



| NSW Department of Education

# Getting ready for primary school





# Get ready for Kindergarten

- If your child attends an early childhood education service, talk to staff about their transition to school.
- Attend a school orientation or transition to school program and make sure you have the school's phone number. If you need help with English ask for an interpreter to be present at the orientation meeting. The school will arrange one if available.
- Contact the school for an enrolment pack.
- Take your child to your local community health nurse or doctor for a health check and make sure their immunisations are up to date before school starts. Visit [health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation](https://health.nsw.gov.au/immunisation) for details.
- If your child takes medication or has an allergy, a medical condition, disability or additional learning and support needs, inform the school as early as possible and make an appointment to speak with school staff.
- Apply for a school Opal card if needed. Go to [transport.nsw.gov.au/ssts](https://transport.nsw.gov.au/ssts) or phone 131 500.
- Organise outside of school hours care.
- Practise safely walking or travelling to and from school.
- Talk about the plan for after school pickup.
- Continue reading to your child.
- Ask the school if there are any school-specific apps or social media groups that you could join to help you connect with other parents or get updates on school activities.



**Tick off the tasks that apply to you.**

# Before you start



## Enrolment

Schools can help with enrolment questions throughout the year. You may need to attend an interview with the principal. There you can discuss any medical conditions or other special circumstances before your child starts school. The school may develop a health care plan or a behaviour support plan to best support your child's needs.

## Budgeting for new costs

Schools usually provide most things Kindergarten students will use in the classroom, but starting school may require new items such as uniforms and school shoes. It may be helpful to check with your child's school so you can budget for the items your child will need.

## Voluntary school contributions

All NSW public schools can request contributions to enhance educational and sporting programs including elective subjects. School contributions help provide additional educational resources for the benefit of all students. Payment is voluntary.

## Uniforms

Your child's school will tell you about the school uniform items and where to buy them. There is usually a summer, a winter and a sports uniform. The school can tell you which shops supply the uniform or the material to make it, and many schools run a clothing pool where uniform items are donated after children have outgrown them.

## Telephone Interpreter Service

If you would like more information and you need an interpreter, please call the Telephone Interpreter Service on 131 450 and ask for an interpreter in your language. Tell the operator the phone number you want to call and the operator will get an interpreter on the line to assist you with the conversation. You will not be charged for this service.

## Financial assistance

If you are unable to pay school contributions because of financial hardship, you may be eligible for assistance from the school.

The principal will ensure no student or family suffers any discrimination or embarrassment over the inability to pay school contributions.



# Useful activities to try in the lead-up to starting Kindergarten



## Don't forget

- Write down the date your child will start school:

- Support your child to develop independence using the bathroom – including urinals for boys – and practise good hand-washing techniques.
- Write your child's name on all their school things and involve your child in organising them and recognising their name. Make sure your child's name is not visible on the outside of anything they'll be wearing to and from school.
- If you live close to the school, go for a walk together and practise crossing roads safely.

## Try this

- Set up a play date for your child to play with a friend.
- Check out the local library and let your child choose books to borrow.
- Take a ball to a park to throw, catch and kick together.
- Organise a picnic with a packed lunch and encourage your child to open it and eat the food by themselves.
- Read Daisy's First Day ([education.nsw.gov.au/daisy](http://education.nsw.gov.au/daisy)) or a book about starting school together.

## Practise

- Putting on their school shoes and walking in them.
- Dressing in their school uniform.
- Writing alphabet letters.
- Drinking from bubblers.
- Cutting and pasting pictures from a magazine and drawing pictures.



# The big day

The first day of Kindergarten is a big event in your child's life – and that of your entire family. To help you make the most of the day and enjoy the experience, here are some helpful tips.

## The night before

- Lay out your child's clothes, shoes and socks.
- Make your child's morning tea and lunch and put it in the fridge.
- Help your child pack their school bag.
- Pack a spare pair of underpants, socks and a change of clothes. Let your child know these are there in case they have any toilet accidents at school.

## On the day

- Be confident with your child and let them dress themselves as much as possible.
- Tie back or plait long hair.
- Apply sunscreen and get your child to wear their hat on the way to school.
- Don't forget to take photos.
- Pick your child up on time.

