

SUPPORTING WELLBEING DURING SCHOOL TRANSITIONS: A PRACTICAL APPROACH



Children and young people experience a range of school transitions including beginning school, moving from primary to secondary, changing to a new school, moving from online home learning to face to face learning as well as transitioning from school to work or tertiary study.

These transition points can be both exciting and challenging for students as they adapt to unfamiliar environments and seek to establish new relationships with their peers, teachers and school staff. Students who are warmly welcomed and supported to build positive relationships are more likely to have a stronger sense of belonging and connectedness to the broader school community.

Supporting Belonging, Connectedness and Positive Relationships



- Welcome students by conveying a genuine interest in getting to know their individual strengths, interests and hobbies.
- Greetings and class check-in routines, class meetings and circles can provide opportunities for students to discuss school values, share experiences, thoughts and ideas as well as contribute to the establishment of classroom agreements supporting safe and respectful environments.
- Connecting new students with like-minded friends at recess and lunch breaks can help them to feel included in social groups outside of the classroom.
- Encouraging new students to involve themselves in sports and co-curricular activities will assist them to build new relationships with friends who share similar interests whilst developing a sense of greater connection to the broader school community.
- Investing in positive relationships at the beginning of each student's transition and ensuring they are well-known and understood will contribute to their wellbeing, resilience and learning engagement.



Primary to Secondary School Transition Considerations



- Reassure students that feeling nervous is normal and plan orientation sessions that address worries and build confidence.
- Plan family orientation sessions ensuring parents and carers are provided with key information alongside their children.
- Introduce key staff members and plan small group orientation activities to address uncertainties and to highlight exciting secondary school experiences.
- Ensure students are familiar with their classroom locations, locker areas and meeting places.
- Invite older students to share their experiences and welcome younger students.
- Partner with parents/carers to guide and support student independence, problem-solving and resilience.
- Support students to build positive relationships with their new peers with games and activities.
- Ensure that students with additional needs are well known and supported.
- Check in and encourage reflection and sharing, highlighting strengths and achievements at the end of Term 1.

Whole-school Approaches and Family Partnerships



- Plan activities and events to welcome new students and their families.
- Encourage authentic student voice and active participation in wellbeing discussions.
- Assemblies, class meetings, camps, excursions, specialist lessons, sport and co-curricular groups provide further opportunity to reinforce social and emotional competencies.
- Ensure students and families are aware of who to contact at school for support if required.
- Ensure school procedures, processes and policies are well understood by students and families.
- Recognise that families are the best source of information about their child and encourage them to share their knowledge.
- Link new families with parent/carer school representatives to provide a welcoming check-in.

