

The Bishops' High School Old Students' Association collaborated with the Bishops' High School to pilot a mentoring programme for third form students during the 2002-03 academic year. Because of its success, a programme was introduced for first form students at the Bishops' High School and Tutorial High School during the 2005-06 academic year and was supported by UNICEF.

The programme is suitable for implementation by other secondary schools and is endorsed by the Ministry of Education.

Documents to facilitate implementation of the programme are:

- Establishing and Managing a Mentoring Programme
- Becoming a Mentor: Role, Activities and Possible Outcomes
- Introducing the Mentoring Programme (Brochure)
- Now Your Child is in Secondary School: A Booklet for Parents and Guardians
- The Changing World of the Secondary School Student

The documents are available from the School Office as well as www.bhsosa.org.gy

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MENTORING PROGRAMME FOR SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS



Now Your Child
is in Secondary School:
A Booklet for
Parents/Guardians

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Useful Resources



Programme Material

The website of the BHSOSA (www.bhsosa.org.gy) is the repository of the following documents which support the implementation of the Secondary Schools Mentoring Programme. It also includes booklets for the different participants (see back cover) and reports such as the following.

- Mentoring Programme for Third Form Students: Evaluation of the Pilot Project 2002-2003, May 2004
- Report: Workshop for Parents, April 8, 2006
- Report: Workshop for Parents & Mentors, May 13, 2006

Local Organizations

- Adolescent Friendly Health Centres, e.g., Dorothy Bailey Municipal Centre
- Georgetown Reading and Research Centre, 179 Waterloo Street, Cummingsburg, Georgetown ☎ 225-5899
- Guyana Girl Guide Association, 106 Brickdam, Stabroek ☎ 227-6516
- Guyana Responsible Parenthood Association, 70 Quamina Street, Cummingsburg, Georgetown ☎ 225-0739
- National Library, Church Street, North Cummingsburg ☎ 226-2690. The National Library has branches in several locations.
- Scouts Association of Guyana, Woolford Avenue, Thomas Lands ☎ 225-3225

Websites

The Internet is a valuable source on information on a range of topics. Below are three examples of websites which may prove useful to you.

- www.talkingwithkids.org – examines topics such as sex, HIV/AIDS, drugs, alcohol, violence
- www.keepkidshealthy.com - examines topics such as discipline, building self-esteem, dealing with peer pressure
- www.ces.purdue.edu/providerparent/Guidance-Discipline/MakingDiscPositive.htm - examines positive approaches to discipline



Parents and family members may benefit from the mentoring relationship in the following ways:

- Increased tolerance and accommodation of the views of others;
- Exposure for mentee which the family is unable to provide;
- Greater appreciation for the school administration and the Old Students' Association;
- Improved communication between the mentee and members of his/her family;
- Advice and support from a responsible adult; and
- Increased understanding of the needs and interests of the mentee.

Students' Perception of Parents

Mentees from the Bishops' High School and Tutorial High School shared these thoughts on the role of parents.

Parents:

Are problem helpers,
Always there when you
need them.
Respect one for who he/
she is.
Are enjoyable to be with.
Never let you down.
Are trustworthy.
Are persons to rely on.

Parents are loving, parents are
kind.
A parent is sometimes hard to
find.
Sometimes they can pay you
no mind,
When they have no time.

Parents sometimes make your
life a misery,
Especially when they get crazy.
When they start to lecture,
I would need a pillow protector.

I thank God for them everyday.
Because you've got to live with
them anyway.

Introduction

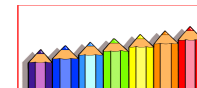


Your child's life changes significantly when he/she enters secondary school. And so does yours! The child who comes into the first form moves into a different world. He/she is often excited about the new school and arrives on the first day full of anticipation but may also experience some anxiety. He/she may be wondering what is in store and whether he/she would fit into the school. The child is leaving the security of several years in a familiar environment with relatively predictable people and circumstances. He/she is on the brink of the unknown.

You, on the other hand, may be happy that your child is on the verge of a new phase of life. You may also be wondering what is in store for your child, paying less attention to ways in which your life and that of other family members will change. Your life and that of your family will certainly change as your child explores that unknown and becomes more comfortable in the new surroundings. You will witness the unfolding of a personality of which you may have had a glance in the past; that personality develops in new ways as the expectations and demands of new systems, people – teachers and students alike – are experienced.