# School routines



Kindergarten children can get very tired at night because they are doing so many new and exciting things. For this reason, it helps if you keep before and after school routines – like bath time, meals and reading – as regular as possible. It's important to leave time for your child to play and get a good night's sleep each night.

## Did you know?

**If your child misses as few as eight days each school term, by the end of primary school they will have missed a year of education.**

## Attending school

Going to school every day is important and Kindergarten sets children up for the rest of their schooling.

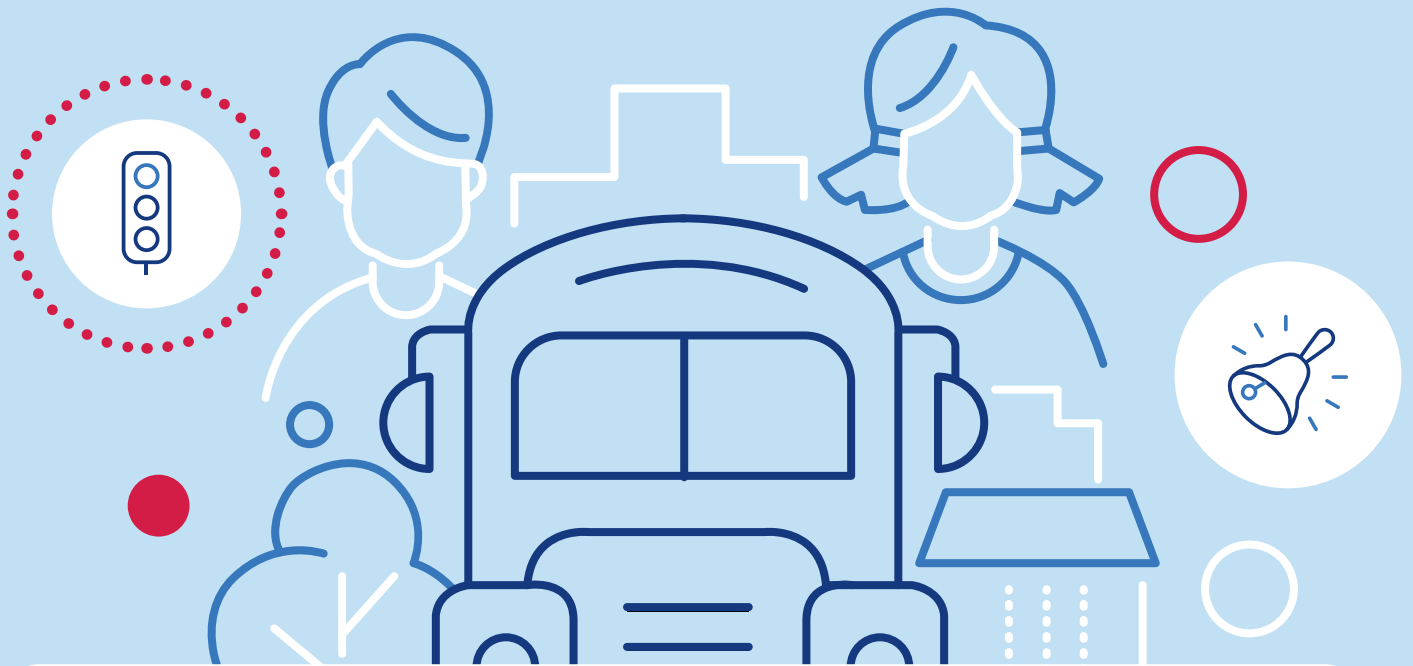
What your child learns each day builds on what they learnt the day before. If your child misses school, their learning routine is broken, so they can lose confidence and miss out on building their friendships.

You have a legal responsibility to send your children to school every school day.

If your child misses school due to illness, religious reasons or family circumstances, talk to your child's teacher and remember to send a signed note explaining the reason for their absence.

If your child arrives at school late or needs to leave early, you will need to go to the office to sign your child in or out.

If you're having difficulty getting your child to school every day and on time, talk to the teacher or principal. If you need help with English ask for an interpreter. The school will arrange one if available.



