

# Year 7 in secondary



## Questions often asked by parents

### What is transition?

Transition is the time of change in your child's education when they move from primary to secondary school. Staff at both your primary and secondary school are very keen to make the transition a comfortable, happy time for your child, and will help them prepare for and become familiar with the new school and routines.

In many secondary schools older students take the role of peer leaders to help new students settle in. They may act as guides offering advice, re-assurance and answering questions from new students. Check to see if your school has peer leaders.

### Will my child get to visit their new secondary school before they start?

Most schools have opportunities for children to visit during Term 4. Visits usually include a guided tour of the school and students can try some sample lessons – such as science and drama. These opportunities help your child get to know the secondary school and feel more comfortable about starting the following year. If your child cannot go on to the orientation day, contact the school and you may be able to arrange a tour for both of you together.

Secondary school is different from primary school, as students usually move between rooms for different lessons and have several teachers each day. Read the information sent from the school such as the handbook and talk about it with your child. If you need further information, contact the school.

A secondary school size and layout might be confusing and the school map is very helpful for those first few days. Your child will adapt more easily to new routines if they know what to expect so talk about the differences in break times, rules and expectations of the school.

### Can I visit my child's secondary school?

You might like to visit the school yourself to get to know the school layout and meet staff. If you are familiar with the school, its programs and teachers, it is easier to chat at home together about your child's day.

Many schools offer parent forums which are very useful and informative. These are also good opportunities to meet other parents and their children. It could be a good refresher to visit the school in the week before day one.



### **What can I do if I am concerned about my child?**

Talk with your child privately and ask about the problem. Listen to what they have to say.

Call the school – sooner rather than later.

Arrange a meeting if necessary to discuss any matters with the year coordinator or a staff member at student services.

If you suspect your child is being bullied, contact the school and work together to address the matter. Here are some tips that may help your child deal with the situation:

- Tell the bully to stop or ignore the behaviour and walk away.
- Show that it doesn't upset you.
- Bullying thrives on silence. Talk with friends, family and teachers. If you say nothing you are actually protecting the bully.
- Give an assertive response and avoid an audience situation. Remember that bullying is about response and audience.
- Don't be afraid of being called a 'dobber'. Know the difference between 'dobbing' and being assertive and taking control.

### **Do I need to communicate with the school?**

Always keep the school advised of information that contributes to the wellbeing of your child such as:

- major commitments that impact on study time or attendance
- conditions such as allergies, ADHD, learning difficulties and mental health issues
- illness
- living arrangements such as sharing between households (extra newsletter if required), family separations, parent/carer travelling or working away
- change of address or telephone number
- major illness or situations in the family or with close friends
- court orders.

Always read the school newsletter. Keep up to date with what is coming up and, if necessary, help your child be prepared and equipped. It may help to have a timetable on the fridge.

Offer to help out at the school canteen or the uniform shop if you can.

Join the parents and citizens' association or school council/board and be involved in decisions that affect the education of your child.

### **I am concerned about my child making new friends. How can I help?**

Talk with your child about making friends and getting to know the teachers and other students.

The best way to make friends is to be friendly. Here are some tips for your child:

- Speak with other children.
- Introduce yourself and ask questions about topics such as sport or music.
- Be positive and talk about good things.
- Find out about clubs and activities at school and join one that interests you. You will have something in common with the other members.
- Be helpful if you see someone looking lost or needing help.
- Join in. Don't hang back hoping someone will talk with you – they might think you are not interested.
- Ask what classes they have next and if they're going in the same direction.
- Listen to what others are talking about and then join in, without taking over.
- Try to remember one or two names each day. Write them in your diary if that helps.

