The cover features a large blue trapezoidal shape on the left containing the title text. To the right, there are diagonal stripes in light green, orange, and dark blue. At the bottom, there are horizontal stripes in light green, white, and blue. A large, light grey watermark reading 'DRAFT' is oriented diagonally across the center of the page.

HIGH SCHOOL PARENT GUIDEBOOK

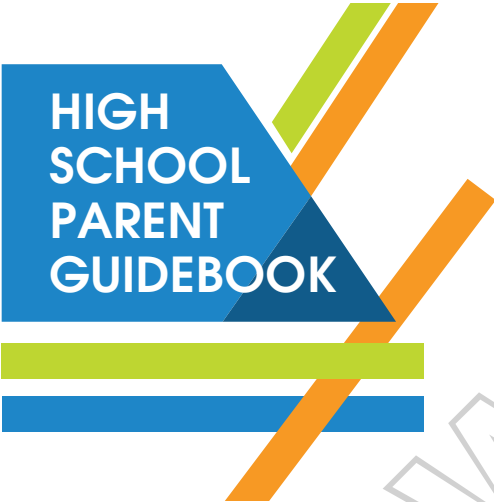


Dear Parent,

Your child is growing up and becoming more independent; however, they still need your support and guidance. During their high school years, your child needs you to be interested in their activities, involved in their academic progress, and available to help them plan for their future.

This booklet will provide the information you need to help your child not only succeed academically, but to also thrive and grow. With your guidance and support, your child is sure to have a great high school experience!

We understand that many children are being raised by grandparents or guardians. For the sake of simplicity, the term "parent" refers to any primary caregiver.



HIGH SCHOOL PARENT GUIDEBOOK

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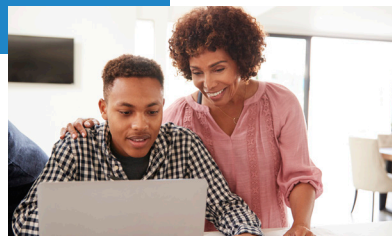
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Be informed

Be informed on the following topics and regularly check your school's website for news and updates.



School calendar

Every school has a calendar that shows when grading periods begin and end, when school will be closed for holidays and breaks, and when special events are scheduled. Make sure you have these dates written in your print or online calendar.

Attendance policies

If your child is going to be absent for more than a couple of days and their teachers do not post assignments online, see if your child's school has a procedure for getting assignments. If your child has an extended illness or chronic health problem, provide your school with the required documentation.

Programs and courses

In order to meet the needs of their students, most high schools have a variety of programs. These often include career and technology programs, special education programs, and programs that allow students to take college courses while they're still in high school (dual-enrollment programs).

Students who are in the right courses and programs are happier and more successful. If your student doesn't enjoy school or is struggling academically, ask their counselor if there might be a more appropriate program or selection of courses for them.

Graduation requirements

As a rule, students must pass all of their school's required courses and earn a specified number of credits to graduate. In some states, students must also pass a state-required test.

To ensure that students are making satisfactory academic progress, most high schools also have specific requirements that students must meet in order to advance to the next grade level.

School rules/code of conduct

Most students understand that school rules are necessary, and they follow them. For the students who disobey the rules, there are consequences ranging from detention to expulsion. While rules vary from school to school, no school will allow weapons, smoking, alcohol, drugs, intimidation, or harassment. *Make sure your teen know that you expect them to follow the rules and be respectful to all teachers, school staff, and classmates.*

Extracurricular activities

Studies show that students who are involved in extracurricular activities enjoy school more—and do better academically. Find out what activities are available at your student’s high school and encourage your teen to get involved in two or three.



Eligibility requirements

In addition to state athletic association requirements, many high schools have their own requirements that students must meet before they can play a sport. These requirements may also apply to students who participate in activities such as student government. If you have questions, talk to your child’s coach or counselor.

See all grade reports

In addition to report cards, many schools also provide students with progress reports, interim reports, or midterm grades. If you don’t see a midterm report or report card, call the school immediately and ask for a copy. Do not just assume that someone will contact you if there’s a problem.