## Getting to and from school safely

Getting your child to and from school is your responsibility – however your child's school wants this to happen safely every day.

Pick the safest way to school and practise travelling the route with your child, talking about how to be a safe road user.

Keep our school community safe by:

- driving and parking safely, even if it means parking further away and walking the rest of the way to school
- being a good role model
- never calling your child from across the road
- using the safest place to cross the road.

Share this information with your child's carers such as grandparents, nannies and friends who may be taking your child to or from school.

[education.nsw.gov.au/safe-travel](https://education.nsw.gov.au/safe-travel)

## Saying goodbye

At first, you might like to stay for a while until your child feels secure at school. When your child has settled into school, a short and reassuring goodbye encourages independence. Let them know who will pick them up at the end of the day.

## Picking up children at the end of the day

When school finishes each day, your child's class will gather at a regular place. Your child's teacher will wait with the children. Make sure your child and their teacher know who will be collecting them each afternoon. This could be a parent, a carer or an after school care worker. Children can get upset if the person picking them up comes late. Check with their teacher about the best time to arrive in the afternoon and where to stand.

## Out of school hours care

Services that care for children out of school hours and vacation care are often run from schools or near schools. Your school can give you information about local services.

[service.nsw.gov.au/basc](https://service.nsw.gov.au/basc)

The Child Care Subsidy helps eligible families with the cost of childcare for out of school hours.

[humanservices.gov.au/childcaresubsidy](https://humanservices.gov.au/childcaresubsidy)



# Learning and activities

Most time in Kindergarten is spent developing children's literacy and numeracy skills.

There are six key learning areas studied throughout primary school:

Creative arts

English

Human society and its environment (HSIE)

Mathematics

Personal development, health and physical education (PDHPE)

Science and technology

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



## NAPLAN

Years 3, 5, 7 and 9 students in Australian schools sit the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN).

NAPLAN is held in May and involves 4 different tests:

- language conventions (spelling, punctuation and grammar)
- writing
- reading
- numeracy.

They are neither English nor maths tests. Rather, NAPLAN assesses students' general literacy and numeracy skills, which are required in all subject areas. Texts used in NAPLAN come from a variety of key learning areas.

Students with disability or additional learning and support needs may qualify for some adjustments or disability test provisions. Contact your school to discuss further.





# Health and wellbeing



Your child's health and wellbeing is a priority for their school. With all the new experiences they'll be having as they start and move through primary school, you can help support your child's health and wellbeing.

## Create routines



Make sure your child is getting a good night's sleep and at least 30 minutes of daily exercise.



Cook nutritious meals including breakfast, lunch and dinner and make sure they're eating regularly.



Encourage your child to stay hydrated, even in the colder months.

[education.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers/wellbeing](https://education.nsw.gov.au/parents-and-carers/wellbeing)



## Talk with your child

- Check in with your child before, and particularly after, school.

How was your day?

What did you learn?

What was the highlight?

- Communicate with comfort and connection. Be relaxed in your facial expression and body, get down to your child's level and offer gentle touch or affection.

"I know Kindy is different to preschool. We have to go to school. Let's sit together and figure out how to make this easier."

- Validate and relate to your child's feelings. Consider how they're experiencing the situation from their point of view.
- Discuss and set limits. Support your child to consider the bigger picture and help them solve problems. Wishes and feelings are acceptable but some behaviours are not. It is important to remain calm, clear and assertive.

"I hear you want to play more. It is important that you get a good night's sleep before school. It is bedtime."

"I can see you are frustrated but it is not OK to yell or hit."

- Notice and address any physical, behavioural or emotional changes. Normal reactions to stress include tiredness, struggling to fall asleep, boredom, feeling irritable or acting out, being withdrawn or avoiding school and homework, complaints of an upset stomach or headache, excessively asking questions, or seeking reassurance.

## Connect with your child's learning

- Get to know their teachers, other school staff, other parents and your child's friends.
- Attend school events, for example parent and teacher nights, presentation nights, award ceremonies, performances or showcases.
- If you can, provide your child with out-of-school opportunities to bond with their friends and the community such as volunteering, sports and supervised play dates.

