



**Sharon Witt**

Surviving High School

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isbn 9780648951728

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A catalogue record for this  
work is available from the  
National Library of Australia

Typesetting and design by Ivan Smith  
Printed in Australia by Open Book Howden Printing

This book belongs to an

**AWESOME**

young person...



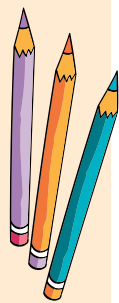


I AM  
THANKFUL  
FOR EACH  
NEW DAY

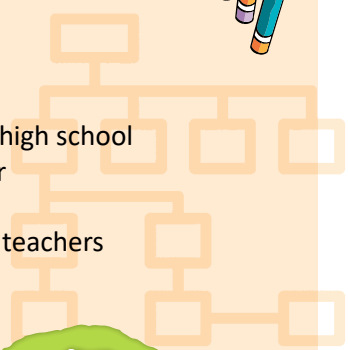
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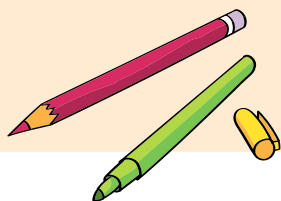


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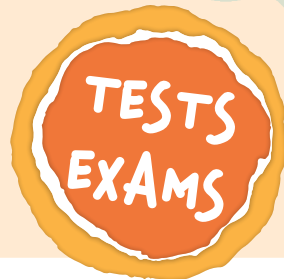
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# Dear amazing young person,

I am so pleased that you are holding a copy of **Surviving High School** in your hands.

I first wrote this guidebook for students headed into high school over ten years ago – so it was well and truly time to update it.

It has been written especially for those of you who are about to begin your high school journey, or have just started and need some helpful hints and advice.

Not only have I been in your shoes many years ago as a year seven student, I have also been a high school teacher for nearly three decades! Not only does that make me feel pretty old – but it also means that I have had plenty of years of experience helping young people just like you, navigate this often tricky stage of getting to know a brand new routine and system, and settling into this next stage of your schooling journey.

One thing I have found to be true is that everyone experiences the transition into secondary school in different ways – all perfectly normal.

Some students are more than ready to say goodbye to primary school and are definitely feeling ready for the new challenge of high school.

Others feel really **NERVOUS** and quite **ANXIOUS** about taking this next step. They worry about things like ‘Will I be able to cope with all the homework?’ ‘Will I make new friends?’ ‘What if I get lost or find myself running late to class?’, ‘What if I can’t keep up with the work?’





Let me reassure you right here – any thoughts or feelings you are currently experiencing about high school are not yours alone! If you are worrying about any of these things, you can bet that many other students are feeling concerned about exactly the same questions.

So, take a deep breath.

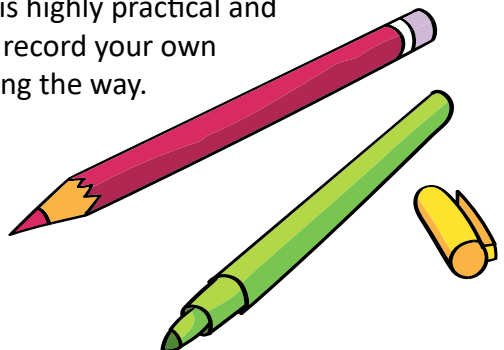
It will be okay!

You are **NOT ALONE** in this new journey. You have your parents/carers to support you, teachers and many support staff at your secondary school to guide you and assist with any worries or concerns you have. Plus, you will have your fellow students that will become friends, and for some – friends for life.

It is my hope that this book is an encouragement to you – especially in those first few weeks and months of high school, but also – a valuable resource that you can refer back to as questions come up, or you have particular issues or concerns you need advice on.

You will also notice this book is highly practical and interactive. This way, you can record your own thoughts, ideas and notes along the way.

Remember your high school years can be some of your favourite times to look back on in the



future. There is so much to look forward to experiencing over the next four – six years (depending on what year level you finish your schooling.)



In many ways, you get to decide how you experience high school. Go into it with a positive mindset and sense of adventure, and you will most likely have a happy time!

