



| NSW Department of Education

Getting ready for high school





Get ready for high school

Encourage your child to take responsibility for a great start to high school.



For parents

- Does your child have allergies, a health condition or disability, learning or support needs? If so, talk to the high school principal as soon as possible.
- Buy school uniforms, books, stationery, school bag, drink bottle, house key and any other supplies.
- Label everything.
- Join your school and the department on social media to get all the updates.
- Learn how you can become involved in the school.
- Connect with other parents on social media.
- Give the school your current contact details.
- Talk positively to your child about the move to high school. Ask them what's exciting about high school. Does anything worry them?
- Provide your child with money and your contact numbers in case of emergencies.
- Make sure you have the school's phone number with you.
- Remind them they can always speak to the counselling staff at their school.

For students

Before the end of primary school

- Participate in any transition to high school program available.
- Watch videos about high school at education.nsw.gov.au/high-school.
- Break in school shoes to make them more comfortable.
- Practise travelling to and from school using your new transport or travel route. If you're catching public transport, you'll need to know how to check a timetable.
- Apply for a school Opal card if needed. Go to transport.nsw.gov.au/ssts or phone 131 500.
- Label everything you will be taking to school.

At high school orientation

- Find out about school uniforms (including sports uniforms) – where and when to buy them.
- Get a map of the school to identify buildings, entry points and bike racks.
- Note school start and finish times.
- Get details on programs the school offers.
- Make a list of book packs and school supplies.
- Meet the Year 7 adviser.
- Find out whether you'll need a device such as a laptop.
- Find out the school's position on mobile phones.

Before term

- Set up a quiet work area and extra stationery supplies.
- Organise personal hygiene items in your school bag.
- Discuss what you will do before and after school, and when you need to be home, including any emergency and safety issues.
- Discuss the dangers of being distracted when crossing the road or riding a bike – including talking on the phone, texting or using headphones.
- Work out a backup plan in case your travel routes change or you miss your transport.
- Pack a healthy lunch or choose healthy choices if your school has a canteen.
- Set your alarm so you can get ready on time.

Once school starts

- Print or photocopy school timetables to place in school diaries, inside locker doors and on the fridge.
- Note all assignments, homework and events in your diary.
- Check through the timetable each night while packing your bag.
- Remember to eat healthy food and get a good night's sleep.



What to expect in high school

Starting high school is an exciting time for students as well as their parents and carers.

Going to high school will be a new experience for your child. The school is likely to be much bigger than the primary school and your child may feel a little insecure at first. Instead of being a senior in a small school, they are now a beginner in a big school. However, it is also an exciting time with many opportunities and a broader curriculum.



New experiences

From Day 1, there will be many changes to get used to including having a number of different teachers and different classrooms, often spread across a larger campus. Set class periods on particular subjects may also be longer than in primary school. Students carry around notes and books, which can be heavy, from class to class.



New teachers

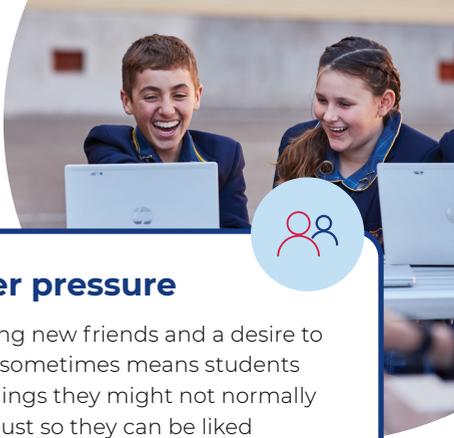
In high school, students usually have eight or more teachers and a student or year adviser to coordinate their activities. There are also head teachers for different key learning areas, and classmates can vary from class to class.



New subjects

Year 7 students will be introduced to subjects they haven't experienced before. They will also be expected to be more independent, self-reliant and self-motivated than in primary school. Lessons will often be more student-centred and teachers will become resources and guides, rather than instructors.





Timetables

Students are given timetables with subjects, times and room locations listed. They need to check their timetables each night to make sure they have the correct books, equipment and homework completed for the next day's classes. Reading and understanding timetables can take some time to get used to, and moving from room to room might unsettle and tire them.

Peer pressure

Making new friends and a desire to fit in sometimes means students do things they might not normally do – just so they can be liked or be one of the crowd. Letting children know they don't have to do everything their peers do is an important way of ensuring the friendships they make are genuine and positive – not based on pressure or conformity. A valuable message is that a real friend is someone who likes them for who they are.