Summer school

Students who are short on credits or who have failed a required course should go to summer school whenever possible. This will help keep them on track for graduation.

Taking a class during the summer can also be a way for students to lighten their class load for the following school year.

Understand the academic record

Parents need to understand the information that's included in their child's academic record. Here's what you need to know.

Grade point average (GPA)

A student's grade point average, or GPA, is an indicator of how well the student is performing in school. A GPA is the average of a student's semester (or end-of-term) grades, starting with freshman year. Because colleges use GPAs to help them decide who to accept, having a high GPA can be very important for college-bound students.



Although there are variations, most high schools use a 4.0 scale in which an A=4 points, B=3 points, C=2 points, and D=1 point. Students with all As have a 4.0 grade point average. Students who have Bs in half their courses and Cs in the other half have a 2.5 GPA.

Many schools have "weighted grades" for honors, AP (Advanced Placement), and/or IB (International Baccalaureate) courses. If a school has weighted grades, then a grade in a weighted course is worth more than it is in a non-weighted course. For example, an A in an honors course might be worth five points instead of the usual four points. *Regardless of the method used, the higher the grades, the higher the GPA.*

Class rank

Approximately half the high schools in the U.S. rank their students.

Class rank shows where a student stands academically in relation to the other members of their graduating class. The student with the highest GPA is number one, the student with the second-highest GPA is number two, and so on.

Because GPAs are used to calculate class rank, a student must have a high GPA in order to have an impressive class rank. Class rank is one of several factors colleges use in the admissions process.

High school transcript

A transcript is a document detailing a student's academic achievement. Although the information included on a transcript varies from school to school, high school transcripts typically contain some or all of the following information:

- ▶ grades and credits for each course completed, beginning with grade 9
- ▶ attendance records
- ▶ current cumulative GPA and class rank
- ▶ anticipated graduation date
- ▶ college admission test scores (ACT, SAT)



Transcripts are used whenever a school, organization, or college needs an official copy of a student's academic record. For example, if a high school student transfers to a different school, the student's new high school will want to see an official transcript.

Colleges also need to see an applicant's high school record in order to determine whether or not the student meets their admissions requirements.

Make a four-year plan

A four-year high school plan is a listing of the courses a student plans to take during their freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior years. Every high school student should have a four-year plan.

When developing a four-year plan, it's important to consider graduation requirements, college-recommended courses, and career goals. Students who want to play a sport in college also need to take into consideration college athletic eligibility requirements.

Encourage your teen to watch this short video—it will show them how to build an impressive high school record.



Work with your school

Support and work with the teachers, counselors, and administrators at your child's school. Like you, they want your student to have a positive, rewarding high school experience.

Support your child's school

A child's attitude about education and school is, to a great extent, determined by what their parents say and do. Your student needs to know that you support the teachers and the administrators at your school, and that you consider education to be a top priority.

You can best convey your interest in education and your support of your child's school by doing the following:

- ▶ Insist that your student be in school every day.
- ▶ Show an interest in what your child is studying.
- ▶ Expect your child to work up to their potential.
- ▶ Discuss the importance of getting a good education.
- ▶ Expect your teen to follow the school rules.
- ▶ Attend all parent programs and parent-teacher conferences.
- ▶ Show consistent interest in your child's academic progress.



Communicate with your school

School websites and email have made it easier than ever for parents to stay informed and to communicate with school personnel.

Don't ever hesitate to ask for information or help. If there's a situation that might be adversely affecting your teen's attitude or school performance—such as a health problem, a death in the family, or a divorce—contact your child's counselor and explain the situation.

Attend parent programs and teacher conferences

When you attend an orientation, open house, parent program, or parent-teacher conference, you learn valuable information. You also show your teen that you consider education to be important, and that you're interested in their academic progress.

Help your child succeed

Your student needs you to be interested and involved in their academic progress and social development.