## Dealing with challenges

The past year has brought a lot of sudden change and disruption for everyone, including children. Whether your child has attended preschool or is starting primary school for the first time, they may experience difficulty settling into normal school routines.

Your child may be feeling:

- **excited or happy** to return to school and see their friends and teachers again
- **nervous or anxious** because of changes and new routines
- **frustrated and annoyed** because they enjoyed the learning from home environment and do not want to return to school.

It's important to remember that all of these feelings are normal and your child may react differently to others.

## How to support your child during a crisis

- Monitor how much your child is seeing television or social media stories about the crisis. It can be distressing to watch repeated images. Explain to them that news reports will repeat images and stories and it may not be a good idea to keep watching.
- Talk about your child's understanding of the event and correct misunderstandings or confusion.
- Include your child in making plans for the future.
- Support your child to stay connected to friends.
- Keep to your regular routines and activities as much as possible.

### Anti-bullying environment

All NSW public schools actively prevent student bullying and encourage appropriate behaviour by helping students build social skills and respect for others.

Schools also have plans in place to deal with bullying or harassment, and school staff are trained to deal with these situations. Contact the school for a copy of your school's anti-bullying plan or to report a concern.

### Support services and school counselling

All NSW public schools have access to psychological expertise through the school counselling service. School counselling staff can help students who are having difficulties at school or home. They can connect families with services outside of school if needed. You may need to make an appointment to access the school's counselling or psychology services by contacting the school.



# Sickness and allergies



## If your child is sick at school

If your child gets sick or injured at school, the school will contact you. If your child is ill, they will go to an area where they can lie down and be monitored. You will be called to come and collect your child if they are too sick to go back to the classroom. For this reason, it is important to keep your contact details up to date with the school, including an alternative contact – such as a relative or neighbour – the school can call should you be unavailable.

## If your child is sick at home

From time to time your child may get sick. If they display any of the following symptoms, they should stay at home and see a doctor:

- a fever of 38°C or above
- vomiting or diarrhoea
- cough or respiratory symptoms
- cold or flu symptoms
- rashes of an unknown origin.



## Head lice

Head lice spread when children are in close contact. They are easily treated and are not harmful to your child. Having head lice is not a reflection or the level of your child's personal hygiene.

## Preventing head lice

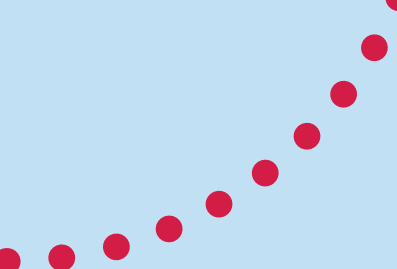
- Check your child's hair regularly.
- Keep long hair tied back, plaited or braided.
- Keep a fine-toothed comb in the bathroom and encourage your family to use it when they wash their hair.

## Treating head lice

Daily combing with a white hair conditioner using a fine-toothed comb will help get rid of head lice and their eggs (nits).

If your child has head lice, let the school know so they can ask other families to check their children's hair. Your child does not have to be identified.

[health.nsw.gov.au/environment/headlice](https://health.nsw.gov.au/environment/headlice)



## Sun safety

Schools promote sun-smart behaviour by encouraging students and staff to Slip, Slop, Slap, Seek and Slide.

Sun-safe uniform items – including hats that protect the head, neck and ears – are included in school uniforms. School staff encourage students to play in the natural and built shade environments around the school. Most schools have a no hat, no play policy so your child will need their hat to play with their friends at recess and lunch.

You can protect your child from the damaging effects of UV radiation by applying sunscreen each morning before they leave for school and ensuring they are wearing a sun-safe hat. Children can also wear sunglasses at school to protect their eyes from sun damage.

[cancercouncil.com.au/sun-protection](http://cancercouncil.com.au/sun-protection)



## Allergies and asthma

It is important for you to inform the principal and the school if your child has asthma or allergies – not just those diagnosed as severe or food allergies.

Anaphylaxis is a severe and sudden allergic reaction to allergens such as nuts or shellfish, or insect bites. If your child is diagnosed with asthma or at risk of an anaphylactic reaction, you must provide the school with information from your child's doctor, including an Action Plan for Anaphylaxis in accordance with the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy (ASCIA).

