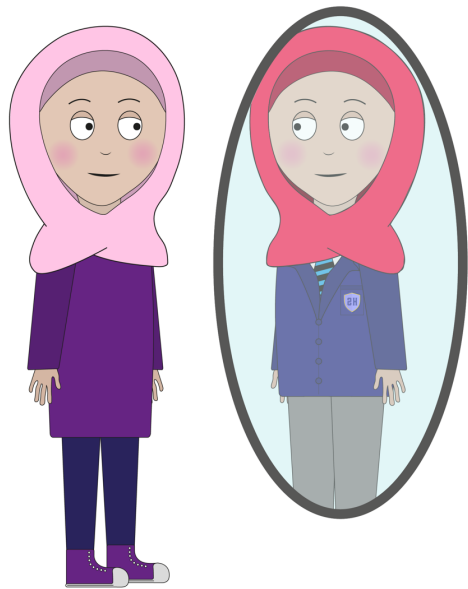


Moving on Up!



The co-authors are neurodivergent young people who have come together to share their experiences and expertise in coping with all things high school.

They have shared their top tips and strategies that they have used to help make it easier to manage everyday activities in high school.

Most of the ideas and strategies have been used by a number of the co-authors and it was only when coming together to write this resource that they realised they sometimes did the same things as other young people.

The co-authors are thrilled to be able to share their expertise with you and ask that you also add your own tips and strategies at the back of the resource, so that you can share this with other people.

Foreward

“I am now going into year 13 and sitting my A levels, it has been a journey with lots of difficulties but now I understand the world is out there for us, it has not always been ready for neurodiverse superhumans, but I am sure it will catch up with us one day!

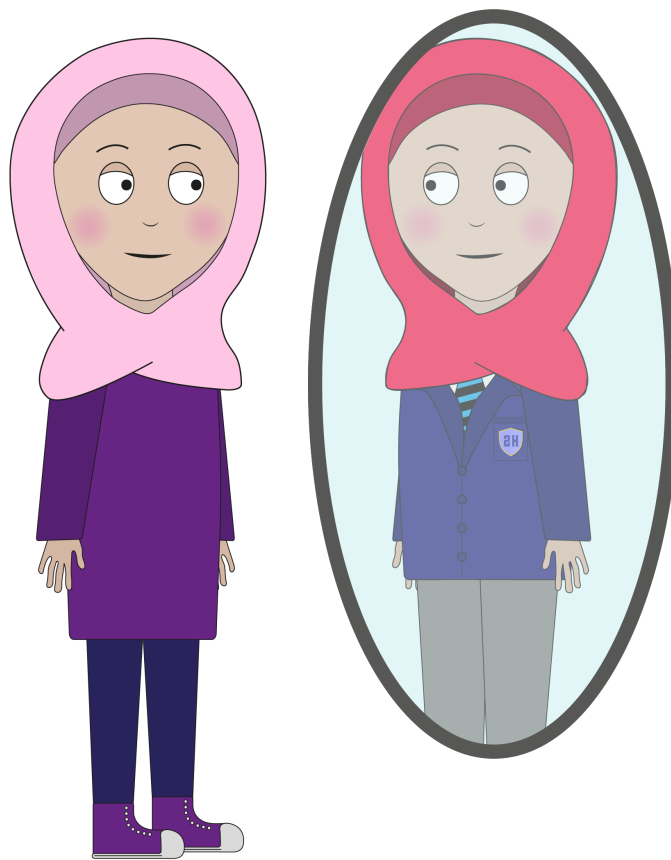
If you are on your way to high school you may be nervous, excited and wondering what is going on, so STOP, BREATHE! Have a quick look through this resource to see if any of our top tips or strategies might be for you.”

Ben

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Getting Ready for High School



Before you start

- ❖ Make the most of transition and / or induction days so you can get familiar with the school.
- ❖ You might be able to have extra opportunities to visit the school.
- ❖ Practise those things that you know you're going to need to do. For example, the walk to and from school and time yourself.
- ❖ Try on your uniform, make sure it's comfortable.
- ❖ Buy bags with plenty of compartments in them, so you have lots of places to store things.
- ❖ Buy a clear plastic pencil case, so you can see what you need to get out.
- ❖ Ask for a map of the school.

