

Union Day IB Student Success Guide

Grade-level tips for students in a rigorous IB pathway, Grades 7–12

STUDENTS: Build the habits first. Then manage the rigor strategically.

7th Grade — Build the Foundation

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- Use a planner or digital calendar every day. Review weekly with parent / teachers
- Create consistent homework and study routine.
- Read regularly and focus on understanding, not just finishing.
- Ask for help as soon as something becomes confusing.
- Keep materials and digital files organized. Use color coding, tabs, folders - whatever works best for you.
- Balance academics with activities, friends, sleep, and downtime.
- [NO screen time for one hour prior to bedtime.](#)

8th Grade — Strengthen Your Skills

- Study over several days instead of cramming the night before. Put study time on your calendar.
- Learn which study methods work best for you. [What is your learning style.](#)
- Strengthen analytical reading, writing, and research skills. - Practice communicating directly with teachers.
- Explore your interests through clubs, service, arts, or sports.
- Learn to manage phone and social-media distractions.
- [NO screen time for one hour prior to bedtime.](#)

9th Grade IBMYP— Establish Your High School Record

- Remember that your high school transcript starts now. - Break large assignments into smaller steps and mini-deadlines. Your teachers can help with this.
- Use one calendar for tests, projects, activities, and deadlines.
- Get to know your teachers and counselor.
- Seek support early instead of waiting for grades to drop. - Build depth in a few meaningful activities rather than joining everything.
- [NO screen time for one hour prior to bedtime.](#) No “doom scrolling” before bedtime.

10th Grade — IBMYP - Prepare for IB Diploma-Level Work

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- Strengthen time management before the Diploma Program begins.
- Use [time blocking](#) to support building healthy habits and stay organized
- Identify your strongest subjects and the ones that need more support.
- Choose challenging courses thoughtfully, not simply for appearance.
- Practice longer analytical writing, research, citation, and note-taking.
- Use practice testing to identify skills that need improvement, look to teachers to help understand where you may have gaps in learning.
- Begin exploring colleges, careers, and meaningful summer opportunities.
- Consider dual enrollment opportunities

11th Grade — Manage IB Strategically

- Create a master calendar for tests, Internal Assessments, CAS, the Extended Essay, activities, and college planning. - Start major IB work early; overlapping deadlines are common.
- Keep CAS experiences and reflections current.
- Meet regularly with teachers and your Extended Essay supervisor.
- Build a balanced college list based on fit, affordability, and academics.
- Use the summer before senior year for applications, essays, and your activity list.
- Begin conversations regarding finance to cover college, training programs, gap year, etc.
- Use the summer to visit colleges of interest.
- Use the [college application checklist](#) to guide your process

12th Grade — Finish Strong

- Keep senior-year grades and IB coursework strong.
- Schedule weekly time for college and scholarship applications.
- Track application, financial-aid, IB, testing, and scholarship deadlines.
- Complete financial-aid forms and compare college costs carefully.
- Prepare for IB exams with spaced practice, past papers, and teacher feedback.
- Ask for help when needed and make time to enjoy your final year.
- Continue using the college application checklist to guide your process.

Remember: Challenge yourself, but do not confuse being overwhelmed with being successful. Strong IB students plan ahead, ask for help, manage their time, and protect their well-being.

Parent Support Guide

How to support a high-achieving student while building independence and connection

PARENTS: Shift gradually from manager to coach to consultant.

Grades 7–8

Provide structure. Teach organization, study routines, planning, and self-advocacy.

Grades 9–10

Begin stepping back. Monitor progress while students manage work and communicate with teachers.

Grade 11

Help with the big picture as IB work, activities, testing, and college research overlap.

Grade 12

Be a consultant. Support deadlines and finances while the student owns applications and IB responsibilities.

Build routines, not dependence

Help your student create systems for planning, studying, sleep, and organization rather than managing every task for them. Don't give into the urge to "help them". These are lifelong skills each will need for continued success.

Ask about the plan, not only the grade

Try: "What is coming up this week?" and "What is your plan for getting it done?" Focus on skills students can control. These are great starter questions during the weekly review of your students tracking calendar.

Encourage self-advocacy

Coach students on what to say, then let them increasingly contact teachers, ask questions, and request help themselves. Encourage independence and support "failures". This is what builds resiliency – students will more often hear "no" than "yes".

Protect sleep and recovery along with proper nutrition

Rest supports attention, memory, mood, and performance. Persistent late nights are a sign the workload may need adjustment. You have to feed your body to feed your mind !!

Praise growth, not perfection

Notice persistence, improved planning, asking for help, learning from mistakes, and progress—not only A grades and high scores. Students WANT a connection with parents but often do not feel heard or supported in their efforts as well as the results. Saying, "you did a great job and I'm proud of you" goes a long way.

Keep college planning in perspective

Discuss fit, cost, programs, environment, and well-being. College should not become the topic of every family conversation.

Become a better listener

1. Give full attention

Put down the phone, pause other tasks, and show that the conversation matters.

2. Listen before advising

Ask, "Do you want me to listen, help you think it through, or help you make a plan?"

3. Do not interrupt

Let your child finish, even when you think you know what they are going to say.

4. Reflect and validate

Name what you hear: "That sounds frustrating." Understanding a feeling does not mean you agree with every conclusion.

5. Ask open-ended questions

Try "What was the hardest part?" instead of questions that can be answered with yes or no.

6. Stay calm with difficult information

A strong negative reaction can make a student less likely to share next time. Avoid minimizing, lecturing, or comparing.

7. Allow silence and choose the right moment

Some students talk more easily in the car, on a walk, or while doing something together.

8. Respect appropriate privacy

Giving older students some space can make voluntary sharing more likely.

9. Thank them for opening up

"I'm glad you told me" reinforces that coming to you was a good decision.

10. Keep the door open

If they are not ready to talk, let them know you are available when they are.

Listen to understand—not simply to respond.

Stress is different for students today than it was when many parents were in school. Remember what school felt like for you, then consider the additional distractions, influences, pressures, and faster pace of today's world. When you lead with genuine empathy, you create a stronger connection with your child.