

In the Classroom

Introduction

This guide was created to support students transitioning to high school. While almost everyone makes this transition, students vary in how these changes impact them. It is important we do all we can as educators to best prepare students emotionally, practically, and socially to increase their chances of this being a positive experience.

Not only is it important to discuss the practical differences students will face, but it is also critical we teach skills to become more resilient and develop a growth mindset.

Research has found when school transitions are a positive experience, it can become the foundation of many years of academic and social future success. It has also been found as vital to the development of students' self-esteem and academic self-competence as well as preventative of potential anti-social behaviour, substance misuse, depression, and suicide.

While these transitions are likely to be more challenging for students with disabilities or who are financially disadvantaged, all students can benefit from increasing their preparedness and skills for adjusting to change.

Within this interactive guide, students will have the opportunity to explore the general principles for promoting positive change.

A partnership between educators/institutions, parents and students is believed to be most effective when navigating this transition. Schools that implement an extensive transition process can overcome transitional setbacks and set students on a trajectory for long-term success.



A GUIDE TO STARTING HIGH SCHOOL WITH A SMILE

Objectives:

This book is designed to prepare students emotionally, practically, and socially for their transition to high school.

Discussion questions:

1. What are the key things you will need to remember for your first day at high school? Before, during and after school.
2. Think of a time when you were recently stressed. What did you do to manage/process this stress? Was this a positive or negative coping strategy?
3. What is your go-to technique to pick yourself up? If you don't have one, think about what you could do next time you need one.
4. Who can you talk to about your worries? Look at the Support Tree on Page 67 for ideas if needed.
5. What is burnout and what can you do to avoid it?

Exercises:

1. List any worries you have about starting high school. Note beside each worry things you could do to reduce or combat these. You could also make this an anonymous exercise and discuss solutions as a class.
2. Write a letter to yourself explaining what high school will be like. How will it be different from your current school? Don't forget to include all the positive things you have to look forward to. Complete the exercise on Page 23 before and after writing this letter and compare results.
3. Create your happiness statement using the instructions on Page 91. Design a poster with your statement for you to put where you can see it daily.
4. Practice the "No conversation" with a partner, explained on Page 84-85.
5. Answer the questions for yourself that are asked to Cooper on page 100 & 101.

Lesson evaluation:

The reader should be able to:

- Identify what the differences will be between their current and new environments.
- Explain any personal stressors about the transition and ways they can reduce/manage them.
- Recognise ways they can ask for support if/when needed.
- Understand the importance of applying wellbeing strategies to improve their lives.

Further reading: findingyourpathbooks.com/positive-schools