



Every day counts

Preparing your child for high school

The move from primary to high school can be a time of excitement and new experiences. It can also be challenging or worrying for some students. Helping your child prepare for high school and making them feel supported will reduce the risk of disengagement from school in the future.

What to expect

- **Relationships** — your child will meet new people, make new friends, and need to re-establish their position within a peer group.
- **School work** — your child will need to adapt to new teaching and assessment styles, cope with a wide range of subjects, adjust to having different teachers and classrooms, become more responsible for their own learning, manage a heavier study and homework load, and learn a new and more complex timetable.
- **Getting around** — your child will have to adjust to a new school site, get to class on time with the correct books and materials, and possibly cope with new transport arrangements.
- **Adolescent developmental changes** — your child will be experiencing normal developmental changes during this time (e.g. physical changes, emotional swings, and an increased desire for independence). Peers will become a greater influence in their life.

How can I help my child transition to high school?

Before your child starts:

- Attend parent information/enrolment sessions

and open days.

- Take your child to school open days.
- Involve your child in selecting the appropriate school.
- Encourage your child to develop their independence (e.g. look after their own belongings, use a diary to plan their homework and activities, read a timetable).
- Ensure your child has all of the things needed to support their learning (e.g. stationery and books, uniform).
- Familiarise yourself with the new school's policies and procedures so you can answer questions and support your child's decision-making.
- Find out what transition services and supports are offered by your child's new school which may include visiting the school prior to enrolment.
- Talk to your child before the move happens. Discuss what they're most looking forward to and what they're worried about. Give your child lots of reassurance.
- Emphasise the positives and highlight the new opportunities your child will have.
- Involve your child in decision-making (e.g. transport to and from school, selection of school bag and additional school materials, and subject choices if applicable).

During or after the time your child starts high school:

- Find out who your child's form teacher or year level coordinator is and make contact or ask questions.
- Ensure your child has a suitable place to study at home, away from distractions such as the television or mobile phone.

- If your child has access to the internet for study, ensure they are visiting appropriate websites.
- Assist your child in developing a homework/study plan and assist with supervision of homework in the junior secondary years.
- Attend parent nights and interviews. Keep in regular contact with class teachers and support staff (email is a great way to do this).
- Encourage your child to join an extra-curricular program offered by the school.
- Discuss your child's achievement results and reports with them and help them to set future learning goals.
- Talk to other parents to check whether your child's experiences and feelings are similar to those of others.
- Ensure your child gets plenty of sleep, eats well and gets regular exercise as this is important for a successful transition to high school.
- Ensure you maintain consistent routines with your child (e.g. getting ready for school).
- Celebrate milestones with your child (e.g. the first day, first week, end of term).

What are some of the signs to look for when my child is not coping?

Be aware there may not be obvious or visible signs that things are not going well for your child. Be conscious of any changes in your child's behaviour, attitude, communication or reactions that are different to what you would normally expect. For example, they may:

- show a lack of involvement in the new school
- lose confidence or self-esteem
- refuse to talk about school or friends/peers
- have no desire to go to school, or refuse to go
- show a decline in academic performance
- become withdrawn or display excessive behaviours
- become easily emotional (crying or angry at the slightest instance).

My child is having difficulties adjusting in high school. What can I do?

It is important that you don't wait for things to improve on their own. Talk to your child to find out what the issues are. Be aware that they may be reluctant to open up to you. It is also a good idea to have a discussion with your child's form teacher, year level coordinator or guidance officer so they can assist you in developing some strategies to address these issues.

Useful websites

- Ten Hints for Creating Resilient Families
<http://andrewfuller.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Ten-Resilience-Hints.pdf>
- Resources to build and sustain positive school cultures
<https://behaviour.education.qld.gov.au>
- Advice for parents to help children have safe experiences online
<https://www.esafety.gov.au/>
- Supporting student's wellbeing and mental health
<https://education.qld.gov.au/students/student-health-safety-wellbeing/student-wellbeing>
- Youth – Health and looking after yourself
<http://www.qld.gov.au/youth/health-looking-after-yourself/>
- The Australian Parenting Website
<http://raisingchildren.net.au/>

