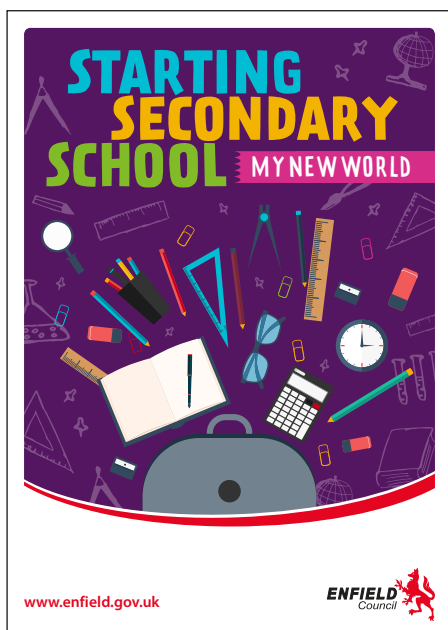
Having your child start a new school can be daunting. From choosing the right school to preparing them for their first day, there is a lot to get your head around.

Starting a new school will be an opportunity for your child to make new friends, learn new subjects and meet new teachers. In their time at secondary school, they may gradually become more independent and develop new interests. It is an exciting time but some of these changes require extra consideration and planning. We can get ready for these changes, and this can start from Year 5 or Year 6.

This booklet will help you work with your child to prepare them for their new school. Spend some time with your child speaking through different scenarios and understanding their views. Encourage them to have open and honest conversations about how they are feeling.

Remember this does not all need to be done at one time. It is best to start preparing for the transition early and give your child some time to process the ideas. Have a look through the booklet and think about when you will work through each section.

This booklet works well alongside our booklet for children "Starting Secondary School: My New World", which has practical activities and exercises to help children feel more prepared with starting their new school.



CLICK ON IMAGE
TO OPEN

This booklet is for:

- Parents, carers and guardians
- Teachers and support staff
- Social workers
- Key adults
- Anyone with parental responsibility

Managing transitions and preparing for change is a vital process for all children, young people and adults. It is especially important for children who are on a child protection plan, in care or are on child in need plan.

This booklet will help you:

- Think about which schools would be a good fit for your child.
- Think about who to talk to within the school.
- Think about which questions you would like to ask them.
- Begin having conversations about this new stage with your child.
- Think about your own wellbeing during this time of transition.

HOW WILL THE TRANSITION WORK?

Moving to secondary school is a key moment in every child's development. They may choose parts of their life to share with others and other parts which they want to keep to themselves.

Transitions are something we all experience, including children. This is a life skill and something we have to learn. Some children find transitions more difficult than others, and it is our job to support them through this.

- Speak with your child about what they would like people to know about them. You can use activities from the [child and young person's booklet](#) to assist with this conversation.
- Fill the booklet together.
- Join them in activities, where possible, over the summer holidays to develop an understanding of their interests.

Schools also work hard to ensure transitions are as smooth as they can be for all children. For more information about the transition of all children into secondary school, as well as a list of Enfield secondary schools, visit www.enfield.gov.uk/admissions



GETTING TO KNOW THE LOCAL SCHOOLS

Why is choosing the right school so important?

- Many children, including care experienced children, children in kinship care, and children who have had a social worker may have experienced grief, separation and loss or may have had traumatic early life experiences. Some may have entered care due to abuse or neglect. It's important to understand that children's needs do not change overnight, and children remain vulnerable even in a loving home. The impact of their early experiences can have lasting effects on their emotional, social, and academic development.
- Changing schools can feel like another loss for children, as it involves leaving behind familiar relationships with staff and peers, and adjusting to a new environment. It is a vulnerable time for children.
- Children who attend school more are likely to pass their exams. At Key Stage 4, children who did not pass their exams were absent twice as much as those who passed their exams.¹
- Planning a positive transition is important for children with a social worker, as they are more likely to have poorer educational outcomes. A positive transition can help the child to develop supportive relationships.

In 2023, Claire Cooper and Molly Carl (Trainee Educational Psychologists) conducted research interviewing foster carers of children who had transitioned from Year 6 to Year 7. The goal was to find out what helped or what could have helped children during their transition. Below is a summary of key themes that emerged from the interviews as important factors in supporting the transition.



