



# PLAN B & C



# BLUEPRINT



A Structured Backup Plan for  
Selective, Local and Scholarship Pathways

■ EDUCATIONAL GUIDE FOR PARENTS ■

# ■ TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Purpose of This Blueprint	5
2. Why a Backup Plan Matters (Brief Evidence Overview)	7
3. The Three Layers of a Robust Plan	10
4. Step-by-Step Template for Parents	12
Step 1 - Clarify Your Non-Negotiables	12
Step 2 - Define Plan A (Primary Pathway)	14
Step 3 - Build Plan B (Same-Year Secure Alternatives)	15
Step 4 - Build Plan C (Future Pivot Options)	18
Step 5 - Bring It Together in One-Page Summary	20
5. Worked Example (for Illustration)	22
6. How to Use This Blueprint in Practice	23



# Purpose of This Blueprint

CHAPTER

## Purpose of This Blueprint

This blueprint is designed to help families build a layered, data-informed backup plan for high-potential students considering:

### ■ Educational Pathways Covered:

- **Selective high schools or opportunity classes**
- **Local comprehensive schools** with strong extension programs
- **Private schools** (with or without scholarships)
- **Later entry opportunities** (Years 8–11 selective entry, later scholarships, subject acceleration)

**It aims to answer:**

- *"If Plan A does not work out, what does a good, realistic Plan B and Plan C look like for our child?"*

**The blueprint is:**

- **Evidence-informed** – drawing on NSW policy and research about high-potential students and school outcomes
- **Systematic** – parents map options across time, not just for one test
- **Child-centred** – anchored in fit, wellbeing and long-term development, not only school labels

You can use this alongside the Selective Fit Self-Test and your child's academic data (school reports, NAPLAN, selective/OC practice results, etc.).



## 2

# Why a Backup Plan Matters

CHAPTER

## Why a Backup Plan Matters - Brief Evidence Overview

### ■ High-potential support exists in all NSW public schools

The High Potential and Gifted Education (HPGE) policy states that every NSW public school has a responsibility to identify and provide appropriate provisions for high-potential and gifted students, not only selective schools.

### ■ Selective schools are one pathway, not the only pathway

Recent Australian research on academically selective schools found modest long-term advantages in wages and employment, but not large differences in educational attainment once prior achievement and background were taken into account.

### ■ School quality and classroom practice matter across sectors

A national analysis of school quality in Australia highlights that teaching quality, school culture and targeted use of data are key drivers of student outcomes, regardless of whether the school is selective, comprehensive or private.

### ■ Later entry points exist

NSW offers Years 8–11 selective school entry, managed by individual schools, as well as later private scholarships and senior subject pathways. Missing a Year 7 placement does not close all doors.

### ■ Reserve lists and placement variability are common

Families frequently experience movement on reserve lists and changes of mind between offers. Expert guidance routinely recommends securing strong backup enrolments while waiting on selective decisions.

### ■ Implication:

**A thoughtful Plan B and C is standard good practice, not a sign of "giving up"**



# The Three Layers of a Robust Plan

CHAPTER

## The Three Layers of a Robust Plan

We frame options as three layers, each with a different time horizon:

### ■ Plan A – Primary Pathway (Year of Entry)

The main goal: e.g. Year 7 selective, top private scholarship, or chosen local school.

### ■ Plan B – Same-Year Secure Alternatives

Confirmed enrolment options that provide adequate challenge and support in the same entry year:

- **Local comprehensive** (with clear extension provisions)
- **Partially selective school**
- **Private school** (full-fee or more accessible scholarship/discount)

### ■ Plan C – Future Pivot Options (Years 8–12)

Medium-term pathways that can be activated later:

- Year 8–11 selective entry
- Later private school scholarships or bursaries
- Subject acceleration, structured extension, or specialist programs in the local school
- Senior study options (e.g. extension subjects, early university programs)

A "good" backup plan normally has at least one realistic option in each layer, compatible with the family's finances, location and the child's wellbeing profile.



# Step-by-Step Template for Parents

CHAPTER

## Step-by-Step Template for Parents

You can present this as a fillable workbook.

### ■ Step 1 – Clarify Your Non-Negotiables

Before listing schools, families should agree on non-negotiable criteria. Research on school quality emphasises that a good match between school practices and family priorities contributes to better outcomes and satisfaction.