Before you start

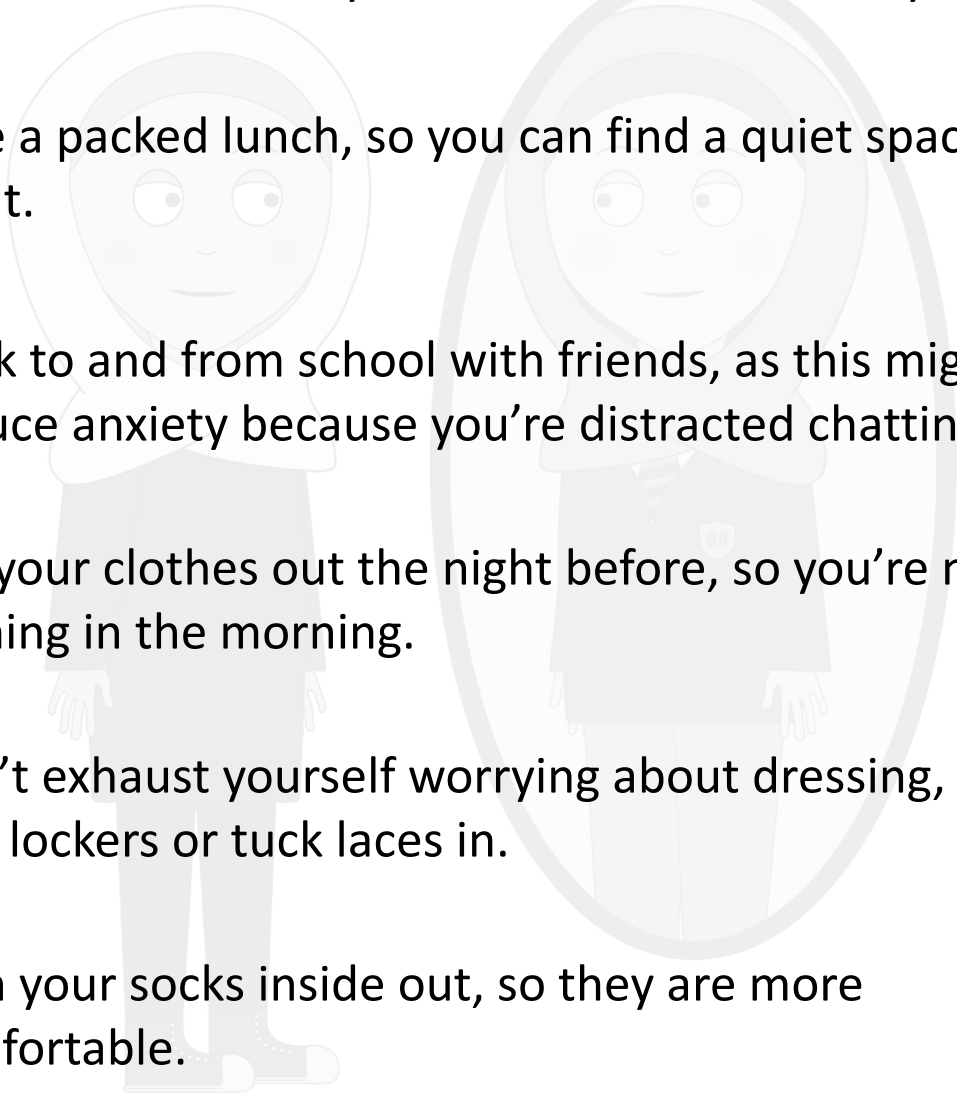
- ❖ If you're nervous, remember everybody else starting is also going to be nervous.
- ❖ It's good to be excited, there are lots of new subjects that you'll get to do.
- ❖ Try to get to know your teachers before you start.
- ❖ Ask for a locker.
- ❖ Make sure you know where the toilets are.
- ❖ If you are going to be travelling with a regular taxi driver and escort, ask if you can meet them prior to starting, then you will know who to expect to pick you up on your first day.

Getting Ready for School

- ❖ Have a schedule of what you need to do in your bedroom (shower/teeth/hair etc).
- ❖ Pack your bag the night before.
- ❖ Make a checklist for each day, so you know what to pack.
- ❖ Sometimes it's easier to leave everything in your bag, so you don't forget anything, but this can make it heavy.
- ❖ Set several alarms, so you can get up early.
- ❖ Get up early, so that you have plenty of time to prepare.
- ❖ Give yourself as much time as possible to get ready.

Getting Ready for School

- ❖ Arrive at school early to avoid the rush and any stress.
- ❖ Take a packed lunch, so you can find a quiet space to eat it.
- ❖ Walk to and from school with friends, as this might reduce anxiety because you're distracted chatting.
- ❖ Lay your clothes out the night before, so you're not rushing in the morning.
- ❖ Don't exhaust yourself worrying about dressing, use lace lockers or tuck laces in.
- ❖ Turn your socks inside out, so they are more comfortable.
- ❖ Get your family or carer to do up your tie for you, so you can just slip it on and off without undoing it.

