



No. 11 – Moving to Senior

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Title: **Moving to Senior School**

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Moving on to senior school

It can be a worrying time for parents when children with ITP move from a primary school, where they have established good contact with the head or class teacher, to a much larger senior school. Suddenly the child will have many different teachers instead of one, playgrounds are less supervised, sports are more focused and competitive, and creating awareness about the child's ITP can more difficult in a bigger school than in a primary school where word spreads quickly.

How parents approach this change depends to some degree on the severity of the ITP and symptoms, and also on how likely the child is to speak up for him/herself. Many schools are fantastic at helping ITP children to fit smoothly into school life, but some are not – possibly because they don't understand that the vast majority of ITP children have very few problems and will cause little or no disruption to school routine.

What to do

- Before the child starts at the new school write a letter to the headteacher explaining about your child's ITP and enclose the Support Association's 'Guidelines for Schools' and Pupil's Factsheet which you can ask to be pinned up in the staff room.
- As contact sports are not advised request an appointment with the head of the sports department to make sure they understand the problem and see what they can offer as an alternative. Emphasise that you don't want your child left standing on the side lines seeing everyone else having fun! If your child is likely to be embarrassed about bruises that show up when wearing PE kit, explain this too.
- Ask which teachers or office staff are responsible for the first aid and make sure they understand about ITP, what symptoms your child is likely to have, and when they should call you or take him/her to A&E.
- Ask the head of year to make all your child's teachers aware of the ITP, and tell him/her how often your child is likely to have a hospital appointment.
- Supply the school with your contact details, and those of two other people so that they can always be sure of getting hold of one of you if the need arises.
- If you have a daughter, ask the head of year who your daughter can go to if she gets into difficulties with very heavy periods, particularly when they first start.
- In a private school there may be a matron who will take on most of the above responsibilities and will liaise with appropriate teaching staff.
- Should you experience difficulties with staff members not adhering to sensible guidelines, ask for an appointment with the head teacher. If this fails to resolve the issues a letter from the pupil's consultant explaining the pupil's problems and needs may help.

If any parents or school teachers have other useful suggestions do please let us know.