The school will develop an individual health care plan to describe your child's needs and how the school plans to meet these needs during the school day, on excursions and in other school activities such as sport.

Schools and parents work together to put arrangements in place for health care support. Information from the child's doctor that you provide will inform the planning process.

[allergyfacts.org.au](http://allergyfacts.org.au)



### Remember

**It's important to keep the school informed of any changes to your child's health.**



# Eating at school

Eating at school will be a different experience for your child compared with eating at home or at preschool. There are no places to keep food hot or cold. Children often sit on the grass or on benches and balance their food on their knees. They will also need to be able to open everything their food is wrapped in and they won't want to spend so much time eating that they miss out on playing.

## Tips to help your child

- Pack food that is easy to open, easy to eat and not messy.
- Write your child's name on their lunch box, water bottle and any other containers.
- Include a frozen drink bottle to keep food cold. Wrap it in a tea towel in case it leaks.
- Use insulated lunch boxes or cooler bags.
- Avoid using plastic wrap because children find it hard to pull apart. Paper bags are better for the environment too.
- Pack tissues or paper around fruit so it won't bruise.
- Remind your child to wash their hands before eating and to use the toilet at recess and lunch.
- Pack a water bottle for your child each day and remind them that they can also get water from the taps or bubblers throughout the day.
- If your child can order food from their school canteen, help them to identify healthy food and drink choices.

## Recess and lunch ideas

- Cut fruit into pieces and put them in a small container. Squeeze some lemon juice on apples or pears to stop them from going brown.
- Cut up vegetables such as carrots, celery and cucumber and put them in a resealable plastic bag. Put dips or yoghurt in a separate container.
- Make wholemeal muffins and freeze them.
- Try different breads, such as rolls, pita, wholegrain or tortilla wraps.
- If using tomato in a sandwich, slice it thinly and place the slices between other fillings to stop the sandwich from going soggy.
- Cook a little extra dinner and save some for lunch the next day. You could make quiche, homemade pizza slices, salmon patties, roast vegetables, noodle salads or sausages. A freezer brick or frozen drink can help keep this food fresh.



# Supporting your child



Your child's teacher is your partner in supporting their education. They will let you know the best way to keep in touch with them and find out about your child's progress. Keep your child's teacher informed of any changes in your child's life that may affect their learning or enjoyment of school.

## Additional support

Public schools provide a range of other staff who contribute to personalised learning and support for students where needed.

These positions include:

- learning and support teachers
- English as an additional language or dialect teachers
- community information and liaison officers
- home school liaison officers
- Aboriginal education officers and teams.

Contact your school office if you think your child would benefit from these support services or you would like to know more.

## How to find the right person if you have questions or concerns

The best education happens when families and schools work together.

If you have questions about your child starting Kindergarten, our website has information on the enrolment process and finding your local school. Contact your local school if you want to talk to someone before term starts.

Once your child has started school, you may have questions or concerns. Your child's teacher is often the best place to start if you would like to talk about your child's progress. If you aren't sure who to talk to, your child's teacher or school office staff can give you the right contact details.

[education.nsw.gov.au/your-feedback](https://education.nsw.gov.au/your-feedback)





## Engaging with your child's education

Your school is committed to working with you to ensure you have all the information and support you need to help your child get the most out of school. In addition, you have the right to feel welcome at school, to be treated fairly and to be able to actively participate in your child's schooling.

We ask that in return you commit to making your interactions with your child's teachers, other school staff, other parents and other children positive. We are all partners in our children's education. Every child has the right to expect their best interests will shape our decision-making and actions.

School staff have the right to feel safe in their workplace and be free of intimidating actions or language as well as inappropriate or unhelpful communications. All our interactions and communications – including those about difficult or complex issues – should be timely, respectful, transparent and focused on solutions.

All public schools in NSW have a School Community Charter which provides the framework for school-based behaviour and interactions. The charter creates clear expectations and a framework by which we can all be held to account. If at any time you think a communication or interaction has not been handled in line with the charter, please raise this with your school or the department.