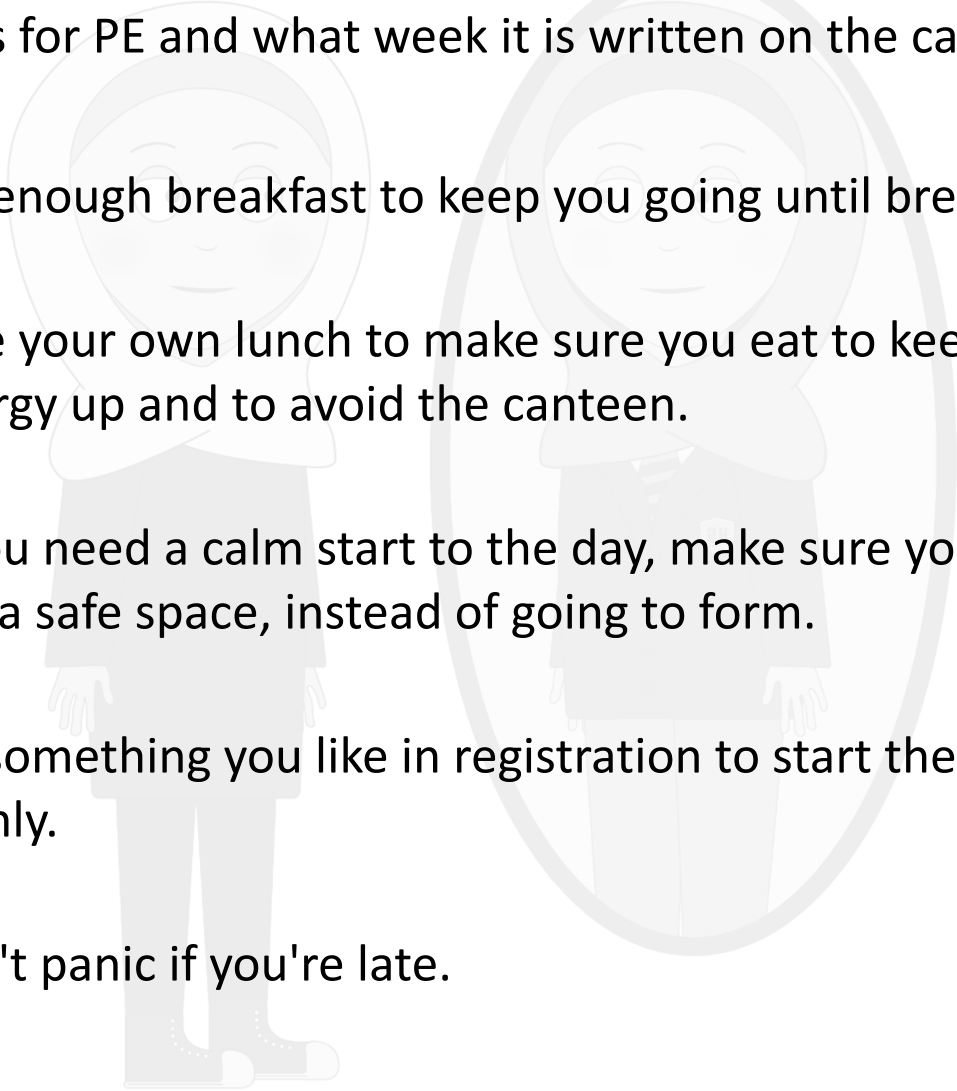


Getting Ready for School

- ❖ Undo only the two top buttons of your shirt and pull it over your head like a jumper.
- ❖ Think about having elastic laces for your shoes, or lace lockers, clip-on tie and learn to take your shirt on and off without undoing the buttons, to make dressing and undressing easier.
- ❖ Have jumpers that are a bit bigger to get on and off easier.
- ❖ Label everything!
- ❖ Make a small version of your timetable and laminate it, so you can keep it on your lanyard or in your pocket.
- ❖ Check what day it is on your timetable, so you know whether you need to take your PE kit.

Getting Ready for School

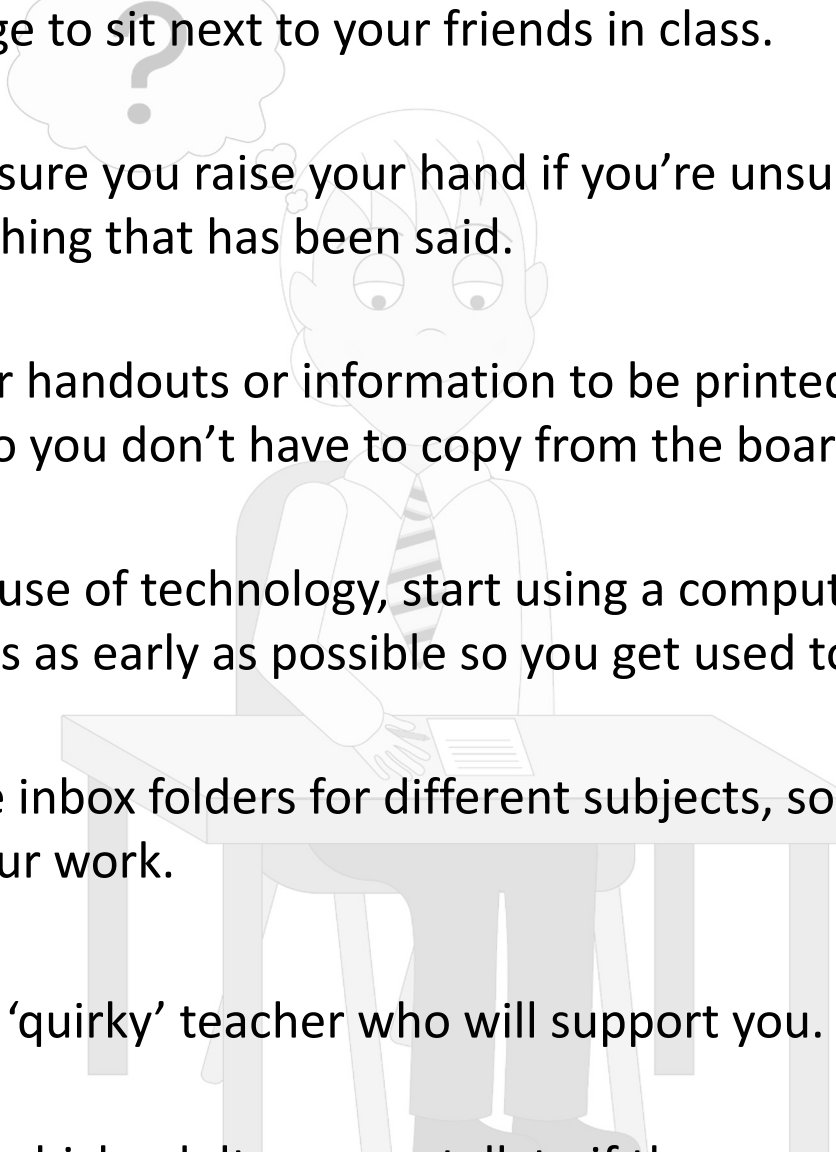
- ❖ Have your timetable in the kitchen with highlighted days for PE and what week it is written on the calendar.
- ❖ Eat enough breakfast to keep you going until break.
- ❖ Take your own lunch to make sure you eat to keep your energy up and to avoid the canteen.
- ❖ If you need a calm start to the day, make sure you can use a safe space, instead of going to form.
- ❖ Do something you like in registration to start the day calmly.
- ❖ Don't panic if you're late.



