

Parents - Ten Tips to help prepare students for High School

Entering high school is an exciting time for students. They are moving into what is often a larger school environment. This can lead to anxiety or periods of unease. Here are some steps parents and caregivers can take to help students start high school on a positive note.

1 Be interested and enthusiastic about their move to high school.

Your encouragement will help your child to make a successful transition to High School. Listen to their experiences and expectations. Do not dwell on your own experiences of school.

2 Attend the High School Orientation Day

If your child will be entering high school in 2004 then keep a look out for the orientation days, which high schools hold in Term 3 and 4. These days are designed to help parents and their children prepare for starting high school. Some children, because of pressure from their peers, will try to discourage their parents from attending orientation days. Being there will help you understand your child's experiences better.

Also keep a look out for other events at your child's prospective school which may help him/her learn about what high school is like.

3 Make sure travel arrangements to and from school are organised.

Organise travel passes. This will help settle some of the concern about independent travel. Talk about back-up travel arrangements, for example, what to do if a bus or train does not come.

4 Discuss the changes every student will experience.

Emphasise that many people feel apprehensive about changing from a small primary school to a larger high school, and that there will be people to help them adjust.

5 Organise your child's uniform well before the first day of school.

Having the new uniform will help your child start to feel a sense of belonging to the school.

6 Learn about school routines and timetables.

Talking to student already enrolled at the school can be useful in finding out information about things such as sporting venues used by the school and school finishing times. The school will provide information before it is needed.

7 Help your child to develop good study habits.

Try to provide them with somewhere private and quiet to study. Help your child to set aside a particular time to study. Work out a daily timetable that incorporates all your child's needs and interests. Regularly viewed TV programs, club activities and sport should all be part of the timetable. Ultimately, they will need to manage their own study and they can guide you in what is helpful for them.

8 Practise organisational skills.

In the first few weeks of high school, you might want to check with your child that they have the right books for the following day. You will quickly encourage a good habit.

9 Discuss emergency and safety issues.

Talk about these issues - including crossing roads or taking essential medication - simply and without emotion. Allow your child to contribute their views. Find out who the staff are at the school who can help them if they need it on issues such as medication.

10 Let your child know that you trust them and that they can trust you.

Keep communication open about all your child's experiences, and make sure they know you are available if things go wrong.

Source Department of Education Web Site