

# GRADE 6 TO YEAR 7 TRANSITION

## Common Changes & Challenges



Grade 6 and Year 7 Students:

Where they are going & where they have come from.

Recent research makes clear that successful transition from primary to secondary schooling is significantly linked with understanding and addressing the developmental issues facing young adolescents.



# Nature of the Student

- **intellectual** – young adolescent learners are curious, motivated to achieve when challenged and capable of problem-solving and complex thinking
  - **social** – there is an intense need to belong and be accepted by their peers while finding their own place in the world. They are engaged in forming and questioning their own identities on many levels
  - **physical** – they mature at different rates and experience rapid and irregular growth, with bodily changes causing awkward and uncoordinated movements
  - **emotional and psychological** – they are vulnerable and self-conscious, and often experience unpredictable mood swings
  - **moral** – they are idealistic and want to have an impact on
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■ In early adolescence, (Years 5-8)

**‘Am I normal?’**

■ In middle adolescence, (Years 9-10)

**‘Who am I?’ Am I cool?**

■ In late adolescence, (years 11-12)

**‘What is my place in the world?’**

**‘Am I going to make it?’**

# Early Adolescence – Am I normal?

- Puberty – with many physical changes
- Bodies and emotions changing at alarming speed
- Transfixed before a mirror
- Desperately want to be like their friends, to be ‘normal’

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# Physical Changes at Puberty

- Apart from infant growth, physical changes occur more rapidly than at any other time in life.
  - During this growth spurt the heart doubles in size.
  - Some can grow up to 10 cm in a year.
  - Some begin their growth spurt at 9 while others begin as late as 15 or 16.
  - Hormone levels rapidly
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# Puberty

- **The start seems to be getting earlier and earlier ( average 11 ½ for girls and 1 ½ - 2 years later for boys)**
  - **said to start with the first signs of sexual development**
  - **Process of adolescent development proceeds over the next 5-10 years ( ends when the young person is socially and emotionally mature)**
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# Emotional Changes at Puberty

- Emotionally unpredictable
- Can be stable emotionally and appear mature one day, the next they are suddenly very moody, tearful, angry and perhaps immature
- Young people are usually not able to predict or easily 'control' their feelings and emotions during this changeable period.

# Physical Changes

- **Sudden growth spurt (coupled with a tremendous increase in appetites]**
- **development of sex glands - ovaries, testicles**
- **development of secondary sex characteristics - breasts, facial hair, voice changes.**

***Adolescents are highly concerned with their physical appearance***

# Accepting a Body Change

- Enormous physiological changes
  - Big task coping with all the implications of a body not doing what he/she expects it to do.
  - Feel awkward, shy, confused and embarrassed (Can experience despair/elation in regard to it)
  - Questions: What does being female/male mean to me? How does what's happening fit into my ideal notion held in childhood about what I look like? Am I normal?
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# Implications of physical and emotional changes.

- Reaching puberty earlier
- Many becoming sexually active at an earlier age
- Young people need to be aware of responsible behaviour and the consequences of sexual activity
- Parents need to know what their children are or might be doing.
- Sexuality questioned much earlier

***All of this contributes to moodiness and confusion***

# Physical and emotional changes in girls

- The hormone estrogen increases more in girls during puberty and is responsible for height muscle and bone growth and development of the sexual organs
- Experience a growth spurt before boys (some as early as 9 – others at 15yrs)
- Onset of menstruation can be unsettling for some girls, especially the premenstrual moodiness and tiredness many experience due to changing hormonal levels

# Physical and emotional changes in boys



- The hormone testosterone increases dramatically
- It is responsible for the growth in reproductive organs and muscles, height growth, deepening of the voice and facial hair
- Most boys begin a growth spurt around the age of 12, however some begin one or two years later

# GRADE 6 TO YEAR 7 TRANSITION

## Common Changes & Challenges

Literature has shown that the transition from primary to secondary school may be a challenging experience for all students. For students with learning difficulties, the experience may be especially challenging.

According to Knesting, Hokanson, and Waldron (2008).<sup>1</sup>Year 7 students with learning difficulties generally required a longer time to learn about and become comfortable with school routines when compared to peers without difficulties.

# GRADE 6 TO YEAR 7 TRANSITION

## Common Changes & Challenges

Areas of adjustment encompass changes to the:

- school environment (physical layout, size and population)
- curriculum (expectations, work type and load)
- organisation (routines and logistics)
- social challenges<sup>4</sup>

School staff and teachers have recognised these differences as common challenges for students, and attempts to address these issues have been made. This presentation documents these challenges.

# SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

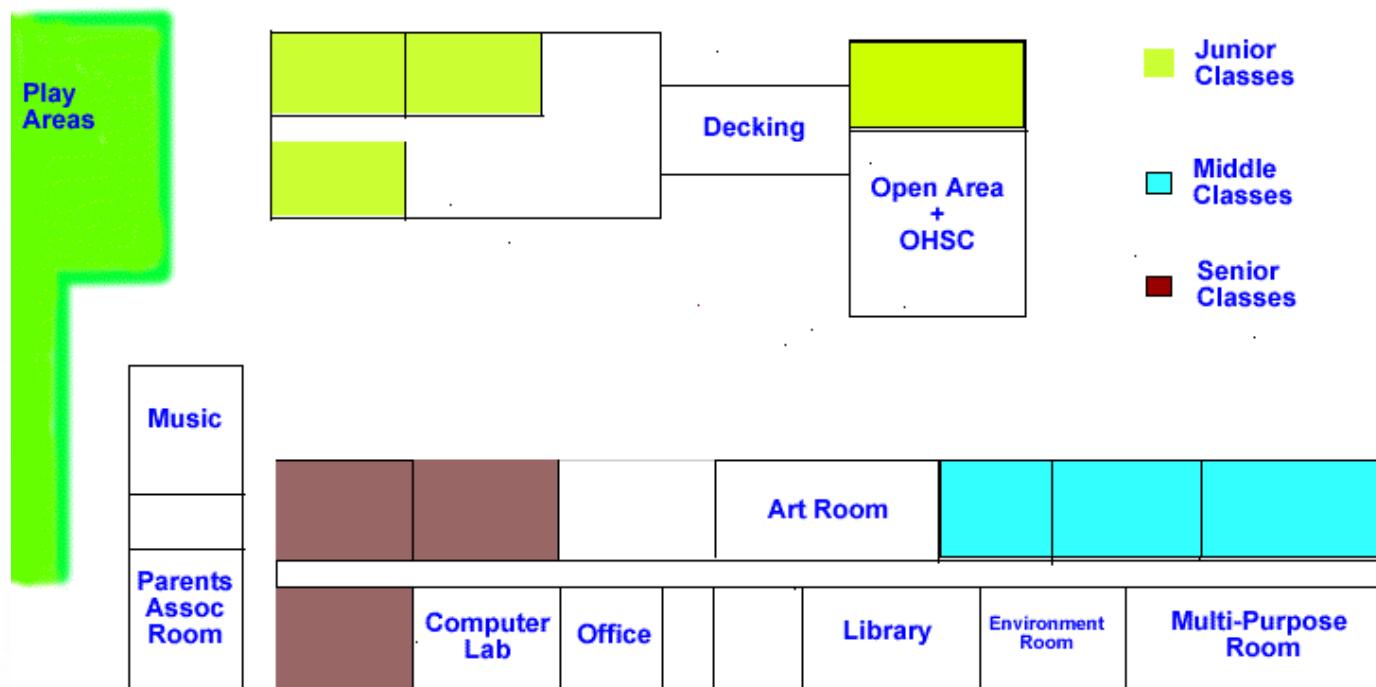
Students transitioning from primary to secondary school will require time to adjust to the new school environment.

The transition is especially challenging for students with language and/or learning difficulties.

*Note: The size, population and layout of primary and secondary schools will vary depending on whether the school is rural or metropolitan based.*