Help your student set goals

At the beginning of each grading period, help your child determine what grade they should realistically be able to earn in each course. Setting goals will give your teen something specific to work toward—it will also help them understand what your expectations are.

Provide school supplies and a place to study

Make sure your student has the supplies they need: a backpack, folders, notebooks, planner, calculator, pens, and pencils. Your child should also have a quiet, well-lit, comfortable place to study.

Insist on daily attendance

When students miss school, they miss lectures, notes, class discussions, assignments, quizzes, and tests. It doesn't matter how conscientious students are about making up their work—they can never make up all of the discussions and hands-on learning they miss, even if they're absent for only a day or two.

If your teen talks about not wanting to go to school, or if you're seeing a pattern of excuses to miss school, talk to your child and/or to their counselor.

Help with time management

Most high school students have a significant amount of homework. Many also have extracurricular activities, part-time jobs, and responsibilities at home.

Talk to your teen about the importance of time management and encourage them to use any free time during the school day to get started on homework. Also, encourage your child to get in the habit of creating a daily study plan.

Help your child succeed

Deal effectively with homework

Students must be responsible for keeping track of their assignments, completing them accurately, and turning them in on time.

If your child is not doing their homework as they should, you first need to talk to them to make sure the homework isn't too difficult or that there isn't a problem with the class. You then need to devise a plan in which the completion of homework becomes your teen's responsibility and—if it's not completed—your teen's problem.

Actively listen

Talk to your teen about what's happening in school and be a good listener. Pay attention not only to the words they use, but also to their body language, attitude, and mood.



Set limits and boundaries

Adolescents need their parents to make rules and set limits. High school students also need to understand that they will be held accountable for their actions and behavior. Even though young people often complain about parental rules and restrictions, knowing that they have a parent who cares enough to make sure they stay on track gives adolescents a much needed sense of security.

Encourage positive activities

Encourage your child to try new things, explore new interests, and discover what's important to them. Provide opportunities for a variety of experiences and activities, and expose your child to other cultures and environments. Most importantly, help your teen find something to be excited and passionate about.

Encourage a healthy lifestyle

It's important for high school students to eat right, exercise, and get 8–9 hours of sleep. Have nutritious food at home, make sure your teen is physically active, and establish a reasonable bedtime.

Be aware and share your concerns

Many adolescents experiment with smoking, drinking, and drug use. Both “street” and prescription drugs are too easily accessible to young people. Keep prescription drugs in a secure location, and share your concerns about the dangers of smoking, drinking, and drug use.

If you think your teen might be involved in an activity that’s immoral, illegal, or harmful, listen to your instincts. Share your concerns with your teen and take the appropriate action.

Monitor activities and jobs

Make sure that your teen isn’t spending too much time perusing social media sites, watching TV, playing video games, text messaging, or talking on the phone.

If your child has a job, make sure they’re not working too many hours or working too late at night.



Know your child’s school counselor

High school counselors monitor academic progress, help students choose their courses, and talk to students about their career goals and education options. School counselors are also available to answer questions and help students figure out how to deal with problems and difficult situations. *Make sure your child knows how to make an appointment with their counselor.*

A school counselor is an excellent resource for both students and parents. If you have a question, need information, or if your child needs help, contact your child’s counselor.

Be a good role model

In today’s world, teens are inundated with messages from a variety of sources, especially online. The messages that resonate the most with them, however, are the messages they get from their parents. Know that your words and actions have a tremendous influence on the way your teen views the world and interacts with people.

Help with career and college planning

Choosing a career and figuring out how to prepare for that career can be challenging. Students need their parents to help them explore and evaluate their career and education options.

Identify abilities and interests

As a parent, you know your child better than anyone. You can, therefore, be an invaluable resource in helping your child identify their interests, talents, strengths, and values.



Help your child see how their personality traits and abilities can be valuable assets in the right career. Remember, there are many talents that may not be directly measured or evaluated in school, such as an ability to work with others, leadership, creativity, empathy, and mechanical ability.

