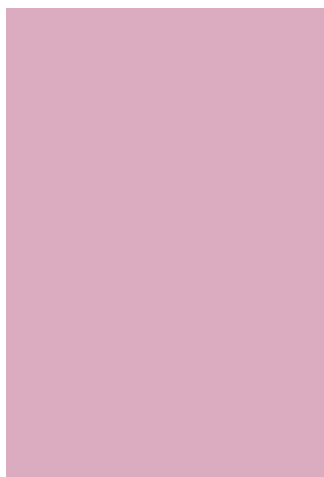


Time to start Year 7

Family guide to starting high school





Welcome to high school

Going to high school is an exciting time for our children.

As a mother I know what it's like to watch your child cope with changes in their life. That's when the experience and professionalism of our public school teachers and support staff come into play to make your child feel at ease.

The first thing we do is invite you and your child to visit the high school the year before they start and get a taste of high school life.

The second thing we do is give you great advice on how to prepare for high school. This booklet is packed with information about what to expect and how to support your child.

Your child will learn the values of respect and responsibility underpinned by strong foundations in literacy and numeracy and the best that our broad curriculum has to offer. They will do so surrounded by new friends and inspirational teachers.

I wish your child every success through their high school years.

The Hon Verity Firth MP
Minister for Education and Training
Minister for Women

Time to start Year 7

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From primary to high school

We will work with you to make the big change from primary to high school as smooth as possible for your child and your family.

We're here to help

Your child's primary school and high school will work together to give your child the best possible start to Year 7.

Transition programs

Many primary and high schools work together to run transition programs for Year 6 students. These programs could include a range of activities, such as visits to high school. These programs can really help your child get to know their new school and to get a taste of high school life.

Orientation

Orientation is a one-off event where the high school welcomes students who will start Year 7 the following year, along with their parents and carers. On that day you can tour the school and find out what is needed and expected. It's also a good time to practise using the transport and travel routes your child will take to school.

If you have missed the orientation, ask your high school to give you the information you need so your child can settle in quickly.



Allergies and medical conditions

If your child has any allergies or medical conditions, you need to let the school principal know before your child starts high school. The best way to do this is to complete the information requested in the application to enrol form. You could follow up with a phone call or make an appointment to see the principal.

Special needs

If your child has special needs please arrange an appointment to discuss with the high school principal as soon as possible to ensure that support will be in place when your child starts Year 7.





Getting prepared

There are a number of things to organise before school starts.

Planning

Travel passes

The Ministry of Transport manages the School Student Transport Scheme which can provide subsidised travel on trains, buses and/or ferries to and from school for eligible students.

Application forms will be available from the high school. These forms are often mailed out with the letter confirming enrolment, or distributed at orientation. The forms should be returned to the high school before your child finishes Year 6.

Before applying for the scheme, you will need to know the transport services to the school available near your house.

Phone: 1800 227 774 or (02) 9891 8900

www.transport.nsw.gov.au/concess_grants/ssts.html



Budget for expenses

Because of the extra costs with starting high school, it may be helpful to budget for these items starting the year before.

Uniforms

Schools usually have a summer, winter and sports uniform. The high school will provide you with information about the school's uniform and can tell you which local shops supply the uniform.

To keep costs down, many schools run a clothing pool where second-hand uniform items still in good condition are donated.

Shoes

Fully enclosed shoes need to be worn for safety in science and other classes. Your child will also need running shoes for Physical Education classes.

School books and equipment

Your child's high school will inform you of the books and equipment needed. Some high schools sell a Year 7 pack of school supplies, saving you time and money.



School financial contributions

Schools ask parents for the following contributions:

- A general voluntary contribution to help the school provide a wider variety of resources and learning opportunities for students
- Subject fees for specific classes such as food technology and visual arts. These fees help to cover the cost of materials used by your child.

Optional expenses

Schools may offer students additional opportunities which are optional expenses. These may include:

- Year 7 camp
- excursions to enhance and support classroom studies
- additional activities, such as playing an instrument in the school band or participating in competitions.

Financial assistance

If you have difficulty with the costs of schooling, please make an appointment with the principal to discuss your situation. The Student Assistance Scheme may be available to assist you.

Education Tax Refund

If you receive the Family Tax Benefit you may be entitled to claim a tax refund of up to 50 per cent off eligible expenses for your child's education for items such as stationery, computers, printers, internet costs and educational software.

www.ato.gov.au



Mobile phones

Mobile phones, MP3 players and iPods are a part of life, but they should not be used in any way at school that interferes with classroom learning. Each school has a policy on the use of these devices.



