CYSTIC FIBROSIS Western Australia

CF Fact
cystic fibrosis fact sheet

Starting High School with CF

Starting high school is an exciting milestone, bringing new opportunities, friendships and greater independence. For children with CF, the transition can also bring some additional challenges as they adjust to new routines, multiple teachers and taking more responsibility for their health needs.

With some planning and good communication with the school, you can help your child feel confident, supported and ready for this next chapter.

Preparing for High School

As your child prepares for high school, encourage them to take a more active role in managing their CF and communicating their needs.

Involve them in discussions about how they would like to manage CF at school, including who they want to know about their CF and what information they feel comfortable sharing. This can help build their confidence and independence as they transition to high school.

Educating the School

Before your child starts high school, it can be helpful to arrange a meeting with a key contact at the school, such as the Year 7 coordinator or student services team. This is an opportunity to discuss your child's CF needs and any important considerations, such as medications, cross-infection, dehydration, periods of illness and any other concerns.



This key contact person can help ensure relevant staff, including classroom and physical education teachers, the school nurse, and relief teachers understand your child's needs. Establish a clear communication plan for managing health concerns, absences or changes to your child's needs.

Enzymes & Salt

By high school, most students should be able to manage their enzymes independently. It is recommended that they keep enzymes in their lunch box or somewhere easily accessible so they can take it when needed. The same applies to salt supplements and hydration drinks, where required.

It may also be helpful to explain to your key contact that these are part of your child's routine CF management and do not pose a risk to other students.

Infection Prevention & Cross-infection

Ensure relevant school staff understand the importance of infection prevention, including access to soap and hand sanitiser for good hand hygiene. Discuss how the school communicates infectious illness outbreaks to families so you can take appropriate precautions when needed. It's also important to consider potential environmental risks, such as exposure to dirty, stagnant water or soil during practical subjects, excursions and camps, and plan ahead for any necessary adjustments.

If there is more than one person with CF in the school community, discuss cross-infection risks and ensure appropriate measures are in place. This includes following the 4-metre guideline and ensuring students with CF are not placed in the same classes, form groups or school houses/factions. Arrangements should also be made to maintain safe distances in shared spaces, on school buses and during whole-school events.

As your child becomes more independent, encourage them to recognise potential infection risks and feel confident speaking up about their health needs.

Managing Treatments, Appointments & Absences

High school often brings increased academic expectations and greater responsibility for keeping up with schoolwork. It's important to discuss how the school can support your child during hospital admissions or periods of illness, including access to missed lessons and flexibility with assessment deadlines. Make sure teachers are aware of these challenges and discuss any adjustments or additional support your child may need.

CFWA Support

CFWA can support your family during the transition to high school through school education, advocacy and practical resources. We can help you develop or update your child's CF Student Action Plan and/or School Management Plan to ensure their individual health needs are clearly communicated to the school.

We also offer education sessions for teachers and school staff to help them better understand CF and how to support students, along with a range of online learning and practical resources through our CFSmart program.

Useful Resources

- CFSmart
- School & Community Education