Explore career options

Take some time to help your teen explore their career options, and encourage them to do the following.

Read and do online research.

To help your student learn about specific careers, visit www.bls.gov/ooh. This government website provides accurate, concise, up-to-date information on hundreds of careers.

Talk to people.

Encourage your child to ask the adults they know about their career. If possible, arrange for your child to job shadow someone for a day.

Get some firsthand experience.

The best way to learn about a career is to get some firsthand experience. Encourage your child to take a related course, get involved in a related activity, or find a part-time job or a volunteer opportunity in a related career.



Learn about educational options

Most careers require education or training beyond a general high school education. In many cases, a career choice will point to a specific education option. For example, someone who wants to be a teacher needs to go to a four-year college.

For information on the education options available to high school graduates, watch this short video.



Help your student stay on track for college

If your student is planning to attend a four-year college, make sure they take the following college-recommended courses in high school.

- ▶ 4 years of English
- ▶ 3–4 years of math (Algebra I, Geometry, and Algebra II)
- ▶ 3 years of science
- ▶ 2–3 years of a world language
- ▶ 3 years of social studies
- ▶ 1 year of fine or performing arts

Encourage your teen to work hard to get the best grades possible. Almost all colleges consider the grades earned in college prep courses to be the most important criteria for college admission.

The following websites provide excellent information on choosing a college, applying to college, and financial aid: educationplanner.org, bigfuture.collegeboard.org, and studentaid.gov. If you want personal advice, talk to your student's counselor.

Although college can be expensive, financial aid makes it possible for students to attend colleges they could not afford otherwise. *For information on financial aid, watch this short video.*



While there are many factors that determine the kinds of opportunities one will have in life, the most significant determining factor is education. Make sure your student understands the importance of doing well in school, and encourage your child to continue their education after high school.

Provide technology guidelines and limits

Even though teens are often more tech-savvy than their parents, they still need their parents to provide guidelines and set limits.

Provide guidelines

- ▶ Remind your teen to never post personal information online, including their full name, age, address, phone number, or school.
- ▶ Discuss what information is appropriate (and inappropriate) to share on social media, and have your teen show you their online profiles.
- ▶ Talk about how anything put on the internet becomes public—and *stays there forever*. Remind your child not to post anything online they would not want a relative, teacher, coach, or college admissions officer to see.
- ▶ Make sure your teen knows that you expect them to use technology responsibly and to never post, send, or share anything that's inappropriate or hurtful to others.

Set limits

- ▶ Require that all communication devices be turned off during family times.
- ▶ Use parental control software to filter inappropriate content, block websites, and/or monitor social media. Check the privacy settings on your child's phone and social media apps.
- ▶ If you're concerned about your teen making late-night posts and texts, consider requiring that phones be plugged in for recharging in a central location in your home an hour before bedtime.
- ▶ Have your teen sign an internet safety contract. (Several examples are available online.)



For tips on teen screen time and internet use, watch this short video.



Support your student's mental health

Whether your teen is generally happy and healthy or struggles with their mental health, it's important that you work together to help them feel safe and supported.

Be aware

Encourage your child to talk about how they feel, especially if something seems to be bothering them. Remember, young people often do not come to their parents when something is wrong. This is why it's so important to regularly check in with your teen to see how things are going.

Make sure your teen takes care of their body

Getting enough sleep, eating a healthy and balanced diet, and getting exercise have a big impact on mental health. *High school students should get 8–10 hours of sleep a night.*

