

Freshmen Year Survival

Sure, high school can be intimidating -- if you don't know what you're doing. But if you know what to expect in high school, it'll be easier to make good friends, ace your classes and be active after school. In order to survive your freshman year of high school, you'll need to familiarize yourself with the layout and rules of the school before the first day of class, be outgoing during and after class, build a solid study and homework plan, participate in class, and guard against negative peer pressure. It may sound like a lot, but once you get going, you'll likely fall into step soon enough.

1 **Avoid skipping the freshman orientation.** This event is usually something your school will hold towards the end of summer, although they may hold it earlier. Not only will it make you more comfortable in your new school environment, and help get you used to a few teachers, but you can also use orientation as a *social opportunity*. That's right -- instead of hanging out with your mom, you can go out of your way to meet a few new people, and to hang out with your old friends.

- Look sharp. Adhere to the dress code and make sure to put some effort into your appearance and hygiene. You only get to make one first impression.
- *Freshmen/Transfer student Orientation will be August 15th from 9 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.*

2 **Make friends before school starts.** If you're lucky enough to already know a bunch of people going to your high school, then great. Then you can talk to your friends in advance, ask about their schedules, and see who can sit with you at lunch. You can also be bold; make friends with kids at your church, at the mall, or from your summer soccer league. You'll feel much more comfortable in school if you do.

- If you're the new kid, don't worry. You won't be the only one.
- Be outgoing, get involved!
- Though it's important to be open-minded, try avoiding the kind of people who will get you influence you to make bad decisions, cut class, or cheat.

3 **Make friends with the upperclassmen.** Another great leg-up in high school is if you know any older kids at the school. If you have an older sibling that you actually like who will look out for you, a

neighbor, or even a friend of the family who goes to the high school, this person can be a great help to you, along with being your friend. Upperclassmen can help you figure out the following things:

- How to act around certain teachers
- Which people to avoid
- The low-down on the clubs or sports you're interested in
- The game plans for acing certain classes

4 **Get to know your school's map.** This may sound a little dorky, but don't underestimate how much more comfortable you'll feel at your new school if you actually know where you're going on the first day. Not only should you pay attention in orientation, but you should grab a map of the school if you can, so you can begin to figure out the best way to move from class to class. Figuring out how to make those precious 3-4 minutes during passing period count can help you eliminate stress and get to class on time.

5 **Get everything you need.** Before the first day of school, you should be prepared with everything you need so you don't have to scramble on the first day. You should have a copy of your schedule if you already have one, all of your binders, notebooks, and school supplies.

6 **Be aware of your school's dress code.** SBHS has a dress code that is outlined in our Parent-Student Handbook (online). Don't get caught by a teacher or Dean who will have flag you down, send you to the Administration office, and make you go home if you don't have a change of clothes. You have a required uniform, make sure you wear it appropriately, but if not, look out for the following:

- Short shorts. Uniform shorts must be the proper length and your shorts have to be longer than your fingertips. Girls, after you put on your shorts, stand up with your hands at your sides to see if you pass the test.
- Displaying your undergarments. Girls, avoid showing your bra straps, and guys, avoid sagging your pants and revealing your boxers. SBHS has a code against this and well. Keep it classy, please.
- Modest dress is key - SBHS Polos and sweatshirts can be purchased through Proforma. Click on SBHS Store link on our school website (www.saintbonaventure.com)

- Also, if you're struggling with your homework, don't be embarrassed to get extra help after school. *Faculty are on campus after hours- schedule time to meet!*

10 Participate in class. Participating in class will not only keep you from falling asleep in class and will make your teacher love you, but it will also make you more excited about the material you're learning, and more excited to come to class. You don't have to answer every question your teacher asks or offer insights every five seconds, but you should speak up from time to time so your teacher sees that you know your stuff.

- Participating will also make you do better on tests. If you're more engaged with the material, then you'll understand it better.

11 Start thinking about college -- but not too much. Though you shouldn't feel pressured to make a list of your top ten dream colleges during your freshman year, you should have an idea of what kind of college you'll be applying to, or at least a sense of how competitive it is. In general, to apply to a four-year university, you'll need to demonstrate a record of academic success, foreign language credits, 2-3 teacher recommendations, a personal essay, and participation in outside activities, from team sports to volunteer organizations.

- If you start joining clubs and sports during your freshman year, you'll have time to develop your skills and find a leadership position by your junior or senior year.
- If you haven't done anything outside of school until your junior year, and you're suddenly joining 5,000 clubs, colleges will be suspicious.
- You can think about college, but don't obsess over it. One grade will not affect your admission to college, and you'll still have a lot of school left.
- If there IS a college you know you want to go to, research for their course requirements to get a brief idea of what credits you need. Better to get those out of the way rather than cramming them all in one year
- *It is always recommended to make an appointment with your academic counselor to discuss your college plans, scholarships, internships and requirements.*

12 Get organized. The *everything folder* won't fly in high school, so make sure you have binders for every subject (or divide a binder for two classes), multiple notebooks, and folders for every class.

Label each folder carefully, and go through your things at the end of every day to make sure that you haven't misplaced any papers.

- Part of being organized is having an organized locker. Make sure your supplies are neatly stacked, not sloppily thrown in.
- Have a planner. This will help you know in advance when you'll have a busy week and to plan ahead for tests and other events. *Check the SBHS Google Calendar for the most up to date events and schedules.*
- If a teacher has a specific request for a binder, folder or notebook, then make sure that you get whatever organizational method they request, and use it for at least the first few months of the school year. If you find that the method they're having you use isn't working; talk to them and see if they will let you use a different method for their class.

13 Join a club or two. Find something that you really care about and join a club that can help you explore your interests. There will be dozens of clubs to choose from, such as Mock Trial, Geo Bowl, Art Club, Eco Club, Interact, Leo, FCA, Habitat on Campus and so on. Picking one or two clubs that you can really focus on and devote your time to is better than picking five or six just so you can put them on your résumé. Clubs will not only make you a better-rounded person, but you can meet some great friends at them along the way.

- It's okay to start off with five or six clubs -- you can see which ones you like the most and drop the rest.
- Check out Key Club, Habitat on Campus, or Interact- the clubs where volunteering makes a difference in our community.
- Remember that not all clubs are created equal. Mock Trial, for example, can take up much more of your free time than other clubs that only meet once or twice a month, so make sure you don't get overwhelmed and make a good selection.

14 Be nice to your parents! Though you may not exactly be best friends with Mom and Dad during your freshman year of high school, you should treat your parents like your friends, not your enemies. After all, they cook for you, they give you rides, and they probably give you some of the spending money you need to go to the mall with your friends, and of course pay your tuition! So don't look back on your life and regret being mean to your parents just because you were moody, selfish or insensitive.