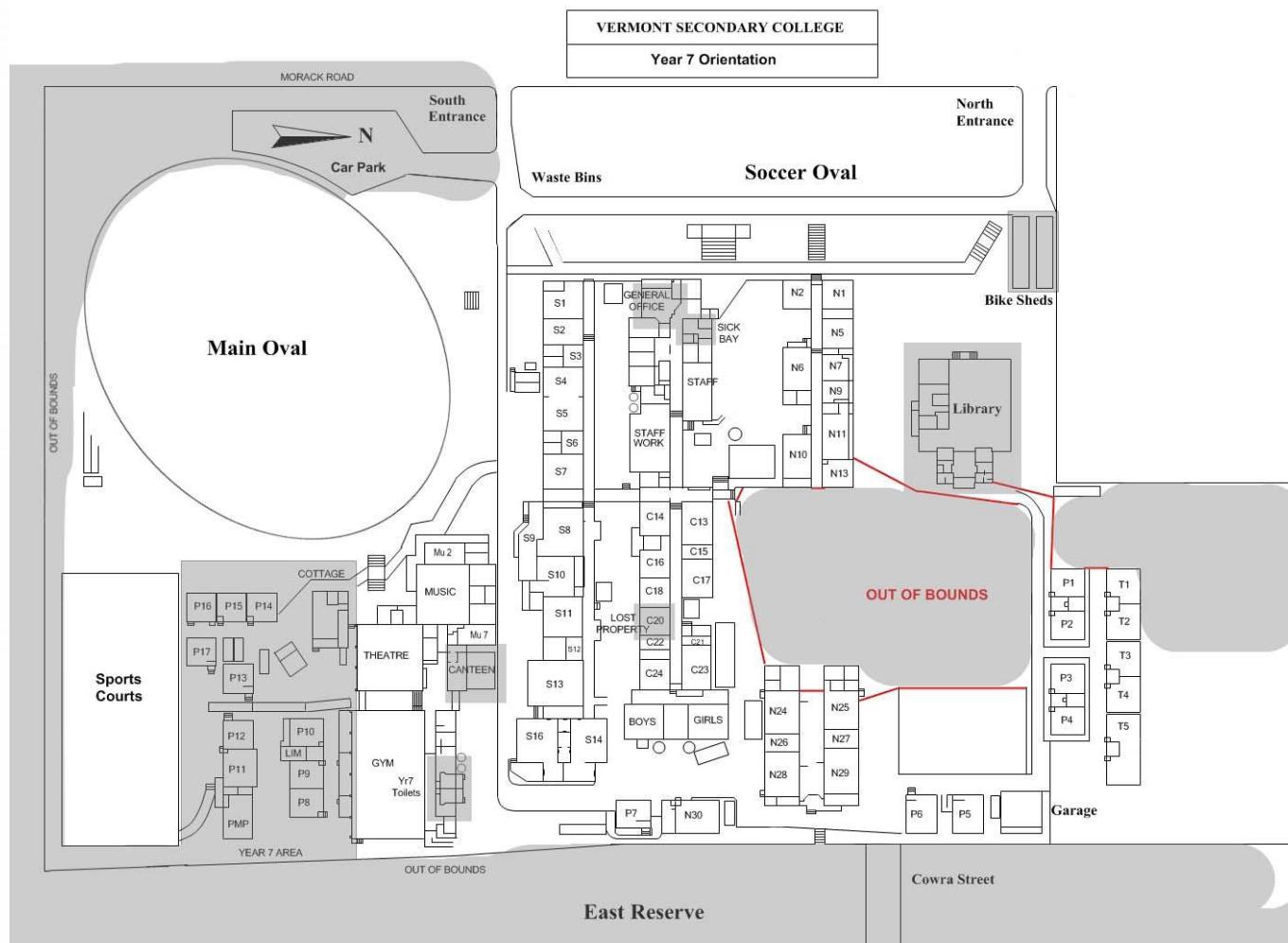
# PRIMARY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT



Primary schools generally:

- Have a student population ranging from 50 to 650 students
- Have smaller school grounds than secondary schools
- Have fewer classrooms
- Have a playground with equipment as well as courts and ovals
- Have fewer facilities than secondary schools
- May or may not have a canteen<sup>15</sup>

# SECONDARY SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT



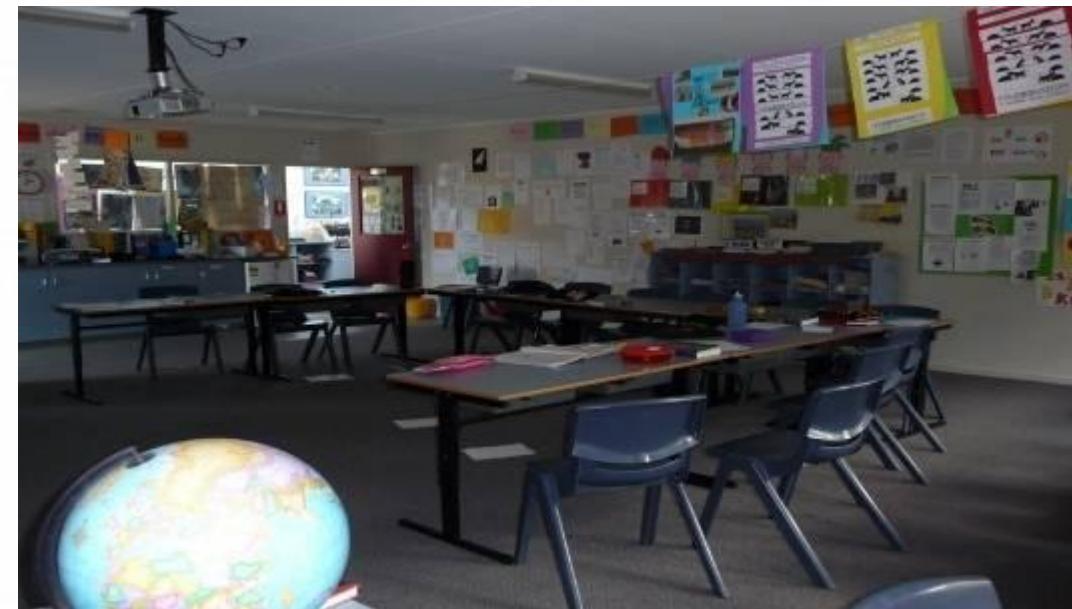
Secondary schools generally:

- Have a student population ranging from 500 to 1500 students
- Have larger school grounds than primary schools
- Have more classrooms
- Do not have a playground, only courts and ovals
- Have more facilities than primary schools
- Have a canteen<sup>16</sup>

# PRIMARY SCHOOL CLASSROOM LAYOUT & SETUP

Generally primary school classrooms:

- Are set out so that tables are grouped together to encourage interaction between students.
- The teacher's desk is located at the front or back of the classroom.
- There is space at the front of the room near the board for the students to sit on the floor and interact with the teacher.
- The walls are covered with posters and student work.
- The children's work is hanging across the room
- The classroom tends to belong to a specific teacher or subject.
- Are a vibrant, colourful and interactive environment.



