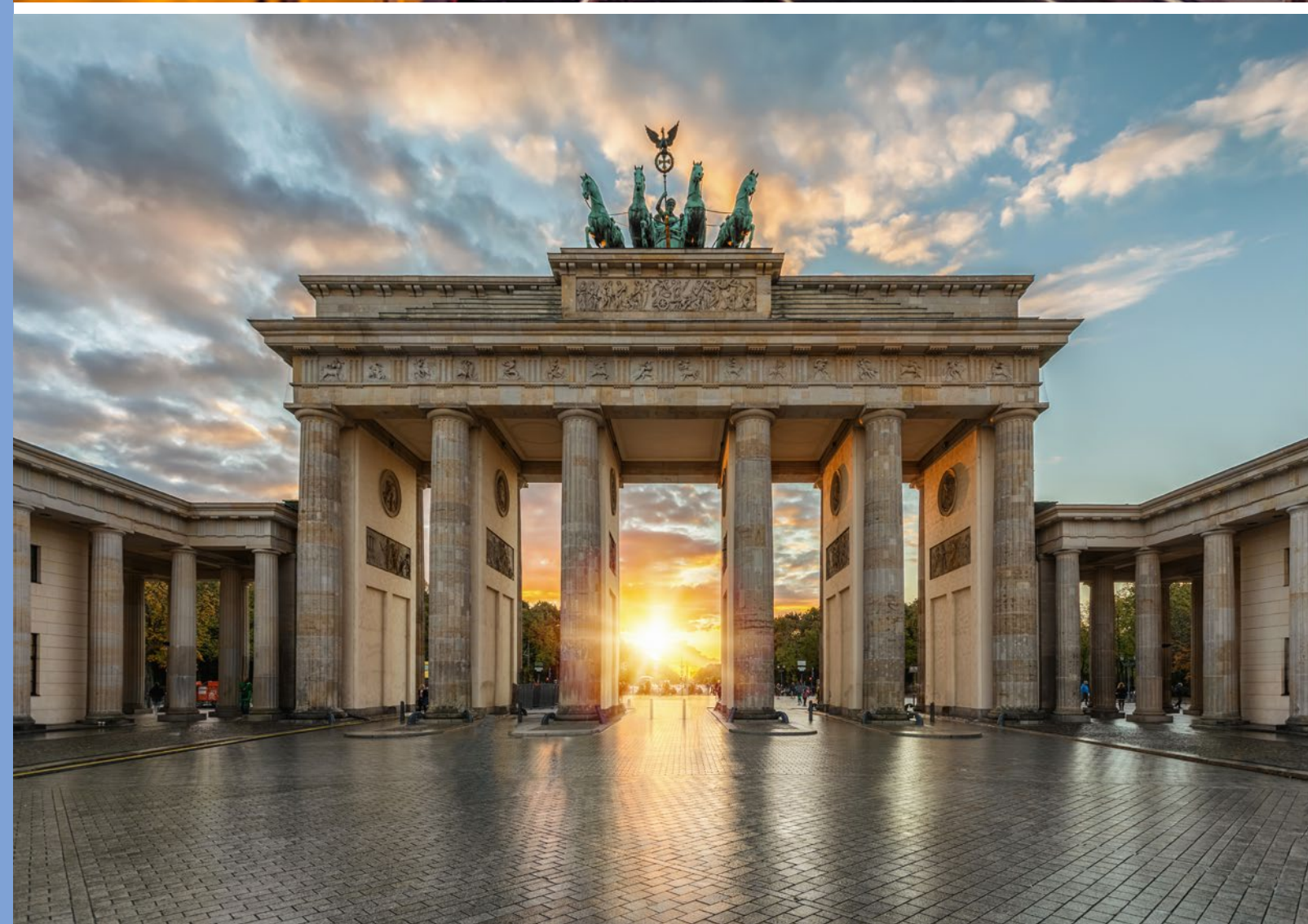




# MOVING ON

A FAMILY'S GUIDE TO TRANSITION







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# WELCOME

Dear new BBIS Students, Parents and Guardians,

BBIS Berlin Brandenburg International School warmly welcomes you to your new school and our amazing host country, Germany, here in the heart of Europe! Thank you for choosing our international community of learners, we truly hope that you and your family enjoy your time with us and come to thrive here, like we have. This guide was designed to make the process of adaptation and transitioning lighter and easier. The brochure is packed full of information and activities that will help you make sense of this potentially enriching experience.