This booklet addresses some of the changes which will come about in your life and that of your child. It presents some of the differences between the primary school experience and that of the secondary school, coping mechanisms and challenges in the life of the pre-adolescent and adolescent. It considers the Secondary Schools Mentoring Programme as an example of sources of support available to you, your child and your family as they make the transition from childhood to adolescence. The booklet draws on information shared by first and third form students who participated in the mentoring programme, their mentors and their parents/guardians as well as other resources.

Transition from Primary to Secondary School



Children are often struck by the many differences between their experiences in the primary school they attended and their new secondary school. They must adjust to these differences rather quickly if they are to develop a sense of identity with the school and find a level of comfort to enable maximum performance.

Many secondary schools are housed in a larger building than the primary school. They may be arranged differently in some of the following ways:

- Individual classrooms.
- Specialized rooms such as a library, computer room and science laboratories.
- Separate staff room.
- Administrative office.
- Sections of the school that are off limits to younger students.

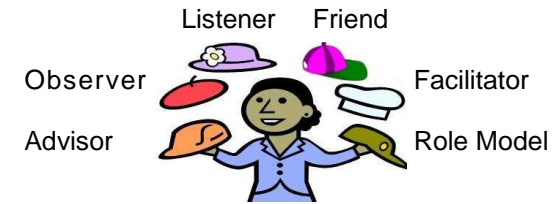
Other differences and possible consequences for the student and the parent are presented in the table below.

Secondary School	Consequences for Child	Consequences for Parent
Moving from 4 subjects to 10 or more subjects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Shorter periods of instruction per subject •A diversity of homework and assignments •Careful planning and scheduling of activities •Challenges in understanding some of the material presented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •More textbooks and supplies to be acquired •Need to provide assistance with homework and assignments •Need to balance household chores and homework demands
Different teachers for different subjects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •More teaching styles and standards to learn about 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •More people with whom to interact
Stricter rules, e.g., dress code enforced, side of corridor to walk on	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Varied penalties for breach of school rules 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Support needed in adherence to rules at home and in school
Use of pen rather than pencil	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Limited use of eraser •Greater attention to presentation of work 	
Assembly in school building rather than school yard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Non-exposure to sun and rain 	
Individual desk and chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Sole responsibility for care of furniture •Comfortable seating 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Asked to provide these in some cases •Recognition of child's increasing independence
More extracurricular activities after school	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Greater opportunity to participate in activities and manage time •Wider choice of activities •Physical exercise •Group interaction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Monitoring and supporting student's after school activities •Facilitating participation in extracurricular activities •Developing mutual trust
Variety of recreational/development activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Opportunity to participate in activities such as sports, elocution, drama 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Support for participation •Provision of needed resources
New school uniform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •New badge of honour •Easily identifiable •Higher standard of behaviour expected 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Guidelines on jewelry, hairstyles, shoe style, etc. •Support of the need to respect the institution and its image
Making new friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Reaching out to different children •Learning tolerance and negotiation skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Meeting and guiding new friends •Making contact with their parents/guardians
Importance of peer group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Pressure to conform to peer group •Being teased or excluded if non-conforming 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Fostering open communication •Acting as a sounding board
Different forms of discipline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Responding to less physical and more attitudinal sanctions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Communication with teachers •Monitoring child's behaviour

The adult (mentor) and the student (mentee) may interact in a face-to-face manner as well as through the use of electronic and other media. They may explore a range of topics and participate in a diversity of activities with the support of the mentee's parents/guardians.

The programme prepares participants for their role through meetings, workshops and printed material.

The mentor serves as:



The parent and the mentor should seek to establish a cordial relationship. The parent should be kept abreast of activities planned, grant permission for participation in activities and may seek advice on from the mentor with respect to the parent-student relationship, if deemed necessary.

After the first meeting, the parent and the mentor may restrict interaction to telephone conversations. On the other hand, the mentor may need to meet the parent at home, at work or in another location. Interaction between the parent and the mentor is important as a means of sharing the parent's perspectives on the mentee as well as building trust between the parent and the mentor.