# Your child may feel

- disorientated by the new schedule and environment
- sad about leaving his old school and his old friends
- anxious about not knowing the expectations of his new school
- worried that he won't make new friends and won't fit into the new school overwhelmed by everything he has to take on board at the new school
- environment
- concerned that he won't meet his parent's expectat

# Your child may show his stress by:

- being grumpy and disagreeable
  - avoiding talking to you about how he feels
  - wanting you to treat him as an adult, and then needing to be treated like a child
  - acting 'cool' or 'tough'
  - not wanting to go to school
  - regularly complaining of head aches or stomach aches
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# On the first day

- Make sure your child goes to school well prepared for the day
  - being well rested after eight or nine hours sleep
  - having a good breakfast
  - wearing uniform (jewellery is restricted in many schools)
  - arriving in plenty of time
  - knowing where to meet friends inside the school grounds
  - knowing where to assemble
  - taking a file, organised into sections, notepaper and pencil case
  - taking healthy food for morning recess and lunch having all belongings clearly named
  - arranging a clear pick-up time and place.
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# Be calm and reassuring

- It will help your child feel more at ease if you are calm. Listen to any last minute concerns and talk about them before seeing your child off for the day. After school, talk about their day, the campus, their teachers, their new subjects and friends. Reassure your child that it's OK if it takes a little while to adjust to the changes and feel settled.

# Making Friends

- **Talk about meeting new people, making friends and getting to know the teachers and other students as soon as possible – without rushing. This is especially important if your child is enrolled at an ‘out of area’ secondary school because there may not be any other students from their primary school for company. The best way to make friends is to be friendly.**
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# Here are some tips for your child:

Speak to other students

- Introduce yourself and ask questions about topics such as sport or music.
  - Be positive and talk about good things.
  - Find out about clubs/activities at the school and join one that interests you. You will have something in common with the other members.
  - Be helpful if you see someone looking lost or sad.
  - Join in. Don't hang back hoping someone will talk with you – they might think you are not interested.
  - Ask what classes they have next and if they're going in the same direction.
  - Listen to what others are talking about and then join in, without taking over.
  - Try to remember one or two names each day. Write them in your diary if that helps.
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# Responsibility and Independence

- **Plan an out-of-school routine with your child that promotes a balanced lifestyle.**
- **You can help your child set up a quiet area for study in your home away from distractions.**
- **Making a study timetable early in the year will help your child finish assignments by the due date and be ready for tests.**
- **Successful students agree that consistent work throughout the year, rather than last minute ‘cramming’, is a key to success.**
- **For overall success as well as your child’s wellbeing, study needs to be balanced with recreation, friends and a healthy diet. Research shows that a healthy breakfast is a very important start to every day – not cool drink and chips on the way to school! Plenty of sleep is also very important for growing bodies.**

# Help your child get into a routine and become responsible about being organised for school

This includes:

- planning a homework schedule and doing homework each day
  - completing assignments before or by the due date
  - taking the sports uniform on sports days
  - having permission slips signed when due
  - setting up a sensible filing system so time is not wasted searching for things before a lesson (label file dividers for each s
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## **Your child can successfully manage assignments if they:**

- **know the due date**
  - **check they understand the task**
  - **know the format required**
  - **do the research write, edit and re-write**
  - **include a bibliography if applicable**
  - **hand them in on time**
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# What to do if you are concerned about your child

- **Talk with your child privately and ask about the problem.**
  - **Call the school – sooner rather than later.**
  - **Arrange a meeting if necessary to discuss any issues with the year coordinator or a staff member at student services**
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# If you suspect your child is being bullied, contact the school and work together to address the issue

- Tell the bully to stop or ignore the behaviour and walk away.
  - Show that it doesn't upset you.
  - Talk with friends, family and teachers. Bullying thrives on silence.
  - Don't be afraid of being called a 'dobber'. Know the difference between 'dobbing' and being assertive and taking control. If you say nothing you are actually protecting the bully.
  - Remember that bullying is about response and audience. Give an assertive response and avoid an audience situation where lots of people are standing around watching.
  - Some areas are high risk. Avoid these before, during and after school.
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