



| NSW Department of Education

# Getting ready for Year 11 & 12







# Introduction to years 11 and 12

Welcome to years 11 and 12. They will be rewarding, challenging and exciting as you start preparing for the HSC and your next chapter beyond school. You're almost there!

This guide has been designed as a handy booklet to prepare you for years 11 and 12. A lot of it you may already know and be aware of. But hopefully there'll be something new and useful for you.

In the guide you'll find:

Handy tips from former year 12 students on studying for the HSC and tips to help you stay healthy and feel good.

- Brain tips and tricks to help you study
- Options for life after the HSC
- The art of time management
- Listening to music tips when you study
- How to make the most of year 11 and 12
- Great resources and support you may not be aware of
- And much more!

So, enjoy your last 2 years of school. Good luck and make them count!



# Checklist for year 11 and 12



☑ Tick off the tasks that apply to you.

- Set up a dedicated study area.
- Use a daily planner to stay on track for assignments and deadlines.
- Schedule breaks throughout the day.
- Learn the gentle art of time management!
- Have a structured study routine that works for you.
- In year 11, use your time to develop your major work or project.
- Use school support services and counselling if you need them.
- Stay in touch with your teacher so you can make sure you're up to date with work and assignments and any help you need.
- Check in with your friends and peers for study and fun and support.
- Look after your health - make sure to fit in exercise or sport around study.
- Make sure to sleep and eat well. Your body and mind will thank you for it.
- Use proper recommended sources as references for your study. Make sure you're working with the syllabus.
- Set up or join a study group for extra help, encouragement and brain power.
- Make the most of your last 2 years at school - use the resources and support available!
- Now's a great time to start thinking about your life after the HSC and seeing what's out there.
- Consider doing work experience, volunteering or internships to get more industry experience.





## Former year 12 students share study tips

"One tip I would give is to study in groups. It makes it a lot more enjoyable and I found that conversations about content was easier to remember because it made the content more applicable to different questions."

Cilla, year 12 student 2020

"I have broken up all my free time into small sections. I've been studying this way for a long time and it's really beneficial especially in year 12 as the HSC gets closer. So, give it a shot!"

Narma, year 12 student 2021

"My tip is to set simple achievable tasks to complete while studying throughout the day. If I have a large amount of work to get done on a particular topic, I'll break it down into smaller obtainable tasks that take 20 - 30 minutes each. This helps with productivity as you can see you are achieving your goals, giving you the energy to keep ticking tasks off, leading to a productive, successful day of study."

Jasper, year 12 student 2020

"My top tip would definitely be to refrain from studying in your bedroom. This is because everyone needs somewhere where they can relax and unwind and this can be difficult if you've prioritised school in this environment. It can become overwhelming and stressful and stop you getting a good night's sleep which is super important in the lead up to the HSC and trial HSC exams."

Stella, year 12 student 2020

"One piece of advice I would give is to study in a clean environment. I think it makes the whole study experience heaps more enjoyable. I used to enjoy studying outside in natural light. I would also recommend making a to-do list to plan each day so that you can know exactly what you've achieved that day as sometimes the HSC can seem really overwhelming".

Grace, year 12 student 2020

"Study can be an overwhelming feeling but I, for one, can say you are not alone. I choose to share my notes with peers, create challenges to finish textbook exercises and memorise syllabus dot points via Zoom because together everyone achieves more."

Neha, year 12 student 2021

"Trying to study for the HSC while we're locked down can be pretty intimidating. That's why the best thing I found when I'm stressed out is to schedule a certain time of day where everyone agrees to get on and catch up."

Alex, year 12 Student 2021







# Brain tips and tricks



Discover new ways to improve your study technique and avoid distraction and procrastination, with some scientifically proven tips.

Your brain is one of the most complicated things you'll ever meet! It solves problems, it's in charge of all your learning, memory and critical thinking. Yet it can also be your own worst obstacle. Your neural pathways can be driven by negative or positive thoughts. These affect your brain patterns and the way you approach things.

For example, you may feel fear (causing procrastination), or be unable to snap out of going down the same paths or ruts your brain gets stuck in. So how do you train or even outwit your brain to help you in your studies? Here's some scientifically based tips.

