

Transition of Year 8 students from a rural primary setting to an Urban Secondary School.



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Purpose:

Students in Year 8 at Hiwinui School transition to many secondary schools both within the Manawatu Catchments and beyond.

They transition to single sex, co-educational, religion based and private secondary schools.

Ages twelve and thirteen can be extremely challenging for many of our young people. Not only are they facing the increased social, emotional and physiological changes of adolescence; for many they are about to change schools for the first time in eight years.

It is my desire therefore to investigate the differences in expectations and identified transition issues between primary and secondary schools, and how rural schools are successfully transitioning students and minimising the impact of different expectations.

For this study I have interviewed students that were in year 8 at Hiwinui School in 2012 and are now at secondary school. The students voice is extremely powerful and the honesty and the maturity of the students telling their stories was a delight to hear.

I also met with a number of primary colleagues and secondary colleagues. The primary colleagues had a similar interest in transition and spoke about what they were doing in their particular setting. The secondary teachers were Year 9 Deans, Assistant and Deputy Principals or SENCOS. These people talked honestly about what they were finding and were eager to hear how the primary schools were trying to make the transition smoother.

Year 9 Student Voice.

7 Secondary Schools Represented.

During your Year 8 year at Hiwinui School how were you prepared for Secondary School?

*Having a secondary school teacher teach us for some maths lessons was really great. This helped us with the maths language used at secondary school and showed us that there are many words which mean the same thing in maths and also some mathematic rules that you need to know
Having a secondary teacher coming in and talking about College Deans and Homerooms etc*

*Flexi-Lit allowed us to develop good time management strategies
Our leadership opportunities – like; Running Assemblies, Sports Activities, Leavers Dinner, Tennis Tournaments, Discos and Movie Nights
Building Personal Confidence – this resulted from the leadership opportunities and gave you the confident to speak up
The variety of Sport and Physical Activity opportunities we were given
Speech Presentations begin compulsory
The opportunity to debate
Extension programmes like philosophy, Spanish, guitar and drums
Doing the ICAS English and Maths Tests
Participating in the Otago Problem Solving Challenge
Doing the IKANS and GLOSS tests as our teacher really knew what we did or didn't know
If we wanted to do something we were able to ask and it happened and sometimes we learnt by our mistakes and sometimes by our successes
Going to technology at Monrad Intermediate gave us the opportunity to change teachers and also work with students from other schools
Going to the different Kainui events: sporting and cultural
The Young Leaders Day
Learning to Learn – made us enquiring learners*

How do you think we could have better prepared you for secondary school

*More homework – on a daily basis
Science – it is hard because we don't have science labs at primary schools
Science language – biology, cell division, hypotheses
Make sure that the maths units align with the secondary topics taught and to try and use the words the secondary school does. Work from a text book like secondary schools
Social Skills - Work on how to choose good friends
Cultures – Because Hiwinui is a monoculture school we need to learn about other cultures
Time management and organisational skills*

Have your friends at secondary school ever talked about things that

they did that you think we could have done?

Keep playing sport because there are a lot of unfit kids at secondary school and they don't like doing P.E. and start opting out because they don't want to be seen as being uncool.

My friends were envious that we didn't have a uniform so let's keep it that way

What worried you about to going to secondary school?

*The physical size of the school – finding my way around the school
Sad to leave my friend and that I'd have to make new ones: would they be a good group of friends and how will I know who are going to be good friends*

Going to a bigger school: would I get the attention that I needed

The amount of homework we'd be getting

Is there anything else that you would like to tell us?

Being in a small school allowed us to be ourselves and we didn't have to try and fit in with a particular group

Not having a uniform gave us the freedom to be ourselves

It's about what you do out of school also that helps when you go to secondary school. Being part of a club grows your friends

You must make sure that the year 8 students continue to do orienteering as this was what helped me in the beginning to find my way around. –

some students didn't know how to orientate their map

The Voice of the Secondary Schools.