Please avoid ringing or sending text messages to your child during school time. If there is an urgent message, you can ring the school office to pass on messages to your child.



The high school environment

The staff at your child's school will help your child to adjust to new ways of doing things.

High school is different

Many children worry about what high school will be like (and so do their parents) as they go from being a “big fish in a little pond” to a “little fish in a big pond”. Most adjust easily and quickly to their new school and flourish with new subjects, friends and routines.

High school students are expected to take on more responsibility. They will use diaries to manage their workload from many subjects and use timetables to know their subjects and classrooms. Students usually have a different teacher and a different classroom for each subject. They may have to carry their belongings around with them or perhaps use a locker.



Getting around

Classrooms are often named by the building block name and number of the classroom within that block, such as B16 or C12. B block may be the classrooms for Science and C may be the Mathematics building. Ask for a school map if your child doesn't have one.

Timetables

When Year 7 students start school they are given their own timetable that shows the time, subjects and classrooms to help them know where they should be. Subjects in high school are usually taught in lessons of 40 to 75 minutes, called 'periods'. Each subject will be taught for one or two periods at a time.

Colour coding

Colour coding subjects may help students to organise what they need each day. Subjects can be highlighted in different colours on their timetable and their books for that subject could be covered in the same coloured paper or contact. For example, green for Mathematics and blue for English.



Going to school is compulsory

All children must go to school and parents are responsible for ensuring their child attends. If students are away from school they miss out on vital information, their learning routine is broken and they can lose confidence. They also miss out on building friendships. All of these factors can affect their attitude towards school and their achievement. Your child also needs to have studied subjects for a certain number of hours to be awarded the School Certificate.

Students usually attend roll call where they are formally recorded as being at school. If a student has not arrived at school that day, the school may call or text the parents.





Writing school notes

If your child is ever away from school, please write a note within two days explaining why your child was away and include the following information:

- child's name and class
- date/s and number of days your child was away
- explain why your child was away
- other information, perhaps they have an injury and cannot play sport.

Your child can return the note to the school office or roll call teacher.



If your child is going to be away for more than three days please let the school office know. Please write a note when your child returns.

Ready for high school checklist

Tick each item when it has been done.

To do in Year 6

- If your child has any allergy, medical condition or special needs, talk to the high school principal.
- Encourage your child to participate in any appropriate transition to high school program offered to them.

At high school orientation

- Organise documents for a travel pass if applicable.
- Meet other students, parents and school staff.
- Get all the information you need about the school uniform.
- Find out school starting and finishing times.
- Get a map of the school and tour the school. Help your child to get to rooms on the map.
- Find out what programs the school offers.
- Find out what other school supplies are needed and where to get them.
- Find out ways to become involved in the school.

To do in the school holidays before Year 7

- Practise travelling to and from school with your child using the transport they will use. Let your child buy the tickets and ask for a copy of the bus, train or ferry timetable.
- Teach your child how to read the timetable for the bus, train or ferry as appropriate.
- Provide guidelines to your child about returning times and communication after school.

At home

- Talk positively to your child about the move to high school.
- Let your child tell you what excites them about high school and what worries them. Let your child know there is always someone at high school they can go to for help.
- Make sure your child has a desk or an area where they can work quietly and have things they need close by.
- Make sure your child has a dictionary.
- Organise personal hygiene items in school bags, such as deodorant and pads or tampons for girls as needed.
- Decide what your child will do before and after school. (There is no before or after school care for high school students).

To do in the school holidays before Year 7

- Buy the school uniform including sports uniform.
- Buy other supplies as needed, such as school bag, drink bottle, house key, etc.
- Label everything.
- Practise wearing school shoes to make them more comfortable.

2010 term dates for NSW public schools

NSW public schools have four terms running over two semesters. Year 7 students usually start the day before the rest of the school so that they can settle in.

Term 1 Year 7 students start school on Thursday, 28th January, 2009*

Term 1 ends on Thursday, 1st April

Term 2 Students return to school on Tuesday, 20th April

Term 2 ends on Friday, 2nd July

Term 3 Students return to school on Tuesday, 20th July

Term 3 ends on Friday, 24th September

Term 4 Students return to school on Monday, 11th October

Term 4 ends on Friday, 17th December**

* School starting dates may be later in some schools in Western NSW. Check with your school.