## Tips To Follow

### Improve your memory through quizzes and tests



Research shows that doing quizzes or tests works far better than if you just passively read information, in terms of you being able to remember. This is called active recall. It means your brain stores information in your deeper memory and you're more likely to remember things in the long term.

### Spaced repetition



Spaced repetition is another great way to keep important study information in your head.

When you repeat information multiple times, your brain takes it in. But, there's a catch. The repetition can't just be you saying a fact over and over in one short burst of time. It needs to be repeated in gradual intervals - usually over days. This helps strengthen your memory.

Scientist Hermann Ebbinghaus called it the Forgetting Curve. He found you can forget 70% of what you just learned within a day. But then, after that, it slowly tapers off. So you might only remember a few things 24 hours later, but then you'd remember them for a long time. His use of spaced repetition to slow down the 'forgetting curve' has been verified to this day.

### Try memorisation techniques like mnemonics



Mnemonics are visual or memory aids that help you remember key information. They have been shown to help with most tasks, and come in all kinds of forms, such as acronyms.

#### Example of mnemonics

"Every Good Boy Deserves Fruit" (to help remember the order of music notes EGBDF on the treble clef).

Mnemonics can also take the form of stories to help. This is sometimes known as the Linking Method. It means you give each thing you're trying to remember a fun backstory and put it together in a sentence. The more exaggerated and silly the story is, the more you're likely to remember it.

#### Examples of linking stories

If you want to remember the names of the first 4 Australian Prime Ministers: Edmund Barton, Alfred Deakin, Christ Watson and George Reid. You could do a story sentence like: BART ON (Barton) a lake found a duck with a BEAK IN (Deakin) and asked WHAT'S ON (Watson) the REEDS (Reid).

As you can see from this example, it really doesn't have to make a lot of sense, just as long as it works for you. It can even be songs and jingles if that will help retain information in your head. Who knows, you could be the first person to come up with a catchy rap about fractals!

### Fight procrastination through intense focus



A great way to stave off distraction is the Pomodoro Technique. It's like the mental version of a high energy, fitness exercise. This is all about intensive study and trying to force your brain to focus on just one activity. It's a really simple practice that works in sprints.

Firstly, it's important you put away any possible distractions such as phones or games. You set a timer (the inventor of this technique used a tomato-shaped kitchen timer) and dedicate 25 minutes to working non-stop on one assignment or piece of study or trial exam or whatever goal you set.

You do nothing else in that entire time.

At the end of 25 minutes you get a 5 minute break. Each of these 25 minute sprints is called a pomodoro. After 4 pomodoros you get a 15-30 minute break. During each sprint you can't do anything other than the task. And, just like being fit, it sharpens and focuses your brain, but you won't be all stinky and sweaty afterwards.

### Play fun brain games



Brain teaser games can be excellent vitamins for your brain. They help increase dopamine which is a neurotransmitter. Dopamine is a big part of how we feel pleasure. It helps us focus, work, plan and remember. So doing brain games like sudoku, crossword puzzles, or any great online brain test are great aids. You feel good when you solve the game and this gives you a rush of dopamine which, in turn, sharpens the key parts of your brain. Plus, brain games are a nice reward after you've put in that time studying.



## Things you should avoid in your study habits

### Don't highlight or underline



"Oh no, don't highlight!" Multiple studies and research tests have shown that highlighting and underlining text doesn't help you remember information. In fact, some surveys have found that it can hinder your learning and students who highlight have a worse recall than students who don't. It can also harm your learning as you're remembering a small piece of information instead of making connections about the whole text.

### Don't multitask while studying



While we often multitask in our day to day lives, especially switching between multiple electronic devices, the experts say that multitasking impacts your ability to retain information. You'll not only have problems remembering information but you may also remember irrelevant or wrong information. For your brain to work properly it needs complete focus on the task at hand.

### Don't cram



Cramming for exams or tests the night before is never a good idea. And it's been shown to place too much stress on the brain. Studies have found that students who cram don't even remember the information they crammed in the long term. Avoid cramming by treating study as a long-term marathon and set aside enough time each day. Having a well structured study timetable will help avoid last minute cramming.