5 Secondary Schools Represented.

Do students from rural primary schools stand more than their city peers as having needs on arrival at secondary school?

No, if anything the rural students are not an issue
They aren't late because they usually come by bus
They don't tend to have trouble mixing with others

What are the things that Year 9 students struggle with most on arrival at secondary school?

The immaturity of some boys
Parents not letting go and letting the students take responsibility for themselves
Parents trying to fight their child's battles
Relationships – making good choices, making friends
Self management - getting from one place to the other with the correct equipment
Time management – getting to school on time and making sure that everything is ready for that day
Organisation skills – homework is done on time. The correct gear is packed and organising lockers / bags and food
Also getting used to the fact that you go to the toilet at interval not during class
Routines

Are there trends that you see coming through with the Year 9 students that you believe the primary schools should be addressing?

Students being able to manage their time and organise themselves for the day.
The language of curriculum subjects
Vocabulary of students is poor
Students inability to write a well structured paragraph

The aim of transitioning students to the secondary school of their choice at Hiwinui School is to:

Transition students socially, emotionally, academically and physically to the best of our ability.

Careful planning is required in order that this transition takes place over a period of time:

1. Transition will be different for each child – some will require more support than others
2. The key to a quality transition is developing the students' key competencies of Managing Self, Relating to others, Participating and Contributing, Thinking, Using language, symbols and texts.
3. They will be provided with a safe emotional and physical environment
4. Individuals strengths, weakness and interests are developed
5. The learning environment is positive and encourages both students and their families to share in the students' goal setting and decision making

6. Learning is fun and relevant to the students needs
7. Positive relationships are developed between students, staff and families

This develops a confident, connected and actively involved life-long learner.

Summary:

I am confident that the students at Hiwinui School are being prepared for the transition to secondary school and appreciated the honesty and openness of our former students when asked for their opinions.

“Baills and Rossi (2001) found that many rural children were confident and willing to ‘have a go’ at anything and usually had high self-esteem. They made the transition with little anxiety. Such a ‘have a go’ attitude appeared to be contagious among country children and created an environment similar to that of home, thus aiding transition.”

A Canadian study (Walsh, 1995) also found that rural school which reduced students feeling of isolation and alienation when they moved from primary school.

Involvement in sports, arts and other activities correlate with academic success and building confident and socially aware students.

I would strongly endorse the findings of Baills, Rossi and Walsh as I believe that the Culture, and Values at Hiwinui School support the Year 8 students to transition smoothly to the secondary school of their choice.

Unfortunately the biggest barrier for this research has been getting the staff at secondary schools to give me time to discuss this issue. I was most grateful to those that did.

What I heard was that the two main issues for secondary schools are;

1. Immature boys
2. Parents being over protective and not allowing their young ones to take responsibility for their own actions, or in some cases the lack of.

Recommendations:

1. To put in place a strong transitional programme for year 8 students throughout their final year at Hiwinui School
2. To prepare a Handbook for Parents and Students transitioning to Secondary School to be taking home at the end of Term 4.

Acknowledgements:

I would like to acknowledge the Ministry of Education for supporting Principals and Providing Sabbaticals.

I appreciate the Hiwinui School Board of Trustees allowing me to have this time away from school. It has been both professionally stimulating and personally refreshing and rewarding. To Bruce Pearson the Board of Trustees Chairperson, your support of both me and our team during this time has been much appreciated.

I have had the time to go into other schools and businesses and ask the questions which too often are put on the ‘back burner’.

To the honest and very mature ex Hiwnui Students, I was delighted to hear our core values of 'respect and honesty' still coming through. I am grateful to Jo Gibbs who stepped into 'my shoes' during my absence to lead the school in such a professional manner. To my loyal and hard working staff who continued on – thank you.