** Finishing days may vary. Check with your school.

- Discuss emergency and safety issues with your child. Talk in a calm way about things that may happen, such as being approached by a stranger or catching the wrong train. Allow your child to suggest what they could do in such a situation.

On the first day of Year 7

- Get your child to wake up to an alarm clock and to get themselves ready on time.
- Make sure they are wearing a watch.
- Perhaps give them some money for emergencies.
- If possible, go to school with your child to make sure they are well settled.
- Make sure you have the school's phone number with you each day in case of emergencies.
- Make sure your child has your phone numbers and any other numbers they need in an emergency.
- Make sure the school has your current contact details.

In the first week of high school

- Make photocopies of their timetable in case it gets lost. Copies of the timetable can be put in their school diary, the front of their school books, on the inside of their locker door and on the fridge.
 - Check through the timetable each night to make sure everything that is needed for the next day is packed, such as sports uniform.
- 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 and a good night's sleep.**

Subjects studied from Years 7–10

Key Learning Area	All students study these courses	
English Mathematics Science	All students study English, Mathematics and Science in Years 7, 8, 9 and 10. By the end of Year 10 all students must complete 500 hours in each of these subjects.	
Key Learning Area	All students study these courses	Students can choose from these courses* for an additional 400 hours
Creative Arts	All students study 100-hour courses in each of Visual Arts and Music.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Dance - Drama - Music - Photographic and Digital Media - Visual Arts - Visual Design
Human Society and Its Environment (HSIE)	<p>Years 7–8 students study 100-hour courses in each of History and Geography.</p> <p>Years 9–10 students study 100 hours each of Australian History and Australian Geography.</p> <p>By the end of Year 10 all students must complete 400 hours of History and Geography combined.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aboriginal Studies - Commerce - Geography elective - History elective - Work Education
Languages	All students must study 100 hours in one language over one continuous 12-month period at some stage during Years 7–10.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aboriginal Languages - Arabic - Chinese - Classical Greek - French - German - Hebrew - Indonesian - Italian - Latin - Korean - Japanese - Modern Greek - Russian - Spanish - Turkish - Vietnamese
Personal Development, Health and Physical Education (PDHPE)	All students study PDHPE in Years 7, 8, 9 and 10. By the end of Year 10 all students must complete 300 hours of PDHPE.	Physical Activity and Sports Studies
Technological and Applied Studies (TAS)	All students study Technology for 200 hours, usually in Years 7–8.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agricultural Technology - Design and Technology - Food Technology - Graphics Technology - Industrial Technology - Information and Software Technology - Marine and Aquaculture Technology - Textiles Technology
<p>*Elective courses offered at each high school will depend on the number of students interested in a particular subject and the teaching expertise available.</p> <p>www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au</p>		

National testing

All Year 7 students in Australia will sit the National Assessment Program - Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) tests covering language, writing, reading and mathematics. The results of these tests will provide schools with information about what each student can do and will be used to support teaching and learning. Parents will receive a report showing how their child has performed against the agreed national benchmarks.

www.naplan.edu.au

Students with learning difficulties

Schools can offer a variety of methods, programs and support for students who have learning difficulties. Please speak to the principal or year adviser to find out about what could be offered if your child has special needs.

Gifted and talented programs

Gifted and talented students are those with above average potential in one or more areas. High schools offer a range of curriculum programs to cater for the learning needs of these students. Please contact your high school principal for more information about what is offered at your school.

www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/policies/gats/support/index.htm

Other opportunities

Your school will provide you with information about other learning and creative opportunities. These include participation in the Rock Eisteddfod Challenge, Schools Spectacular, school and regional bands, the Duke of Edinburgh Award, debating and public speaking programs, etc. The school newsletter or letters home will tell you how your child can participate.



Student reports

The school will keep you informed of your child's progress by:

- at least two written reports each year, usually at the end of terms 2 and 4
- a report about your child's performance in the national test in Year 7.

Parent-teacher interviews

Parent-teacher interviews provide an opportunity for you to discuss your child's progress with all of their teachers and to discuss how you can assist your child at home.

You can also visit, phone or email the school at any time to make an appointment to discuss any matter that concerns you. Interpreters can be provided in your language if needed.



Caring for students

It is important that you and your child know there is always someone at school to help them and to answer any questions they may have.

Your school's student care team

Every NSW public high school has a highly qualified student support team who will care for students and help them with any difficulties. High schools have also developed successful programs that support students and keep them safe.