### Turn off your phone at night



Your phone can be a major distraction when you're trying to study. But research has also found that using an electronic device late at night interferes with your sleep patterns and the quality of sleep you get. People who use phones or devices late at night can feel depleted and disengaged the next day. So if you want to be more productive and switched on - switch off your phone!



## Listening to music - 5 tips to tune in, tune out and tune up!

We all know that music can affect our mood and take us to a special place. Chances are the artists you listen to now will be remembered for your entire life, for good or bad.

But will it help you study?

### 1 Choose your music

Tracks with no lyrics, instrumental or classical or ambient music are recommended. Avoid music you've got on high rotation. Unfamiliar tunes come with less triggers, and are less likely to distract or send you down a rabbit hole of memories or daydreams.

### 2 Choose your moments

Subjects like maths where you are working with numbers, ratios, angles and problem solving or using visualisation can be good with music. But if you are studying the poetic rhythms and meanings of Shakespearean sonnets, then plain silence might be your best friend. The bottom line is if you find yourself re-reading a paragraph over and over it's time to switch off the music to see if that makes a difference.

Sometimes going from music to silence or visa versa can help engage you and shake you out of a rut. While music can help you study and relax, avoid getting into a habit of connecting music to recalling certain information.

Remember, the exams are a quiet affair.

### 3 Use headphones

For removing distracting sounds and to avoid distracting others, headphones are a must. Nothing says I'm studying intently more than a huge set of cans on your head (though earbuds are fine too).

The noise limiting or cancelling function of headphones also means you are less likely to get distracted by sounds around you. Even music at a low volume can help you to sustain focus.

### 4 Make it part of your routine

We are creatures of habit and use music to do a whole lot of different activities already, like exercise, household chores and even to help fall asleep. Why not use music to get set up to study to put you in the learning mood. Just like your workout playlist, make a pre-study playlist of tracks that get you in the right frame of mind.

### 5 Use music to dial down the stress

Studies show music can improve your emotional state and that helps to improve cognitive function.

So, if you're feeling a bit dazed or distracted then it might be a good idea to put some music on. Not only can it help you concentrate on your studies, it may help to turn the stress levels down, making you feel positive and helping to get in that learning mood.



# HSC exam tips - Lead up to exams

Use these tips in the run up to the HSC exams. Like doing a marathon, the work you put into the preparation and training is what will ultimately give you the most rewards.

## Study plan



A study timetable means that all your subjects are revised and you spend enough time on the subjects that really need attention. Your study plan will work best if it's a bit fluid as there will always be things beyond your control. It's OK if you don't cover everything you want in one session. Don't be too hard on yourself.

Don't forget to include time for exercise and relaxation in your timetable

Make sure you have priorities and key goals you want to achieve each study session. Flow charts and diagrams will help you visualise your study areas.

## Reach out to teachers



Niggling doubts in your mind about where you're going and how you're studying? Don't be afraid to ask questions in class or check in with your teachers about your notes and where you've been focusing your studies. It's a good idea to get your teachers' support while you still can. They are the experts on the curriculum and the way exams will be assessed. So if you're confused about what's needed for an assessment or how to direct your studies, it's always better to ask.

## Practise your exam technique



It's great to know your subject but it's also important to train for the actual exam. Use old exam papers and practise answering the questions. This gives you vital training in how to formulate your questions and work with the exam format. You should also use a timer and practise writing your answers with a black pen within a set time. This is critical for when you find yourself in the exam room on the day.

Visit NESA to download past HSC exam papers. You'll also find the guidelines used by markers, plus sample answers with markers' feedback.

## Practise and learn from your mistakes



It doesn't matter if you don't always do well in your assessments. What matters is how you learn from mistakes you made and how you apply it to doing things in a slightly different way, just like if you were riding a wave, a skateboard or swinging a racket. Keep practising over and over, identify your weaknesses and figure out how to improve them. Think of assessment as the practice run for the HSC. The HSC is about showing you understand the concepts and have done the preparation. Ultimately doing the work will get you through.



# Make a study group\*

Study need not be a solo journey. Team up with friends to make a study group and power up your learning. For most of the time study is somewhat of a solo journey.

## Keep it small

If you have a dozen people, you have a party (leave that till after the last exam). For now, think 3, 4 or 5 people. An even number means you can pair off if needed.

A small number means you can take turns and run the group, building up your confidence through collaboration and leading. These are also useful skills for when you've left school too.