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Preparing for high school
The teen commandments
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10 ways to help your children succeed
Advice from Teachers to help parents help their kids be better students
Strategies for change

Transition Programme for Year 8

Having spoken to both Students and Staff from various secondary schools, Hiwinui School can now put in place a purposeful programme that is going to help students from our school make a confident and successful transition to the school of their choice.

I have looked at what a Year 9 student should be able to do at the beginning of Year 9 and put together a programme for the Year 8 Teacher at Hiwinui to work through in order that our students leave ready to fully participate emotionally, socially and physically at the secondary school of their choice.

Key Competency	What is required by Year 9	How are we going to do it
Using Language, Symbols and Text	<p>To have a good grasp of forming sentences both orally and in written form</p> <p>To have a good vocabulary with a focus at this level based on the language required for specific curriculum areas</p> <p>To be able to write a correct sentence / paragraph using the required punctuation</p>	<p>Include grammar in the Flexi Lit programme</p> <p>Include a component within the Literacy programme that increases students Vocabulary. This will also be important when developing personal writing.</p> <p>Make sure that students' writing includes sentence and writing structure.</p> <p>Really important to use the language of each curriculum correctly.</p>
Managing Self	<p>Set yourself good routines around your daily organisation – preparation, bedtime, relaxation time and sports and cultural practices</p> <p>To be organise for the day</p> <p>To have the correct equipment</p> <p>To record important tasks and homework</p> <p>To meet deadlines</p> <p>To have a positive attitude towards school and work</p> <p>To take pride in their personal appearance</p> <p>To wear the school uniform with pride</p> <p>To use break times for things such as going to the toilet</p> <p>To manage their own issues and not get their parents to go</p>	<p>Homework is an important part of the transition programme. Students must learn to use a timetable for this and meet deadlines. Consequences if not. Changes to the homework to occur throughout the year – recorded and monitored by students.</p> <p>Through Leadership opportunities students to organise and show pride and respect for both themselves and the school.</p> <p>To encourage Year 8 students to use the toilet at intervals not during lessons</p>

	into battle for them	
Relating to others	<p>To show respect and honesty</p> <p>To be a good listener</p> <p>To follow instructions</p> <p>To value others opinions</p> <p>To work as a team</p> <p>To use good manners</p>	<p>Through upholding the values of the schools students are encouraged to relate positively to others.</p> <p>To look after the junior school in the playground and on wet days</p> <p>To include 'Buddy Reading' within the school on a weekly basis</p> <p>To organise school events to raise money for their camp without parental support</p>
Participating and Contributing	<p>To make the most of all opportunities presented in the following, Academic - social – sporting – cultural</p> <p>To give your best for yourself, your friends and the school</p>	<p>Year 8 students to participate in:</p> <p>All Kainui events</p> <p>To encourage students to coach sports teams and run sports programmes for the Junior Students</p> <p>Leadership Day</p> <p>Speech Making</p> <p>Debating</p>
Thinking	<p>To always ask questions</p> <p>To be prepared to give your ideas</p> <p>To use your initiative</p>	<p>To be encouraged to speak in front of others, offer their opinions and ideas and to value others</p> <p>To be involved in a critical thinking programme</p> <p>To offer all students an extension programme in some area if possible</p>

Sessions to be introduced throughout the year to give the students confidence:

Visit by a secondary school maths teachers

Visit by a secondary school science teacher

Visit by secondary school English teacher

Road shows from as many secondary schools as possible to be held at school. To

make sure that the students have a list of questions that they ask all schools

To do an orienteering course so that the students are confident in finding their way around on the first day

Continue to give the students a wide variety of sporting opportunities.

To continue teaching and encouraging Te Reo

To encourage as many students as possible to learn a musical instrument

All students to do ICAS in Maths and Reading

All students to do Otago problem solving

All students to read, read and read

Students to be exposed to the world around them – current events to be discussed

Students to learn about their own country and its historical events

Extra things to be instilled in the students:

Make sure you attend daily

Take a positive attitude towards your work, your peers and teachers. But most of all, **yourself**

You get one chance at education – give it your best and enjoy every opportunity that is put before you.

