

Is Your Child Ready for High School?

A readiness checklist for Year 6 parents | Academic, social, and organisational skills

The transition from primary to secondary school is one of the biggest shifts in your child's education. It's not just about academic skills - it's about independence, organisation, resilience, and social confidence. This checklist helps you assess where your child stands and where they might need support before Year 7 begins.

From a Deputy Principal's Perspective

Having spent 6+ years as a Deputy Principal managing Year 6 to Year 7 transitions, I can tell you: the students who struggle most in high school aren't always the ones with the lowest grades. They're often the ones who lack organisational skills, reading stamina, or the ability to ask for help independently. These are all teachable skills - but they need to be addressed before the transition, not after.

Academic Readiness

By the end of Year 6, your child should be comfortable with these foundational skills. Gaps here will compound quickly in secondary school, where the pace increases and teachers assume these basics are in place.

Literacy

- Can read and comprehend age-appropriate texts independently (chapter books, informational texts)
- Can write a structured paragraph with a topic sentence, supporting details, and conclusion
- Understands basic grammar: parts of speech, sentence types, punctuation rules
- Can identify the main idea and supporting details in a non-fiction text
- Can write a persuasive, narrative, or informational text of 300+ words
- Has a vocabulary level that allows them to understand Year 7 textbooks without constant support
- Can take basic notes from spoken or written information

Numeracy

- Knows multiplication tables to 12x12 fluently (instant recall, not counting)
- Can add, subtract, multiply, and divide with confidence - including with larger numbers

- Understands fractions, decimals, and percentages and can convert between them
- Can solve multi-step word problems (read, understand, plan, solve, check)
- Understands basic measurement: area, perimeter, volume, time calculations
- Can read and interpret graphs, tables, and data displays
- Has a sense of number magnitude ("Is 0.8 bigger or smaller than $\frac{3}{4}$?)")

How many did you tick? If your child is confident with most items in both lists, their academic foundations are solid. If you ticked fewer than half in either list, targeted support before Year 7 starts will make a significant difference to their confidence and performance.

Organisational Readiness

Secondary school demands far more independence than primary. Multiple teachers, multiple classrooms, multiple subjects with different due dates. Students who haven't developed organisational habits often feel overwhelmed in the first term.

- Can pack their own school bag with the right materials for the day
- Can follow a timetable and get to the right place at the right time
- Can manage a homework diary or planner (writing down tasks, checking them off)
- Can break a larger task into smaller steps ("I need to do research, then write a draft, then edit")
- Can manage their own belongings without losing things regularly
- Can complete a task without constant reminders or supervision
- Understands the concept of deadlines and can work toward them

Social and Emotional Readiness

The social landscape of high school is significantly more complex. These skills matter as much as academic ones for a smooth transition.

- Can introduce themselves and make conversation with unfamiliar peers and adults
- Can ask a teacher for help without excessive anxiety
- Can handle disagreements or conflict without becoming overwhelmed
- Can work collaboratively in a group - contributing, listening, compromising
- Has strategies for managing stress, frustration, or disappointment
- Can navigate social situations without always needing parental intervention
- Shows resilience when things don't go well - can recover and try again

Digital Readiness

Most secondary schools use learning management systems, online submission, and digital collaboration tools. Your child should be comfortable with:

- Typing at a reasonable speed (not hunt-and-peck)
- Navigating a web browser, email, and file management (saving, organising, finding files)
- Using a word processor to write and format a document
- Understanding basic online safety: passwords, privacy, what not to share
- Managing screen time and knowing when to put the device away

Practical Steps Before Year 7

1. Run a diagnostic assessment

Know exactly where your child stands academically. Specific knowledge of gaps allows specific action - far more effective than vague worry. Onedai's free assessment takes 15 minutes and covers the key literacy and numeracy foundations.

2. Address academic gaps now, not later

Foundational gaps in fractions, reading comprehension, or grammar don't fix themselves. They compound. A few months of targeted support before Year 7 is worth more than a year of struggling to catch up.

3. Build organisational habits over summer

Start a homework planner habit now. Practice packing bags, following schedules, managing deadlines. These habits take weeks to establish - don't wait until Week 1 of Year 7.

4. Visit the school and walk the grounds

Familiarity reduces anxiety. If possible, attend orientation days, walk the route between classrooms, find the library and the student services office.

5. Talk openly about the transition

Ask what they're excited about and what they're nervous about. Validate both. Share your own experience (or a positive one). Normalise the fact that it's a big change and it's okay to feel uncertain.

Free Diagnostic Assessment

See exactly where your child stands with our free 30-question, curriculum-aligned assessment.
Instant parent report. No payment required.

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