[education.nsw.gov.au/school-community-charter](https://www.education.nsw.gov.au/school-community-charter)

### High potential and gifted

High potential and gifted children are those whose potential is more advanced compared to their age peers in one or more domains: intellectual, creative, social-emotional or physical. Opportunities exist in all NSW public schools for high potential and gifted children. Contact your school to talk with the principal about the programs offered.

### Students with disability and additional learning and support needs

The NSW Department of Education is committed to building a more inclusive education system, where every student feels welcome and can learn to their fullest capability, and that meets the needs of students with disability, their families and their community. The Disability Strategy sets out our plan for meeting these commitments.

To achieve this, NSW public schools provide a range of specialist services to support students with additional learning and support needs. This includes support for students' diverse needs in learning or behaviour, students with disability, students with additional health and wellbeing needs.

Every mainstream NSW public school has a learning and support teacher who works directly in the school to support students with disability and additional learning and support needs and their classroom teachers.

[education.nsw.gov.au/disability-learning-and-support](https://www.education.nsw.gov.au/disability-learning-and-support)

### Support for English learners

If your child is learning English as an additional language or dialect (EAL/D) they may require additional support to develop English language skills. Schools provide language support for EAL/D learners to participate fully in schooling, including support for children who speak Aboriginal English at home. Contact your school to discuss with the principal how the needs of EAL/D learners are met.

