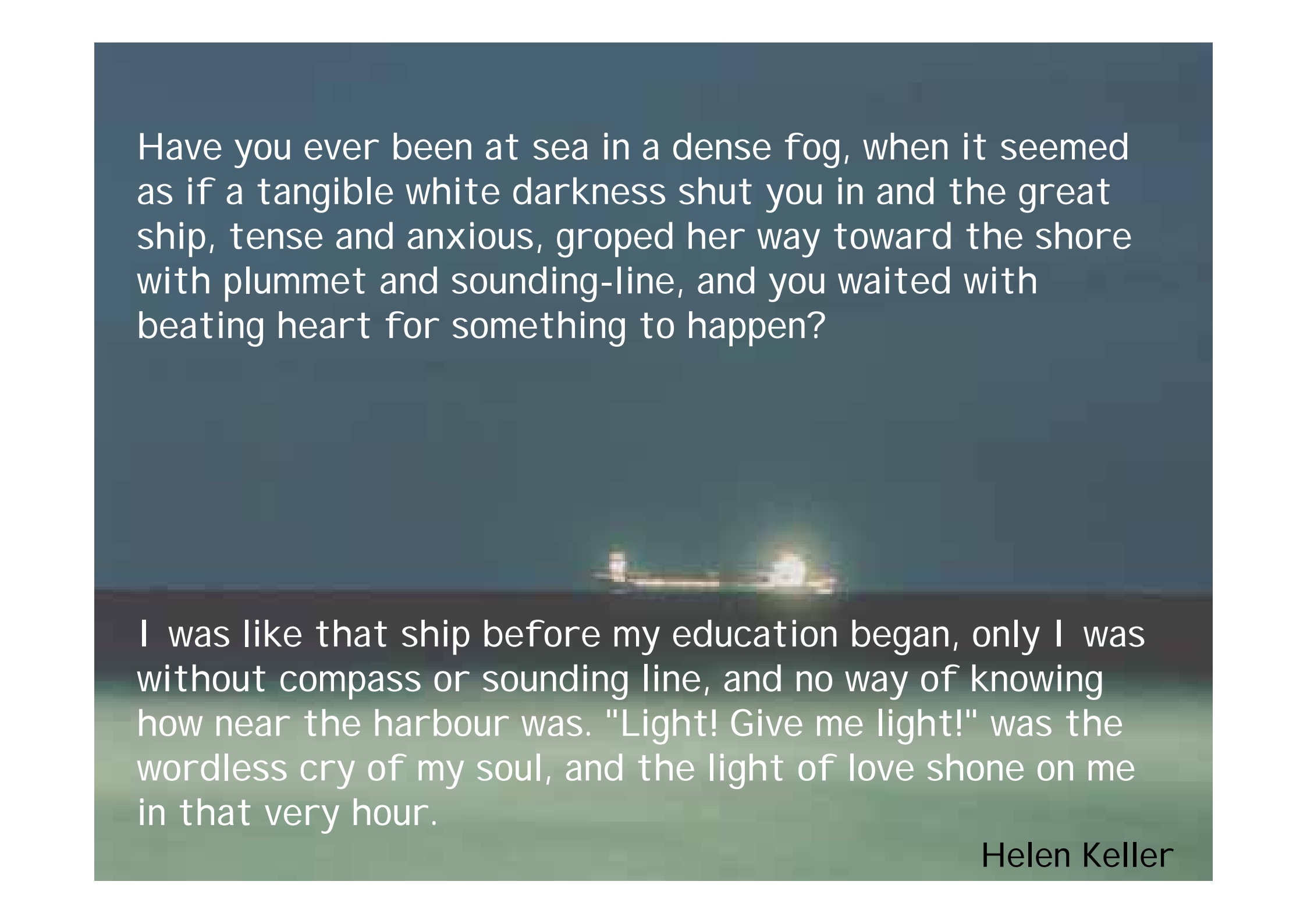


# Educational Implications of a Cancer Diagnosis

Susie Edmonds, Katrina Sheraton-Yu, Valerie De Fina  
Back on Track team





Have you ever been at sea in a dense fog, when it seemed as if a tangible white darkness shut you in and the great ship, tense and anxious, groped her way toward the shore with plummet and sounding-line, and you waited with beating heart for something to happen?

I was like that ship before my education began, only I was without compass or sounding line, and no way of knowing how near the harbour was. "Light! Give me light!" was the wordless cry of my soul, and the light of love shone on me in that very hour.