Teachers

High school students have up to eight or more subject teachers to help them through the year. Get to meet your child's teachers at parent-teacher nights and other school events. You can call the school at anytime to speak to any of their teachers.

Year 7 Adviser

Every Year 7 student group is given a teacher who looks after their welfare and progress. This adviser usually continues as their year adviser throughout their high school years, so there is always someone who knows your child very well looking out for them.

The Year 7 Adviser is the best person to speak to if you have any concerns about your child or their schooling, or if you need to communicate with all your child's teachers.

School counsellors

School counsellors are experienced teachers who have a degree in psychology and postgraduate qualifications in school counselling. School counsellors can also help families get services and help outside of the school if needed.

Additional care

Public schools provide other support staff where needed, so that all students can be helped to realise their full potential. These positions include:

- support teachers for students with learning difficulties
- English as a second language teachers
- Aboriginal education assistants
- community information officers.

Keeping children safe and happy

Every high school makes every effort to keep students safe and happy. All public schools actively prevent bullying through programs that encourage appropriate behaviour and respect between students and build self-esteem. School staff are trained to deal with bullying or harassment of students. You can get a copy of the school's anti-bullying plan from the school office.

Student responsibilities

Students are expected to behave appropriately in the following ways:

- wear school uniform
- arrive at lessons on time and ready to learn
- be respectful towards teachers and other students
- actively participate in the class by listening, thinking, answering questions and not disrupting others
- show respect to others on transport to and from school.



Understanding the changes

Your child will be experiencing many changes. Public schools understand this and have established programs that support and promote your child's social, emotional and intellectual development.

Adolescent life

Making friends

Making new friends and fitting in is extremely important for Year 7 students.

How school helps:

- orientation and transition to school programs
- camps, excursions and programs help students to develop communication skills and friendships
- student mentors provide positive relationships with older students
- student leadership training provides opportunities and skills.

New challenges

High school students are developing study habits and forming attitudes about their success as learners. Their thinking becomes more complex and they question and analyse more. They are expected to develop their opinions on current issues as they develop the values they will live their lives by.

How school helps:

- gifted and talented programs
- awards and recognition programs
- anti-bullying policies and programs
- anti-racism education
- crime prevention programs
- student representative councils allow students to make decisions about their school.

Physical changes and learning to be an adult

All high school teachers and other staff are sensitive to the hormonal and physical changes that students undergo in high school. Public school environments incorporate the needs of students at these times and programs provide relevant information and support. Please contact the school if you want to know more about these programs.

How school helps:

- peer support develops social skills and self-esteem
- health, drug and fitness education
- child protection education.



Get help early

Talk to your child – and get help early if needed. If you see that your child is anxious or losing interest in school or the activities they previously enjoyed, encourage your child to talk to you and/or someone else they trust. At school you or your child can talk to the year adviser, school counsellor or principal. Outside of school, your local doctor, community health centre or youth centre are places to go for help.



Your child, you and school

We want the same outcomes for your child as you do. When we work as a team we can help children become successful learners and successful in life.

Stay involved

Research shows that students perform better at school when their parents or carers take an active interest in their work. High school students still need your support and encouragement, even if they say they don't. Staying interested in your child's life, asking them about friends, helping them with homework and praising their results shows them that they are important to you and that you value education.

Home as a learning environment

- Encourage your child to keep reading for their own enjoyment whatever interests them – magazines, comics, a variety of books, etc.
- Relate classroom learning to the rest of your child's life where possible.
- Encourage your child to read and take an interest in news and current affairs.
- Offer experiences that boost learning in new ways, for example, if they are studying the Japanese language, then have a family meal in a sushi bar.



There is always homework

Your child will generally have homework set each school day in high school. Homework reinforces work done in class and helps develop skills such as research and time management. It also helps to establish study habits, concentration and self-discipline. Some high schools provide homework clubs after school where students can get help with their homework.

As a general rule, each night students are expected to:

- complete assigned tasks
- finish any work they did not finish in class
- read over what they learnt that day
- use their timetable and diary to plan for the next day.



Helping with homework

You can:

- help your child with assignments, but don't do the work for them as this doesn't help your child to learn
- let the school know of any family situation that may interfere with homework
- chat to your child's teacher if your child is finding homework too hard
- help your child to have a regular time each day to do their homework
- help your child manage their time when they have lots of assignments at the same time
- help your child research information on the internet by directing them to useful sites, such as www.tale.edu.au
- encourage children to re-read their writing to check for spelling and punctuation. Sometimes it's easier to find ways to improve writing when it's read aloud.
- encourage and praise all of your child's efforts.