## Make a plan

Don't just rock up (or Zoom in), then sort it out when you get together. Set an agenda!

For example, before you meet, each study group member submits one or 2 goals they'd like to meet by the end of the session. If the goals range across many subjects you can decide to hold them over for the next study session. Try focussing on one of 2 subjects only per session.

For each subject pull out old exam papers (from the NESA website). Pick a section (that supports current syllabus) and everyone does it under timed conditions, say a 20-25 minute chunk.

Mark each other's work using the associated Marking Guidelines (or go through the answers together).

Break the session into, say, 4 x 25 minute sections with a 5 or 10 minute break in between. Send the agenda out with a time frame before you get together.

## Care to share

One great way to learn something is to teach it to someone else, or together you fill in the gaps. Play to your strengths. If you are winning in a subject or module then take the lead. If your mate is strong in another subject then learn from them.

Trade knowledge. Also, telling others about what you understand improves your own recall, and you'll be more confident explaining it to your key audience: the exam marker.

Take turns to lead a topic for discussion that you care to share. The leader can help keep the topic going, avoid distractions and push for an outcome, such as meeting one of the study goals.

Keep some simple rules like leave your ego at the door, everyone is valued and there are no dumb questions.

## Avoid distraction

Phones off. No really. Off. Change locations or whose house you meet at to avoid familiar distractions.

At the end of the study session take a moment to share with your group something you have learned.

## Make notes and share resources

Put your subject notes and information in a shared online folder, like Google drive. Ask questions, give examples, or provide sample answers in dot points. Whichever way you use it, keep it active.





# The art of time management

Year 12 is the year when you'll find yourself having to be independent and self managed. So here's some tips to help you get started in managing your time effectively:

## Use a daily planner



You can't go wrong if you have a daily list of study and tasks to do. The key with using a daily planner is to try and plan for everything, not just study. This means scheduling in exercise, chores, sport, after school activities, even social things. Don't be too exact, give some room to be flexible. At first, it's a bit of trial and error. You may find that you're not giving enough time to some study subjects and too much to others. It's OK to tweak the planner. The most important thing is that each day you're working with a plan.

## Keep distractions well away



Set up your space and make sure it's designated for study only. Keep the devices, phones, books and anything else that may tempt you away from study, well away. Make sure your study space is warm and inviting and set it up to suit you. Try and keep your workspace clear so when you come in, you're instantly ready for study. Have a clock with you so you're always timing what you're doing and working to your schedule.

## Use a reward system



Rewards are just as important as the hard work you'll be doing all year. It's been shown that incentives can motivate you to learn. Rewards can be anything you enjoy, whether it's gaming time, social media or a snack. Think of rewards as a pat on the back for your great time management. You're not a study robot, and breaks are important.

## Rank everything in terms of importance



Learning to prioritise is a big part of self management. Prioritising your goals and tasks is an essential part of planning out your schedule. Only you will know which of your subject areas need more attention than others or which assignments are screamingly urgent. Some people like to use a ranking system to help categorise their priorities. For instance, dividing tasks up into A, B or C etc. or use numbers (1,2,3) or colours (red for most important, green for least) or whatever works for you. Put your top priority tasks in your daily schedule and the lesser priority tasks you can aim to achieve in a few days or weeks. The ability to prioritise is a great skill to have as you start your adult journey.



# Tips from former year 12 students to help you with mental health

"Go on walks and listen to music! Breaks made my work ethic far more efficient."

Cilla, year 12 student 2020

"Just getting outside and exercising with friends whether that's going for a walk, or a swim, or to the beach. I just think these things are really important, so that your study is more efficient because doing things that you love will make you feel better. And while it can be really overwhelming, it can be really nice to hang out with your friends or family. And do something that makes you happy."

Grace, year 12 student 2020

"To keep me focused, something that I do is meditation. Meditation works for me because it keeps me focussed for a longer period. It also ensures that I am having a rest and that I am stress free. If you decide to start meditating I advise you start with guided meditation. It allows me to get all my work done as planned without procrastinating."