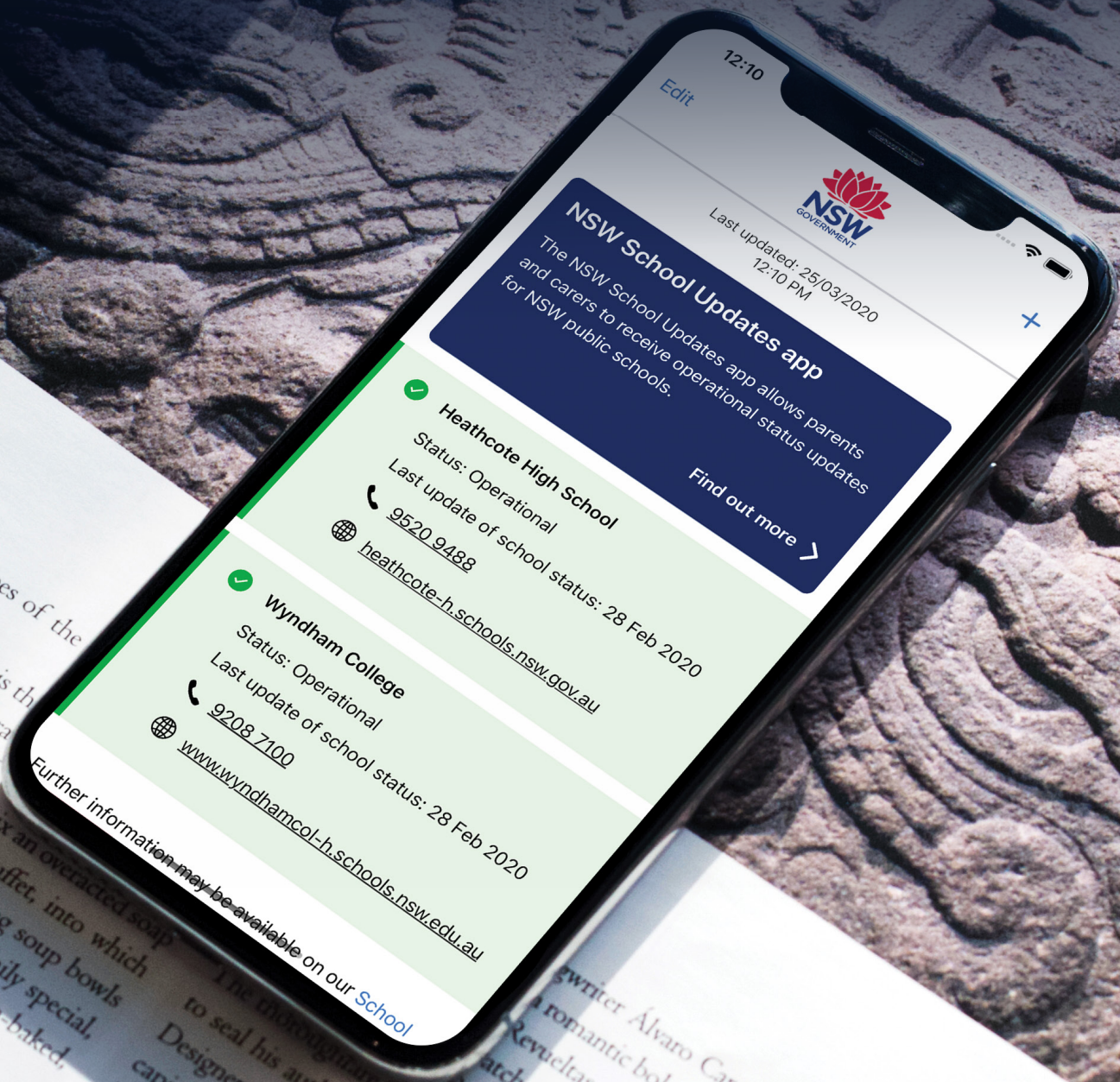
### Aboriginal students

In some communities, there are additional tailored transition programs working to enhance the educational outcomes for Aboriginal students. Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander parents and carers are encouraged to participate in the development of their child's personalised learning pathway (PLP). For more information about tailored transition programs and PLPs, contact your school.



## Download the NSW School Updates app

Parents and carers can sign up to receive operational updates for NSW public schools. Scan the QR code and follow the prompts to download the app.



## Want more practical starting school tips?

Access this guide online and explore our resources to help your child get the most out of their school year. Scan the QR code or visit [education.nsw.gov.au/primary-school](https://education.nsw.gov.au/primary-school).



# Calendar 2021



## Key dates

- **Term start and end dates\***
  - Term 1 (Eastern) – 27 Jan to 1 Apr 2021
  - Term 1 (Western) – 3 Feb to 1 Apr 2021
  - Term 2 – 19 Apr to 25 June 2021
  - Term 3 – 12 July to 17 Sept 2021
  - Term 4 – 5 Oct to 17 Dec 2021

- **School vacation dates 2021**
  - Summer (Eastern) – 21 Dec 2020 to 26 Jan 2021
  - Summer (Western) – 21 Dec 2020 to 2 Feb 2021
  - Autumn – 5 Apr to 16 Apr 2021
  - Winter – 28 June to 9 July 2021
  - Spring – 20 Sept to 1 Oct 2021
  - Summer (Eastern) – 20 Dec 2021 to 27 Jan 2022
  - Summer (Western) – 20 Dec 2021 to 3 Feb 2022

- **Education Week**  
26 to 30 July 2021
- **Exam dates**
  - Selective high school placement test – 11 Mar 2021
  - NAPLAN paper test – 11 to 13 May 2021
  - NAPLAN online test window – 11 to 21 May 2021
  - Opportunity class placement test – 21 July 2021
- **Public holidays**

School zone speed limits apply on all school days, including school development days.



\* Check with your school as starting and finishing dates may change.





# Useful websites

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

## Translated school information

[education.nsw.gov.au/translated-documents](https://education.nsw.gov.au/translated-documents)

## A-Z quick guide for parents

[education.nsw.gov.au/parent-guide](https://education.nsw.gov.au/parent-guide)

## Parents and carers resources

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

## NSW School Updates app

[education.nsw.gov.au/school-updates](https://education.nsw.gov.au/school-updates)

## Complaints, compliments and suggestions

[education.nsw.gov.au/your-feedback](https://education.nsw.gov.au/your-feedback)

## Aboriginal Education & Communities

[education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/aec](https://education.nsw.gov.au/teaching-and-learning/aec)

## Aboriginal Education Consultative Group

[aecg.nsw.edu.au](https://aecg.nsw.edu.au)

## Disability, learning and support

[education.nsw.gov.au/disability-learning-and-support](https://education.nsw.gov.au/disability-learning-and-support)

## NSW Health

[health.nsw.gov.au](https://health.nsw.gov.au)


[mhcs.health.nsw.gov.au](https://mhcs.health.nsw.gov.au)

## Road safety

[education.nsw.gov.au/safe-travel](https://education.nsw.gov.au/safe-travel)

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

### Say hello

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

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