You are always welcome

Staying involved in activities at the school means you meet other parents and school staff, get to have a say in what happens at the school and all this benefits your child.

Ways to get involved

The opportunities for getting involved in school activities are endless:

- **Year 7 welcome night**

Schools often hold an event for parents to meet the teachers, other parents and students at the school.

- **Special days**

You will often be invited to attend special days at the school, such as sports carnivals and assemblies. This gives you an important opportunity to see your child doing a range of activities at school.

- **Volunteering**

Do you have skills and knowledge that could benefit your child's school? Your contribution may be sewing costumes for a drama performance, working in the canteen, improving the school gardens, starting a school chess club, or offering older students work experience at your workplace.

- **Parents and Citizens' Association (P&C)**

Your school's P&C provides opportunities to get involved in making decisions about your child's school.



Useful information

NSW Department of Education and Training

Phone: (02) 9561 8000
www.det.nsw.edu.au

School Parents

www.schools.nsw.edu.au/ezine

Click

www.schools.nsw.edu.au/click

Public school information

www.schools.nsw.edu.au

Translated school information

www.det.nsw.edu.au/languagesupport/index.htm
Interpreter service: Phone: 131 450

Subjects studied in high school and assessment

www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au

Homework help

www.tale.edu.au

Travel passes

– School Student Transport Scheme

www.transport.nsw.gov.au/concess_grants/ssts.html
Phone: 1800 227 774 or (02) 9891 8900

Education tax refund

www.ato.gov.au/individuals/content.asp?doc=/content/00174278.htm

Parenting teenagers

www.raisingchildren.net.au

School lunch ideas and healthy eating

www.healthykids.nsw.gov.au

School-based immunisation programs

www.health.nsw.gov.au/PublicHealth/Immunisation/school_prog/index.asp

Student welfare policy

www.det.nsw.edu.au/policies/student_serv/student_welfare/stude_welf/PD20020052.shtml

Student health

www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/studenthealth/conditions/index.php

Special needs

www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/programs/disability.php

Bullying

www.det.nsw.edu.au/antibullying

Gifted and talented education

www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/policies/gats/support/index.htm

Healthy school canteens

www.schools.nsw.edu.au/studentsupport/studentwellbeing/schoolcanteen/index.php

Allergies

www.allergyfacts.org.au

NSW Sport and Recreation

www.dsr.nsw.gov.au

NSW Federation of Parents and Citizens' Associations (P&C)

www.pandc.org.au

Aboriginal Education Consultative Group

www.aecg.nsw.edu.au/

Help lines

Lifeline

24 hour counselling
Phone: 131 114

Men's Line Australia

24 hour help line for men
Phone: 1300 789 978

Kids Help Line

A free and confidential telephone counseling service for 5 to 25 year olds
Phone: 1800 551 800



School Parents

Keeping you informed to support your child through school.

For more information, please go to:

www.schools.nsw.edu.au/ezone



Click

Be regularly updated on the technologies your children will be using at home, at school and on the go.

For more information, please go to:

www.schools.nsw.edu.au/click



If you have difficulty understanding this document or would like further information please ring the Telephone Interpreter Service on 131 450 and ask them to telephone the school.

CHINESE

如果你不大了解這份文件的內容或者你想得到更多的資料，請致電
131 450 電話口譯服務並請他們致電學校。

ARABIC

إذا وجدت صعوبة في فهم محتويات هذه الوثيقة أو أردت الحصول على مزيد من المعلومات، فيرجى أن تتصل
بخدمة الترجمة الهاتفية على الرقم 131 450 وأن تطلب من العاملين هناك أن يتصلوا بالمدرسة.

VIETNAMESE

Nếu quý vị không hiểu tài liệu này hoặc muốn biết thêm chi tiết, xin vui lòng gọi đến Dịch Vụ
Thông dịch qua Điện thoại (TIS) số 131 450 và nhờ họ điện thoại đến trường.

SPANISH

Si tiene dificultad en comprender este documento o si desea más información, llame al
Servicio Telefónico de Intérpretes (Telephone Interpreter Service / TIS) al 131 450 y pídale
que llamen a la escuela.

Find information translated into many languages at:
www.det.nsw.edu.au/languagesupport/index.htm

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GPO Box 33
Sydney NSW 2001
Australia
T (02) 9561 8000
www.det.nsw.edu.au

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