Transitioning to a new home and new school can often be an exciting, but difficult time for many. Concerns over leaving friends behind, meeting new people in the future, and what your new home will look like are just the beginning. In order to support each other through this time of transition, we hope that this guide will offer some ideas and support for you all and help successfully transplant you to your new home, country and school.

If you have any questions, or if you are struggling with this process at any point, please know that my colleagues and I are here to help. You can find the contact details for your child's school counsellor at the back of this guide. Please do not hesitate to use our team as a resource. Allow yourself time to settle in, enjoy exploring the sights, meeting new friends and making a new home here. Do your very best to have an open mindset to the wonderment that unfolds around you during this unique time of change. As the famous Berlin Pedagogue, Kurt Hahn, once said "There is more in you than you think", so be ready to surprise yourself and others, as you grow and adapt into your new life here. We're looking forward to being part of that experience.

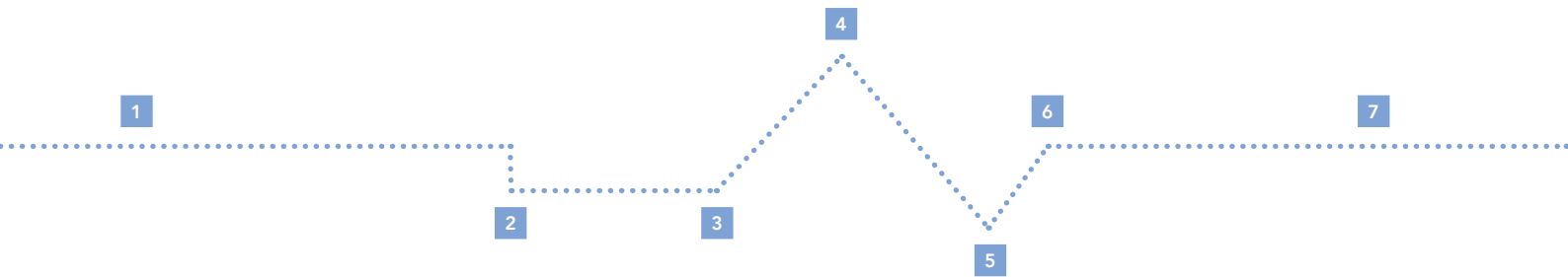
Yours in guidance,

**Steven Gregory**  
Student Support Services  
Head of School Counselling

# WHY DO WE PREPARE?

The Transition process is a complex and emotional time. This is something many of us choose to avoid and deny due to many an unfinished or difficult goodbyes in the past. It requires a lot of energy to move and deal with the logistics of settling life in one place and starting it new in another place. It is important to attend to your emotional self and to be aware of actions you can take to ease the transition for yourself and your family.

# THE TRANSITION PROCESS



## 1. INVOLVEMENT

This is your normal state of living, feeling secure, and being integrated and part of a community.

## 2. PREPARATION FOR LEAVING

When you learn that you will be moving or changing jobs/schools, you go into a preparation mode. Many different feeling states are experienced, including excitement, sadness, and fear. You begin to separate from your current surrounds, relationships may be strained, and you may be more ‘on edge’.

## 3. ARRIVAL

This is the moment of entry into your new culture. This time can be marked by chaos as you set up a new home and enter a new environment.

## 4. HONEYMOON

This is a period of excitement. You are living in a new place, experiencing new sites and sounds, new foods, people. Many people find a lot that is familiar to their old home and things feel hopeful and good.