New friends

Making new friends can be a daunting task for Year 7 students. Students often come from a variety of primary schools and they may find themselves in classes filled with children they don't know. Fitting in is often important to Year 7 students – finding people they like and who share their interests helps motivate them and increase their self-esteem. Discuss their new school experiences each day, the people they've met or observations they've made – that way there is an awareness of difficulties when they arise.



Technology and mobile phones

Generally, your child shouldn't use their mobile phone or any personal digital (gaming) device while they're at school. If you need to communicate with your child during school hours or if they need to contact you, this can be organised through their school. Mobile phone usage policies vary across NSW public high schools and are based on the best approach for the individual child and school community. Check with your child's school for their specific mobile phone policy.

Year 7

Many schools begin a transition program during Semester 2 of Year 6. Make sure you attend any orientation or 'meet the teacher' events offered by your school. It will make Year 7 easier if you know what to expect, how the school works and who to talk to about issues. Staying in touch with your child's progress is harder than primary school as they may have a different teacher for each subject. Getting to know the staff is important.

Ask the school

Some questions to ask at information sessions:



- Is there a parent or student portal with details of timetables, assessment tasks, excursions and so on? How do you access it?
- Who is the year adviser for Year 7 and how do you contact them?
- How do you contact individual teachers with any concerns?

Supporting your child's needs

If your child has disability or additional support needs, start planning early to support your child's successful transition to high school. Every high school has a learning and support team or teacher who can support your child's transition.

Together with the school, you can identify educational options that best support your child's individual learning needs and the most appropriate curriculum options and adjustments for your child.

[education.nsw.gov.au/
parents-and-carers/learning](https://education.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers/learning)







Studying at high school

Once your child is in high school, regular study becomes important. Study time is completely different to doing set homework.

Homework will vary in amount and type because of the number of teachers and subjects each day. Most students will need to do some homework every night. It might be a review of the day's lesson, completion of exercises or starting an assignment that is due later on.

Study time is different from homework. During study time, students should go over the day's work, read their textbooks or notes, create summaries and try to increase their understanding of concepts covered in class.

Students in high school should regularly review work covered in class, summarise key ideas and do additional reading and research on topics, as well as practise tasks such as essays and maths problems.

Suggestions for effective studies

There is no one 'best' way to study. Students often find different methods and times to study to suit themselves. The key is regular study, not cramming before a test or exam. Does your child have a homework and study planner or diary? Some will prefer scheduling homework and setting reminders on their phone or device, but you still need to check they are keeping up with their homework and study each week.



NAPLAN

Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 students in Australian schools sit the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN).

NAPLAN is held in May and involves 4 different tests:

- language conventions (spelling, punctuation and grammar)
- writing
- reading
- numeracy.

They are neither English nor maths test. Rather, NAPLAN assesses students' general literacy and numeracy skills, which are required in all subject areas. Texts used in NAPLAN come from a variety of key learning areas.

Students with disability or additional learning and support needs may qualify for disability test provisions. Contact your school to discuss further.

Attending school

Going to school every day continues to be important in high school, just as it has been from Kindergarten to Year 6.

What your child learns each day builds on what they learned the day before. If your child misses school, their learning routine is broken, so they can lose confidence and miss out on building their friendships. You have a legal responsibility to send your children to school every school day.

If your child misses school due to illness, religious reasons or family circumstances, talk to the school and remember to send a signed note explaining the reason for their absence.

If your child arrives at school late or needs to leave early, you will need to go to the office to sign your child in or out.

If you're having difficulty getting your child to school every day and on time, talk to the year adviser or principal.

Student wellbeing



Encourage your child to keep a balance in their high school life. They still need time to relax, have fun and spend time with friends and family. They also need healthy food, exercise and a good night's sleep.

Bullying

All NSW public schools actively prevent student bullying and encourage appropriate behaviour by helping students build social skills and respect for others. If your child tells you they or someone they know is being bullied at school or out of school hours, you should contact the school to report the concern. Schools also have plans in place to deal with bullying or harassment, and school staff are trained to deal with these situations. You can get a copy of your school's anti-bullying plan from the school office.

Responding to a crisis

The past year has brought a lot of sudden change and disruption for everyone, including children. Supporting your child through this change can help them settle into high school.

