

Going to secondary 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 lost and insecure at first. Instead of being a senior in a small school, they are now a beginner in a big school.

It can be a time full of fun and new experiences, but can also be challenging or worrying for some children. Students may need to change classrooms for different lessons and make sure they have correct books and equipment, they will make new friends and will need to adjust to a new environment. Staff at the secondary school will assist students with the transition and help make this a positive and exciting time in their lives.

A place has been reserved for your child in your zoned secondary school. Government primary school students will be notified of their zoned school when they receive their enrolment package in term one. Other secondary schools and their zones can be obtained by clicking on 'Enrolment Information' on the DECD home page www.decd.sa.gov.au. Information on starting secondary schooling in South Australia can be found at www.decd.sa.gov.au/docs/documents/1/StartingSecondarySchoolBr.pdf or ask at your primary school for a copy.



South Australian Association of School Parents Clubs (SAASPC)

- promotes and develops the interest of parents in the education and general wellbeing of children at preschool and school
- develops and maintains contact with parent groups throughout the state
- acts as an advocate for parents on educational matters
- supports parents with information on parent group organisation and meeting procedure; the rights and responsibilities of parents in preschools and schools; the regulations, policies and programs of the SA Department for Education and Child Development
- offers free information sessions to parents on *Reporting abuse and neglect* and *Principal/Director selection panels*



More information can be found at www.saaspc.org.au



GPO Box 2126 Adelaide SA 5001
tel 08 8272 4640 freecall 1800 724 640
email info@saaspc.org.au

SAASPC's Tips for parents

Starting secondary school



Preparing for secondary school

- Research and choose the right secondary school for your child – go to information sessions and tours at the schools you or your child are interested in. You could ask questions such as
 - ◇ What are the school's academic results?
 - ◇ How many children attend the school and how many children are there in each class?
 - ◇ What educational programs are offered?
 - ◇ What extracurricular activities are offered?
 - ◇ What facilities are available?
 - ◇ How does the school support children with additional needs?
 - ◇ Are there specialist teachers available?
 - ◇ Does the school work in partnership with families?
- Find out what transition services and supports are offered by your child's new school – some schools run special programs to support their new students. You can also ask your child's primary school about its transition program
- Be interested and enthusiastic about the move. Talk to your child well before it happens. Discuss what they are most looking forward to and what they worried about and give lots of reassurance and emphasise the positives
- Organise your child's school clothes, books and stationery well before the first day of school
- Make sure your child is confident with their new travel arrangements. Organised travel passes and make sure they know where to get on and off public transport. Talk about back up travel arrangements, for example, what to do if a bus or train doesn't come.

At secondary school

- Students will be introduced to new subjects which may have a different approach from primary school learning. They will be expected to be more independent, self reliant and self motivated than in primary school
- Your child may have eight or more teachers, and at the start teachers may not know all the students' names and it will take some time for them to get to know the students. It's important for your child to know that the teachers are there to help and not to hesitate to ask questions
- Find out the name of the teacher responsible for your child's overall care, attendance, social and academic progress. Make contact with this teacher as early as possible to introduce yourself and ask questions. Schools usually have a parent information session early in term one
- Encourage your child to join in school activities and explore new opportunities as this is a great way to make new friends with similar interests
- Support your child in forming new friendships. Friendships play an important role in helping your child feel connected at school. Make sure your child knows that they don't have to do everything their peers do so that the friendships they make are genuine and positive and not based on pressure or conformity
- Help your child to develop good study habits. Try to provide somewhere private and quiet to study. Work out a daily timetable that incorporates all their needs and interests including regularly viewed TV programs, club activities and sport
- Make some allowance for tiredness and irritability in the early weeks

Get involved

- Don't be surprised to find that your child doesn't want you to be as visible at the secondary school as you might have been at the primary school. Your support will still be needed
- Read all school newsletters and notices and reply as soon as possible
- You may not have much spare time for school activities – if you can't help or go to meetings during the day you may be able to contribute in other ways such as on governing council, in social and fundraising events and working bees

Signs your child might be having difficulty

- a lack of involvement in the new school
- little or no talk about new friends
- refusal to talk with you about school
- little or no interest in doing homework
- low confidence or self esteem – your child might say they are dumb or stupid
- no desire to go to school, or refusal to go
- a drop in grades or academic performance
- bullying - verbal, physical, or via the internet or mobile phone

If your child is having trouble try to get them to talk about how they are feeling and see if you can work out some strategies together. It is important to work with the school personnel and you can always seek advice from school counsellors, the Year Level Manager or the Assistant Principal/Deputy Principal in charge of Year 8. They will be able to help you with ideas for supporting your child. They can also quietly look into any problems and take action as you both decide. And if you aren't happy about the support make an appointment with the principal.