## 5. DISORIENTATION

Being in an unfamiliar culture, things begin to feel unfamiliar, overwhelming and uncertain. You might experience a sense of feeling lost, out of place, and unsure of what you are doing in this new place.

## 6. TRANSFORMATION

Slowly, things begin to look up a bit. You learn a bit of the language, you start to know where to buy your favorite foods; you make connections to new people and places. Still, during this time you may find yourself wishing you were where you felt entirely comfortable again.

## 7. RE-INVOLVEMENT

One day you realize, after all of your questioning, that you feel at home. You have learned new ways of interacting and adapting to this new community and people recognize you and see you as belonging.

# TRANSITION PROCESS OVERVIEW

STAGE	INVOLVEMENT	ENDING Prepare to leave	NEUTRAL ZONE Arrival Honeymoon	ENTERING	REINVOLVEMNT
Status	Belonging	Separating	Culture Shock Disorientation	Culture Shock Marginal	Belonging
Relationship	Commitment	Disengaging	Unknown	Discovery	Commitment
Feelings	Security	Grief Anticipation	Anxiety Excitement	Vulnerable	Security
Focus	Present	Temporary / Future	Future	Temporary / Future	Present

# LOSSES AND GAINS

LOSSES	GAINS
Friends	Chance to make new friends Chance to expand personally from contact with others
Being seen a certain way	Chance to redefine how you are seen Chance to broaden your self-definition
Understanding how things are done	Sense of competency as you master a new system Gaining perspectives on how things were done before
Familiar family roles and patterns	Chance to grow closer as you support each other Opportunity to explore together
Sense of control over your own destiny	Greater understanding of new opportunities and responsibilities
Being connected to hobbies and activities, new things	Discovery of the same activities somewhere new, a chance to try
Mastery of one’s own town/neighborhood	Chance to explore and find new favorites
Mastery of one’s own or host language	Chance to learn a new language

# CHANGING LIFE SPACES – Help, I am new!

## SUGGESTIONS FOR HELPING YOUR KIDS ADJUST

### 1. Be aware of the adjustment process, give time and listen.

- Do not feel you need to fix it, support your child, allow kids to grow
- Establish rules and routines; don't be too lax but be sympathetic
- Explore the neighborhood (the city and transport for older students) so they are familiar with their surroundings
- Remain with children until they are settled, if possible. If left too early younger children often regress. They need parental presence
- Plan fun activities with the family. Allow for down time
- Celebrate your family's festivities

### 2. When children complain explore with them what choices they have.

### 3. Help them understand that it takes time and let them see the opportunities they have. They take your cues:

- Help them see that things are different, rather than worse or better
- Children have the opportunity to learn from others who come from far away places; help them to be open for the diversity of customs, behaviors, foods
- Questions like "why do people eat different foods, have different skin colors, wear different clothes, behave differently" broaden the children's understanding
- Invite families from other cultures to your celebrations and share in theirs
- We have lots of books about moving and about other cultures in the library
- Join an international group if you are interested

### 4. Keep in touch with the teacher if you have concerns. Parent/Teacher relationship is so important and should be collaborative. Contact the counsellor if you have questions.

### 5. Be aware that the kids don't make you feel guilty for moving. It is not a helpful emotion and youngsters don't learn to grow with it. Blame is destructive.

### 6. One aspect of moving is that it teaches children and adults to be flexible. You will see the growth of your children within the year.

## ARRIVAL

Arriving in a new home can be overwhelming and exciting. It is not childish or immature to recognize feelings of sadness and loss, it does not mean the change isn't good or you won't adapt. When parents acknowledge their own grief, they act as models and give children permission to express their feelings, process, and move on, allowing for a healthy transition to take place.

