

Keeping informed and involved

Time to start year 7 – A parent’s guide to starting high school



Your child’s school will regularly send you newsletters, notes and invitations to school functions and parent meetings.

Your child’s progress

Reports play a vital role in telling you how your child is going at school. Student reports will be sent home to you at least twice a year, usually at the end of terms 2 and 4, to give you a clear understanding of your child’s progress.

Both the Principal and teachers will be more than happy to discuss your child’s progress with you. Many high schools hold parent/teacher meetings to provide parents with the opportunity to discuss their child’s progress with all of their child’s teachers. Other high schools have an ongoing ‘open door policy’, and encourage parents to visit or telephone the school if they wish to discuss any concerns or ideas they may have.

Keeping in touch with school activities

Your child’s school will regularly send you newsletters, notes and invitations to school functions and parent meetings. Most of this information will be given to your child, with the expectation that they take it home to you. Many high schools are also using email to keep parents up-to-date with the latest news, and there also a number of high schools that use SMS to notify parents of student non-attendance.

Getting involved

Our high schools always welcome parent involvement and support.

Parent groups like the P&C Association provide a great opportunity to become involved in the life of the school and to participate in school decision making.

Some schools also have a school council. School councils play an important role in helping to develop ideas and determine priorities and policies within the school.

Your school will be able to provide details of meeting times for their established parent groups.

Volunteering at school events and fundraisers can be a great way to meet other parents and school staff. Any help that you are able to offer will be appreciated.

Why get active in your school?

- Children feel better about school when they see their parents getting to know their teachers and talking with them
- Having regular contact with your child’s school will help to build a relationship to support your child’s learning
- A positive home/school relationship better allows your child’s needs to be met
- Parents make many long-lasting friendships through school life
- Being involved in the school community makes it easier to find out information on where particular resources may be found, sharing handy hints and helping your child to look forward to high school

Attendance

Attending school is compulsory. Please make sure your child is not away from school unnecessarily, because this just makes it harder for them to keep up with lessons, and it also breaks their routine of learning. This can lead to your child losing confidence in class, and their level of achievement will quickly fall.

Writing school notes

- If your child is absent, you need to write a note within seven days
- It must explain why your child missed school
- Include how many days your child was away
- Remember to include the date or dates
- Place this in your child's school bag
- Remind your child to give the note to the teacher
- If your child is going to be away for more than three days please call the school to let the teacher know. You will still need to write a note when your child returns to school

Student support

Your high school has a number of people and programs in place that will help your child make the move to high school.

These include:

- Teachers, school executive, school counsellors and school administrative staff who are trained and available to help new students get adjusted to their new school. We suggest that you make a note of these people when you see them during the high school orientation program.
- Special programs including:
 - meetings and visits where primary school and high school staff get together to talk about students and teaching
 - orientation programs in the high school at the start of Year 7
 - student mentoring programs where Year 7 students are paired with older students for advice and support.

Problem solving

If you are worried about something that affects your child and their schooling, or you have a minor issue that you need to discuss, you may wish to speak to your child's year adviser or subject teacher in the first instance.

If there is a bigger issue, or you believe that the original problem was not solved, please speak to the principal or deputy principal. Depending on what the problem is, they may suggest that you speak to the school counsellor. The school counsellor is an experienced teacher who has a degree in psychology and post-graduate qualifications in school counselling. They work with students, parents and teachers to help solve a range of problems.

Bullying is not tolerated

All parents want reassurance that their child is not going to be bullied at school. They also don't want their child to bully others. It's an issue that your school always takes seriously.

Bullying is a deliberate attempt to make your child feel uncomfortable or unhappy.

Bullies can be anywhere...at school, at work, even neighbours! It is important that your child learns how to deal with bullies. All schools have an Anti-bullying Plan, which includes specific ways to deal with bullying behaviours. A copy of the school's Anti-bullying Plan is available at the school office.

Go to:

www.det.nsw.edu.au/antibullying
www.racismnoway.com.au
www.bullyingnoway.com.au

HANDY HINT:

Often issues can be resolved quickly and the teacher and/or principal will know how to deal with them. The sooner the issue is raised, the sooner it can be sorted out.

© October 2006
NSW Department of Education and Training

GPO Box 33
Sydney NSW 2000
Australia
T 9561 8000
www.det.nsw.edu.au



Further information

For further information talk to your school principal, contact your regional office or go to www.schools.nsw.edu.au

For translated information go to www.det.nsw.edu.au/languagesupport