Parents are expected to:

- Give permission for the student to participate in the programme;
- Discuss the activities planned and their outcomes with the mentor and mentee;
- Gain feedback from as well as give feedback to the mentor and mentee on progress in the mentoring relationship;
- Provide support to the mentee, refraining from restricting participation in programme activities as a form of punishment;
- Participate in programme meetings for orientation and assessment of progress and workshops on adolescent development and other issues of interest; and
- Liaise with the Project Coordinator or the School's Liaison Officer whenever necessary, and especially where a major change occurs in the mentee's situation.

for you to be acquainted with the persons who have such influence over your child, viz., the teachers.

You should seize every opportunity to interact with the staff of the school. You may meet the Headteacher for the first time when you are registering your child and/or attending an orientation session. You should also ensure that you meet the child's form teacher and as many of the subject teachers as possible. These contacts should be forged so that you can monitor the child's performance and behaviour and discuss non-violent forms of discipline and not be limited to a request for your attendance at school because of a problem that has occurred. Parents also have an important role in ensuring that the school uses non-violent forms of discipline.



Formal Parent-Teacher meetings may be called for all parents or those of children at a particular level such as Form 1 or Form 3. These meetings are significant as they serve to inform parents of the school's plans and how these may affect your child. They also present the opportunity for parents to receive or give specific feedback to the teachers. Too often, the parents who attend these meetings are those who already have good rapport with the staff and their child. No parent should consider Parent-Teacher meetings as insignificant. Your attendance signals to your child that you care about his/her welfare.

You should enquire of your child, communicate with other parents or contact the school to determine whether a meeting is scheduled. The reality is that some children receive notices for parents but fail/forget to deliver these.

Some parents provide their children with cell phones. If you do, you should be aware that the policy of the Ministry of Education restricts the use of cell phones in the classroom. In addition, some schools have decreed that cell phones are prohibited. If you have signed an agreement to disallow the use of a cell phone by your child in school, you are responsible for ensuring that this is fulfilled.

Watchwords: Liaise with teachers

Getting Support through the Mentoring Programme

The mentoring programme pairs an adult with a student. It enables the adult to give guidance and support to the student with a view to helping the student develop a rounded personality and achieving a high level of academic performance.

Some children engaged in extracurricular activities such as Scouts, music lessons and dancing classes while in primary school. Some of them may continue with these activities while others may consider themselves too big for such activities or prefer not to do so since their friends are not involved. Others had the freedom to play with friends after school and walk home from schools with other children whom they knew for many years. For some, these experiences will cease while new ones are in store for them.

Some children are burnt out after primary school and may want time to "catch themselves." They will need special attention to prevent them from lagging behind the other children in the class.

Relationship with the Child



The parent has responsibility for shaping the child's world view and sense of self. He/she therefore plays an important and critical role in the child's life. While some parents focus heavily on providing food, shelter and material things for the child, many fail to recognize the significance of interaction with the child on an on-going basis and in a supportive manner.

You are encouraged to address the child's needs in the following ways:

- Take the child seriously, particularly since he/she faces many challenges during the transition from primary to secondary school and from childhood to adolescence.
- Spend time listening to and interacting with your child. He/she needs your company more so than the things you can provide. Some parents want to give their child things and experiences which they did not have without realizing that those may not be in the child's best interest nor are they appreciated by the child. A show of interest in the child's activities helps to build his/her sense of value and importance as well as self-esteem.
- Help the child to find a balance between home, school and other communities such as religious and social organizations. This is necessary since the child is likely to be exposed to other children who have access to privileges and material things which you cannot provide or you may not see as appropriate and life experiences which you consider undesirable.
- Seek to establish open communication with your child, encouraging him/her to raise issues which you may not have been able to discuss with your parents but wish that you had been.
- Help the child to appreciate the value of money. Some children receive pocket money without a sense of responsibility for its expenditure. Others may seek unsavoury means of getting money when

the parent chooses not to or cannot provide pocket money on a regular basis or is unable to meet the requirements of the school. Some use the money they have to gain popularity.

- Encourage the child to read and set an example by reading yourself. Discussion of books, magazines and material accessed on the Internet, for example, would help cement the relationship between you and your child and promote a love of reading which could influence academic performance and social development positively.
- Collaborate with the child in the preparation of a timetable of activities and monitoring its implementation. This is likely to promote a disciplined approach to life and influence his/her decision-making capacity as he/she weighs the emphasis placed on each activity.