Helen Keller



Size

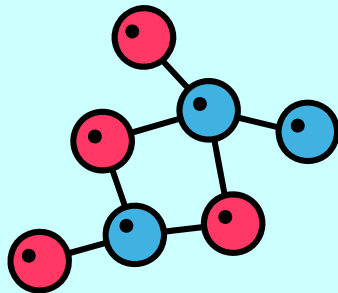


Location



Length of  
attendance

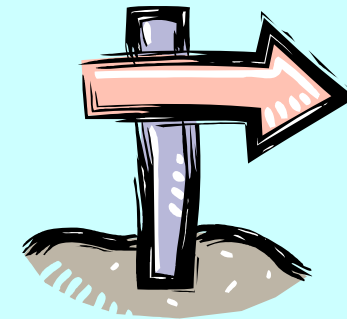
**EDUCATION**



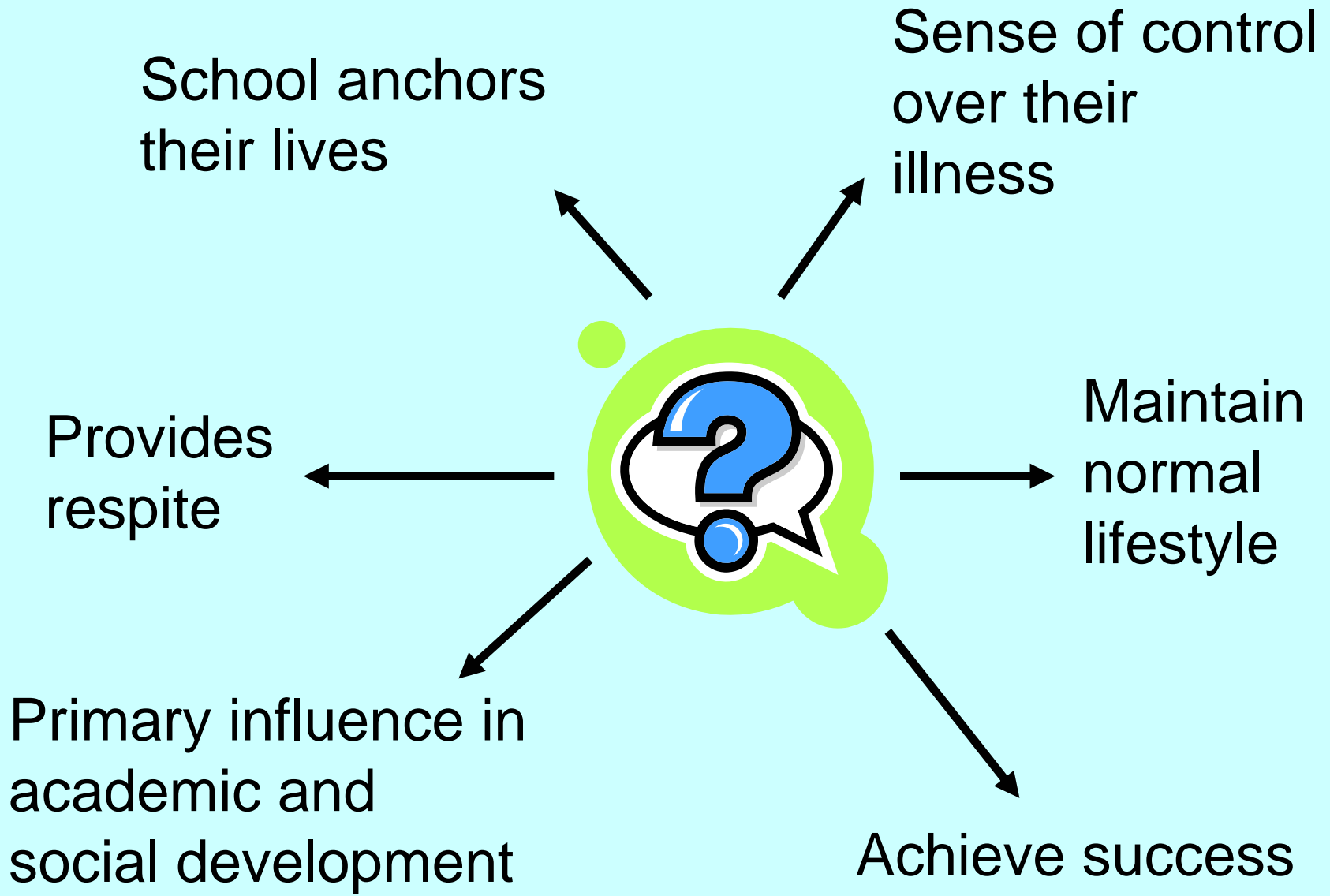
Cohesion



Attitudes



Proximity

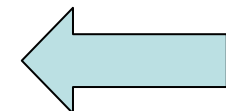


**Illness**

**Standard treatments + Medical complications**

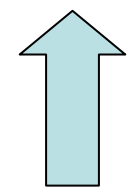


**Prolonged Absenteeism**



**Post Illness**

**Average yearly absenteeism is over 20 days**



**Common Implications**



**Self Esteem**



**Friends**

- ↓ academic success,
- ↑ risk of becoming underachievers
- ↑ failure in their own eyes
- ↓ experiences → development of self
- ↓ sense of control in their own environment

