Is your child ready for Secondary School?

Secondary school can be a time of fun and excitement, full of new experiences— but it can also be challenging and worrying for some children and their parents.

The preparation you do with your child will help them make a great start to their senior years at school.

Here are some helpful suggestions:

- Find out about the transition and support services offered at your child’s new school.
- Listen to your child- discuss what they are looking forward to or worried about- give lots of assurance.
- Talk about the positives- lots of new teachers, extracurricular activities, new friends and opportunities.
- Involve your child in decision making- from how to get to school to how best to keep in contact with friends who are going to a different secondary school.
- Get to know the new school- who the principal is and the home group teacher, welfare staff, the people you can contact to discuss any issues that may arise.

Information and support for parents:

- www.raisingchildrennetwork.net.au
- www.parentingideas.com.au
- www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au
- www.beyondblue.org.au
- www.thehormonefactory.com
- www.reach.org.au

Vision Testing

Optometrists Association Australia recommends that children have a full eye examination with an optometrist before starting school and regularly as they progress through primary and secondary school. This has become more important as the hours of screen based learning and entertainment increase. A thorough eye examination with an optometrist takes approximately 25 minutes and attracts a Medicare rebate- no referral is required.

Signs that could indicate a possible vision problem:

- Difficulty learning to read
- Holding a book very close to read
- One eye turns in or out while the other points straight ahead
- Poor hand eye coordination
- Covering or closing one eye
- Frequent blinking / red or watery eyes
- Frequently rubbing the eyes
- Leaving out or confusing words when reading
- Difficulty in recognising familiar people in the distance
- Tilting head noticeably
- Complaints of headaches
- Sensitivity to light
- Complaints of blurred or double vision
- Squinting or sitting very close when watching TV
**Adolescent Scoliosis Spinal Curvature**

How do you Detect Scoliosis? Simply look for it! (It only takes 30 seconds)

Information taken from Scoliosis Australia - National Self-Detection Program [www.scoliosis-australia.org](http://www.scoliosis-australia.org)

### What is Scoliosis?

Scoliosis is a sideways curve of the spine. It usually develops during early adolescence when growth is rapid (10-13 years). Scoliosis requiring treatment is far less common in boys than in girls - the ratio is 1 boy to every 10 girls.

While very small curves are common and of no significance, about 2% of girls have a curve which warrants medical observation.

3 out of 1000 girls will require treatment during the growth phase.

We know that scoliosis is NOT contagious and NOT caused by bad posture, a soft mattress or carrying a heavy school bag.

### How to detect Scoliosis

The reliable **FORWARD BEND TEST** is used to diagnose scoliosis.

This simple visual examination requires the teenager to stand with their feet together and parallel and bending forward as far as they can go with the hands, palms facing each other, pointed between the two big toes.

In scoliosis one side of the upper chest (thoracic) region or the lower back (lumbar) region will be more than 1 cm higher than the other.

If you find scoliosis have a check-up with your family Doctor.

If treatment is required, the earlier it is undertaken the better the long term result. This is the basis for screening.

### Does scoliosis run in families?

Scoliosis tends to run in families. When a curve is detected in one member of the family, other children should also be examined by the family doctor.

If there is any history of a blood relative, especially a female cousin, having been treated for scoliosis by brace wearing or surgery, then this strengthens the case for spinal examinations as a regular health check between 10 and 13 years of age.

### Is treatment successful?

Yes, modern methods produce excellent results when a curve is detected early. In most cases an inconspicuous spinal brace is worn. Surgery may also be needed.

### What will happen if scoliosis is not treated?

The curve may increase unnoticed during the growing years. Moderate and severe curves may also increase in adult life.