Narma, year 12 student 2021

"Mental health is my number one priority. And I often 'stress swap' the books and pens to play the harmonica. Music is therapeutic and keeps me connected to my culture. Often we forget that tunes, rhythms and sounds are a form of communication, far more powerful than words. Practice relaxation and elevate your mood by picking up a musical instrument or listening to your favourite musical genre."

Neha, year 12 student 2021

"My stress swap is to exercise daily. Exercise helps clear your head and allows you to take a moment to work off the stress of the day. All it needs to be is a quick 15 minute jog or a 7 minute workout. This gets your heart rate up and allows you to get back to achieving your goals."

Jasper, year 12 student 2020

"There are so many resources designed for year 12 students that focus on the stress that comes with the HSC. It's so handy to have tips and tricks up your sleeve so you can study and perform at your best in the lead up to the exams"

Stella, year 12 student 2020



# Online dangers to watch out for

Tips to help you work, play and communicate safely online.

## Creating a negative digital footprint

The internet is unforgiving and unforgetting. There's little that you can 'undo' when it comes to things you post online.

Comments you make, images you upload and posts you share can come back to haunt you later in life. In the heat of the moment it's easy to say something before having a chance to think it through. That single comment could cost you a job or damage your reputation later in life. Your digital footprint can't be easily erased, if at all.

### How to avoid creating a negative digital footprint:

Before you post anything publicly, take a deep breath and ask yourself: 'could I regret this down the track?' or 'Is this really me?', or 'would I say this in person, or in front of an audience?' If there's any doubt in your mind, a good rule is not to hit 'enter'.

## Cyberbullying

Cyberbullying is using technology to deliberately and repeatedly bully someone else. You might feel more upset if you experience cyberbullying because you may not be able to escape it, even at home.

Cyberbullying can include:

1. abusive texts and emails
2. posting unkind messages or images
3. imitating others online
4. excluding others online
5. inappropriate image tagging.

Unfortunately, cyberbullying affects many young people across Australia. One in 5 young people have been bullied online.

If you experience cyberbullying, the eSafety website has excellent advice on what to do and who to talk to.

[esafety.gov.au](https://esafety.gov.au)

**How to deal with it:** The best way to deal with cyberbullying is not to respond or get directly involved. Instead take screenshots, gather evidence of the bullying and report it.

**Important note:** If the bullying material involves sexualised images of people under 18, saving or sharing such images may be a crime even if you have just taken a screenshot for evidence purposes.

## Catfishing

Catfishing is when someone uses a fake identity in order to scam, defraud or manipulate someone else. They will usually use social media and make up an entire persona, with photos and a complex life story. They do this to trick people into giving them money, gifts or compromising images.

You should be wary of any stranger that approaches you on social media. If they seem to know a lot about you, chances are that it's not a coincidence. If they seem suspicious, search their name online and see what comes up, including any other social media accounts they have.

**How to deal with a suspected catfish:** If someone doesn't seem to exist elsewhere online, they're avoiding audio and video contact or asking for money or inappropriate photos, it's best to stop all contact and report them to the platform, your school or police if necessary.

If you're feeling stressed or upset about something someone online has asked you to do, speak to an adult you trust.

## Social media pressure

There are some great things about social media. It helps you stay connected with friends and family. It helps you discover new ideas, projects and like-minded people and groups. However, it can also be easy to get caught up in it. This can lead to you comparing your own life to others.

Remember, that social media is often highly stylised. People will present the best photos and images of themselves. It's easy to feel like you have to be connected all the time and this can lead to stress.

**How to deal with social media pressure:** If it gets too much, take a break from it. The eSafety Commissioner advises to unfollow accounts that make you feel bad. Turn off your notifications and talk to an adult you trust if you're starting to feel stressed.

## Identity fraud and identity protection

The web has become increasingly sophisticated in capturing your personal information. This can lead to anything from unwanted spam to hacking and identity fraud.

To protect your identity online you should always:

- Set strong passwords and unique passwords for each account
- Avoid phishing scams by not clicking on any links from an identity you're not sure of
- Delete or manage your cookies so you're not leaving a trail of personal information across the web
- Don't use your social media accounts to log in to any apps, websites or online services
- Limit what personal information you share online
- Avoid WIFI hotspots when doing something personal or financial online
- Use privacy settings and controls when they are offered on the sites you visit.