### Make sure to take time for the following:

- Take a break from unpacking to explore the neighborhood together
- Plan exciting future adventures in the new location that the family can look forward to sharing together
- Give your children tasks (unpack a box, clean windows, etc.)
- Allow your child to have input around the decoration of his/her bedroom
- Encourage children to invite friends over that they meet in the new location
- Mourning the losses: Giving yourself and your family permission and time
- Provide an opportunity for your child to talk about upsetting feelings
- Take time for yourself. Treat yourself to a spa appointment, a long walk, a new book, etc.

**Remember:** Life in the new location will be different and there will be a period of adjustment. Your attitude and reactions will set the tone for how your children will respond.

# SAYING GOODBYE

## RAFT

**R = Reconciliation**  
**A = Affirmation**  
**F = Farewells**  
**T = Think Destination**

Moving is stressful for most people – children, adolescents and adults alike. This is because of the physical, emotional and psychological adjustments you need to make during the transition process.

There are a number of things that you can do to prepare for the inevitable changes that will occur and to cope more effectively with those changes.

- 1. You need to recognize that you may be experiencing a period of considerable stress.
- 2. You need to accept and acknowledge that you may need time to adjust and settle into your new life

It is important to prepare to leave BBIS or any international setting. Dave Pollock, the author of the *Third Culture Kid Experience* suggests that people build a **RAFT** to support themselves through the leaving phase and to ensure a satisfactory closure.

"In order to leave, one must loosen ties, let go of roles, disengage. In order to transplant a plant, one has, to pull up its roots. Just as when transplanting a plant, however, a person's roots must be carefully disengaged; they will otherwise be torn and damaged and not be able to take firm hold again in the new location". (Barbara Schaeffer)

# BUILDING A RAFT

The following tips follow the **RAFT** format (Reconciliation, Affirmation, Farewells, and Think Destination) a concept for healthy goodbyes discussed in *Third Culture Kid Experience*.

## "R" STANDS FOR RECONCILIATION.

It is extremely important to reconcile and resolve differences with friends or colleagues. Distance and time only makes it more difficult to rebuild or repair relationships.

- If there are any loose ties or relationships you feel need mending, spend the time to reach out. Once you are gone it is hard to reconcile and regrets can be a block for being able to build new relationships.

## "A" STANDS FOR AFFIRMATION.

Affirming the importance of close relationships is crucial for positive closure. Establishing ongoing ways of communication with friends and colleagues is important.

- Take the time to tell friends, colleagues and neighbors what they mean to you. Write notes or cards, let the people you care about know it.
- Have the children/family make a special "Berlin Memory Scrapbook"
- Let your children use a disposable camera so they can take photos of special people and places
- Have your children pack one special box just for them with things they want to keep

## "F" STANDS FOR FAREWELLS.

These are important and help you and people you leave behind celebrate value and bring to a close your part in their everyday life and work. If time permits, go to a place that has special meaning for you.

- Organize a "Goodbye" party for adults and children so you can have a formal goodbye and closure. (Movie party, Beer Garden Gathering, Picnic on the Elbe, etc.)
- Have children make "Let's keep in Touch" cards with information to give their friends each a **friendship book** and are making "**Berlin Boxes**" with them to help collect and treasure memories and their time here
- Make a paper clip chain with each link representing the move. Each evening remove one together
- Get emails and addresses of friends you want to keep in touch with
- Be honest about the reasons for the move
- Make a family chart listing the pro's and con's to living in Berlin and the pro's and con's to living in the new location

- Think positively and talk positively about the move to help the children form a positive feeling about change

- Take a farewell tour of favorite places, restaurants, parks, etc.

- Take a cutting of a favorite plant to put in a new garden

## "T" STANDS FOR THINK DESTINATION.

It is important to think about your hopes and dreams. Take note of any concerns and accept that you may experience a range of emotions. You need to think realistically about your new life and consider what may be the positive and negative aspects. Be aware of and examine the strengths and resources you have for coping with problems that may occur.