**Ask:**

<b>■ Travel &amp; Time</b>	
Maximum acceptable door-to-door commute (minutes):	_____
Can the family sustain this daily for 6 years?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No / Unsure
<b>■ Financial Boundaries</b>	
Maximum tuition/fees per year willing and able to pay:	\$ _____
Comfortable relying on annually reviewed scholarship?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No
<b>■ Wellbeing &amp; Balance</b>	
Minimum sleep acceptable on school nights:	_____ hours
Priority level of co-curricular involvement:	<input type="checkbox"/> Low <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate <input type="checkbox"/> High
<b>■ Values &amp; Culture</b>	
Do we prioritise particular ethos (single-sex/co-ed, religious/non-religious, emphasis on music/sport/academics)?	
Briefly note:	_____

These become your filter for all later options.

## ■ Step 2 – Define Plan A (Primary Pathway)

In most cases, Plan A is the most aspirational option your child can reasonably prepare for, consistent with the Selective Fit profile and non-negotiables.

### Examples:

- Year 7 entry to a particular selective high school
- A specific private school scholarship
- A high-quality local comprehensive with established extension programs

### Template for Plan A:

**Target school(s)/program(s):** \_\_\_\_\_

### Entry pathway:

- Selective placement test (Year 5/6)
- School-run scholarship exam
- Local enrolment + internal extension
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### Evidence of readiness (data):

**School reports (subjects, grades):** \_\_\_\_\_

**NAPLAN bands/scaled scores:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Reading / maths levels, competition results:** \_\_\_\_\_

### Key dates and milestones:

**Application open/close:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Test/interview:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Outcome release:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Fit check (using Selective Fit Self-Test):**

**Academic readiness:** ■ Strong ■ Moderate ■ Emerging

**Wellbeing risk:** ■ Low ■ Moderate ■ Elevated

## ■ Step 3 – Build Plan B (Same-Year Secure Alternatives)

Plan B should contain one or more options that are highly likely to be available, and that still offer reasonable academic stretch.

### 3.1. Local Extension Option(s)

Use the HPGE policy as a conversation starting point: every NSW public school is expected to provide provisions for high potential students (e.g. extension classes, enrichment groups, competitions, subject acceleration).

#### Local Extension Checklist

For each local or nearby comprehensive school, note:

School	Catchment / out-of-area?	Extension offerings	Evidence of academic culture	Notes
		e.g. streamed maths/English, enrichment groups, Olympiads	e.g. HSC/NAPLAN data, subject breadth	

#### Prompts for school tours / emails:

- "How do you identify and support high-potential students?" (HPGE implementation)
- "What extension pathways are available in Years 7–8?"
- "Are there opportunities for subject acceleration in later years?"

### 3.2. Partially Selective or Alternative Public Options

If available in your region:

School	Type	Entry requirement	Likelihood (high/medium/low)	Comments
	■ Partial selective ■ Local	e.g. school test, report-based		

### 3.3. Private School (Full-Fee or Accessible Scholarship)

For each realistic private option:

School	Fee level	Scholarship / fee relief options	Entry criteria	Fit notes
		e.g. academic scholarship, means-tested bursary	exam, portfolio, interview	

#### Key questions:

- "If scholarship not offered or partial, still comfortable with this option?"
- "How stable are scholarship conditions across Years 7–12?"

## ■ Step 4 – Build Plan C (Future Pivot Options: Years 8–12)

This layer recognises that pathways can change as students mature.

### 4.1. Later Selective Entry (Years 8–11)

The NSW Department of Education provides a separate process for Years 8–11 selective entry, managed by individual schools. Vacancies, tests and timelines vary.

School	Year(s) we may consider (8–11)	Typical process	Key dates to monitor	Notes
		e.g. school-run test, portfolio, reports, interview		

#### Questions to note:

- Does this school historically offer Year 8–11 places?
- What achievement levels expected for later entry?
- How would potential move affect friendships and commuting?

### 4.2. Later Private Scholarships / Bursaries

Some independent schools offer scholarships at multiple entry points (e.g. Year 7, 9, 11). Identify any schools where a later scholarship attempt is feasible. Note whether they value co-curricular achievements (music, sport, leadership) in addition to academics.