**How to find support:** IDCARE can support you to deal with the consequences of identity theft. You can also report scams to Scamwatch if your identity hasn't been compromised.

[idcare.org](https://idcare.org)

[scamwatch.gov.au](https://scamwatch.gov.au)





# After the HSC, there are many options



When you're thinking about your post HSC life don't feel too pressured about having to get into university.

There's many possible pathways to your chosen career. University is not necessarily the answer. Many jobs don't require a university degree at all.

Check out these other options which may be just as beneficial.

## Vocational Education and Training (VET)

Enrolling in a VET course (through TAFE NSW or a private provider) is a great idea if you're sure of your pathway and want to get the necessary skills and qualifications to get there. VET gives you authentic, hands-on practical experience where you work in the workplace and gain skills specific to your chosen industry. You can work as an apprentice or trainee meaning you'll be learning the ropes from a mentor currently working in the industry. VET courses are all about being trained to work in your chosen career.

VET courses range from 6 months to 2 years or more. They cover Certificates I-IV through to Advanced Diplomas and even some degrees. The great thing about VET is the qualifications are nationally recognised. So you can use them to work anywhere in Australia. Apprenticeships are usually 3 to 4 years and traineeships are around 2 years.

It's important to remember doing VET doesn't stop you also going to university if you want to. Many students do a VET course to get some practical experience before getting a diploma or a degree.

Many universities now offer direct entry to some courses for those people holding an appropriate VET qualification.

You may be eligible for a fee free apprenticeship or traineeship from the NSW Government, so it's worth looking into if you're interested.

## TAFE NSW

TAFE NSW provides a direct alternative pathway to university. You can get qualifications much faster. Diplomas, short courses and certificates all range from a few months to 3 years. TAFE is very flexible and there's also options to speed up your course so you get qualified more quickly. There are 130 TAFE locations across NSW so finding one in your area shouldn't be a problem. TAFE NSW courses have a mix of classroom learning with practical hands-on learning depending on your preferences. Many courses come with guaranteed internship and placements so you'll get off to a great career start once you finish your course.

TAFE NSW offers Associate Degrees, Bachelor Degrees, Graduate Certificates and Microcredentials. You can potentially use qualifications from TAFE to get into University and they often count as a credit of one or 2 years towards a degree. However, TAFE qualifications are strong in their own right and you may not need a university degree at all.

TAFE NSW is excellent for getting a good mix of classroom learning and practical experience as well as setting you up for a career in your preferred field.

## Gap year

If you're not totally sure what you want to do with your career - don't worry. It can take years to discover what your true career path is. It's better to take time and figure out where you want to go rather than rush into a career you may not enjoy.

For these reasons, taking a gap year can be a great way to help expand your horizons and give you time to reflect and explore your interests.

And if you thought taking a gap year might set you back, here's an interesting statistic: students who take a gap year are more likely to complete a degree or qualification than those who enter straight from school. A study has found gap year students are more likely to work and earn an income whilst taking a gap year. Your gap year could be a year of study, work or travel or a mixture of the 3. It's really up to you. Think of it as a year entirely devoted to your own personal research into yourself!

A gap year is not an alternative to higher education in itself. But it's a great way to discover what you love or don't like. It will help you make important connections and dip your toes into the workforce. And depending on where you do your gap year, you'll open up your eyes to new cultures and perspectives. Wherever you do your gap year you'll have amazing experiences to shape your thinking and strengthen your decision making.

## Work experience or internships

Is there an industry or career you're seriously considering? An unpaid internship or job placement or work experience is a terrific way to help decide if that job's right for you. You'll be in the thick of the work environment, getting valuable inside experience and seeing how the workplace functions. Plus, you'll have an active role in assisting and testing your skills and knowledge.

Internships look great on your CV. Also they help you network and get a foot in the door. In a competitive work environment having inside contacts and experience counts for a lot. If you do extremely well in your internship it may lead to a direct job offer at the end of it. Or you can potentially use your internship employers as references for another job.

Be aware internships are usually low level. They may not be as fulfilling as you anticipate. But you should make sure both you and the employer are crystal clear about what each will get from your internship and what's involved. Also, it's important your internship meets the guidelines of what an internship is meant to be.

One good rule of thumb is: are you doing work for an employer that would normally be paid?





