

## How to ease the transition from Junior to Senior School

Research indicates that for many students, the jump from the constant environment of a Primary school classroom to the much more dynamic environment of Secondary schooling, is daunting and can lead to an alienation from school in the early Secondary years. The fundamental principle behind our Transition Program is that those changes should come from a series of small steps, rather than from one massive jump. Consequently, elements such as the number of Teachers involved with a class, the need to move around the campus, the change to the classroom cohort, all change in gradual phases from Year 6 (Junior School) to Year 7.

The staging covers both curriculum and pastoral care, where the students are gradually introduced to the different elements of the Secondary school. The Transition Program aims to develop a positive, calm and supportive environment in which the students are provided with opportunities to accept responsibility for their learning and behaviour; to feel happy and secure both in the playground and classroom.

At CCPS, our Transition Program commences in Term Three, Year 6 with an introduction to the Senior School. During this time, Senior School Teachers present subject lessons to the Year 6 class, providing the students with valuable insight into the variety of subjects offered.

A Senior Head of House accompanies the Year 6 class on their Canberra excursion which provides the students with a point of contact in the Senior School. The student experiences include:

- Year 6 attendance at the Senior School Assemblies.
- Year 6 attendance at Senior School House meetings on Wednesday and Thursday mornings.
- Year 6 students are encouraged to participate in all Senior lunch time House activities and competitions.
- The Year 6 Teacher will evolve the structure of homework to be more reflective of the homework structure and expectations in the Senior School.
- In the last week of School, Year 6 students are allocated a Senior buddy. Students are required to stay with their buddy until lunch time and attend all the buddies' classes.
- Year 6 students are invited to attend the last Senior School Activities Day at Kings Beach.

### What Can Parents Do?

- Discuss with your child what they are looking forward to most at Secondary School and what fears or concerns they may have.
- Find out the name of the Teacher responsible for your child's overall care, attendance, and social/academic progress. This person might be called a Head of House, Chaplain, or Dean of Students.
- Listen when your child shares his feelings about Secondary School; however, highlight the positives and tell them who they can speak to if they have worries, friendship issues, etc. It is important to provide support during this transition period.
- Highlight the new opportunities your child will have by talking about extracurricular activities, camps, overseas exchanges, etc.

Your child's transition to Secondary School is a big change for parents too. Parents are likely to develop a different sort of relationship with their child as they transition and adapt to Senior responsibilities, often taking a less hands-on approach. As your child enters the teenage years, friends will become more important. Your teenager will still need you, and the secure base the family provides, but don't rush in too quickly to solve all of their problems.

Unfortunately, there is no instructional guide for raising teenagers and there will be a few tumultuous times. However, being interested and available reaffirms to your child, that they can

turn to you whenever they need, in a supportive and non-judgmental environment. Especially in times of transition, of which there will be many.

Amanda Stuart  
Head of Senior School