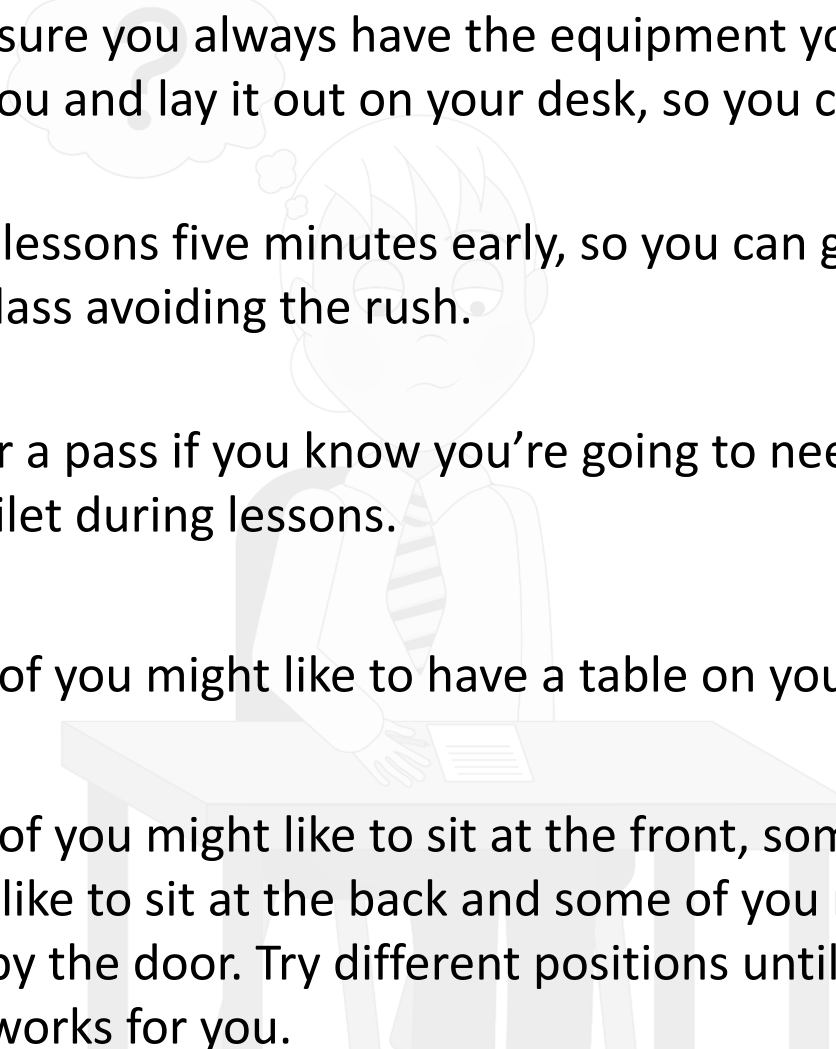
Navigating High School



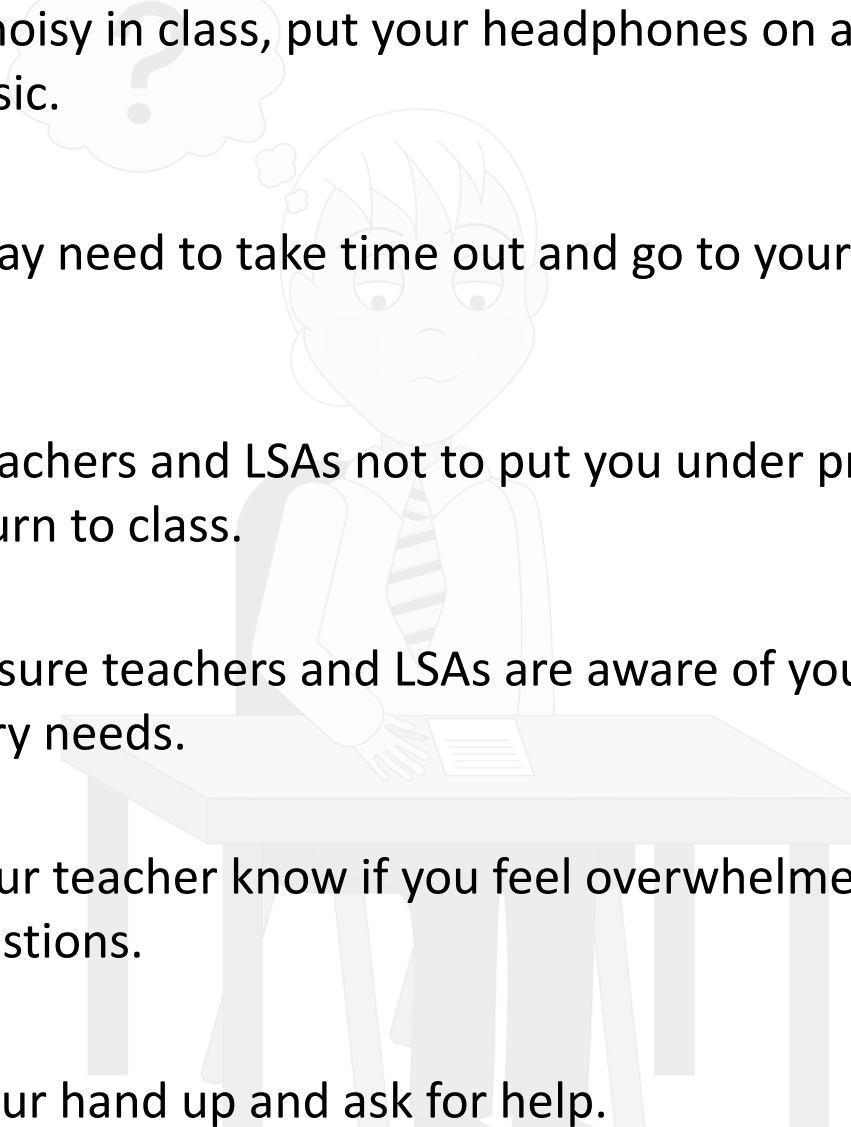
Managing Lessons

- 
- ❖ Arrange to sit next to your friends in class.
 - ❖ Make sure you raise your hand if you're unsure of something that has been said.
 - ❖ Ask for handouts or information to be printed out for you, so you don't have to copy from the board.
 - ❖ Make use of technology, start using a computer in lessons as early as possible so you get used to using it.
 - ❖ Create inbox folders for different subjects, so you can file your work.
 - ❖ Find a 'quirky' teacher who will support you.
 - ❖ Know which adult you can talk to if there are any issues.

Managing Lessons

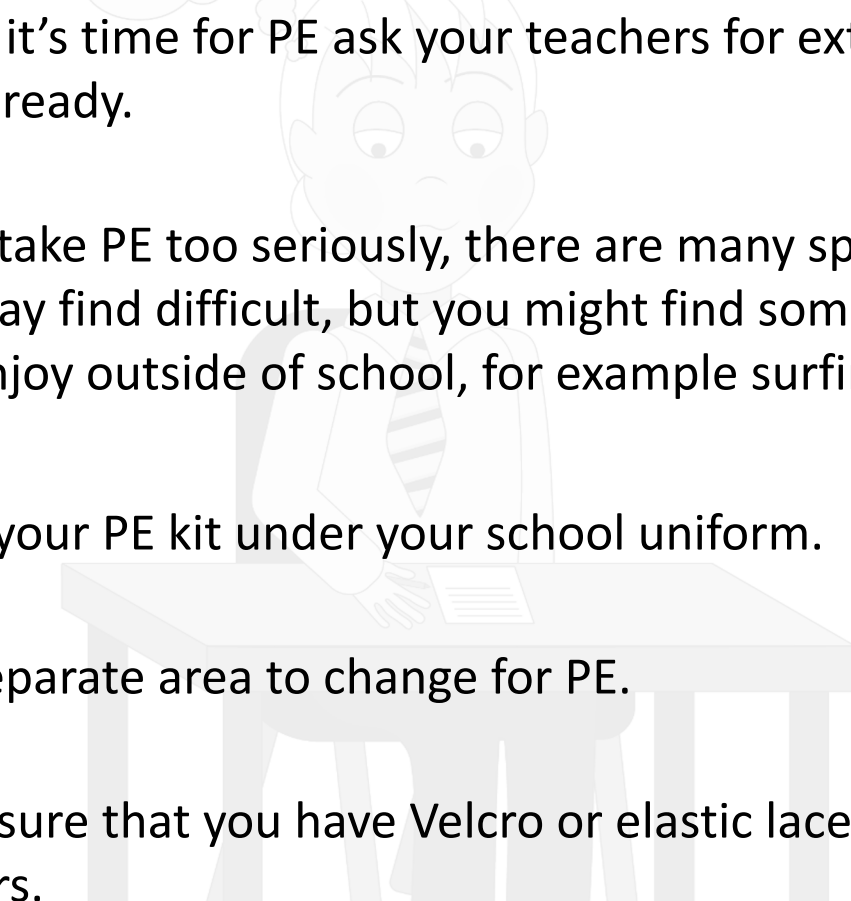
- 
- ❖ Make sure you always have the equipment you need with you and lay it out on your desk, so you can find it.
 - ❖ Finish lessons five minutes early, so you can get to the next class avoiding the rush.
 - ❖ Ask for a pass if you know you're going to need to use the toilet during lessons.
 - ❖ Some of you might like to have a table on your own.
 - ❖ Some of you might like to sit at the front, some of you might like to sit at the back and some of you might like to sit by the door. Try different positions until you find what works for you.

Managing Lessons

- 
- ❖ If it's noisy in class, put your headphones on and listen to music.
 - ❖ You may need to take time out and go to your safe space.
 - ❖ Ask teachers and LSAs not to put you under pressure to return to class.
 - ❖ Make sure teachers and LSAs are aware of your sensory needs.
 - ❖ Let your teacher know if you feel overwhelmed by lots of questions.
 - ❖ Put your hand up and ask for help.

