



The primary school to high school transition

Find tips for helping your child make a smooth start to high school.



Even if your child has had a rocky time in primary school, starting high school can be the fresh start your child needs to get back on track with their education. The primary school to high school transition is a big change in your child's life so the more you can do to support them, the better chance they'll have of enjoying a smooth start to high school and getting the most out of their secondary education.

Work with the school

From the outset, try and see your child's high school as your partner in supporting your child to get the most out of their education.

- Speak to the team at your child's primary school, including the guidance officer.
- Ask them to help you organise any extra support your child might need for their start at high school.
- Encourage your child to be part of this process to help them feel greater control of their school experience.

Share what you know

Useful information for your child's high school to know about your child might include:

- which subjects your child enjoys and which ones they find most difficult
- any health or wellbeing concerns that might impact their learning
- anything about particular teachers, school strategies or relationships that helped them thrive
- any behaviours your child has exhibited at primary school that may have caused them difficulties
- what your child's social interactions were like at primary school
- any significant changes at home or in your family.

Connect with the teachers

You know your child better than anyone else so when you share insights about your child with their teachers, you are equipping the teachers to better understand and cater for your child's needs. When you approach your child's teachers, try to:

- be kind and respectful when you connect with teachers
- start the discussion with something positive to build trust and goodwill
- discuss the different ways teachers can respond to students' learning needs if your child has learning difficulties.

Be present and be practical

Just being by your child's side, reassuring them that nerves are normal, and being positive about the transition to high school will help your child get through this challenging time. There are also practical steps you can take to prepare your child for high school including:

- attending transition and orientation programs at their new high school
- practising how to get to and from school on public transport
- organising books, stationery, a school bag and school uniform
- creating a quiet study space at home.

It's never too late

There's help available if your child has struggled at primary school and has fallen behind. Remember:

- Talk to your child's school as there may be things your child can do over the summer holidays to catch up before school starts.
- If your child is refusing to go to school, contact the school so they can help.

- If you've tried everything, including working closely with your child's school, and things aren't working out, call your local Regional Youth Engagement Service, a team of people who can help kids struggling to stay engaged in their schooling or refusing to go to school.

Download the tip sheet



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