This document has been prepared to hand out to our Year 8 Students when they leave so that they have something to refer to during the Summer holiday break in order that they, and their parents, have a stress free holiday.

Hiwinui School



Handbook for Parents and Students Transitioning to Secondary School

2013 / 14

This booklet has been put together to help both students and their parents prepare for the next step in the life of a year 8 student.

The comments made are not for, or about a particular secondary school but generalisations which are offered with the best intentions possible to make the first few weeks of secondary school event free.

Haere ra Hiwinui

E noho ra

***(Goodbye, you must return again.
May the Lord look after you?)***

Why Can't I Skip My 20 Minutes of Reading Tonight?

Student "A"	Student "B"	Student "C"
reads 20 minutes each day	reads 5 minutes each day	reads 1 minute each day
3600 minutes in a school year	900 minutes in a school year	180 minutes in a school year

1,800,000 words



90th percentile

282,000 words



50th percentile

8,000 words



10th percentile

By the end of 6th grade Student "A" will have read the equivalent of 60 whole school days. Student "B" will have read only 12 school days. Which student would you expect to have a better vocabulary? Which student would you expect to be more successful in school...and in life?

(Nagy & Herman, 1987)

"Beginning a new school year can be as exciting as beginning a good book"

Appointments:

Try and make dentist and doctors' appointments for after or before school. If your appointment has to be during the school day get written permission from your parents and check where you sign out from school and then sign back in from.

Assessment:

Right from day 1 you are beginning to work towards major qualifications so make it your business to find out what assessments are coming up and when parent interviews and reports take place at your school. Education is a partnership and it is really important to have your parents fully informed and then they are able to support you and your leaning.

Attendance:

You are required to attend every day. Full attendance ensures greater success and establishes a good work ethic.

Board of Trustees:

Your Board of Trustees is elected just the same as that at primary school. The only difference is that there is a student's representative on the Board of Trustees at secondary level. Parents step forward and get involved, it is a very rewarding experience and keeps you informed.

Bullying:

Bullying is harassment and will not be tolerated anywhere.

There are three main forms of bullying:

1. Physical – Doing something hurtful to someone or something
2. Verbal – Saying or writing something that is hurtful
3. Emotional – Doing any of the above that hurts someone feelings

Bullies can only succeed when bystanders stay silent, if you see bullying speak up and tell someone.

Your school will have good guidelines to follow, start by talking with a friend, your form teacher/year dean or the schools guidance councillor.

Parents if you suspect your child is being bullied don't hesitate to seek help from the school.

BYOD: (Bring Your Own Device)

Each school have their own policy on this. But remember if you take a device to school it is your responsibility. Make sure it is named. Don't lend it to others. Only use it for what it is intended.

Canteen:

Most schools have a canteen – they cost!

Get yourself organised and make your lunch the night before and save your money.

Remember to always carry water with you and drink plenty.

A canteen should be used as a treat.

Cell phone and I-Pods:

Each school will have their own policy on this. But remember if you take a device to school it is your responsibility. Make sure it is named. Don't lend it to others. Only use it for what it is intended.

Contact Details:

Make sure that the office always has your current address and contact numbers.

As parents if you are off shore or away make sure that during that period of time you have let the office know who your child is with and what those contact numbers are.

Cyber Safety:

If you are old enough to own a device you are old enough to take responsibility.

Only send or up-load constructive messages

Don't write hurtful messages

Don't write hurtful messages about other people

Get permission before publishing someone else's photo or work

Don't give someone else your access code or passwords

If this happens to you get adult help immediately from either your parents or the school (Forms Class/ Year Deans)

Emergency Procedures:

Each school will have slightly different procedures, but what ever happens the school will take the best care that they can of your child. Please refrain from ringing the school in the event of an emergency – the school will contact you when they can.