- ↑ feeling of being disconnected
- Difficulty with friend being ill
- ? Do you contact the child

# Scenarios

**Year 1 Student**



**Year 7 Student**



**Year 11 Student**



## Year 1 Student



- Don't have peers with which to share information e.g. school news



- Haven't established clear peer relationships
- Lack of control over communication with peers



- Key reading and numeracy skills



- Lack of constant feedback



- Lack of opportunity to learn through exploration



- Access to readers



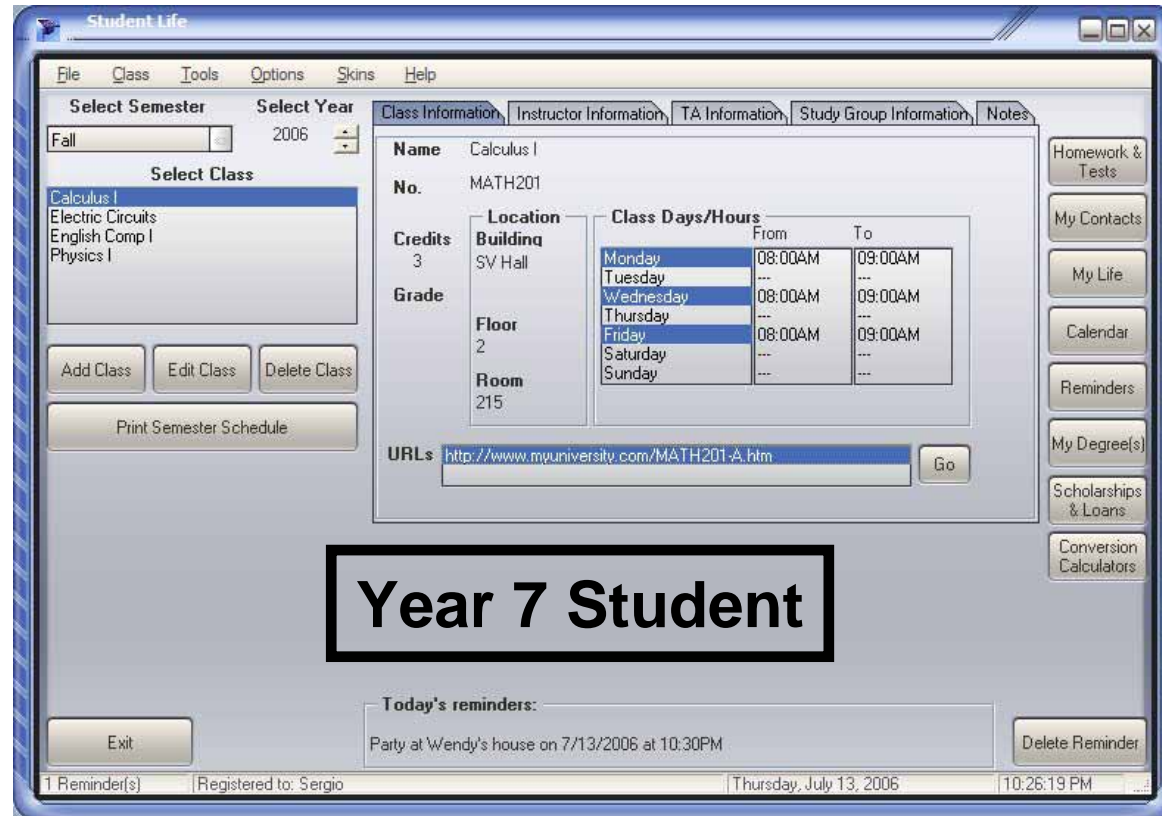
- Miss out on a diverse curriculum

- Change of routine
- Timetable
- Extra curricular demands

- Subjects requiring group work and/ teacher direction

•Content can be more challenging

•New school to find their way around



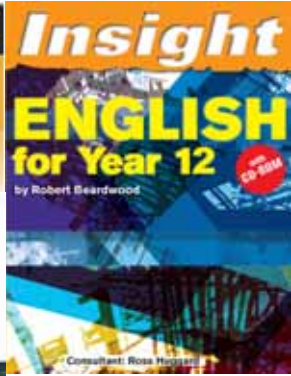
**Year 7 Student**

•New subjects

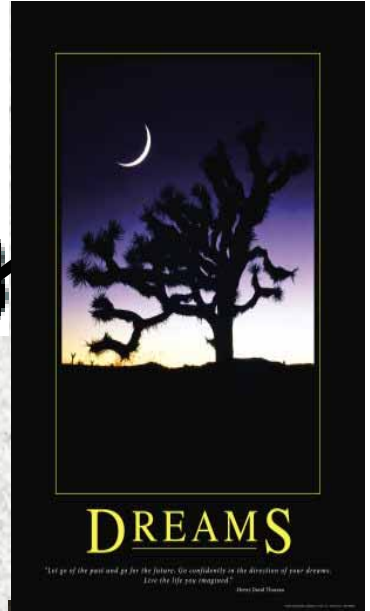
•More teachers to coordinate

- Increased homework demands
- Increased assignment load

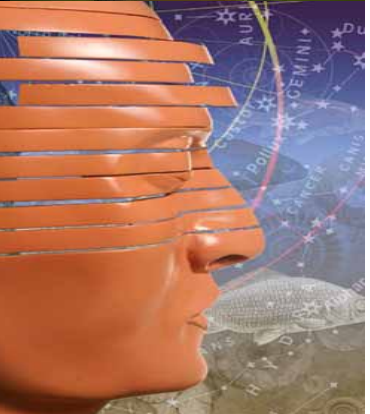
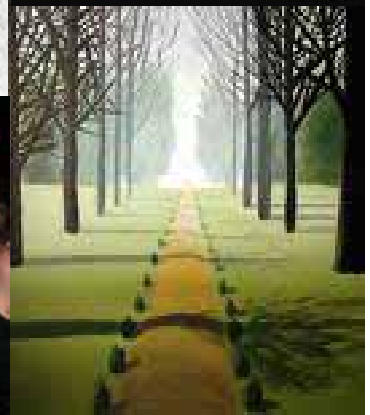
- Practical subjects requiring apparatus



**HSC:  
All My  
Own Work**



**Year 11 Student**





A student at our school has  
just been diagnosed with  
cancer?

What do we do now?



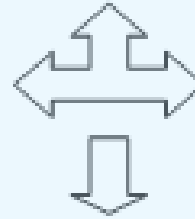
## A SCHOOL PLAN

### When a student is diagnosed with cancer

1. Assign a key contact person at the school

2. Contact the family

3. Contact the clinical nurse consultant at the hospital



4. Form a support team and arrange a meeting.

Invite the following:

- Principal
- Key contact person from the school
- School counsellor
- Classroom Teacher
- Year Advisor
- Welfare staff
- Special Education and/or Support Teachers
- Clinical Nurse Consultant
- Hospital School Teachers
- Parent Advocate or consultant (optional)
- Parent (optional)

5. At the meeting:

- Consider the medical, social and educational implications for the child.
- Consider the child's and family's desire regarding level of disclosure to staff and students.
