



STARTING HIGH SCHOOL

A MESSAGE TO PARENTS AND YEAR 6 STUDENTS

The move from primary to secondary school is an important time for students and their parents. For some it is a time to consider a number of options, for everyone it is a new beginning.

Many families across New South Wales have no trouble deciding which school to choose. They are happy with the primary education their children have received, and they are confident that the local government comprehensive, co-educational high school is the best choice for their child.

Sometimes parents may wish to consider a school other than the local high school. In some parts of the state students have a choice of a number of schools, some of which have specialist programs. The school for your child is the school that the family thinks best matches the child's interests, needs and aspirations. Gaining entry to some of these schools is not automatic, either because they have special entry requirements or because the number of places is limited by the available accommodation.

This letter has been written to help your family choose secondary schooling for your child. Help in making the decision is also available from a number of other places. Your primary school principal is a professional educator who knows your child well and can provide good advice. The principals of the government high schools you are considering are also very happy to give advice and guidance and to give you information about their schools including a copy of the School Annual Report. The district superintendent and the staff of the district office can also help.

I wish you and your child a most successful and enjoyable high school experience.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alan Laughlin".

(Dr) Alan Laughlin
Deputy Director-General (Schools)

WELCOME TO SECONDARY EDUCATION

High schools are different from primary schools in a number of ways:

- the way classes are organised
- the number of subjects available
- the size of the school
- what is expected of students, and
- the greater levels of personal responsibility expected of students.

All high schools offer a wide range of subjects to meet the needs and interests of students and to meet the requirements of the Board of Studies for the achievement of the School Certificate and the Higher School Certificate. Many high schools also provide courses in conjunction with TAFE colleges.

There are many things to think about when considering a high school:

- your child's talents, interests and maturity
- the school's curriculum
- school performance and climate
- availability of transport
- bus/train schedules and time spent on travel
- your child's ability to establish friendships
- alternative subjects available
- special school facilities and programs
- weekend friendships/sport
- co-educational or single sex education.

HOW TO APPLY

As parents or caregivers of Year 6 students you will receive in term two a *High School Enrolment Application Form* from the primary school your child is currently attending. That form will indicate your local high school. If that is where you wish your child to attend, simply complete your child's personal details, sign the form and return it to your child's primary school by the due date in June.

All students are entitled to a place in the local high school which is based on their home address. Some principals of high schools may check the address supplied.

On the application form you will also be able to apply for a place at a non-local high school for your child. You can nominate up to **three** non-local high schools in order of preference. There is space on the form for you to note the reasons for making these choices. Some places at non-local high schools will then be offered.

You will be notified of your child's placement when you receive an *Authority to Enrol* letter from the high school. If you do not receive an offer of a place at the non-local school, your child will be given a place at the local high school. Reasons will be given for non placement at the non-local school. You may lodge an appeal at the school level if you wish and then at the district office if necessary.

LOCAL COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOLS

The foundation of public secondary education in NSW is the local comprehensive high school.

Comprehensive high schools offer your child the opportunity to undertake secondary school studies in an atmosphere closely reflecting the local community in which the school is located. These schools offer quality education for students of all ability levels, including programs to challenge the gifted and talented and programs to cater for students with special needs.

Comprehensive high schools include both co-educational and single-sex high schools.

Most secondary schools have a local enrolment area. Students living within that area are entitled to be enrolled at the government high school.

SINGLE-SEX HIGH SCHOOLS

Most single-sex high schools have a designated enrolment area. Students living within that area will be able to enrol, especially if enrolling at the beginning of the year. Students living outside the area will be enrolled if a place is available and the subjects your child wants are available.

SPECIALIST HIGH SCHOOLS

Some high schools have a special emphasis, either in curriculum or in the nature of the student enrolment.

Enrolment at technology, languages, sports and performing arts high schools will depend on the student meeting special criteria for enrolment.

ACADEMICALLY SELECTIVE HIGH SCHOOL ENROLMENT

Parents may apply for their child to be enrolled in Year 7 at selective high schools or at selective agricultural high schools. Applicants are required to sit for the selective high school tests which are held in June each year.

TRANSITION TO HIGH SCHOOL FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

The transition of students with disabilities or learning difficulties from primary to secondary settings requires careful planning, sharing of information and close liaison between schools and families.

The choices available for high school include:

- regular classes in regular schools
- support classes in regular schools
- special schools.

Special conditions apply to enrolment in support classes in regular schools and special schools.

Support can be obtained through the school or the special education consultant at the district office.

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS AT HIGH SCHOOL

Every high school has student welfare as a priority. Each school provides a system of support in which particular teachers take on roles such as student adviser or year patron. These teachers are assisted in their roles by specialist teachers, school counsellors and by members of the school executive such as the deputy principal or the student welfare coordinator or head teacher.

It is important that each student feels safe and supported at school and gains as much as possible from their schooling. Effective schooling needs to be based on strong partnerships between parents, students and staff.

OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION

Travel passes

Applications forms for train, bus and/or ferry will be available from your child's high school in term four. These forms are often distributed on Orientation and should be returned to the high school before the end of the school year to make sure that passes are received before the next school year begins. The Department of Transport manages the School Student Transport Scheme. If you have any further queries please call the Department of Transport.

If you have any difficulty understanding this pamphlet or would like further information, please ring the Telephone Interpreter Service on **131 450** and ask them to telephone the principal of your child's **primary** school.