Help your teen deal with stress

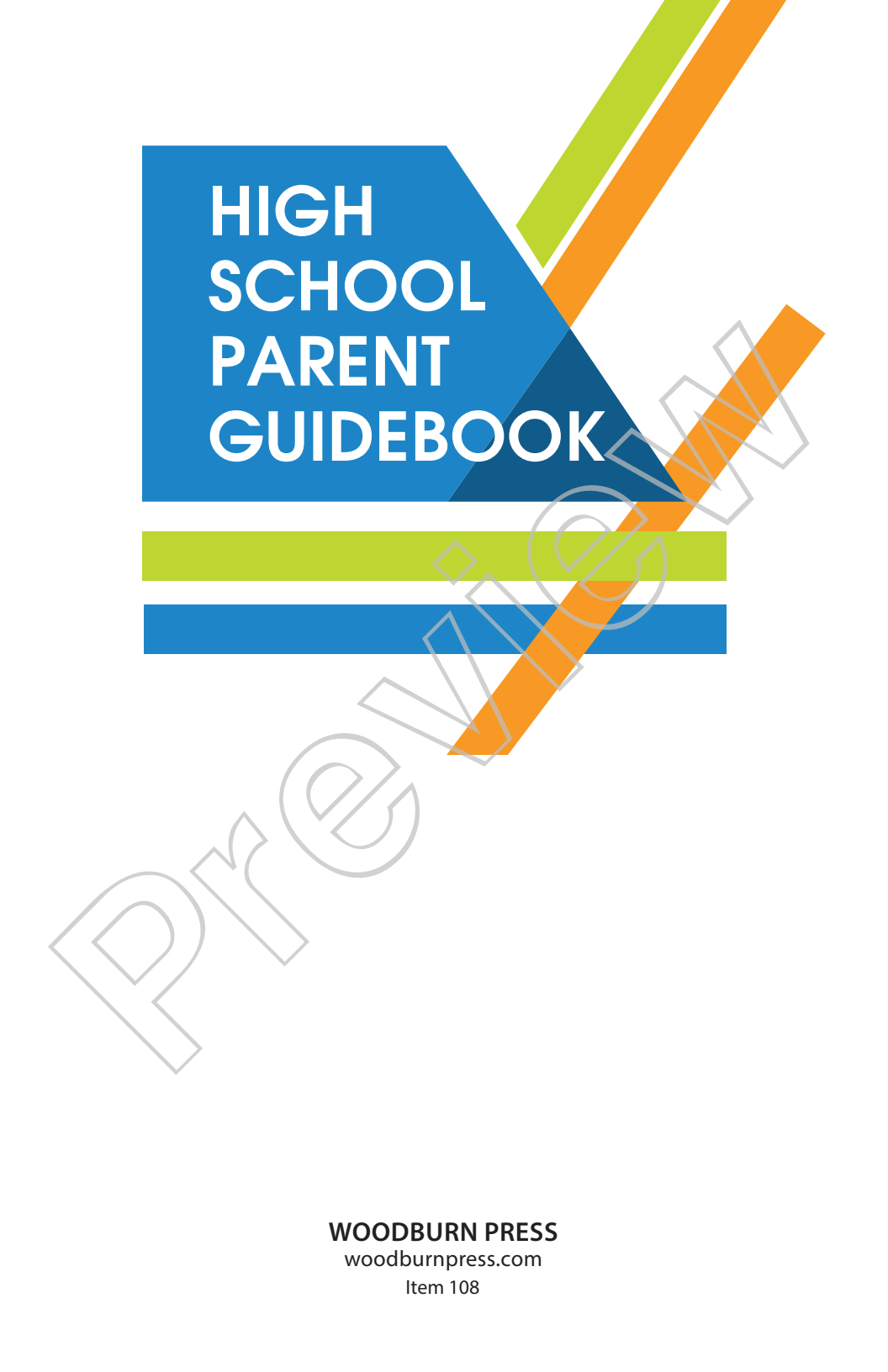
Stress is a part of everyday life, but too much stress can have a negative impact on your teen's life. Encourage your teen to take time to relax and recharge.



Most importantly, be available to listen. The problems of teenagers can sometimes seem like minor issues to adults, but they often don't feel like minor issues to teens. Be a good listener, don't judge, and be there if your teen needs to vent or just talk.

No one needs to go it alone

No matter what your teen is going through, they don't have to go through it alone. There are resources available for them, and for your family, too. For help, speak to your child's counselor, their doctor, a mental health professional, or contact the National Crisis Text Line by texting HOME to 741741.



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