

YEAR 7 TO HIGH SCHOOL IN 2022



Parent Update Week 3, Term 2 – 2021

Our regional schools

We understand that regional communities have some unique needs and challenges. In preparation for the year 7 to high school move in 2022, we conducted widespread consultation with our rural schools and communities so they could share their hopes and individual concerns.

We heard from more than 250 individuals and received 25 written contributions, 4 of which came from peak representative groups. Many regional families and communities were excited about the opportunities of bringing year 7 into high school.

Having listened to the feedback, we are working with country schools to ensure they have the right support for the move, especially in terms of staffing, professional learning and transport requirements. This Parent Update will address some common questions raised by country families during our consultation.

How will my child cope in a large high school?

For many regional students, starting high school means leaving a small primary school for something much bigger. We know from our pilot program that year 7s are well and truly ready for high school. The pilot is tracking the progress of students, families and staff from three schools that have already welcomed year 7s. One of them, John Pirie Secondary School, is regional. Feedback from pilot program students has indicated the vast majority are enjoying making new friends, trying new sports and activities, and learning in a larger, more mature environment.

Will my child cope with a longer bus ride, alongside older teenagers?

We acknowledge that the availability of services in regional locations is a broader community challenge. Some year 7 students will have longer commutes to high school, as do their peers in years 8 to 12.

Feedback from students in our pilot program has shown they quickly feel comfortable in the company of older students. Our pilot schools established peer leadership and mentoring programs to help year 7s feel welcomed by older year levels. The older students played an important role in orientating them to the high school settings.

Orientation and transition activities are being organised by individual schools to suit their communities' needs, but peer mentorship will be a common feature of them. Contact your local high school for more information on orientation programs and activities they have planned.

What if my local high school is more than 20km away?

By default, all year 7s will go to high school or area school from 2022. However, if your primary school is more than 20km away from your local area or high school by road, you are eligible to seek a 'by exception' exemption from your primary school principal to keep your current year 6 student in their primary school for year 7. These arrangements, which also apply to School of the Air, will apply for a transitional period until 2024, provided you attend one of 45 eligible primary schools. For more information visit our website at www.education.sa.gov.au/7toHS.

What if my local primary school loses student enrolments?

The state government has made a commitment that it will not close schools as part of the year 7 to high school move. For the eligible primary schools mentioned above, we are also offering top-up funding to ensure they don't lose classes due to the departure of year 7s. The funding will be available up to and including 2024.

Where to find out more

Stay informed through your school and the Department for Education's website: www.education.sa.gov.au/7toHS

Or share your feedback with the project team by emailing: Year7toHS@sa.gov.au