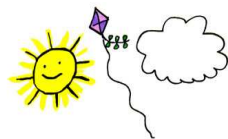
Watchwords: Support, openness, listening

Fostering Independence

At this stage of development, children consider themselves to be “big.” They expect to be given more freedom to choose their friends, activities in which to participate and make other choices about their lives.

The extent to which a child may be afforded increasing degrees of independence will depend on:

- The strength of trust that exists between you and your child.
- The respect given and received by both of you.
- The extent to which you are able to model the behaviour and attitudes which you would like your child to display.
- The effectiveness of the communication system you have developed.



These will be optimum if you acknowledge the importance of developing that sense of independence in your child and act appropriately.

You should seek to speak with your child privately if you are displeased with him/her rather than embarrassing him/her in front of friends. You should also pay attention to what you say, striving for consistency rather than, for example, saying on one occasion that “you’re not a child anymore” and on another saying, “you’re still a

- Poor performance in school;
- Low self-esteem;
- Stealing;
- Reluctance to go home;
- Demonstration of fear at the mention of a parent’s name;
- Lying about injuries; and
- Unkempt appearance.

Watchwords: Protection, self-control, caring

Tackling Difficult Topics

Some parents find it difficult to discuss topics which they consider sensitive with their child. Many may not have had such a discussion with their parents and may feel inadequate to perform this role. It is important for you to take the lead in raising difficult topics rather than waiting for the child to do so. This will give the child the indication that you are approachable.

One question some parents have is how early they should introduce topics such as sex and sexuality, HIV and AIDS, substance (drugs and alcohol) use and abuse. You should remember that children are exposed to these issues from early childhood and therefore your discussion should begin then. You should provide as much information as is appropriate for the child’s age as too much information may be as harmful as no information at all.



The longer you wait to discuss these topics with your child, the greater the chance that someone else will. The sooner you do so, the greater the opportunity that you will be able to positively influence your child’s actions.

You may say that you don’t know what to say or how to begin the conversation since you never experience this with your parents. You can access much information from books on parenting or through the Internet.

Watchwords: Sooner rather than later.

Parent-School Interaction

Your child spends many hours at school and receives assigned tasks which will require many more hours of work while the child is at home and in the wider community. It is imperative, therefore,

ing, forced labour and begging. These are inappropriate and should not be utilized as they negatively affect the child's self-esteem and behaviour in the foreseeable future.

It is important for the parent to let the child know that he/she is not being rejected but rather the discipline results from inappropriate behaviour.

Watchwords: Communication, limits, consistency

Domestic Violence, Child Abuse and their Impact on the Child

The child is exposed to both positive and negative influences in his/her life. Unfortunately, many of the negative experiences occur in the home, a place which should be warm, loving and safe.

Domestic violence occurs between members of a family or household or persons who are in an intimate relationship. It may take several forms and affects the child directly (child abuse) and/or indirectly. It represents the violation of the rights of the child and a breach of the responsibility of parenthood.

Examples of some forms of domestic violence and child abuse are:

- Physical e.g., pushing, kicking, cuffing, biting, slapping, kneeling on a grater;
- Psychological e.g., controlling behaviour; breaking down one's belief system; destroying property/treasured objects; denying opportunity to have friends, social contacts, outside interests; interrogation; withdrawal of affection; put downs; constant criticism; humiliation;
- Financial e.g., allowing no money of one's own or no opportunity to improve earning capacity, controlling all money;
- Neglect e.g., failure – intentional or unintentional – of parents or guardians to provide food, shelter, clothing, health care, education, love and/or nurturing to a child; and
- Sexual abuse e.g., forced sex with or without objects (e.g., buggery, incest, rape).

Some people are involved in an abusive relationship, often reacting to frustration and a sense of helplessness, for instance. They may be physically and/or verbally abusive in the presence of the child, not paying attention to the effect of their actions on the child. Others vent their frustration and anger on the child.

Domestic violence, child abuse and neglect may affect the child in the following ways:

child." You should remember that words are power and, once said, cannot be reclaimed. You may apologize for what you said but you can't remove the impact.

Parents are generally desirous of ensuring that their child is secure. However, some are too overprotective and react rashly when experiencing fear about their child's safety.