- Discuss the child's current condition, treatment and prognosis.
- Gather information to formulate a health care plan.
- Gather information about the child's current academic strengths and weaknesses.
- Consider the impact of the diagnosis on the wider school community.
- Plan the disclosure of the news to the school community and supporting their reactions.
- Arrange a time for another meeting within two weeks.



# Start with 1, 2, 3

- 1. Assign a key contact person at the school to:**
  - Liaise with the family
  - Manage the plan



- 2. Contact the family to:**

- Provide name and number of key contact person
- Discuss disclosure
- Invite them to a meeting



- 3. Contact the Clinical Nurse Consultant to:**

- Invite them to a meeting



# The Support Team

- Principal
- Key contact person from the school
- School counsellor
- Classroom Teacher/s
- Year Advisor
- Welfare staff
- Special Education and/or Support Teachers
- Clinical Nurse Consultant
- Hospital School Teacher
- Back on Track Consultant (where relevant)
- Parent Advocate or consultant (optional)
- Parents (optional)



# The First meeting

- Consider the child's and family's desire regarding **level of disclosure** to staff and students
- Discuss the **child's current condition** and treatment
- Consider the **medical, social and educational implications** for the child.



- Gather information to formulate a **health care plan**.
- Consider the **impact** of the diagnosis on the wider school community
- **Plan the disclosure** of the news to the school community and put **support** in place for their possible reactions.
- Arrange a time for another **meeting** within two weeks.



Knowing is not enough; we must apply.  
Willing is not enough; we must do"

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Vision without action is a dream. Action  
without vision is simply passing the time.  
Action with Vision is making a positive  
difference.

Joel Barker

