

SC Link Crew: Helping Your Child with the Transition to High School

Starting High School can be a scary, uncertain experience for any student. We know that if we do all we can to make that next big step in their lives a positive one, then they are much more likely to be happy and successful. South Carleton has established a transition program to help all of our new students feel safe, included, and excited about coming to high school and striving to do their best. **SC Link Crew** is a group of senior students (grade 11 and 12) who are committed to providing peer support, leadership, and mentoring for every grade nine student.

Link Crew is a student centered program that engages, develops and trains senior students to be leaders and mentors. Our Link Crew Leaders volunteer to help grade 9's throughout their transition starting from their grade 8 visit to South where Link Crew welcomes them and provides a tour of the building.

To help quell some of the nervousness of the first day, we hold a BBQ the week before school starts. It is an opportunity for our new students to re-familiarize themselves with the building, meet up with old friends, and make new ones. They will have an opportunity to receive their class schedules and take another tour to find those classes.

On the first day of school, South Carleton hosts an orientation day for our new grade 9's. It starts with a big assembly of grade 9's and Link Crew leaders who all participate in a series of spirited and interactive activities designed to make your student feel comfortable in their new school. They have a lot of fun while being encouraged to consider the kind of path they want to take as they enter high school. Then they are organized into smaller groups, each led by two Link Crew leaders. These small group experiences offer a more personal connection as they participate in team building activities and discussions about being in high school and how to make it a great experience. Later in the day, students will visit classes to meet with their classroom teachers. The day concludes with a second large assembly which will leave these incoming freshmen invigorated and excited about the upcoming school year.

However, Link Crew's connection to our grade 9's does not end there. Throughout their entire first year of high school, our new students participate in a series of academic, social and leader initiated events with the Link Crew Leaders. They are able to maintain the connection with their peers and Link Crew Leaders from the small groups established on orientation day. The structured activities range from classes on time management and goal setting, to group lunches and movie nights, and one-to-one connections where a link crew leader may call them at home to check in on them or offer some tutoring.

All of these connections are meant to help your student feel welcomed and safe because that, in turn, is reflected in positive behaviour and academic success. These students are tomorrow's community leaders, and Community is what South Carleton is all about.