

# Transition to secondary school for students with disability

## Supporting a shared approach for successful transitions

### Fact sheet for parents/carers

The Department’s *Equity and Excellence: realising the potential of every student* is our strategy for every state school student, focusing on educational achievement, wellbeing and engagement, and culture and inclusion. A key school priority outlined in the strategy is for students to be “On track for success” as they transition through junior secondary.

Starting secondary school is an exciting transition for a child. There will be new learning and social opportunities that will allow your child to further explore and identify their strengths, passions and interests. There will be differences in routines and new relationships to develop with a range of classroom teachers, other staff members and peers.

The school needs to be ready for all students, including planning for and implementing reasonable adjustments for students with disability. Schools will consult with you regarding reasonable adjustments and support strategies when you enrol your child and as they transition into their new school and throughout their secondary schooling. Your input, as well as your child’s, is highly valuable, along with the input provided by the primary school and other specialists working with your child.

All young people will develop familiarity and confidence in new school routines and new ‘ways of working’ at their own pace. It’s alright if your child is unable to ‘do’ things at the same rate as their peers. Some young people may need additional time and support to become confident with new school routines.

Your child will participate in a school-based transition program. This is an opportunity to become familiar with new school routines, develop new ‘ways of working’ and build connections with staff and peers. For some students, a more personalised transition program will be required, such as accessing additional supporting materials.

Parents/carers will also be supported through this transition phase. Schools offer this support in a range of ways, including workshops or involvement in transition activities. If you require additional support, do not hesitate to discuss this with your child’s primary or secondary school.

Parents/carers can support their child to transition successfully to secondary school. The following information provides you with a sample approach in planning for transition and working effectively with both the primary and secondary school. The times provided below are guides only. The timing of actions will need to align with your child’s individual needs.

Year 6 – Term 1	Year 6 – Term 2
<p>Your child’s primary school can provide you with information about local secondary schools. This information is also available on the Department of Education’s school directory which is found at <a href="https://education.qld.gov.au/contact-us/schools-directory">https://education.qld.gov.au/contact-us/schools-directory</a>. You can also consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>gathering local school information from websites, prospectus, information sessions and open days</li> <li>speaking with other families who have children at local secondary schools</li> <li>discussing options with the primary school.</li> </ul>	<p>The local secondary school will organise a tour for parents/carers and prospective students. Your child’s primary school will communicate this information to you. You can also consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>taking a friend with you when touring the new secondary school</li> <li>identifying subjects offered by the school that may interest your child, particularly in the senior years, e.g. certificate courses</li> <li>collecting the enrolment package from the new secondary school (when you have made your decision). You can share your decision with the primary school and begin to complete the forms</li> <li>collecting any reports and documentation that will help the school understand your child’s strengths and needs.</li> </ul>



*It is important that a team approach is adopted and maintained to ensure that all members of the school team, which includes you and your child, have a voice and can contribute to decisions made about reasonable adjustments and supports required.*

### Enrolment phase

The secondary school will conduct an enrolment meeting with you and your child. At the enrolment meeting, the school will:

- discuss orientation visits and transition activities that will be provided to support your child
- ask for your input about the strengths, interests and needs of your child and contact details of current teachers, support staff, therapists, allied health professionals and other key personnel who currently support your child – a consent form may be completed to allow the school to consult with external agencies, as required
- ask for any relevant plans/reports/medical information about your child
- discuss transport options with you. Your child may be eligible for assistance through the School transport assistance program for students with disabilities. Your child may also be receiving support through their NDIS plan in relation to accessing public transport
- provide you with information about the inclusive model of support and ask for your input about reasonable adjustments and support strategies.

An additional transition meeting may be suggested by you or the school. You can nominate people to attend a transition meeting who will be able to share additional information about your child.

