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The Leap to Secondary School

**HOW TO
SUPPORT
YOUR CHILD**



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The leap to secondary school - how to support your child

Introduction

Many Year 6 students start to worry about secondary school at the beginning of Term 1, and these concerns often escalate throughout their final year of primary school. Students' concerns are often mirrored in the family, with emotions swinging from excited to unsettled, particularly when a family is going through the transition for the first time.

Some students' fears are compounded if there is initial uncertainty over which secondary school they will be going to. When they do find out, their concern shifts to what the school will expect of them. Fear of the unknown can be very powerful and the more barriers that can be removed will allow students to embrace the new adventure and find success.

The purpose of this e-book is to assist students with their transition and alleviate feelings of overwhelm, anxiety and stress. It will ensure they have the necessary skills to hit the ground running, so they are looking forward to starting secondary school, rather than being daunted about it.

As a parent, you might be wondering how best to support your child. I'll share tips and strategies to assist you to do this. You will find that the transition is smoothest when parents and schools (both primary and secondary) work closely together to support a child's learning and development.

"It is not what you do for your children, but what you have taught them to do for themselves, that will make them successful human beings."
Ann Landers

what the transition involves and can fear change — a new environment, new routines and new expectations.

Most secondary schools have a transition or 'orientation' program in place (some are more in-depth than others). Usually, on a transition day, teachers will outline in detail what children can expect. Once the children actually start secondary school, schools often provide further transition programs or activities to enhance students' familiarity with the school, the processes and expectations.

Factors contributing to a successful transition

The transition works best when the following are present:

- 1 A supportive family environment with a focus on positive attitudes** - emotional stability is really important. Students are more likely to adjust happily to the new environment, and be able to handle challenges when parents are interested in and involved with the transition.
- 2 The ability to adjust socially** – resilience and having the skills to form new friendships are crucial to the adjustment to secondary school.
- 3 Being able to adapt and adjust to the new institutional environment** – again it is important for students to have a strong sense of resilience. Flexibility assists in adjusting quickly to new routines and school life. The more that students and parents understand of what to expect from the specific school, the easier this adjustment.
- 4 Having an ongoing interest in the curriculum and learning** - the more prepared students are to adapt to more advanced work and new subjects, the more easily students will settle in at secondary school. Students need to be challenged (and usually want to be) so they can build upon their primary school learning.