

Going to High School with CF

Moving to high school can be a big transition. Your child will become more independent and will need to learn to manage all the normal high school requirements, plus CF treatments.

It is important to have open communication and a good partnership with the school to ensure your child's education and school experience is not limited by CF.

Choosing a School for Your Child

Choosing a school is a personal decision with many factors to consider for each family. Some questions to consider may be:

- Are any other children with CF enrolled at the school (this does not necessarily mean you cannot enrol, but is important to consider with [cross-infection](#)).
- How does the school cater for children with medical needs?
- Are they willing to have relevant staff educated about CF?
- Do the student toilets have soap and paper towels/hand dryers available?
- What is the school's medication policy?

Other considerations may include:

- Health and wellbeing policies.
- Ability to provide additional care and support when needed.
- Hygiene and cleanliness.
- Modern, new air conditioning that is regularly serviced.



Disclosure

Once a child reaches high school they may not feel comfortable with everyone knowing that they have CF. It is worth having a conversation with your child to understand their thoughts on this.

While they may not want other students to know, it is important that the relevant staff have an awareness of how CF may affect your child in a school setting, to ensure the best outcome for them. There is no right or wrong approach to disclosure - each family should disclose CF in a way that suits them.

Educating the School

Start by making an initial meeting with a key staff member such as Year Coordinator, form teacher, member of student services or school nurse and ask that the information be passed on

to relevant staff. You will be required to fill out a Student Health Support Plan which will detail your child's medical needs. It will need to be updated on an annual basis, or more often if their medical details change. Here is a [sample plan](#) from CFSmart.

Key points to consider discussing include:

- An overview of CF
- Other CF-related complications (e.g. CF related diabetes)
- Medications (e.g. enzymes, salt, ventolin)
- Bowel issues/toilet needs
- Infection prevention and control
- Dehydration
- Absences
- Exam requirements

Educating teachers means they will be more understanding and aware of changes in your child's health, necessity to access toilets when needed, moving away from sick students and leniencies for assignment deadlines due to illness.

It is important that communication with your key contact is ongoing so they are aware of changes in health or impending absences such as hospital admissions and providing ongoing education as teachers change. Email is a great way to do this in high school.

CFWA's Education Officer is available to visit your child's school and provide CF education. Contact education@cfwa.org.au for more information.

Camps and Excursions

School camps and excursions are exciting and provide many new and fun experiences. For children with CF, there will be some forward planning and extra considerations both families and the school need to account for, including medication storage, physio, dietary needs, dehydration, environmental risks, toilet access and suitable hand hygiene facilities. For more information, read our [School Camps](#) factsheet.

Useful Resources

- [CFSmart](#)
- [Starting High School with CF- Information Booklet \(CFSmart\)](#)
- [Tips and Ideas for High School Students with CF \(CFSmart\)](#)
- [A Guide to CF for High School Teachers \(CFSmart\)](#)
- [CFWA Factsheets](#)

Last reviewed June 2021