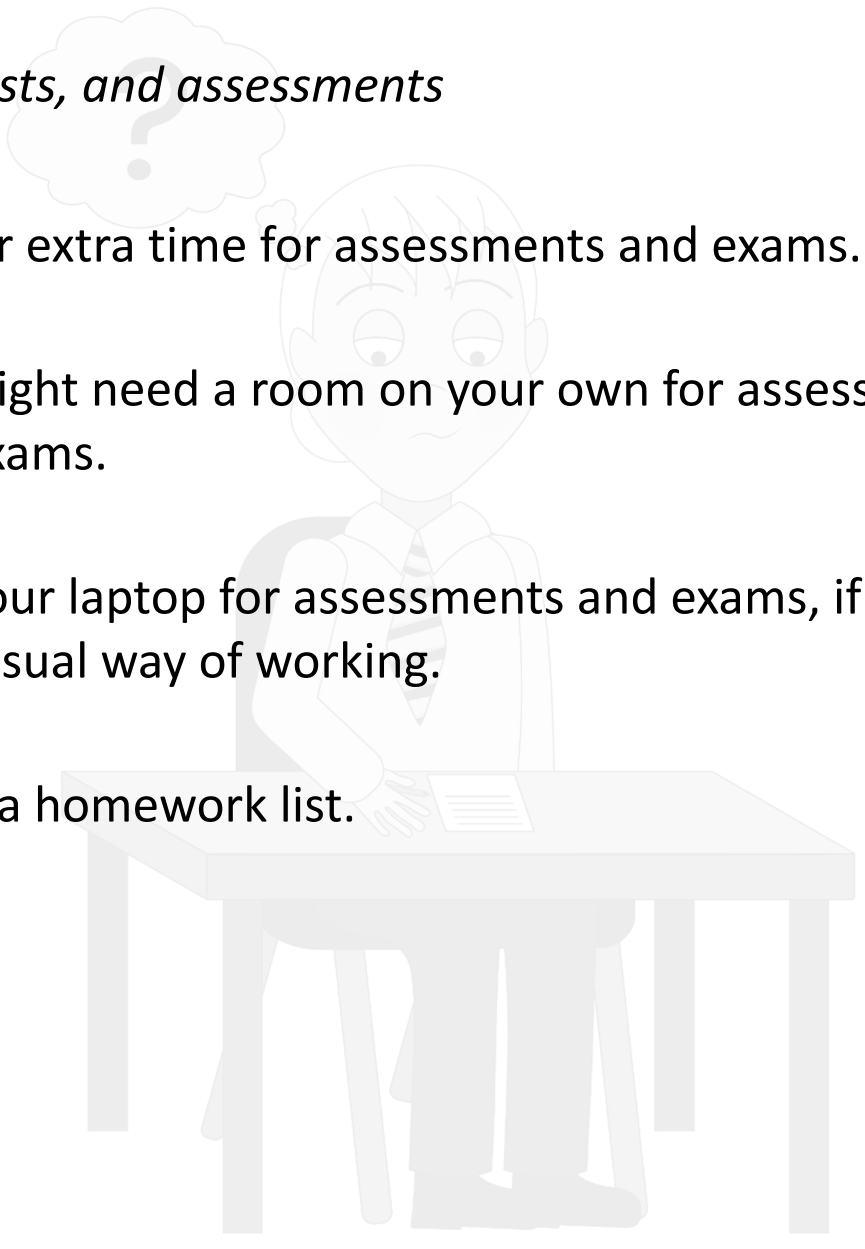
Managing Lessons

PE and Games lessons

- 
- ❖ When it's time for PE ask your teachers for extra time to get ready.
 - ❖ Don't take PE too seriously, there are many sports that you may find difficult, but you might find something you enjoy outside of school, for example surfing.
 - ❖ Wear your PE kit under your school uniform.
 - ❖ Use separate area to change for PE.
 - ❖ Make sure that you have Velcro or elastic laces on your trainers.