¹ Statistic taken from 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' September 2022

Trauma-Informed Transitions to Year 7

Extra-curricular activities for sense of belonging	Transition visits	Gradual transition if needed	Include child in meetings and decisions	Let the child know what the expectations might be in their new school
Academic progress should be monitored and fed-back to parents and carers		Safe space identified in new school		Nurture groups
Minimise disruption through Year 6 to Year 7	Support tutors to develop positive relationships	Trauma-informed training and behaviour policy	School staff should know who the children with social workers are and check-in on them	
Stick to agreed plans	EHCPs updated to reflect current needs*	Parents and carers should be involved in deciding what support is provided	Support parents and carers to have conversations	
Less rigid behaviour policies in Year 7	Make sure children know they are being listened to	Schools should get in touch with families early on (from April)	Agreed transition days	

Research by Molly Carl and Claire Cooper (TEPs) on supporting the transition from Year 6 to Year 7 for Children with a Social Worker.

*More information on this can be found in the Special Educational Needs Transitions Guidance.

VISITING AND CHOOSING A SCHOOL

Below is some guidance on how to find the right school for you and your child.

- Start thinking about secondary school early. For example, when your child is in year 4, begin to consider what your child will need in order to thrive in secondary school, or whether they may need the support of a more specialist environment. If this is the case, discuss this with the SENCO and Designated Teacher at your child's primary school.
- Go and visit schools when your child is in year 5. This will give you and your child time to process and reflect on the different visits and visit them again in year 6.
- Remember that, for children in care, the social worker will choose the child's school, as they are the corporate parent. However, it is good to start these conversations early with the social worker and explore some schools with your child.
- Keep in mind that Ofsted reports do not necessarily guide you towards which school is best for **your** child. Read them if you would like to, but remember this may not be the best deciding factor.
- Think about what is important for your own family and your values, and how well the school represents these.
- Remember that you know your child best and you will have the best idea about what will work well for them.
- Look through different school's websites where you should be able to go through their policies and get an impression of the school.
- Read the school's policies on behaviour, inclusion and attendance to help inform you of the school's values and ethos.
- Speak with the school's Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCo) and Designated Teacher (DT). Find out about the school's wellbeing policy and whether they offer any interventions around emotional wellbeing.



- Ask the designated teacher how they can support the transition to secondary school. For example, can your child have additional visits and opportunities to meet key staff early on?
- Remember every child is different; try not to be guided by where the child's friends or other family members may be going/have gone previously. Having someone familiar at the new school can be helpful, but all children are different and may need different environments to thrive.
- Consider the structure of the day, for example does the school use a 2-week timetable? Is this something your child will find tricky?
- Consider the physical distance of the school. If it is further away, will you still be able to attend meetings at the school? How will your child travel there? Will your child travel independently?
- Be timely about when you start talking about transition. Every child is different and you know your child best; think about how to best manage their anxiety levels when deciding how early you start these conversations.
- Think about what questions you would like to ask the school. Below are some ideas of what you may like to ask.

What is a SENCo?

A SENCo is a staff member at a school or educational setting who is responsible for overseeing provision for students with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). The key roles and responsibilities of a SENCo include: coordinating support and education plans for students with SEND.

What is a Designated Teacher (DT)?

A designated teacher (DT) is a qualified teacher who is responsible for the educational needs of children who are in care or were previously in care at a school.



When looking at schools please speak to the Designated Teacher for children in care and children who have previously been in care.

For children in Kinship care and children with a social worker, speak with SENCO and Head of Year, It may be worth considering the following points and asking:

- Have staff received training on attachment and the impact of early trauma and loss?
- How does the school provide consistent key relationships for children with attachment needs? (e.g. named members of staff as key workers for children, with quality 1:1 time scheduled into the child's day or week, with particular attention to the times when the child is most vulnerable?)
- Is there a safe base for your child to go to if they need to calm down or self-regulate?
- What support is in place for children who find unstructured times difficult? (e.g. Is there an indoor lunch club for more vulnerable children, where they can develop their social skills, or calm down and relax? Are teachers present at lunch times? Are there structured lunchtime clubs for different interests such as music, art, sport?)
- Are children allowed off site at any point?
- How does the school support children who find it difficult to manage their feelings? (e.g. nurture group; calm boxes; a calming zone within the school; emotion regulation skills; teaching and coaching; anger management training; empathy from all staff; social skills groups).
- How is the Pupil Premium Plus used for children who have previously been in care? Is it used for social and emotional interventions as well as learning?
- How does the school manage curriculum hotspots that include issues which your child may find challenging (e.g. liaise with parents about baby photos and family trees; cards for mothers' and fathers' day; subjects such as evacuees in WW2 in English and History; NSPCC and Children in Need assemblies...)
- How will school communicate with you/how will they ensure there is effective home-school communication?
- Is there a buddy system/peer mentoring available to support transition to new schools?
- Will there be an opportunity for a gradual timetable? (Research has shown that following a pace the child is comfortable with can support an effective transition).



Who to talk to - introducing yourself to the school

Once you have chosen a school, it is important to introduce yourself to the necessary people:

- We encourage parents to tell the school that their child was previously in care or on a Special Guardianship Order, Child Protection or Child in Need Plan. We also encourage schools to ask families. If the school do not know your family's situation, they will not be able to provide the right support for your child.
- We also encourage you to organise a meeting with the designated teacher/Head of Year/SENCO so that they can get to know the child's story to help them understand your child and any needs they may have.
- It can be useful to book in a meeting early on with the school. Research has shown that early communication with the school leads to a smoother transition. You may want to ask your child if they would like to be involved in this.



SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS TRANSITIONS GUIDANCE

How do I choose the right school?

We are lucky to have lots of different schools in Enfield, including mainstream mixed schools, mainstream girls' and boys' schools, special schools and schools with Specially Resourced Provisions (SRPs), all of which have been rated as good or better across the main areas by Ofsted. Choosing a secondary school is an individual choice and depends on what works for you as a family. Considerations may be location, size or type of school. Below is a brief overview of different schools you may be able to choose from. You can look through all of the schools in Enfield here. Below definitions are taken from gov.uk.

Mainstream schools (including academies and free schools)

Most children and young people in Enfield will be supported in a mainstream school with universal or targeted services. Each school publishes a SEN information report on their website, which explains how they meet the needs of children and young people with SEND.

You can find a guide to our secondary schools in Enfield [here](#).

Mainstream School with Special Resource Provision

In Enfield there are two types of specialist provisions that can be found in some mainstream schools. These are called specially resourced provisions (SRPs) and Designated Units (Units).

These are part of mainstream schools to facilitate integration with mainstream peers. For more information about SRPs in Enfield, visit [here](#).



Special School

Special schools with pupils aged 11 and older can specialise in 1 of the 4 areas of special educational needs:

- communication and interaction
- cognition and learning
- social, emotional and mental health
- sensory and physical needs

Schools can further specialise within these categories to reflect the special needs they help with, for example autism.

The majority of children with an EHCP can have their needs met and flourish within our mainstream schools. Only children with EHCPs can attend special schools if their needs cannot be met in mainstream. [See here for guidance on special schools in Enfield.](#)

Special Educational Needs Transitions Guidance

Why is choosing the right school so important?

- Children who have had a social worker (including children in care, previously looked after children, and children in kinship care) are more likely to be identified with having special educational needs (SEN). Finding the right school, which will support your child's needs, is important for their educational outcomes.

What is an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)?

- An education, health and care plan (EHCP) is for children and young people who need extra specialist support. The EHCP will look at your child's education, health, and care requirements, and set out the additional support to meet those needs.