## Making the most of year 11 and 12

# #Stay Healthy #HSC



The final 2 years of school will be rewarding and challenging. You'll find that year 11 and 12 will fly by. So how to get the most out of school before you hit the outside world? Here's some tips.

### Do extra curricular activities that you enjoy

School isn't just studying and exams. Doing activities after school that you love are just as important too. Whether it's music, sport, drama, arts and crafts, dancing, cooking, or anything else that makes you happy, put it in your timetable and do it regularly. It will act as a reward to look forward to and help you have a rounded and balanced school life.

### Look for a leadership role in your school

As a year 11 or 12 you are automatically a school leader for the younger students. Maybe you want to take on extra responsibilities in your school such as student representative council, or school, house, or class captain, depending on what your school has to offer.

Or perhaps you want to start a club that doesn't exist in your school. Or lead a group or project that helps the local community, or start a fundraising initiative for your school. If you have ideas for new projects or groups, talk to your school and use all the support and resources that are available.

### More work experience never hurts

You probably did work experience in year 10. But why stop with one work placement? The more work experience you do, the more you'll be able to find out what you like and don't like.

This time, you will have to organise work experience directly with employers, so look for organisations that provide a structured work experience program. Doing unpaid work experience gives you a great chance to make contacts and be considered for jobs once you leave school.

Volunteering is another option to consider. You may want to volunteer for a charity, community or not for profit organisation. You'll pick up great new skills and it looks good on a CV.

### Use school resources while you can

For instance, the library for research, the school's technologies such as computers, printers, video and audio, design and photography resources. Maybe you want to create a portfolio of your student work to show employers when you leave school. Or you may just want to use the available resources to develop and build up your skills. Don't forget to chat to your careers counsellor or teachers that you get on well with, about your life after school.

### Healthy self-esteem

Self-esteem can affect your motivation, mental wellbeing, and your overall quality of life. Work on developing a healthy self-esteem (neither too high or too low).

Having healthy self-esteem can help motivate you to reach your goals, because you know that you are capable of accomplishing what you set your mind to. It also helps you set appropriate boundaries in relationships and maintain a healthy relationship with yourself and others.

You can nurture a healthy self-esteem when you:

- Avoid dwelling on negative past experiences
- Believe you are equal to everyone else - no better and no worse
- Express your needs in a calm, ordered way
- Feel confident
- Choose to have a positive outlook on life
- Say no when you want to
- See and accept your overall strengths and weaknesses.





# Useful websites

[education.nsw.gov.au/useful-websites](https://education.nsw.gov.au/useful-websites)

## Mental health and wellbeing

[education.nsw.gov.au/student-wellbeing/counselling-and-psychology-services](https://education.nsw.gov.au/student-wellbeing/counselling-and-psychology-services)

## Stay Healthy HSC

[education.nsw.gov.au/stay-healthy-HSC](https://education.nsw.gov.au/stay-healthy-HSC)

## Wellbeing advice for senior students

[education.nsw.gov.au/wellbeing-at-home/general-information](https://education.nsw.gov.au/wellbeing-at-home/general-information)

## Anti-bullying information

[education.nsw.gov.au/anti-bullying](https://education.nsw.gov.au/anti-bullying)

## If you need urgent help

[education.nsw.gov.au/student-wellbeing/stay-healthy-hsc/resources/seeking-urgent-help](https://education.nsw.gov.au/student-wellbeing/stay-healthy-hsc/resources/seeking-urgent-help)

## Student voices

[education.nsw.gov.au/student-wellbeing/student-voices/student-voice-and-leadership](https://education.nsw.gov.au/student-wellbeing/student-voices/student-voice-and-leadership)

## External links for student participation

[education.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers/learning/extra-curricular-school-activities](https://education.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers/learning/extra-curricular-school-activities)

## Arts, Entertainment and Culture

[education.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers/learning/arts-entertainment-and-culture](https://education.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers/learning/arts-entertainment-and-culture)

## Premier's Sporting Challenge

[app.education.nsw.gov.au/sport/premiers-sporting-challenge](https://app.education.nsw.gov.au/sport/premiers-sporting-challenge)

We acknowledge the homelands of all Aboriginal people and pay our respect to Country.

## Say hello

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