### 4.3. Internal Pathways in the Local School

Even without changing schools, students can access more advanced learning through:

- Early entry into Stage 6 subjects
- Extension subjects (e.g. Extension Mathematics, Extension English, languages)
- Vocational Education and Training (VET) subjects aligned with interests
- University-linked programs in senior years

For the chosen local/Plan B school: List potential Years 9–12 pathways your child could use to regain or extend academic challenge.

## ■ Step 5 – Bring It Together in a One-Page Summary

You can present this as a simple matrix for parents.

### Plan A / B / C Overview

Layer	Option(s)	Type	Key Conditions	Status
Plan A	_____	■ Selective ■ Private scholarship ■ Local extension	Test/exam, interview, etc.	■ Preparing ■ Applied ■ Offer/Outcome
Plan B1	_____	■ Local comprehensive + extension	Enrolment confirmed, HPGE provisions checked	■ High certainty
Plan B2	_____	■ Partial selective / other	Entry method noted	■ Medium certainty
Plan C1	_____	■ Year 8–11 selective	Monitor school website for vacancies	■ Future
Plan C2	_____	■ Later scholarship / senior pathway	Application or subject selection in Years ____	■ Future

**Encourage families to write a brief decision rule, for example:**

*"If our child receives a place at School X (selective) and School Y (private scholarship), we will compare: commute and time cost, observed wellbeing after transition days, financial sustainability over six years, and then make a joint decision with our child."*



# Worked Example

CHAPTER

## Worked Example (for Illustration)

You can include a short anonymised scenario, e.g.:

■ **Student:** Year 5, high reading/math achievement, moderate test anxiety

■ **Plan A:**

Year 7 entry to a mid-to-high pressure selective school, based on fit and commute

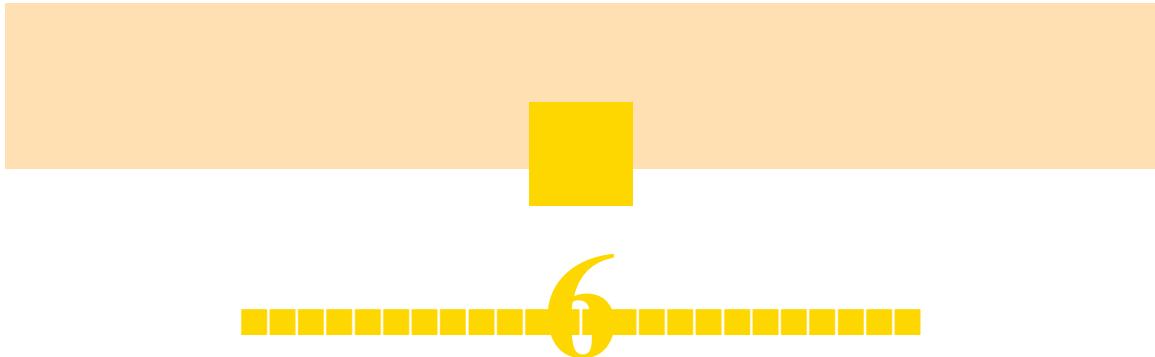
■ **Plan B:**

- Confirmed enrolment at local comprehensive with documented extension classes in English and Mathematics
- Application to a nearby partially selective school
- Exploration of one realistically affordable private school with modest academic scholarship option

■ **Plan C:**

- Note Year 9 selective entry at two schools (diary key dates from school websites)
- Confirm that local school offers early Stage 6 Maths for strong students in Year 10
- Consider a later (Year 9) scholarship at a school with strong music program, aligned to the child's interests

The purpose of the example is to show that a "good" backup plan is layered, realistic and flexible, rather than a single "second choice".



# How to Use This Blueprint in Practice

CHAPTER

## How to Use This Blueprint in Practice

■ **Treat this as a living document:** update it annually as your child's interests, results and wellbeing change.

**Use it as a structured basis for discussions with:**

- Classroom teachers and HPGE coordinators
- School leaders (for extension pathways)
- Your child, so they understand that not getting one particular offer does not close their future

This blueprint helps you make evidence-informed decisions while keeping your child's wellbeing at the center.

## ■ CONCLUSION ■

**A well-structured backup plan provides:**

- **Peace of mind** for families
- **Multiple pathways** to academic challenge
- **Flexibility** as your child develops
- **Evidence-informed** decision making

■ **Remember:** A thoughtful Plan B and C is standard good practice, not a sign of 'giving up'.

Your child's potential can thrive in many environments with the right support and provisions.

**Thank you for using this blueprint! ■■**