Extra Curricular Activities:

Encourage your child to participate in sporting and cultural activities but remember everything involves a cost. Talk with your child and plan activities around a budget. This includes sports and music lessons.

Hair:

Check out your schools policy and make sure that you stick by it. Most schools do not allow unnatural colours or extreme fashion styles so be warned.

Health Services:

Public Health Nurses are available at most secondary schools for students. Find out when they are in attendance at your school.

Mobile Dental Units will also be in attendance at most secondary schools once or twice a year. Students enrolled with this service will be notified of their appointment usually from the main school office

Homework:

There is ample evidence from research that homework increases learning and achievement, especially in literacy and numeracy.

Homework is just that. Work to be completed at home by the student not the parent; however it is a great opportunity for parents to see what their child is doing at school and a time to give praise, support and encouragement.

Homework helps:

Develop responsibility

Develop self management and organisation skills

Extend the skills and content learned at school during the day

Parents can help by:

Having a set time and place for homework to be done

Keeping the area quiet

Removing distractions during this time – TV, Phones

Giving praise and showing an interest in what they are doing

Independence:

Please parents make sure your child is responsible for their own learning and this includes preparation to and from school and making wise choices. You need to be part of this but don't cover up for your child they need to be standing on their own feet by now.

Jewellery:

Most schools allow a wrist watch to be worn and a pair of plain ear studs. But you must check with your school policy so that you don't cause yourself any grief

Late to School:

If for some reason you are late for school make sure you know what to do. Ring and let the office know you'll be late and then on arrival you'll need to sign in – start at the front office if you are not sure where this is.

Leave:

Most secondary schools have a zero tolerance of students seeking leave for special occasions / holidays.

Lockers:

Check to see if the school you are attending have 'Lockers'. Those schools that do, you usually have to rent/pay for the use of them. BUT it prevents you having to carry around a really heavy bag all day.

Lost Property:

Make sure that everything you take to school is named. You are responsible for your own gear. If you lose something go back to where you last had it. If there is a teacher present tell them and then go to the main office and report it missing/stolen. (If your school has a different system make sure you know it)

Money:

If you need to take money for something to the office you put the money in an envelope with your Full name, Form Class, The Amount being Paid and What it is for.

Relationships: "Happiness is being accepted"

"A faithful friend is the medicine of life" – Aprocrypha 6:16

Remember to:

Respect others

Treat them as you want to be treated

Listen to them and don't share what they have told you to others

Keep your promises

Be loyal and stick up for your friend when the going gets tough

Be honest and be yourself

"Your most important decision is who your friends are"

School Donations:

The Board of Trustees at each school will set a donation fee to be charged annually. These donations are tax deductible and are a real necessity for schools to make ends meet.

Stationery:

Some schools will send a stationery list to you others, will hand it out on the first day. Check where you can get your stationery from and when it is required by. For a lot of schools you can buy your stationery on-line or some of the major Stationery shops have a list for schools available at the door – e.g. Warehouse Stationery
Make sure on day 1 you have a book to write in and a pen and pencil at least.

Take home work components:

In most schools subjects where there is a take home component like Art, Technologies –food, wood work and metal work – there is a cost attached and students do not get to take their projects home until they are paid for.

Timetable:

Make sure as soon as you are given your subject / school timetable get it copied several times so that you can have a copy in your School diary,(if your school doesn't have a diary – get your own) one on the fridge at home and one in your room.

Transport:

If you are catching a bus to school where are you going to catch it? Ask around and watch. Remember that while you are on the bus your schools code of conduct is still applicable.

Remember if you are offered a ride by an older student think – do they have a full licence, am I making a wise choice. Most schools do not allow students who drive to school to take passengers in the car with them

Uniform:

Wear your uniform with pride. Wear it correctly and make sure it is clean and at all times worn correctly.

“Happiness is being accepted”

“Attitude is everything”