Managing Lessons

Exams, tests, and assessments

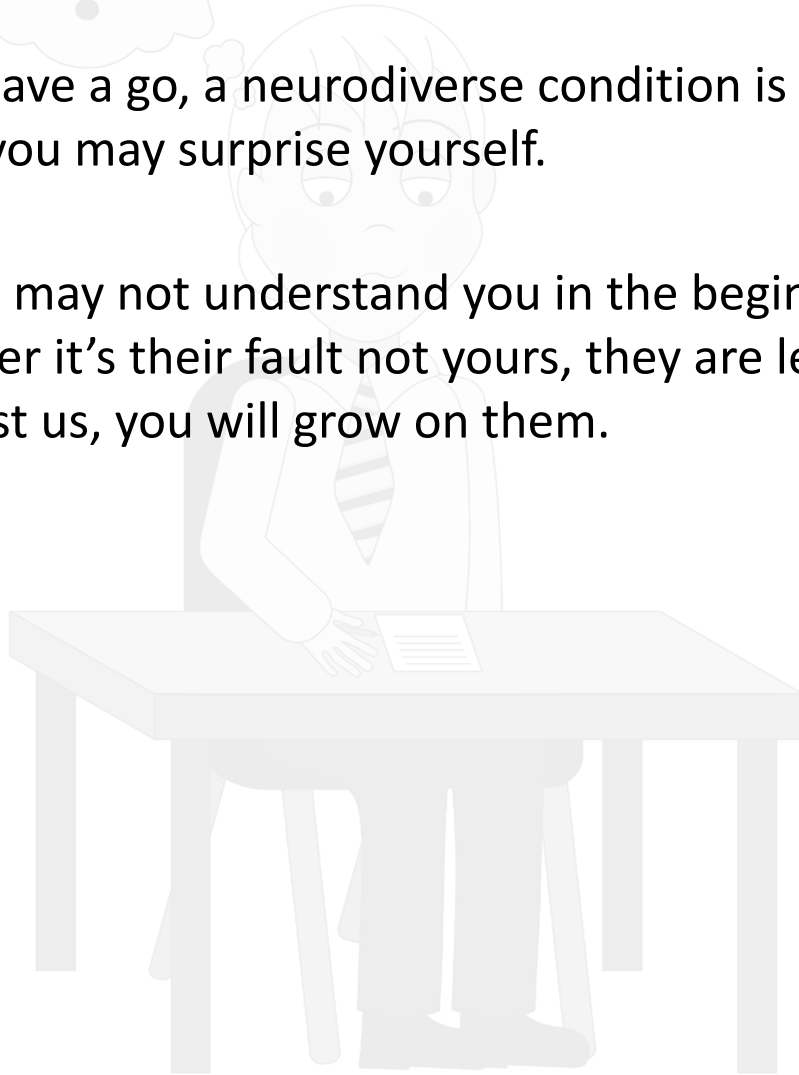
- 
- ❖ Ask for extra time for assessments and exams.
 - ❖ You might need a room on your own for assessments and exams.
 - ❖ Use your laptop for assessments and exams, if that's your usual way of working.
 - ❖ Write a homework list.

Managing Lessons

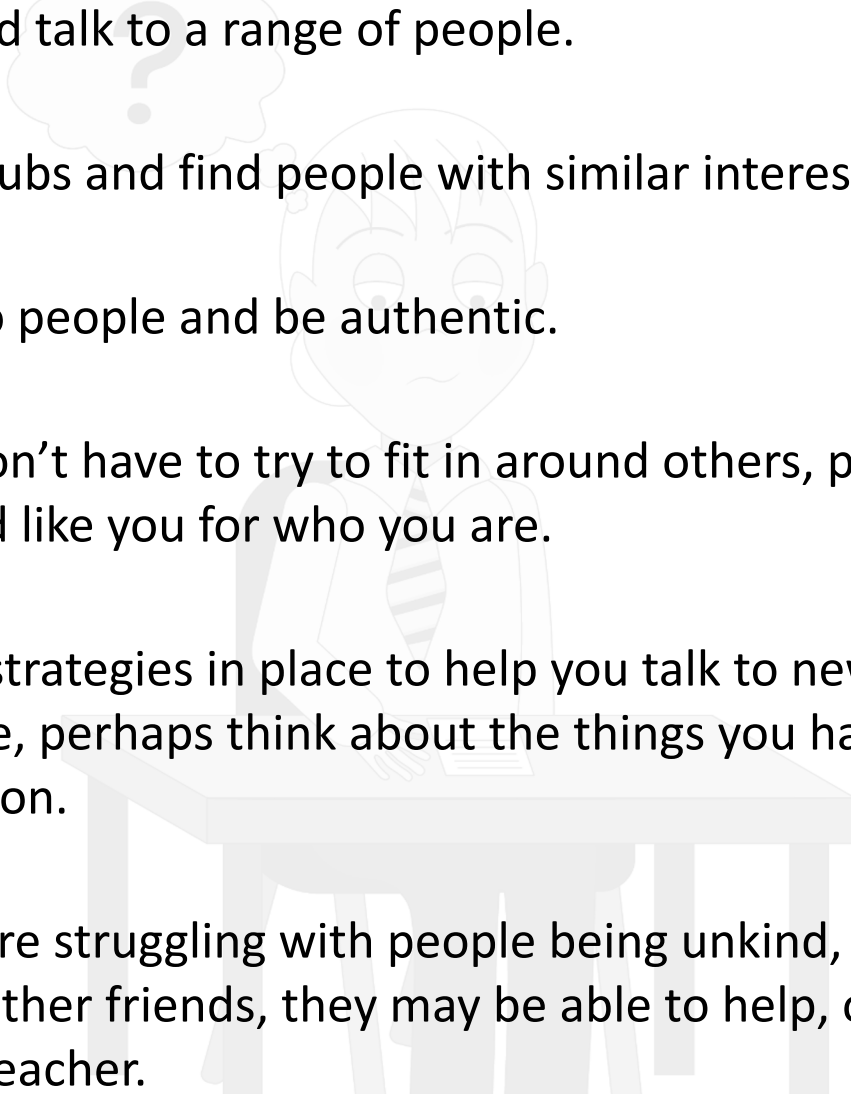
Remember



- ❖ Always have a go, a neurodiverse condition is not an excuse, you may surprise yourself.
- ❖ Teachers may not understand you in the beginning, remember it's their fault not yours, they are learning too - trust us, you will grow on them.



