


Where Should I Sit at Lunch?



The Ultimate 24/7 Guide to Surviving the High School Years


Harriet S. Mosatche, Ph.D.,
and Karen Unger, M.A.



Where Should I Sit at Lunch ?



The Ultimate 24/7
Guide to Surviving the
High Years



Harriet S. Mosatche, Ph.D., and Karen Unger, M.A.

McGraw-Hill

New York Chicago San Francisco Lisbon London Madrid Mexico City
Milan New Delhi San Juan Seoul Singapore Sydney Toronto

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Mosatche, Harriet S., 1949–

Where should I sit at lunch? : the ultimate 24/7 guide to surviving the high school years / by Harriet S. Mosatche and Karen Unger.

p. cm.

ISBN 0-07-145928-6 (alk. paper)

1. Teenagers—Life skills guides. 2. High school students—Life skills guides.

I. Unger, Karen, 1954– II. Title.

HQ796.M627 2006

646.700835—dc22

2005027002

Copyright © 2006 by The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. Except as permitted under the United States Copyright Act of 1976, no part of this publication may be reproduced or distributed in any form or by any means, or stored in a database or retrieval system, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 DOC/DOC 0 9 8 7 6

ISBN 0-07-145928-6

Interior design by Think Design Group

McGraw-Hill books are available at special quantity discounts to use as premiums and sales promotions, or for use in corporate training programs. For more information, please write to the Director of Special Sales, Professional Publishing, McGraw-Hill, Two Penn Plaza, New York, NY 10121-2298. Or contact your local bookstore.

To Ivan, Liz, and Rob with love.

—HSM

*To my mother, who shared her love of books,
and to my father, who always encouraged me to strive
to do the best I could. To my husband, who makes
it possible for me to realize my dreams, and
to my son, who is the best of me and much more.*

—KU

Preface

“ Just before I entered high school, I was really nervous because I had heard all these horror stories about getting lost in the massive building. As soon as I entered the school, I remember everyone being helpful, and I was no longer scared. I did get lost in the building several times, but that happens to everyone. High school is a million times better than middle school. There is a ton more freedom and more people to meet, and you can choose some of your classes. ”

—ANDREW, 17

“ Middle school was extremely difficult for me. I was teased a lot, and I didn't have many friends. The transition to high school was amazing. I immediately started making a ton of friends, and suddenly I had so many activities that I was part of. I love high school. I am so happy with my friends and what I do every day. I have never felt so confident. ”

—ELIZABETH, 16

“If you make the right types of friends and do what you love, then your high school years should be amazing.”

—WENDY, 19

Welcome to High School Survival

Why are you reading this book? Are you a high school student looking for some advice? Are you reaching the end of middle school and curious as to what comes next?

High school is huge. Whether you live in a small town with a class of kids you've known since you were 6 or in a community where your middle school or junior high was local and you are heading to a regional high school of thousands, your high school years are very different from anything you have experienced before. In your high school years, you prepare—not only academically, but also socially, mentally, and emotionally—for the independence of the years to come.

Ten Tips to Get You Started

Dr. Jeff Matteson is the principal of Millbrook High School in New York. Here are his top ten tips (and, he adds, not in any order of importance) for success during the high school years:

1. **You have to just say no to some things.** You will find yourself chronically overbooked. You may want to be on everything. Schools with everything they offer to make “all” possible know you can't do it all. (See pages 167–69 for time management tips.)

2. **Find an adult mentor.** A teacher, coach, family friend, or librarian can help you focus your interests and energy and celebrate your successes. Find a mentor you can trust with your deepest confidences and most serious questions. (See pages 163–64 for guidance on how to find a mentor.)
3. **Show up.** Don't have a poor attendance record now—you wouldn't last at work if you did. You won't be successful in college either. It sounds simple, but it's important. Businesses look for good, talented people who show up—physically and mentally. (See pages 48–50 for ideas on managing stress so that you can stay focused.)
4. **Do the work.** Teachers really care. Teachers reward big time the kids who regularly do their homework. (See pages 138–42 for tips on teachers.)
5. **Communicate with your parents—for the most part, be open and honest.** (See pages 64–67 for how to do that.) Parents can't understand silence. Successful kids let their parents know what is going on. (See the advice from Stephen Wallace of SADD on pages 194–95.) You can still keep some stuff private, but give your parents a chance to understand your life.
6. **Stay safe, and know that your safety depends to a great extent upon yourself.** You don't have to be a “narc,” but you do have to tell if you know that someone is planning to do something that will hurt others. (See pages 93–95.) Even an anonymous note is better than not telling when lives are at stake. Think about who you choose to get in a car with and what you are doing if you are self-medicating—you are not invincible.
7. **Get some sleep.** Computers are sleep burners. How much time do you waste? You can't think clearly and do well in

school if you are perpetually exhausted. (See pages 15–19 for ideas on staying healthy.)

