

# DURING HOLIDAY BREAK for families

- 1** Consider keeping a routine throughout the break that mirrors a typical weekly schedule. For younger students, especially, this sense of routine can make transitions between school and winter break easier. Maintaining a consistent bedtime (exceptions are allowed, of course!), wake-up hour, and mealtime schedule can be useful in fostering a sense of calm throughout the holiday season.
- 2** Wrap-up the year by taking time to consider what the goals of your family are—both as individual members and as a whole—for the upcoming year. Maybe the goal is to spend more uninterrupted time together as a family each week by playing a game together or finding time outside when the weather is nice. In addition, talking through any stresses or anxiety surrounding the upcoming year can also create connectedness. Children who are heading into high school or college may be worried about choosing a school or a career path; others may be worried about fitting in, getting good grades, or making a certain sports or activities team or trying out for a play. Laying worries out in the open allow for creation of a sense of calm.

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Practicing gratitude as a family is one way to think beyond the materialistic aspects of the holidays and consider what truly lifts people up and makes them happy. Naming something—or someone—families are grateful for each day can promote a sense of belonging and warmth during the season.

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These guides, designed for students and families, provide an overview of signs that others are in need of mental health aid, and contain practical strategies for enhancing mental health.

**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.

**Signs a child or young person may need mental health support**

In some cases, these options will not be enough 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
- Ordinary things get harder
- Being easily irritated or angry
- Taking more dangerous risks, like using alcohol or drugs
- Withdrawn or feeling overwhelmed
- Difficulties with concentration and motivation
- Having a lot of negative thoughts
- Changing in sleeping and eating<sup>1</sup>

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

- Feeling 'low', unusually stressed or worried
- Ordinary things get harder
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**Actions that support positive mental health**

Encourage your 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
- Seek professional help if needed<sup>2</sup>

The Department have 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 senior 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.



1. headspace - a parents guide to school issues and stress <https://headspace.org.au/friends-and-family/parents-guide>  
2. headspace 'mental health and you' poster [https://headspace.org.au/health/secondary/Mental\\_Health\\_Posters\\_mgsaf.pdf](https://headspace.org.au/health/secondary/Mental_Health_Posters_mgsaf.pdf)  
3. headspace - how to talk to your children about mental health <https://headspace.org.au/ukbde>

**For students**  
Wellbeing support during the school holidays

This guide provides tips to continue looking after your mental health and wellbeing during the school holidays and services to reach out to if you need support.

**Signs that you or a friend may need mental health support**

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
- Ordinary things get harder
- Being easily irritated or angry
- Taking more dangerous risks, like using alcohol or drugs
- Withdrawn or feeling overwhelmed
- Difficulties with concentration and motivation
- Having a lot of negative thoughts
- Changing in sleeping and eating<sup>1</sup>

**Actions that support positive mental health over the school holidays**

Encourage your young person to:

- Exercise boosts mood and mental health – make it fun!
- Nourish your brain by eating healthily – it will also improve your 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 you enjoy
- Practice positive self-talk – and remember you are not alone
- Seek professional help if needed<sup>2</sup>

**Feeling it: mindfulness resources and activities for students.** Smiling Mind gives you tips on looking after yourself, understanding and managing emotions, being mindful, being kind to yourself, negotiating uncertainty and preparing for change. You may find that these actions are not enough to look after your mental health. Here are some signs you may need some support.



1. headspace - a parents guide to school issues and stress <https://headspace.org.au/friends-and-family/parents-guide>  
2. headspace 'mental health and you' poster [https://headspace.org.au/health/secondary/Mental\\_Health\\_Posters\\_mgsaf.pdf](https://headspace.org.au/health/secondary/Mental_Health_Posters_mgsaf.pdf)  
3. headspace - how to talk to your children about mental health <https://headspace.org.au/ukbde>

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