

HOW RSAS CAN SUPPORT SCHOOL TRANSITIONS

Students are more likely to stop going to school during times of change. This could include starting school for the first time, changing schools, going to boarding school or moving from primary to secondary school. The more changes a student goes through, the harder they will find school. They might feel lonely, fall behind in class, find it hard to make friends, or think school is too hard. They may stop attending or act out. No matter how hard it gets, do not accept that “this is just the way it is”. Instead, offer help and be there when students are ready to go back to school.

- **Let families know their children will be safe and cared for at school.**
 - Families will want to protect their children and may keep them home from school if they seem unhappy. Make families and children feel safe by:
 - Matching students with a buddy or mentor who they can talk to at school;
 - checking in with the family at lunch time to let them know their child is okay at school;
 - talking to the family after school to let them know how the day went; or
 - setting up a time for the family to visit the school and talk to the teachers.
 - Be ready for the first day of school. Let families know that change can be hard, but working together can make it easier.

- **When younger students are going through a change or transition, you could:**
 - Ask families to keep talking to their children about why school is important and to celebrate improvements and achievements.
 - Think of fun ways to get students to school and ask families to participate.
 - Talk to families about how school is good for their children’s wellbeing.
 - Help students and families feel connected to the school by encouraging them to participate in activities, such as sports.

- **When older students are going through a change or transition, you could:**
 - Talk to them to let them know school is not just “kids’ business”.
 - Share stories about your own education and let students know that you are never too old to learn or go to school.
 - Give them a job to do and ask them to help you with RSAS activities. By doing this, you can make them feel proud.
 - Ask families and the community to remind older students that school is important and they should still attend.

- **Take the time to show students you care when they are going through change.**
 - Ask the school to give new students extra support. RSAS may be able to help with this for the first few days or weeks.
 - Make sure new students have someone to talk to about any problems they are having.
 - Offer to talk to families and refer to support services if needed.

- **Talk about life beyond school.**
 - Encourage communities to show they care about school so that students attend more often.
 - Ask families to talk to their children about the importance of school.
 - Encourage everyone to tell students that they can be successful if they attend school. This will encourage them to follow their dreams.
 - Talk to students about people in the community who are successful and about how school helped them.
 - Talk to students about the different jobs they could do after they finish school.
 - Display a list of local jobs which students could do. This might include: police, doctors, builders, teachers, counsellors, pilots, government workers, small business owners, writers or musicians.

- **Where possible, offer support when students go to school in another community.**
 - Before students travel to a boarding school, they may need:
 - Material support (such as clothing, a suitcase or books);
 - Transport to and from school;
 - Health checks or counselling services; or
 - Help completing paperwork for school.
 - Make a plan with the family about what you will do if students at boarding school get home sick. It could include:
 - Setting up regular phone calls and visits home for students;
 - Finding a mentor for students; or
 - Asking the school to provide extra support.
 - If a student is leaving your community, you can help them get started in their new school by:
 - Contacting the RSAS team in the new community and let them know the family is coming.
 - Contacting the new school to let them know new students will be arriving.
 - Helping families talk to the new school before they leave, so they can find out what the school is like.

➤ **Talk to your NIAA contract manager if you have ideas to support school transitions that may not be in your RSAS contract.**

- Include any school transition activities in your Activity Attendance Plan.
- Keep records of any school transition activities RSAS is doing so you can demonstrate your achievements and NIAA can support this work.

