

For parents and carers

Wellbeing support for students during the school holidays

This guide provides tips and resources for parents, carers and families to support the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people in their care during the school holidays. This includes services to reach out to if more support is needed.

Actions that support positive mental health

Encourage your child or young person to:

- Exercise and eat healthily to boost their mood
- Prioritise sleep to support mental and emotional wellbeing
- Explore relaxation techniques and coping strategies
- Stay in touch and catch up with friends and loved ones
- Make time to do things they enjoy
- Practice positive self-talk, and remind them they are not alone
- Engage in healthy online habits
- Seek professional help if needed.¹

The department has developed wellbeing activities and conversation starters for parents and carers of [primary school-aged children](#) and [secondary school-aged children](#).

Feeling it: [mindfulness resources and activities for secondary students](#). Smiling Mind gives tips on self-care, understanding and managing emotions, being mindful, being kind to yourself, navigating uncertainty and preparing for change.

Signs a child or young person may need mental health support

In some cases, these actions will not be enough to support positive mental health.

Keep an eye out and seek professional help for changes that last two or more weeks such as:

- Loss of interest or involvement in activities normally enjoyed
- Feeling 'low', unusually stressed or worried
- Doing ordinary things gets harder
- Being easily irritated or angry
- Taking more dangerous risks, like using alcohol or drugs
- Withdrawal or feeling overwhelmed
- Difficulties with concentration and motivation
- Having a lot of negative thoughts
- Changing sleeping and eating habits.²



Young people supporting each other

Young people are most **likely to turn to each other for support** before seeking out an adult or service provider.

Young people can support each other by:

- **contacting 000 if a friend needs urgent assistance** or is at risk of harming themselves or others
- reaching out to a friend, offering support and letting them know you care

¹ headspace – supporting young people with school stress
<https://headspace.org.au/friends-and-family/parents-guide-tips-for-managing-stress-and-problems-at-school/>
<https://headspace.org.au/explore-topics/supporting-a-young-person/school-stress/>

² headspace 'mental health and you' poster
<https://headspace.org.au/assets/Uploads/Mental-Health-Posters-mgpdf.pdf> and headspace – how to talk to your children about mental health <https://headspace.org.au/dads/>

- letting their friend know they may need to tell a trusted adult about their concerns.

Having these types of conversations can be difficult for young people. Information for young people on how to support a friend is available via:

- headspace: [How to help a friend going through a tough time](#)
- the Mental Health and Wellbeing Toolkit: [If you or a friend need help with mental health](#)

Mental health resources

- [Supporting your young person during the holidays](#) (headspace)
- [Mental Health and Wellbeing Toolkit](#) (Department of Education)
 - [Raising Learners Podcast Series](#): providing expert advice and information to parents and carers on topics including how to keep your child safe online
 - [Understanding mental health – fact sheet](#) (Orygen)
 - [Learn how to handle tough times](#) (headspace)
 - [Get into life \(to keep your headspace healthy\)](#) (headspace)

Online wellbeing and safety

- [Safe Socials](#) (Department of Education)
 - [Fact sheet – parents of primary students](#)
 - [Fact sheet – parents of secondary students](#)
- [ScrollSafe](#) (Orygen)
 - [Parents and carers hub](#)
- [Social media age restrictions](#) (eSafety Commissioner)

Mental health support

- **Contacting 000** for urgent assistance
- **Your local GP** for a mental health plan and referrals
- **headspace Counselling**: Young people aged 12-25 can access counselling services from headspace. During the holidays, students can call their [local headspace centre](#)
- **eheadspace**: 1800 650 890 www.headspace.org.au/eheadspace
- **Kids Helpline**: 1800 551 800 www.kidshelpline.com.au
- **Lifeline**: 13 11 14 www.lifeline.org.au
- **Beyond Blue**: 1300 224 636 www.beyondblue.org.au
- **Head to Health**: 1800 595 212 <https://www.medicarementalhealth.gov.au/head-to-health-clinics-victoria>

- **Suicide Call Back Service**: 1300 659 467 www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au

Self-harm and suicide prevention resources

- [Getting a mental health care plan](#) (ReachOut)
- [What you need to know about self-harm](#) (headspace)
- [How to help when someone is suicidal](#) (SANE Australia)

Family violence support and resources

- **Safe Steps**: 1800 015 188 www.safesteps.org.au
- **1800RESPECT**: 1800 737 732 www.1800respect.org.au
- **What's okay at home**: www.woah.org.au
- [Family violence support resources](#)