8. **Set realistic personal goals.** (See pages 169–71 for goal-setting ideas.) Reflect on what you are good at and what others say you are good at. (See pages 31–32 on how to make a list.) What do people thank you for? That’s probably what you are good at.
9. **Seek to make a difference.** Schools are like little cities. There are tons of opportunities to serve, not so you can get an award but so you can be a vital member of a community. You’ll really grow as a human when you can help someone. (See pages 197–204 for ideas.)
10. **Figure out what you need and how you need to learn, and let your teachers know.** You have to be responsible for your own learning. (See pages 131–38.) Think about the teachers you liked best. Did they draw lots of pictures and diagrams? Give you lots of activity choices? Assign interesting projects? Have a great sense of humor? Your teachers and your schoolwork can help you figure out how you learn best.

“Worry about yourself, not what everyone else is doing. Don’t let anyone talk you into doing something you know is wrong. Do your work, stay focused, and just try to do your best.”

—JULIA, 14

Bests and Worsts

What’s the best thing about being in high school? The worst?

“

The best things about high school were the little things like the cafeteria's popcorn chicken, talking in the hallways, passing notes in class, watching girls walk down the hall with their skirts accidentally tucked into the back of their tights, leaving books in my friends' lockers if they were closer to my classroom, hanging out in the bathroom, the hilarious movies we had to watch in driver's ed, sneaking out of my assigned seat in the front of the classroom to go sit with my friends in the back, running to homeroom right before the last bell rang, eating Cocoa Puffs during English class . . . Basically my day-to-day activities that I never really regarded as anything special during high school are what I now really look back on and miss the most.

The worst part about high school is all the high school drama and B.S. that no one cares about as soon as you graduate. No one cares if you dated the homecoming king or that you were voted Nicest Hair in the yearbook. All of high school was basically a bunch of girls whining and crying about their terrible lives and going behind each other's backs and being mean to one another, and attitudes like that will get you nowhere in life, period. Guys are competitive and full of testosterone and always trying to outdo one another and be better than the next guy and funnier, and just like with girls, none of that will matter as soon as they are handed their diploma. So of these I have found some will grow up, but others seem to continue to have the maturity of a sophomore in high school, and they just have to get over themselves.

”

—WHITNEY, 19

“

The best thing about high school was definitely my friends, 'cause I did a lot of fun stuff, hanging out, whatever. Regardless of the situation—we could have just been playing Ping Pong in my basement—it was the people I was with who made it fun. At the junior-year carnival, I rapped in front of three hundred people, and I'll never forget how awesome it felt when they rushed the stage, yelling for an encore. By senior year, everyone at school knew who I was—I had respect, I had a girlfriend, I knew what college I was going to, and I had a tight group of friends.

The worst thing about being in high school was the beginning of it. Every weekend, I would hang out with the same three guys, doing nothing. We didn't hang out with girls—that happened later. Freshman year was easy—we just had tons of boring busywork. But things got better, much better.

”

—ROB, 19

About This Book

In *Where Should I Sit at Lunch? The Ultimate 24/7 Guide to Surviving the High School Years*, you'll find advice from experts: teens who have graduated from or who are in high school and professionals who work in many different fields. Why 24/7? Because this book doesn't just cover what happens during the school day, it covers all aspects of your high school life. You can read the book in order—or choose a chapter that answers a question you have now and then skip around. You may find it hard to believe that many people look back at high school as the best time of their lives. Or you may be so happy,

you can't imagine what you will do once you graduate. Or—like most people—you may be somewhere in between. Wherever you fall on the love-hate high school spectrum, you'll find something in this book that will make your life better. And why is the title *Where Should I Sit at Lunch?* Because high school students said finding a group of kids they felt comfortable hanging out with was one of their biggest concerns when they first started high school. What about you?

Acknowledgments

Working with McGraw-Hill on this book has been an absolute joy. John Aherne, senior editor, has been consistently enthusiastic and encouraging. Thanks also to Susan Moore, Sarah Pelz, and the rest of the McGraw-Hill team. I am grateful to the experts who generously shared their knowledge and ideas with me: Audrey Jacobs Brockner, Sheryl Scalzo, Judy Strauss-Schwartz, Michael A. Tedesco, and Diane Tukman.

My children, Robert and Elizabeth, gave me valuable feedback and were constantly on call to find friends and acquaintances who would answer their mother's never-ending questions. My husband, Ivan Lawner, has always been totally supportive of my writing and is endlessly patient.

Many of my friends helped me locate teens who were willing to talk about their lives. The high school and college students across the country who shared their experiences made this book come alive for me. I truly appreciate their honesty, their insights, and their time.

—HSM

Thank you to McGraw-Hill for recognizing how tough the high school years can be, and its editors, John Aherne, who was the perfect combination of coach and wordsmith, and Susan Moore, who shepherded the manuscript to finish. A special thank-you to Sarah

Pelz for her hard work, enthusiasm, and creative suggestions. Thanks, too, to the design team, who created the teen-appealing look.