How your child may be feeling...

Your child may feel **excited or happy** to return to school and see their friends and teachers again.

They may feel **nervous or anxious** due to being away from their peers and routine structure.

Or, they may feel **frustrated and annoyed** because they enjoyed the learning from home environment and do not want to return to school.

It's important to remember that all of these feelings are normal and your child or teen may react differently to others.



What you can do to help support your child

- Monitor the media your child is watching – repeated viewing can be overwhelming and distressing. Explain to them that news reports will repeat images and stories and it may not be a good idea to keep watching.
- Find out what your child's understanding of the event is and correct misunderstandings or confusion.
- Include your child in making plans for the future.
- Support your child to stay connected to friends.
- Keep to your regular routines and activities as much as possible.

Thinking about the future

Change can be stressful and the natural disasters and pandemic have only added to the uncertainty and challenges of high school.

Your teen might feel worried about what will happen this year, as well as what lies ahead in 2021 and beyond. These emotions, while understandable, can be distracting and draining. That's why it's important to have some strategies to manage their worries, re-focus their thinking and ensure they're looking after themselves.

Share these tips with your teen and remind them that you're here to help:

Being balanced and compassionate in your thinking – It's important to be kind and realistic in your thinking. Speak to yourself as you would if you were talking with a good friend.

Keeping connected – In challenging times, we're better together so stay in touch with friends and family, look out for those around you and keep connected. Make time to be around people who make you feel good and are there to help.

Taking back some control – Identify things in your life that you are in control of, make a 'to-do' list of what you are going to complete and check them off when you're done.

Accepting that which you're unable to change – Accepting that there are things beyond your control and choosing to be comfortable with that fact is likely to bring greater peace of mind and use less energy than fighting something you can't change.

Making healthy choices – Stay active, make sure you're getting enough sleep, eat well and keep hydrated. Remember that you're still in control of your own body and your own path.

[education.nsw.gov.au/
parents-and-carers/wellbeing](https://education.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers/wellbeing)





Supporting your child

Engaging with your child's education

Your school is committed to working with you to ensure you have all the information and support you need to help your child get the most out of school. In addition, you have the right to feel welcome at school, to be treated fairly and to be able to actively participate in your child's schooling.

We ask that in return you commit to making your interactions with your child's teachers, other school staff, other parents and other children positive. We are all partners in our children's education. Every child has the right to expect their best interests will shape our decision-making and actions.

School staff have the right to feel safe in their workplace and be free of intimidating actions or language as well as inappropriate or unhelpful communications. All our interactions and communications – including those about difficult or complex issues – should be timely, respectful, transparent and focused on solutions.

All public schools in NSW have a School Community Charter which provides the framework for school-based behaviour and interactions. The charter creates clear expectations and a framework by which we can all be held to account. If at any time you think a communication or interaction has not been handled in line with the charter, please raise this with your school or the department.

education.nsw.gov.au/school-community-charter



Support services and counselling

Support is available for your child, and any child that needs it. All NSW public schools have access to psychological expertise through the school counselling service. School counselling staff can help students who are having difficulty at school or home. They can connect families with services outside of school, if needed. You may need to make an appointment to access the school's counselling or psychology services by phoning the school.

English learners

If your child is learning English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) they may require additional support to develop their English language skills. Schools provide language support for EAL/D learners to participate fully in schooling. Newly arrived EAL/D learners with limited English language skills may also be eligible to attend an Intensive English Centre or Intensive English Class. Contact your school to discuss how the needs of EAL/D learners are met.

