

Sleep

We have an expert team to support our students.

Our pastoral care team includes junior and senior deans, a behavioural psychologist, specialist guidance counsellors, and youth workers from Kahu Youth and 24-7.



Our team of guidance counsellors
Victoria Stewart and Holly McDiarmid

How to contact our guidance counsellors

E: dept-guidance@mtaspiring.school.nz

T: 020 404 94623 or 03 443 0496

A teenager needs between eight and ten hours of sleep every night.



— TE KURA O TITITEA —
MOUNT ASPIRING COLLEGE

INFORMATION SHEET

Why is sleep so important?

Sleep is vital in supporting healthy development of the body and the mind.

What happens when young people don't get enough sleep?

When teenagers regularly do not get enough sleep, it can lead to chronic sleep deprivation. Sleep deprivation can affect all aspects of a teenager's life, including their mental health and wellbeing. Some signs that may indicate a teen is not getting enough sleep include:

- difficulty concentrating
- poor memory
- moodiness and aggression
- poor emotional regulation
- depression
- risk-taking behaviour
- clumsiness and slower physical reflexes which can lead to accidents and injuries.
- a drop in school attendance due to tiredness
- reduced academic performance.

How much sleep is enough?

Research has found that a teenager needs between **eight and ten hours of sleep every night**. This is more than the amount of sleep a child or adult needs, yet **most adolescents only get around 6.5 - 7.5 hours sleep per night**.

What the research says

A [recent Australian study](#) found that poor sleep predicted an increase in generalised anxiety, social anxiety, depression and eating disorders. [Research from VicHealth and the Sleep Health Foundation \(Australia\)](#) found that:

- The average teenager only gets between 6.5 and 7.5 hours of sleep a night.
- Two-thirds of teenagers (66%) reported at least one symptom of a sleep disorder, such as insomnia.
- Sleep problems during childhood and adolescence are predictive of depression later in life.
- Teenagers slept up to 90 minutes more on weekends due to being able to wake up later.
- Teens who put down their smartphones an hour before bed gained an extra 21 minutes sleep a night, an extra one hour and 45 minutes over the school week.

INFORMATION SHEET

Tips for parents

- Encourage your child to have a **consistent bedtime and wake-up time**.
- **Buy a simple alarm clock** as teens like to use their phones as morning alarms.
- Encourage your child to **avoid screen time for one hour before sleep**.
- **Keep screens out** of the bedroom.
- **Avoid stimulants** such as coffee, tea, soft drinks and energy drinks in the evening.
- **Encourage an early night on Sundays** before the start of the school week.
- **Manage your child's after-school activities** to ensure they have enough time for rest and sleep.
- **Avoid early-morning appointments**, classes or training sessions where possible to maximise time for sleeping.

Tips for students

- **Create a relaxing bedtime routine** eg have a bath, listen to soothing music, meditate.
- Try to **avoid screens for at least an hour** before bedtime.
- **Avoid drinking coffee, tea, soft drinks and energy drinks** in the evening.
- Keep your **bedroom dark** at night.
- Be **active during the day** so you are more tired at night.
- Set a **regular wake-up time**.

Resources

- [Parenting teens: sleep needs in teenagers](#) (KidsHealth NZ)
- [Teenage sleep](#) (SleepHealth Foundation Australia)
- [Quick facts and FAQ about sleep for high school students](#) (SleepHealth Foundation Australia)
- If you are concerned about your child's sleep habits, please seek professional help.

Why do some teenagers struggle to sleep?

- Some teenagers don't feel tired until late as their melatonin (a hormone in the body that plays a role in sleep) levels don't begin to rise until later in the evening. This means some teenagers feel more alert at night and struggle to go to sleep earlier in the evening.
- During the school week, teenagers cannot sleep in and can struggle to get their recommended eight to ten hours of sleep each night.
- Some teenagers use screen-based devices around bedtime which reduces the time they spend asleep.
- Being on devices at night is shown to stimulate the arousal mechanism in the brain.
- Screens on electronic devices emit blue light. Studies show blue light alters the brain's ability to process and use melatonin, which can cause sleeping problems.



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