- This is for children whose needs cannot be met through ordinarily available provision. If you would like your child to be assessed for an EHCP, you can read more about this process [here](#).
 - If your child has an EHCP, ensure that their most up to date needs are reflected in their EHCP. This will mean the new school has the correct information and will have a better understanding of whether they can meet your child's needs.
 - **Memory cards** – present anything that is really important for your child to remember (e.g. their journey or their bus number) on a simple memory card.
 - **Transitional objects** – this is an item that is special to both of you, such as a cuddly toy or a bracelet. It is taken from home into the setting to reinforce to the child that they will be going back home again.
 - **Pupil profiles** – summary documents about your child to help them share key information about themselves without having to rely on their memory or language. You can find examples of these in the [children and young people's activity booklet](#).
 - **Colour-coded timetables** for their subjects with corresponding lists of what to pack in their bags each night for each subject.
 - **After school routine** – support your child with structuring their evening when they come home. For example, having time for homework or time to relax. This could be done using a visual timetable.
- If your child has Special Educational Needs, some adapted activities may be useful for them. The strategies recommended in section 7 (Activities for preparing your child for the transition) may be useful, and you may also find some of the below suggestions useful. You can find examples of these resources towards the back of the book.
- **Picture Timetables** – represent your child's new journey or routine using pictures or symbols. Sometimes verbal cues are not enough and it can be a lot easier for some children to understand situations represented through pictures.
 - **Checklists** – to break down bigger tasks into smaller, more manageable steps.
- See [Enfield Advisory Service for Autism \(EASA's\)](#) website for more resources around transitions.



Emotional-Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA)

- EBSNA is a term used to describe children who are finding it difficult to attend school due to emotional factors. It is not a diagnosis, but a term to describe a number of difficulties children are experiencing that result in them not attending school.
- Enfield Educational Psychology Service can offer guidance around EBSNA. There is further information about this [here](#).
- Familiarise yourself with the signs of EBSNA so that you know when to seek support:
 - Anxiety around school
 - Stomach aches/headaches when thinking about school
 - Frequently requesting to miss days of school or be sent home early from school
 - Being upset when dropped off to school
- Familiarise yourself with the strategies to help children manage.
 - Discuss your concerns with your child's school at an early stage.
 - Understand the factors which are pulling them towards home and away from school. Ask them what they enjoy about school.
 - Have a quick, planned goodbye build into your routine with your child.
- Different local authorities in the UK have published guidance and toolkits for EBSNA.



PREPARING YOURSELF FOR THE TRANSITION

It is really important to consider your own wellbeing during this time.

We know that children and young people who have experienced trauma are best supported when the adults around them are feeling calm and ready themselves. This means taking care of yourself and ensuring you have a strong support network is even more important during this time. So what can you do?

- Reach out to charities; for example [Kinship](#) are a local group who offer support. See Section 9 for more agencies and services.
- Reach out to SEN specific support groups, such as [Enfield's Advisory Service for Autism \(EASA\)](#), who offer 'cuppa and a chat' sessions.
- Think about your own protective factors; your support system, clubs, hobbies, self-care routines.
- If you are a foster carer, engage with all the training that is offered to you, including E-TIPSS training.
- If your child was previously in care, you can attend groups which are run by the virtual school to connect with other parents/carers in a similar situation. You can find useful contacts and information about this [here](#).
- If you are a special guardian, the social work team can offer support. You can find useful contacts within the special guardianship team [here](#).
- You can find more information about services for parents and carers in Enfield on the [Virtual School's website](#) and the [Enfield Parenting Directory](#).



Working with a social worker

- If your child has a social worker, it is important to involve them in this process.
- If your child is on a child protection or child in need plan, please contact your social worker if your child has any issues with their education to find out what support they can offer.
- Maintain strong links with your child's social worker.
- Ensure your child's social worker knows about the transition and where your child is going. If there are any difficulties arising, keep them in the loop.
- If your child is a child in care, remember the social worker is the corporate parent for the child. Social workers should be present at key meetings with the school where possible.
- If your child is a child in care, Personal Education Plans (PEPs), which will have been held throughout primary school, will continue throughout secondary school (as long as they continue to be a child in care).
- Ideally, have extra transition meetings prior to your child starting their new school with the social worker and school.
- If your child is in care and having any difficulties in school, including suspensions, please ensure that the school has informed your social worker.



ACTIVITIES FOR PREPARING YOUR CHILD FOR THE TRANSITION

During the summer holidays before your child starts secondary school, make a checklist of activities to help them with the transition. You may find some of the below suggestions useful for your checklist:

Parents and carers

- Have an open and honest conversation with your child about their new school and how they are feeling about the transition. Parents and carers have sometimes shared that they do not always feel equipped to have conversations about transitions, but as a key adult in your child's life it is important that they know they can speak with you if they are feeling worried. Start this conversation early as research has shown that children manage this transition better when they have had longer to process the change.