I cannot thank enough all of the experts, and the organizations and institutions they represent, who shared their experience and knowledge in these pages: Adam Aberman, Rick Beckwith, Maggie Blayney, Karen Bokram, Dr. Nancy Brown, Dr. Cheryl Dellasega, Danny McKeever, Trish Tchume, Stephen Wallace, Marlene Weber, Kelly Whalen, and Kelly White. Their advice is so much more useful and eloquent than mine would ever be.

Thank you to my friends who helped gather such insightful and real stories, but most of all, thank you to the high school and college students who gave such true-to-life and compelling quotes, especially those from Millbrook, Lyall Memorial Federated Church, Poughkeepsie Day School, and Stanford University. Their words are the heart of this book.

—KU

Contents

	Preface	vii
	Acknowledgments	xv
1	Body Stuff: DEAL WITH IT	1
2	The Inner You: KEEP IT TRUE	27
3	Parents, Privacy, and Parties: FIND THE BALANCE	53
4	The Friendship Game: WHERE SHOULD I SIT AT LUNCH?	81
5	Heart Smart: LOVE, SEX, AND COMMON SENSE	103
6	Teachers, Tests, and To-Do Lists: TACKLE THEM	129
7	Jobs, Internships, and Mentors: WORK THEM INTO YOUR LIFE	151
8	Manage Your Life: GET RESULTS AND DO MORE	165
9	The Pressure's On: STAY TRUE TO YOU	183
10	Above and Beyond: DO THE RIGHT THING	197

Body Stuff

DEAL WITH IT

“Physically, my self-image is of a short, rather heavy teen. I’ve got no trouble with the short part, but I do want to change the heavy part. I lost fifteen pounds in the past two years and am really proud of myself for that. I hope to lose another fifteen or more in the coming years, seeing as I still couldn’t be called slender by any stretch of the imagination. I’d say I’m most self-conscious about my stomach, which always sticks out.”

—ANGELA, 16

Your Changing Body: The Wide Range of Normal

Your body has already gone through some of the big stuff. You know, a height growth spurt, a curvier or more muscular body, hair growing under your arms, and a lot of other changes. Maybe you had a tough time at the beginning because your shoe size and your body parts got larger overnight, and you just weren’t ready. Or maybe you were the one who had to wait nervously for some sign that puberty had finally arrived, while your friends’ body changes surged way ahead. Timing is a tough part of

puberty—some seventh-graders look like they're 19, while some 16-year-olds could still get into the movies at child prices.

Wherever you are on the road to physical maturity, you may be wondering what's normal. Basically, there's a very wide range. For girls, the first signs of puberty begin anywhere from 8 to 13, and for guys, anywhere from 10 to 15. That's why there was probably a time in middle school when you noticed some of the girls towering over a lot of the boys. High school is the time when boys play catch-up. If you're really worried about whether you're developing normally, talk to your doctor. But chances are, you're okay. Look at the following lists to see the specifics about puberty.

What Happens During Male Puberty?

- Height increases.
- Testicles and scrotum enlarge.
- Penis widens and lengthens.
- Pubic hair develops, gradually becoming curlier and darker.
- Facial and underarm hair develops.
- Voice deepens.
- Body and face mature.
- Leg hair becomes thicker and darker.
- Chest hair appears.
- First ejaculation occurs, typically in wet dreams (during sleep) or during masturbation.
- Erections are more frequent.
- Sweat glands are more active.
- Acne appears on face, chest, and back.

What Happens During Female Puberty?

- Height increases.
- Breasts develop.
- Underarm hair develops.
- Pubic hair develops, gradually becoming curlier and darker.
- Menstruation begins (cycle is often not regular for the first year or so).
- Leg hair gets thicker and darker.

- Thighs, hips, and buttocks fill out. (Most girls gain weight in those areas.)
- Sweat glands become more active.
- Acne appears on face, chest, and back (usually less severe than in boys).

Dozing in Class Doesn't Count as the Nine Hours of Sleep You Need

One thing that *isn't* changing is your need for sleep. The demands on your time are increasing, and you need at least as much sleep as you did during middle school. How are you going to fit everything in and still get enough sleep? Most high school students need about nine hours of sleep a night. Are you getting even close to that on an average school night? If you're sleep-deprived day after day, you can't focus very well on your schoolwork—or on anything else, for that matter. Unfortunately, most school schedules are out of sync with the physiology and sleep patterns of adolescents. You're feeling most alert in the evenings and most tired in the early morning hours—like at 8:30 in your American history class. Try establishing nightly routines that will help you fall asleep, which means no loud music, fights with parents, or intense IM conversations with friends around bedtime.

“ Basically, I never get enough sleep on school nights. I usually can't finish my homework before eleven, often later. I never get up in the morning before my CD alarm goes off, and even with loud music playing, it's hard to get out of bed. Most of the kids in my first-period class are in the same zombie state as me. ”

—BETH, 16