### Transition meeting

The secondary school may conduct a transition meeting with you and your child. This will be an opportunity for you to share information about your child's educational, social and emotional needs. You can bring a friend or family member to the meeting. At the transition meeting the school will:

- give you the opportunity to ask questions about the support strategies that may be appropriate in the more complex and different secondary school environment
- give you and your child's broader support team (e.g. allied health professionals) the opportunity to share information about your child's strengths, interests and support needs and determine reasonable adjustments required, including for health support needs
- discuss how your child will access the curriculum, particularly how they will be supported with subject selection and class rotations
- discuss how your child can best be supported through the transition period (e.g. developing a more personalised transition plan that might include additional transition sessions, supporting material)
- identify health support needs so State School Registered Nurses (SSRNs) can provide training to the secondary school staff
- determine the best way for you and the secondary school staff to communicate and collaborate effectively.

A number of meetings may be required so that all information can be shared and plans can be made to support your child's needs.

### Year 6 – Terms 3 and 4

Schools will use terms 3 and 4 to plan for the needs of all students and conduct transition programs. During this time the school will:

- conduct transition programs. You can support your child by encouraging them to participate in transition program activities. Your child may have particular ideas/input into activities that they see as valuable or helpful in their transition. You can support your child to communicate these ideas with the school
- organise additional visits to the school for yourself or members of your family as needed
- provide you with resources developed during the transition program that you can use to support your child over the holidays
- provide you with the contact details of relevant staff at the school
- determine the professional learning needs of staff. You may be invited to contribute to the professional understanding of staff who will be teaching/supporting your child. You may also have external specialists who can provide professional learning for staff. You can speak with the school principal about this.

You can also support your child throughout this transition phase by:

- discussing the secondary school with your child in a positive way and talk about any concerns your child may have
- discussing transition activities with your child and reinforcing information, e.g. your child may have been provided with a transition booklet
- gathering further tips from the school and friends on helping your child become more organised and independent at secondary school.

## Over the holidays

## Year 7 – Term 1

During the holiday period, you and your child can continue to prepare for the transition to Year 7. You may like to consider:

- labelling school books and resources clearly to assist your child to locate and organise items as they move from classroom to classroom during the busy secondary school day
- reading information provided by the secondary school with your child, e.g. the transition booklet
- making connections with other families who will be attending the same secondary school
- travelling to and from the school a number of times to familiarise your child with the route
- identifying a study area at home and assist with packing and unpacking the school bag to practise organisational skills
- linking with school and community services and programs, e.g. local library, sporting activities, arts programs, disability-specific services.

This will be an exciting (and possibly, challenging) time for your child. There will be many new routines to become familiar with (including organisational skills), new 'ways of working' and new relationships to build. There will be many successes and possibly some speed bumps along the way. School staff will be available to support you and your child.

To support your child, you may wish to consider:

- having school timetables and special events visible at home
- assisting your child to develop organisational skills
- celebrating successes and discussing speed bumps in a positive way
- communicate with the school any concerns or questions you or your child may have. In particular:
  - moving around the school and accessing different classes
  - social and relationship issues
  - organisational skills
  - study skills
  - self-awareness and advocacy skills
  - homework
  - changes in behaviour.

## Other helpful information

- Sample transition booklet — Getting ready to start secondary school: <https://education.qld.gov.au/student/Documents/getting-ready-secondary-school.docx>
- Sample transition booklet — completed example: <https://education.qld.gov.au/student/Documents/junior-secondary-completed-sample-booklet.pdf>
- Queensland Government – Department of Education – podcasts for parents <https://qed.qld.gov.au/about-us/news-and-media/podcasts/tips-for-parents>
- Community Resource Unit — Inclusive education and transition fact sheets: <https://cru.org.au/resources/factsheets/inclusive-education/>
- Inclusive education — <https://education.qld.gov.au/students/inclusive-education>
- Students with disability — <https://education.qld.gov.au/students/students-with-disability>
- Spark their future — <https://www.sparktheirfuture.qld.edu.au/>
- Transition tools – Raising Children Network — <https://raisingchildren.net.au/disability/school-play-work>

## Planning for secondary school

Things I need to do	Information to gather to share with the school