Watchwords: Trust, respect, open communication

Access to the Television and Electronic Media

You should monitor the programmes the child views on television and the sites he/she accesses on the Internet. You should agree on the amount of time spent as well as the time of day for engaging in these activities. You should ensure that there is mix of entertainment and education. You should discuss the programmes viewed by the child individually or as a family activity as well as the information accessed with the child to determine the benefits derived.



Watchwords: Vigilance, participation

Living with the Pre-adolescent

The pre-adolescent lives in a challenging world. He/she inhabits a body which is ever changing as it prepares for adolescence. He/she is interacting with others who are developing at different rates, have different life experiences and are exposed to different expectations at home and in his/her wider community. The pre-adolescent is in a period of adjustment and needs the support of his/her parent.



As you accommodate the developing child, you need to equip yourself with information on adolescent development, paying attention to the physical, psychological and social aspects. For example, you should learn about the nature of puberty and the consequences for both females and males. You should discuss this with your child to help in the transition from childhood to adolescence. Again, while you may have had to find out for yourself, you should use the opportunity you have to be the person who educates your child. If you don't seize this opportunity, someone else will.

You will need to exercise patience with your child, as your child will continue to show that they are 'big' and try to do things on their own.

Your child is likely to become friends with a range of children. He/she may be a member of a group, wanting to do many things with his/her peers. He/she may feel pressured to follow the lead of other members of the group or be one of its leaders.

Peer pressure may result in a tendency to disobey home values or school rules, try out things like drugs, alcohol, sex or engage in other kinds of risky behaviour "for the fun of it".

As a consequence, you may find it necessary to talk about friends and values often. You may find it useful to become knowledgeable about social issues and the challenges your child may be facing. At the same time, you need to show respect for the child's privacy as he/she grows older.

Extracurricular activities help to widen the child's perspectives on life. They expose the child to a variety of experiences and contribute to the development of self-esteem, competence, judgment and healthy competition. Therefore, if your child is interested in acting or singing for example, you should encourage him/her to pursue their creative interests as these will be complementary to their academic activities.

Some children occasionally absent themselves from school, while others do so more frequently. Should you discover that your child is being truant, you should spend some time to find out what is happening. You may want to contact the form teacher or head-teacher to determine your child's pattern of attendance and speak with the child to find out what is promoting the behaviour.

Watchwords: Love, humour, constancy, vigilance

Promoting a Healthy, Active Lifestyle

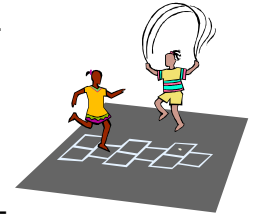
The growing child is in need of a healthy diet. He/she may prefer to purchase lunch at the school canteen or elsewhere rather than taking a home-cooked meal to school. The child needs to be taught about the value of different foods and food groups and encouraged to take responsibility for ensuring that he/she eats properly. He/she should learn to limit the amount of junk food that is consumed because of its high fat content, despite the fact that it is

popular with friends and easy to access. He/she needs to understand that too much fat in the diet increases the risk of obesity and lifestyle diseases such as heart disease and diabetes. The child should be involved in cooking which could be fun for both of you.

The growing child also needs regular exercise.

An active, healthy lifestyle encourages:

- Improvement in self-confidence;
- Development of positive attitudes;
- Promotion of better memory and concentration skills;
- Maintaining a healthy weight;
- Development of good posture and balance;
- Flexibility;
- Development of strong bones; and
- Healthy growth and development.



**Watchwords:
Exercise,
healthy diet**

You should set an example for the child by exercising on a regular basis and eating a healthy diet.

Disciplining Your Child

As a parent, you have the responsibility of teaching values and moral standards to your child. You should communicate clearly your expectations of the child and the limits for their behaviour. You should help your child to understand that every decision/choice/action has a consequence.

While setting limits, you need to be clear, consistent and firm in the method of discipline. You should refrain from meting out discipline while you are angry as you may apply excessive forms of discipline which you regret later on. You may choose forms of discipline such as limiting time spent on electronic entertainment e.g., television, computer chat and games, going to bed early and non-participation in activity. Where you share responsibility for the child, everyone involved should agree to honour the disciplinary action; if not, the child may become confused and/or become manipulative. You should carry out the discipline you say you will apply and ensure that it fits the situation.

Some forms of discipline currently used constitute child abuse. These include beating, burning, slapping, calling names, demean-