Finding the right person if you have questions or concerns



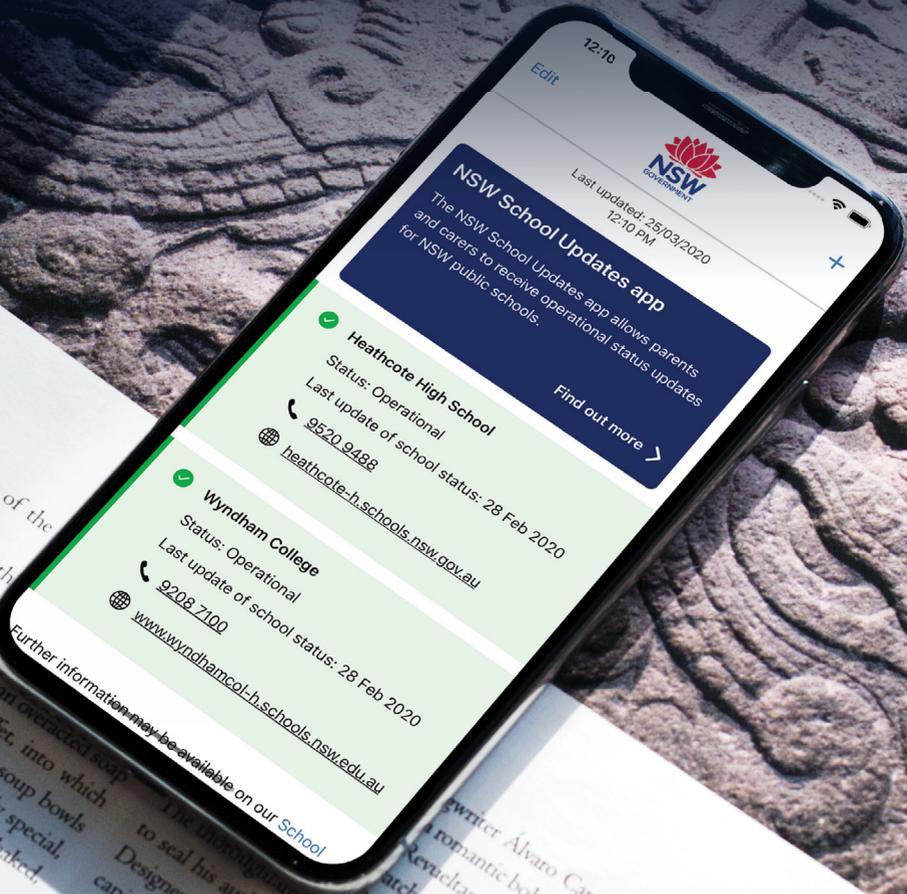
We understand that you may have questions about your child going to high school. Our students' wellbeing is our priority and we want to work with parents, carers and families to support them during this transition. If you have a question or issue and want to talk to someone before your child starts high school, you can contact your local school and ask to speak to someone. Once your child starts high school, the subject teacher can discuss your child's progress in that subject. The head teacher of a specific subject or the year adviser can also be a good place to start.

education.nsw.gov.au/your-feedback



Download the NSW School Updates app

Parents and carers can sign up to receive operational updates for NSW public schools. **Scan the QR code and follow the prompts to download the app.**



Want more practical starting school tips?

Access this guide online and explore our resources to help your child get the most out of their school year. **Scan the QR code** or visit education.nsw.gov.au/high-school.





Useful websites

education.nsw.gov.au/useful-websites

Translated school information

[education.nsw.gov.au/
translated-documents](https://education.nsw.gov.au/translated-documents)

A-Z quick guide for parents

education.nsw.gov.au/parent-guide

Parents and carers resources

education.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers

NSW School Updates app

education.nsw.gov.au/school-updates

Complaints, compliments and suggestions

education.nsw.gov.au/your-feedback

Road safety

education.nsw.gov.au/safe-travel

Aboriginal Education & Communities

[education.nsw.gov.au/
teaching-and-learning/aec](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/aec)

Aboriginal Education Consultative Group

aecg.nsw.edu.au

Disability, learning and support

[education.nsw.gov.au/
disability-learning-and-support](https://education.nsw.gov.au/disability-learning-and-support)

NSW Health

health.nsw.gov.au

mhcs.health.nsw.gov.au

Telephone Interpreter Service

If you would like more information and you need an interpreter, please call the Telephone Interpreter Service on 131 450 and ask for an interpreter in your language. Tell the operator the phone number you want to call and the operator will get an interpreter on the line to assist you with the conversation. You will not be charged for this service.

2021 term dates for NSW public schools

Starting and finishing dates may vary between schools. Check these dates with your school and write the date your child starts each term in the space below.

Term 1

Wednesday 27 January - Thursday
1 April (Eastern division)

Wednesday 3 February - Thursday
1 April (Western division)

Term 2

Monday 19 April - Friday 25 June

Term 3

Monday 12 July - Friday 17 September

Term 4

Tuesday 5 October - Friday
17 December

education.nsw.gov.au/calendars

School information

We acknowledge the homelands of all Aboriginal people and pay our respect to Country.

Say hello

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education.nsw.gov.au

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