

MOVING TO
SECONDARY SCHOOL**CHECKLIST AND TIPS TO HELP PREPARE YOUR CHILD**

The most important thing you can do to help your child is to be prepared. Below is a checklist of things you can do to prepare.

Be informed

- Talk with teachers at your child's primary school to find out how the school is helping Year 6 students prepare for the move to secondary school.
- Attend parent nights and information sessions at your child's schools (primary and secondary). These are good opportunities to find out what is happening, ask questions and meet other parents.
- Visit the website of your child's secondary school, have a look to see what is happening at the school and read some of the recent news items.
- Don't forget to read your child's school news as there is often information and updates on the move to secondary school.
- Find out when your child's secondary school is holding an orientation day and make sure your child attends. If they can't attend, contact the school and arrange a tour for both of you together.
- At the secondary school orientation day your child should receive a handbook. Make sure you read it together and are both familiar with school processes and policies – such as school times, homework and uniforms.
- Find out what your child's school is doing to support students to make the move as seamless as possible and ensure your child takes part. For example, your school may run orientation activities and camps.
- Contact your child's secondary school if your child has a medical condition, any special needs or you are concerned about something. Speak with the appropriate member of staff, for example the year coordinator, student services manager or school nurse.

Preparing for the year

- Make sure you have your child's school uniform, books, stationery and any other items well before the school year starts.
- Have travel arrangements in place and make sure your child knows the routine and what time they have to leave home. If using public transport, do a test run so they feel comfortable. If they are being picked up after school make sure they know where to meet you.
- Have a plan for the first day – such as getting your child to meet up with a friend and make sure they know where to go when school starts.
- Place a copy of your child's timetable where it's clearly seen at home – such as on the fridge.
- Have a map of the school and your child's timetable easily accessible during the day.



MOVING TO SECONDARY SCHOOL

- Be organised at home – encourage your child to use a diary, have a daily routine for homework, schedule homework with other activities, and have a quiet place for homework to be completed.
- Have a plan on how to manage home/school communication such as returning notes.
- Develop a plan each week so your child knows what equipment and books to take each day to school.
- On the first day of school make sure your child goes to school well prepared for the day including:
 - being well rested – a good sleep is important
 - having a good breakfast
 - wearing the uniform (jewellery is restricted in many schools)
 - arriving in plenty of time
 - knowing where to meet friends inside the school grounds
 - knowing where to assemble for day one
 - taking a file, organised into sections, notepaper and pencil case
 - taking healthy food for morning recess and lunch
 - having all belongings clearly named
 - arranging an agreed pick-up time and place and have a back-up plan in case something unexpected happens.

Talk with your child

Before they start secondary school

- Ask questions such as ‘What do you think secondary school will be like?’ and ‘What are you looking forward to?’
- Listen to your child’s concerns and help them deal with them before they happen. What action do they think they will try first? What will they do if they get lost or are late for class?
- Talk about meeting new people, making friends and getting to know the teachers.
- Talk about bullying and peer pressure. Make sure your child knows where to find the year coordinator or student services staff in case they need help or advice.
- Talk about the school routine and timetables, and ensure they are familiar with the school map.
- Help your child be realistic about taking time to settle in to the new environment.
- Be available to listen when your child has questions or wants to talk about school.

During the first weeks of school

- Ask about their day at school and what they like about secondary school – the campus, teachers, new subjects and friends.
- Talk positively with your child about school and focus on their successes.
- Reinforce strategies such as thinking positively, taking deep breaths, getting enough sleep at night and eating well.
- Listen – provide opportunities for your child to talk.