

PARENT INFORMATION SHEET

www.parentline.org.au



Higher School Certificate (HSC)

Maintain wellbeing:

- Eating regular balanced meals (including snacks during study breaks).
- Adequate sleep and rest: Staying up late studying, internet surfing, or chatting can be counter-productive as adolescents won't be refreshed for the next day.
- Regular exercise can assist with relieving stress and help adolescents to get a good night's sleep.

Behaviours to discourage:

- Late nights, parties and alcohol consumption.
- Excessive caffeine consumption (especially in the late afternoon and evening).
- Too much work: Doing too much part time work can reduce the time available for study.
- You may also need to reduce your expectations about how many chores can be done around the house at this time.

Attaining a Higher School Certificate (or HSC) can be a very stressful time for many young people and their families.

There are many things that families can do to help their adolescent prepare for the HSC, and also to support their adolescent through the personal and emotional challenges that this time presents.

This information sheet is designed to give parents some survival tips and strategies for supporting young people at this stage of their life.

Surviving the HSC

- Maintain perspective: Success in the HSC can help to secure access to University, but it is not essential for many other options that your adolescent may wish to pursue.
- Tune into what your adolescent wants to achieve. This may be completely different to the goals that you hold for your adolescent and it could be the case that they do not even need a particular mark in the HSC to achieve their goals.
- Support your adolescent to find a level of balance in their life of socialising, recreation and study that is appropriate to the goals that they wish to achieve.
- Provide emotional support: Be there for them and be supportive and encouraging. Praise them for all of their achievements.
- Be supportive by giving your adolescent space and leeway as they go through a very stressful time in their life.

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Supporting your adolescent

As a parent you want to help your adolescent achieve to the best of their ability in the HSC, but you may be unsure about how to do this.

There are a range of practical strategies that parents can use to support their adolescent:

- Avoid getting into arguments or nagging adolescents over minor issues.
- If your adolescent feels unprepared and anxious, don't panic with them. Reassure them that they can only do their best.
- Ensure that adolescents have an appropriate environment for study. They should have a dedicated space that is comfortable, has adequate lighting and is free of clutter.
- Encourage your adolescent to develop a good study timetable and develop skills in managing their time.
- During focussed study time adolescents should avoid other distractions e.g. accessing social networking sites.
- Help your adolescent to think about goal setting – knowing what goals they want to achieve is an important first step in planning for the future. Then they can research what is needed to reach their goals.
- Help adolescents to see that there are many ways to achieve their desired end result. Encourage them to speak to their school's Career Adviser to explore the full range of options open to them.

If you would like more information about communicating with your teenager, or advice tailored to suit your situation, call **1300 1300 52** to speak to one of our professional counsellors.

What if my adolescent doesn't receive the marks they were hoping for?

The HSC is only one way of achieving career goals. If your adolescent doesn't receive the mark that they want there are many ways to reach their objectives.

- Encourage your adolescent to move on from the HSC. This means making the shift from seeing it as the only path to future success. Help them to be open to devising a new plan for the next phase of their life.
- Start thinking about alternative options. It may be helpful to make a time to sit down together with a pen and paper and brainstorm some possibilities.
- Encourage your adolescent to reach out for guidance. For example they could speak to a TAFE Counsellor or research the internet for University courses, apprenticeships or other courses.
- If your adolescent is feeling very upset, encourage them to see a counsellor to talk through how they are feeling. Your local GP will be able to give you a referral.

Resources

The NSW HSC Online
<http://hsc.csu.edu.au>

Board of Studies
<http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au>

Universities Admission Centre
www.uac.edu.au

TAFE NSW
www.tafensw.edu.au