Practice the journey

- Preparing for the new transport to school: Practice the journey to and from school several times so that it becomes embedded.

Help them feel prepared

- Practice reading timetables for the bus and train, ensure that your child has the equipment they need to identify the correct train or bus (this could be a leaflet or a notebook).
- Help them develop routines, such as laying their clothes out the night before and packing their bag ready for the next day. Make sure they have all the right equipment for each lesson (many secondary schools have a two-week timetable so is not the same each week).



Talk about safety

- Start talking about safety and how your child can keep themselves safe in the community. Talk about places of safety, e.g. shops, banks, approach a community police officer/bus driver. Speak about not having their mobile phones or valuables on display when in busy areas. Think about their e-safety, what they have access to and whether you have parental controls on phones.
- Speak about different situations your child may come across, and how to stay safe if a stranger speaks to them. Role play situations or look at social stories together.

Support their friendships

- Support with making new friends; find out if the school are offering summer holiday camps. Parents and carers have shared that young people find it incredibly reassuring when there is a familiar face in their new school. If your child does not know many people going to the school, we can flag this with the designated teacher/key adult ahead of the transition and often they can put them in classes with other children in the same position.

Life story work

- Speak with your child about what they want their new school to know about their story. For example, would they like key adults to know but not other children? What do they want to say when people ask about their story, or why they live with who they live with? Practice a script of what they will tell people.

Your child's goals

- Speak with your child about their future aspirations and how secondary school can help them achieve these goals.

Complete activities together

- Work through the [‘Starting Secondary School: My New World’](#) booklet with your child.

There are also some resources at the end of this booklet which you may find useful.



SETTLING YOUR CHILD INTO THEIR NEW SETTING

Below are recommendations for helping your child settle in, based on the themes identified by previous research in Enfield.

- Joining summer clubs and non school related extra curricular activities are an opportunity for your child to grow in confidence and practice making new friends. Find out what is on offer and sign your child up for these.
- Keep in touch with the designated teacher. Agree who the day-to-day point of contact can be with the child. This could be a key worker, form tutor, head of year or pastoral lead.
- Ensure the transition is happening at the child's pace. Think with the school about a graduated timetable, if needed.
- Look through the booklet "[Starting Secondary School: My New World](#)" together. Complete some of the activities alongside your child by asking them the questions in the booklet and having a conversation about these, particularly the questions on page 5-8 (Section 3). Once your child has started secondary school, revisit these questions and ask them if they still feel the same way. do they still have the same worries, or do they feel better about these now?
- Continue to ask your child open questions about how their day has gone. some days they may feel less talkative than others, and that is ok. below are some example questions you could ask them.
- What was the best part of the day? what was the food like at school? How was your (new friends name)? what was something funny that happened today? How did you feel when you were in PE (use a subject you know they like)? What did you learn about in English? What did you do at break time?
- Help your child with their morning and evening routine in the first few months. it may take children longer than we expect to learn and remember these. Be patient, give them time and try out some different checklists and visual cues included at the end of this booklet.



WHO TO CONTACT AND SIGNPOSTING TO SERVICES

- **Contact for educational concerns concerning children who were previously in care or in Kinship care:** Jane Manning (Jane.Manning@enfield.gov.uk)

- **Foster carers can contact their social worker regarding school concerns.**

- **Young minds:** www.youngminds.org.uk/professional/resources/supporting-school-transitions

- **Anna Freud:** www.annafreud.org/resources/schools-and-colleges/supporting-childrens-transition-to-secondary-school-guidance-for-parents-and/

- **PAC UK:** www.pac-uk.org/our-services/education

- **Place2be:** www.place2be.org.uk

- **Parenting programmes offered by the local authority:** <https://cp.childrensportal.enfield.gov.uk/web/portal/pages/ehfhparenting>

- **Our voice:** <https://cp.childrensportal.enfield.gov.uk/web/portal/pages/ehfhparenting>

- **Incredible Years:** Speak with the school about referrals for this.