If you always focus on the things that might go wrong – then you may find high school a less than positive experience

I would encourage you to try and **RELAX** and look on this next step as a positive one where you will experience growth, take on new challenges, and most of all – discover more about you!

With my best wishes for your high school years,



*Sharon*



# The Next Step



# The next step – Am I going to be ready?

You'll probably be in one of two camps regarding beginning high school – particularly if you are starting after the challenging year where we all experienced a global pandemic.

You may be thinking 'How can I possibly cope with starting high school after missing some time or many, many months of face to face schooling due to COVID-19. You may feel really underprepared for moving into high school after missing a lot of time physically at school.

I can totally understand your concern.

It is completely **UNDERSTANDABLE** that you might be feeling that you haven't had the necessary time in Year 6 to do all the usual preparations for moving out of primary school. Whilst this was very much out of your control, I would like to help you reframe this.

Firstly, as a high school teacher, I would like to suggest that remote learning of 2020 due to the pandemic, provided some opportunities for growth that you may not have experienced otherwise.

For example – during COVID-19, you may have learnt greater **RESILIENCE**. You now understand that there are events that can occur in our lives that we have absolutely no control over. And when challenges come along, we have to draw on those resources around us to help get us through.

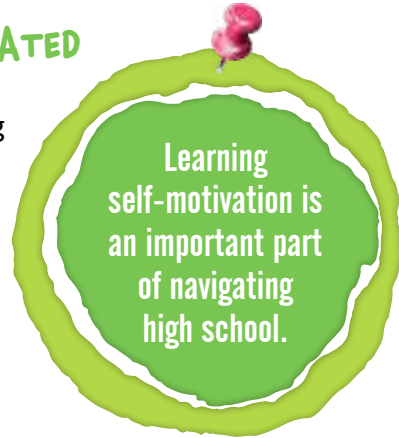
Building resilience is a really important part of navigating high school.

You also learnt greater skills in using **TECHNOLOGY** – using on-line school platforms to help you complete your schoolwork.

Perhaps you had to email your class teacher more often if you experienced any problems with at home learning.

Learning valuable communication strategies is also an important part of navigating high school.

You also had to learn to be **SELF-MOTIVATED** with at home learning during COVID-19, as you didn't have your class teacher watching over you constantly. You probably had to take on a bit more responsibility for getting your schoolwork completed and submitted.



Learning self-motivation is an important part of navigating high school.

You may have learnt new skills during lockdown in 2020 that you might not have developed for some years. Perhaps you wrote more, taught yourself to play a new instrument? Maybe you learnt what you need for your own self-care and well-being.

Think about it this way...

Every single Year 7 student has experienced the global pandemic of 2020. Wherever you live, you will know that your fellow classmates will all be in exactly the same position as you.

They will have all experienced the same disruption to their schooling.



The teachers in your new high school have also had to face challenges in their own teaching practices during COVID-19. It wasn't easy for them also (believe me!). They learnt resilience,

new online learning platforms and technologies, and the challenges also of teaching via a screen.

So, take a breath.

We will move through high school with greater resilience, new understandings and perhaps, more gratitude for what we have and the opportunities we have ahead of us.

## what are my biggest worries about high school?



A large rectangular box with a light green border and rounded corners, containing ten horizontal white lines for writing.

# Starting out – First day nerves

*'Learn from life – learn from the day.'*

James Rohn

One of my favourite all-time movies stars the actor Owen Wilson, playing the part of a budget bodyguard *Drillbit Taylor*. It tells the story of a group of boys who are starting their first year of high school. One of the first scenes in the movie shows both friends turning up at the school bus stop dressed the same, wearing identical red shirts.


Picture the shock. There's no time to run home and change, so the pair get on the bus and begin the first day of their high school careers dressed the same. No fun!

You have left the comfort of your primary school where you knew your classmates and teachers well. You knew where everything was. Now you are beginning an entirely new school experience and are facing a new social group.

You are carrying a ridiculously heavy school bag and the path to the gate is packed already with kids who actually know their way around.

You reach the first corridor, shuffling on vague memories from an orientation day.

Other Year 7s all around – already best friends, it seems. Groups of chatting 12 year-olds, lots of friendships. Even a few teachers walk by and get in on the conversations.



It's perfectly normal to feel nervous on your first day of high school.