- Phone/Email the children's new school with any questions before you arrive. Let the children look at the new school's website (if available) to help them visualize where they will be going

- See if the new school can put your child in contact with a student of the same age

- Research the new location as much as possible

- Buy books or watch movies about the new location

- Look up locations where you and your family members may be able to continue hobbies (dance centers, swimming pools, sports clubs, craft stores, food stores, etc.)

## You can help yourself cope with transition by:

- Understanding the process
- Recognizing the nature of transitions and emotion that can accompany each stage.

# WHAT IS GOING ON WITH MY KIDS?

Below are some **common and normal ways** kids express feelings of loss/lack of control/fear and anger during transition:

- May be negative, argumentative, or angry. May break rules and expectations
- May be withdrawn or over-sensitive
- May try to be excessively helpful and obedient
- May be ‘clingy’ or need more reassurance than usual
- May regress to earlier behaviors

Below are some **warning signs** that might mean your child needs more support going through the transition (from either you or your school's counsellor):

- Wanting to be alone and cutting off from the family for an extended length of time
- Sudden drop in grades
- Getting sick often – colds, headaches, stomach aches, or lack of energy
- Lack of interest in activities that were previously exciting
- Lonely and unable to make friends

# RESOURCES

## BOOKS

**Robin Paseoe:** *A Moveable Marriage: Move your Marriage without Breaking it*  
**Robin Paseoe:** *Culture Shock! Successful Living Abroad: A Parent's Guide*  
**Mary Pipher:** *Reviving Ophelia: Saving the selves of Adolescent Girls*  
**Craig Storti:** *The Art of Coming Home*  
**David Pollack and Ruth Van Reken:** *Third Culture Kids*  
**Robin Pascoe:** *Culture Shock! Successful Living Abroad – A Wife's Guide* (Graphic Arts Center Publishing Company)  
**Robin Pascoe:** *Coming Home! – Relocation*  
**Beverly Roman:** *Footsteps Around the World – Relocation Tips for Teens* (Anchor Publishing)  
**Beverly Roman:** *Home Away from Home – Turning your International Relocation into a Lifetime Experience* (Anchor Publishing)  
**Carol Schubeck:** *Lets Move Together* (Suitcase Press)

## FOR CHILDREN

**Judith Viorst:** *Alexander, Who's Not (Do you hear me? I mean it!) Going to Move*  
**Stan and Jan Berenstain:** *The Berenstain Bear's Moving Day*  
**Katie Couric:** *The Brand New Kid*  
**Nancy Carlson:** *Arnie and the New Kid*  
**Dorothy Corey:** *You Go Away*  
**Yangsook Choi:** *The Name Jar*  
**Nancy Carlson:** *How to Loose All Your Friends*  
**Meg Cabot:** *Moving Day*  
**Anthony G. Brandon and Wong Herbert Yee:** *Moving Day*

# BBIS FAREWELL WORKSHEET

What will you find sad to leave behind in Berlin?

What are you excited about to leave?

What has changed about you and your family since you have been in Berlin?

What are three items you want to take with you to make your new home feel like home?

What are you looking forward to?



YOUR TRANSITION PLAN

Which stage of transition are you in?

Choose three responses that may help smooth your transition

1.

2.

3.

How will you implement these ideas? (Be specific)

HALT!

Don't get too:

H(UNGRY)  
A(NGRY)  
L(ONELY)  
T(IRED)





# MY JOURNEY

It is good to have a map before you begin a journey – on the map below find all the countries you have lived in. Draw a line from your home country to connect them, include your new country.



"We tend not to choose the unknown which might be a shock or a disappointment or simply a little difficult to cope with. And yet it is the unknown with all its disappointment and surprises that is most enriching."  
(Ane M. Lindbergh, "Gifts from the Sea")

# REFERENCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Model (*The Transition Process*, page 4) and information adapted from *Culture Shock* (Robin Pascoe) and *Third Culture Kids* (David Pollack and Ruth Van Reken).

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