- **Early Help:** www.pac-uk.org/our-services/education

- **Kinship:** kinship.org.uk

- **EASA:** www.enfieldasa.org.uk

- **Enfield Specials Guardianship:** www.enfield.gov.uk/fostering/special-guardianship/special-guardianship-guide

- **Adopt London North:** <https://adoptlondon.org.uk/adoption-support>

- **Enfield SENDIAS:** www.enfield.gov.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0031/49747/Enfield-SENDIAS-Flyer-Informed-families.pdf

- **Kooth:** www.kooth.com/

- **NCL Waiting Room:** <https://londonwaitingroom.nhs.uk>

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- www.gov.uk/types-of-school
- “Supporting the Transition from Year 6 to Year 7 for Looked After Children” by Molly Carl and Claire Cooper (2023)
- www.lancashire.gov.uk/media/930428/lancashire-ebsa-guidance-strategy-toolkit-2023-update.pdf
- learntogether.peterborough.gov.uk/asset-library/transition-book1.pdf
- www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance











RESOURCES

Picture timetables

These can be specific to your child's journey, their morning routine or their subjects for each day. Below is a completed example and blank one which you can fill out yourself with your child. You can use Google images or [Canva](https://www.canva.com/) to find images which are meaningful for you and your child, or you could use real pictures of them and their journey. Practice this with them and reference the picture each time, so that they learn what each picture represents.

Example:

<h1>SCHEDULE</h1> <p>MORNING ROUTINE</p>								
TIME	7:30	7:40	7:45	7:50	8:00	8:10	8:15	8:20
MONDAY								

Checklists

These could be for getting ready or for what your child needs to pack for school in the morning. You could create a different checklist for each day of the week, depending on what your child needs to bring into school each day. You could also add pictures to these using Google images, [Canva](#) or specific photographs of your child's belongings. You could put the checklist by the front door so they can check and remind themselves as they are leaving or put this in their room and encourage them to check the night before. Find a routine that works for both of you.

Example:

Checklist

- Keys
- PE Kit
- Food Technology Ingredients
- Planner
- Pencil case
- Lanyard



Checklist

















Memory cards

These can be used and adapted for anything your child needs to remember, such as their bus journey or the safety plan you have created together. Decide as a family how much information you feel comfortable having on this card and who's (if anyone's) number you may want to provide in case of emergencies. This could be printed, laminated or saved on the child's phone. Discuss scenarios with your child about when you might use this card.

Examples:

My Name is My School is.....	
 This is me	I need to get on the bus
	number:
	My stop for school is:
	My stop for home is:
If I am lost, I can phone my parent or carer on:	


My Name is Mike My School is Greenfield	
 This is me	I need to get on the bus number:
	191
	My stop for school is:
	Edmonton Green Bus Station
	My stop for home is:
	Manor Gardens
If I am lost, I can phone my parent or carer on: 07 xxx xxxx	

Colour coded timetable

This can help your child with what to pack. For example, you could put a coloured dot next to subjects which need additional equipment.

Example:

Time	Lesson
8:00am	Arrive at school
8:00 - 8:40am	Form Time
8:40 - 9:40am	PE
9:40 - 10:40am	English
10:40 - 10:30am	Break Time
10:30 - 11:30am	Food Technology
11:30 - 12:30pm	Maths
12:30- 1:30pm	Lunch Time
1:30 - 2:30pm	Science
2:30 - 3:30pm	Form Time
3:30pm	After School: Music Club

