MOVING ON UP

From day-care dribbler to the pinnacle of primary school, childhood is dashing by. Now, on the eve of high school, is your baby ready to take flight? Kristie Hayden talks with local kids and experts about progressing to secondary school, overcoming fears and the support required to launch into an adult world.

A letter to my Year-12 self

Hi, remember me? If being a teenager changed anything, hopefully this letter will help you remember who you were. Still enjoy writing, Lego, Minecraft, drawing and dreaming up things? Hopefully you do. Architect? Artist? Or Author? I wonder if you are still dreaming about those careers. Are your friends (Dragoners) still friends with you? Keep Dreaming on... – Eamonn Murphy, Year 6

Hi, I have many high expectations for you, as well as hopes and dreams to be achieved by Year 12, and for your future. I hope you...
are graduating high school with many new friends, and that you go on to pursue your dreams by having a career in the acting industry. I want you to make sure you are doing what makes you happy. Have fun.

– Saskia Velcek, Year 6

Creating a smooth transition

The grade six contingent at St Robert’s Primary School Newtown is humming with anticipation. As their journey through primary school concludes, teacher, Deborah Roland says her kids are feeling great.

“You get to this end of the year and there’s a real level of excitement,” she says. It’s the culmination of a six-year emotional and academic journey.

“There’s a lot of preparation that goes into connecting with the children and making them feel confident the whole way through their primary school lives,” she explains. “They’ll have a smooth transition into secondary if they’re confident in themselves.”

Many local schools foster social and emotional learning programs that give children the strengths they need to move forward.

“Here, we look at relationships with people and who to talk to if they need support with anything,” Deborah says. “It’s a really strong factor in making them feel that by the end of primary, they know what they’re good at and what they need help with. By now, they should have

One of the biggest fears children have is that they can’t cope without their best friend

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Notes from the launching pad

“Leading up to year 7 I was nervous that I wouldn’t make any friends at high school, as very few kids from my school were going to Belmont High. Fortunately, almost straight away on orientation day, I met someone with similar interests and we quickly became friends. I also participated with my friends in Readers Cup and the Book-in-a-Day competition and settled in well.”

– Ewan Breakie, Year 7

Adopting a growth mindset

Highton-based psychologist Dr Nicole Cavill is passionate about helping children develop the skills they need to flourish.

“Children need a growth mindset in order to do better at school.

“A growth mindset is underpinned by the belief that your potential is unknown,” she explains, “and that your skills and abilities can grow and strengthen through training and persistence. This is the belief that sustains you when you are learning something new and making mistakes as you learn.”

“A growth mindset also helps you to look for experiences that will stretch your skills (so that) when you experience a setback you’re more likely to look at what you could do to improve the outcome next time.”

Dr Cavill’s advice for parents wanting to help boost development of this mindset is to praise their children’s effort rather than their ability.

“Say things like: you’ve done really well on that test. You must have worked really hard, rather than: you’ve done really well on that test. You must be really smart. Effort is something you can control.”

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