

# Preparing for VCE Success - A Guide for Students and Families

## Sleep and Wellbeing

**Sleep - your secret study weapon:** quality sleep is essential for memory consolidation and cognitive performance. Year 12 students should aim for eight to nine hours of sleep nightly. Poor sleep can reduce concentration, impair memory, and increase stress levels.

### Sleep hygiene tips

- Maintain consistent sleep and wake times, even on weekends
- Avoid screens one hour before bedtime
- Create a cool, dark, quiet sleeping environment
- Avoid caffeine after 2pm
- Use relaxation techniques like deep breathing or meditation before bed

**Managing stress and maintaining balance:** regular exercise, even just 20 minutes of walking daily, can significantly reduce stress and improve mood. Maintain social connections and hobbies where possible – complete isolation from enjoyable activities can be counterproductive.

### Warning signs to watch for

- Persistent sleep difficulties
- Changes in appetite
- Increased irritability or mood swings
- Difficulty concentrating
- Physical symptoms like headaches or stomach issues

If these symptoms persist, encourage your child to speak with a trusted adult, school counsellor, or healthcare provider.

## Creating the optimal study environment

### Physical space setup

- Choose a quiet, well-lit area away from distractions
- Ensure comfortable seating and appropriate desk height
- Keep the space organised with the necessary materials within reach
- Remove or silence mobile phones during study sessions
- Use noise-cancelling headphones or soft background music if helpful

## How parents and guardians can support their VCE student

### Practical support

- Help maintain a structured routine, including regular meal times
- Provide nutritious snacks and meals to fuel brain function
- Respect study schedules and minimise household disruptions during designated study times
- Assist with organising study materials and creating a dedicated study space

### Emotional support

- Listen without immediately offering solutions
- Acknowledge the pressure they're experiencing
- Celebrate small victories and progress, not just final results
- Model healthy stress management techniques
- Maintain perspective – remind them that VCE results don't define their worth or limit their future options

### When to step in:

- If you notice significant changes in behaviour, appetite, or sleep patterns
- When stress levels seem unmanageable
- If your child expresses feelings of hopelessness or overwhelming anxiety

## Additional Resources and Support

### For students

- VCAA Student Information: [www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/studentguides](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/studentguides)
- Reach Out (Mental Health Support): [www.reachout.com/study-stress](http://www.reachout.com/study-stress)
- Study Skills Guides: [www.studyskillsguide.net](http://www.studyskillsguide.net)

### For parents and guardians

- ReachOut Parents: <https://parents.au.reachout.com/school-and-education>
- Parent Helpline Victoria: 13 22 89 (for confidential support and advice)

### Professional support

- **Lifeline:** 13 11 14
- **Kids Helpline:** 1800 55 1800
- **headspace:** [headspace.org.au](http://headspace.org.au) (for young people aged 12-25)