 = extra equipment needed

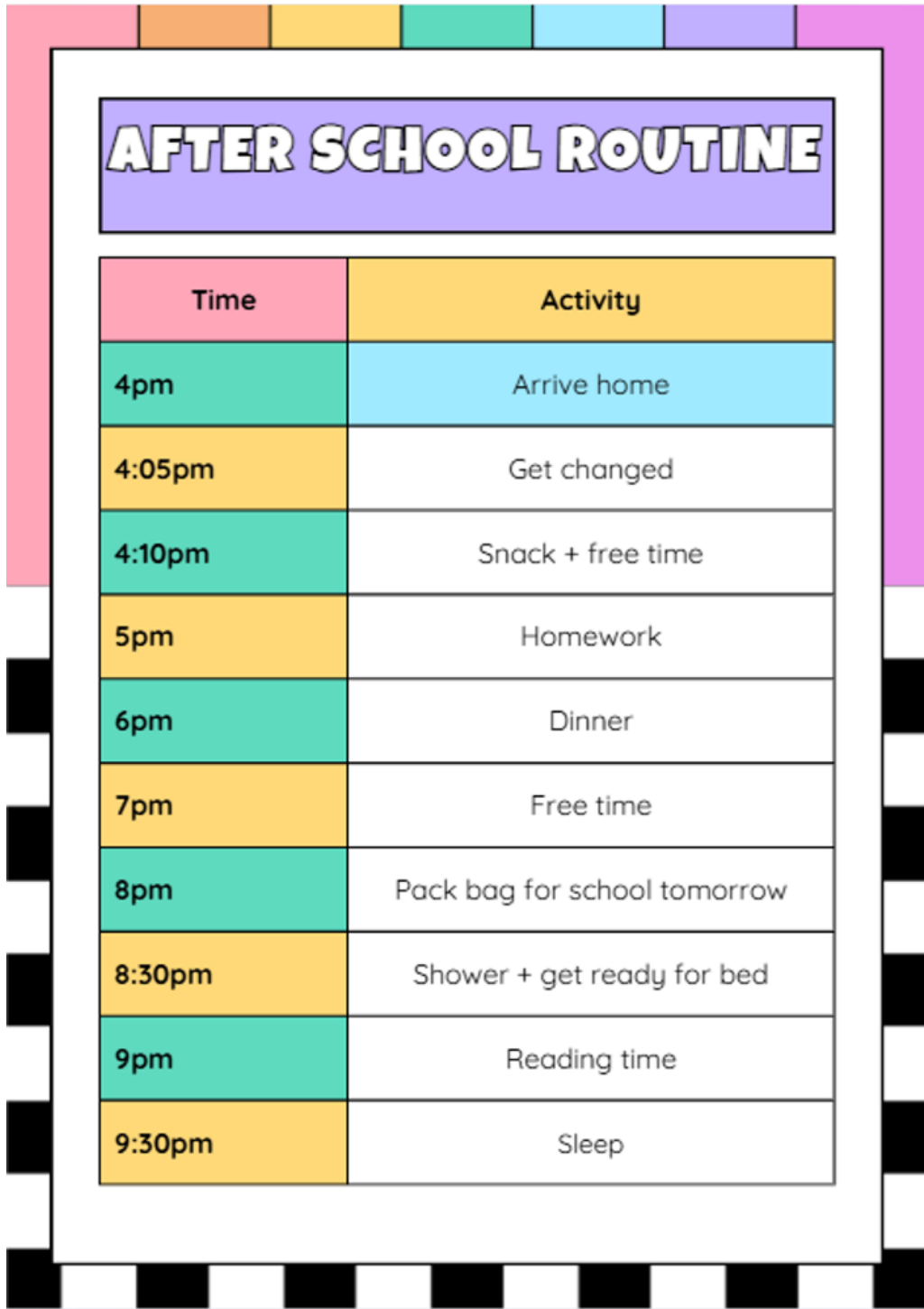
CLASS TIMETABLE

Time	Lesson

After school routine

You could create an after-school routine for your child to help them structure their free time and build in time to relax. This also helps to create a safe, predictable routine for them to help them feel settled.

Example:



The poster features a title box at the top with the text 'AFTER SCHOOL ROUTINE' in bold, white, uppercase letters on a purple background. Below the title is a table with two columns: 'Time' and 'Activity'. The table is framed by a decorative border consisting of colored blocks at the top and black-and-white checkered blocks at the bottom and sides.

Time	Activity
4pm	Arrive home
4:05pm	Get changed
4:10pm	Snack + free time
5pm	Homework
6pm	Dinner
7pm	Free time
8pm	Pack bag for school tomorrow
8:30pm	Shower + get ready for bed
9pm	Reading time
9:30pm	Sleep

AFTER SCHOOL ROUTINE

Time	Activity

MY CHILD IS STARTING SECONDARY SCHOOL

Our new routine