

Transition to Secondary School

Age Range:

9-12, Years 5-7, KS2, KS3

Topics Covered:

Puberty, Growing up, Transitions

Time:

20 - 40 minutes

Equipment needed:

Flipchart paper, pens

An exercise to explore the attitudes and skills needed when changing schools.

Introduction

This exercise uses creative thinking and reflective learning to prepare children for the transition to a new school.

Exercise

The change from primary to secondary school can be a big change for many children and young people. This exercise helps them to think ahead and prepare for the changes they may face.

Use the instructions below on 'Create a Character' and create a character with the group called Daz who is 11 years old and male (or if a predominantly female group create Maz, who is 11 years old and female. Add that the character is still in primary school.

Create the character and then start a discussion using the questions below.

- Daz / Maz finishes primary school next week. How might they be feeling and why?
- What kinds of changes will there be for Daz / Maz when they move schools?
- It is now the end of the summer holidays. Daz / Maz starts secondary school tomorrow. How might they be feeling and why?
- They have now been at secondary school for 2 weeks.
 - What might they be enjoying about their new school?
 - What might they be finding difficult?
 - What could they do to overcome these difficulties?

Summary

Recap on the main changes the characters might face and the suggested ways of dealing with any difficulties. You could also use the same approach to look at the changes over time (including body changes).

This might be a useful exercise to do before any preparatory visits or days to their new school to generate questions or information that it would be useful to find out. E.g. If Daz / Maz could go back in time, what information would have been useful to them as they started their new school? What questions could you ask when you visit your new school that would help you to find this information out sooner?

Learning Outcomes:

- Children have an increased awareness that there will be changes as they go through puberty and that this is okay and normal
- Children have an increased confidence in seeking help and support about puberty and growing up
- Children have increased knowledge of the physical and emotional changes that take place during puberty

This supports key concepts for PSHE education in personal wellbeing including:

- Personal identities
- Healthy lifestyles
- Risk
- Relationships

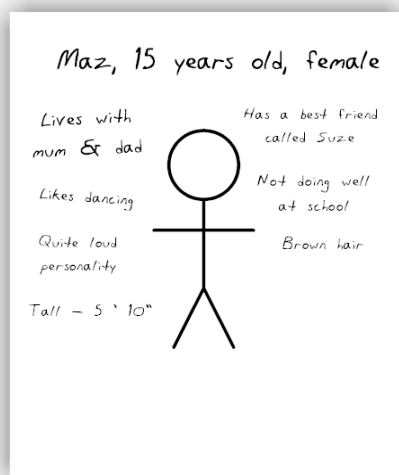
Create a Character

This very simple technique is a great way to engage learners into talking and thinking about an issue.

The learners work together to create a realistic character by each providing a suggestion on the character's appearance, interests, family etc. The aim is to work together to build a realistic and consistent character that can be used to discuss and explore issues.

On a sheet of flipchart paper or on the board, draw a stick figure. Draw this in the middle of the sheet with plenty of room around to write the groups' suggestions. Give the stick figure a name (not the name of anyone in the group!), age and gender and write these at the top of the sheet. Usually the character is similar in age and background to the group to allow them to connect quickly and relate to the character's situation and feelings.

This works best when the learners are in a circle. Go round the circle asking each person to give one fact about the character. The two rules are that the suggestions must be realistic and consistent. They must all follow on from what is already written so if someone has said that the character is very tall then someone else can't say that the character is short. The aim is to build and develop the character as a group. You should have something that look a bit like the illustration below.



Once everyone has had a chance to contribute (and you are happy that the character is realistic and there are no contradictions) then you can use the character to explore a situation. You could pick up on any issues that the group have added or simply add a new piece of information that places the character in a situation that focuses on the issue you want to cover. If we were using the character above we could add 'Maz's period is late, how might she be feeling and why?' and then explore the different feelings and reasons etc. You could follow a character's journey as they face decisions exploring different feelings the character might have and the different options and strategies available to them.

This technique can be adapted to work with many, many different issues and provides a safe and creative way to engage young people on an issue. Loudmouth run training courses that go into more depth and build confidence in using this and other interactive PSHE techniques. Ring 0121 4464880 for more details.