Managing People

- 
- ❖ Try and talk to a range of people.
 - ❖ Join clubs and find people with similar interests.
 - ❖ Talk to people and be authentic.
 - ❖ You don't have to try to fit in around others, people should like you for who you are.
 - ❖ Have strategies in place to help you talk to new people, perhaps think about the things you have in common.
 - ❖ If you're struggling with people being unkind, talk to your other friends, they may be able to help, or talk to your teacher.

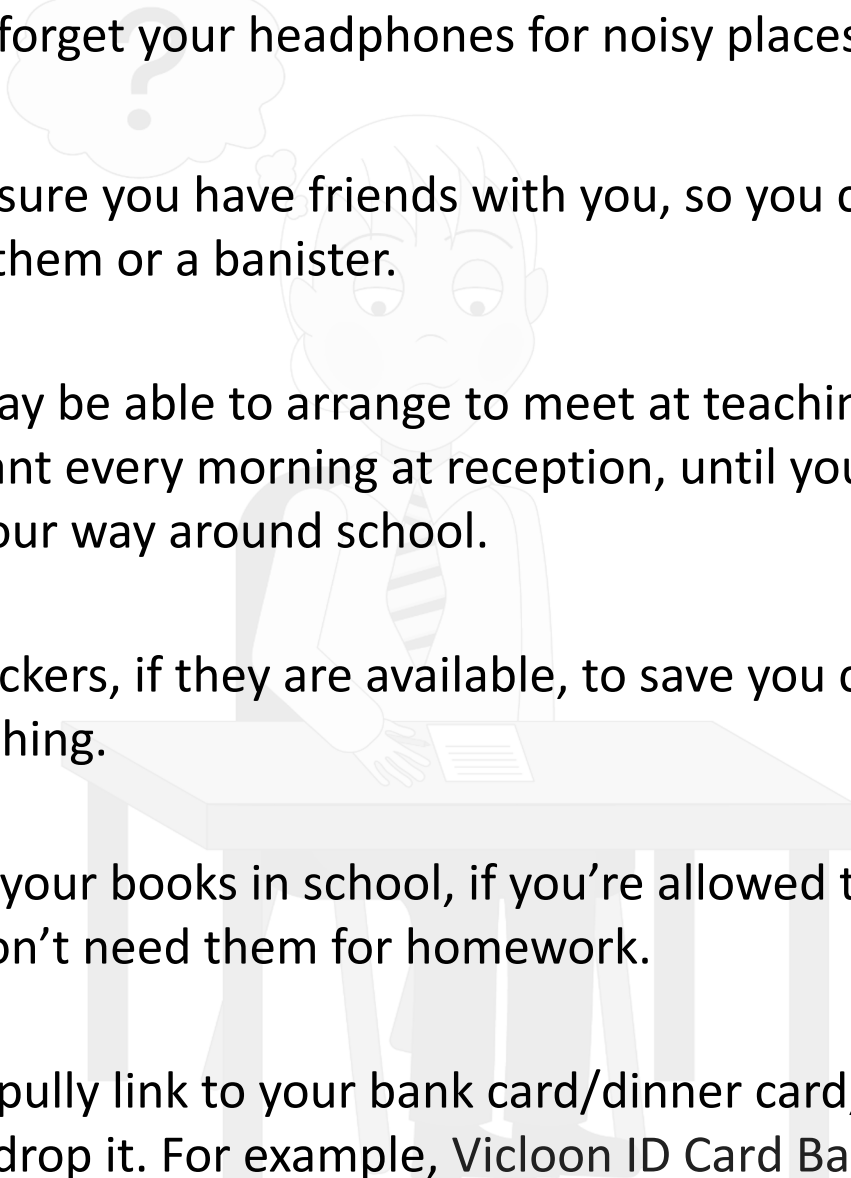
Getting Around High School

- ❖ Make sure you have permission cards so you can either get to class early or arrive late, so you can move around the corridors when they are quieter.
- ❖ Leave class five minutes early to avoid the noise and crowds.
- ❖ You might want a toilet pass, so you can access the toilets when they are less busy.
- ❖ Canteens can be busy and noisy, so ask for a queue jump pass.
- ❖ Find a less crowded route around buildings, so you can avoid crowds.
- ❖ Make sure that you have your timetable on you, so you know where you are going.

Getting Around High School

- 
- ❖ Write classrooms on the back of your hand, so you know where you are going.
 - ❖ Follow your friends to find your way around, someone will know where they are going.
 - ❖ Take packed lunch, so you can eat it in a quiet place in the yard.
 - ❖ You might want to practise going to busy restaurants with friends, so that you get used to going to the canteen.
 - ❖ If you are messy or slow eater, choose something at lunch that you can eat with your hands, for example, baguettes, bagels, burgers and if you don't finish it, you can always eat it later.
 - ❖ Have the option to go to a quiet room, or nurture room, at break and lunchtime.

Getting Around High School

- 
- ❖ Don't forget your headphones for noisy places.
 - ❖ Make sure you have friends with you, so you can hold on to them or a banister.
 - ❖ You may be able to arrange to meet a teaching assistant every morning at reception, until you can find your way around school.
 - ❖ Use lockers, if they are available, to save you carrying everything.
 - ❖ Leave your books in school, if you're allowed to and you don't need them for homework.
 - ❖ Use a pull link to your bank card/dinner card, so you don't drop it. For example, Vicloon ID Card Badge Holder: https://www.amazon.co.uk/dp/B087CX9H63?ref=ppx_pop_mob_ap_share

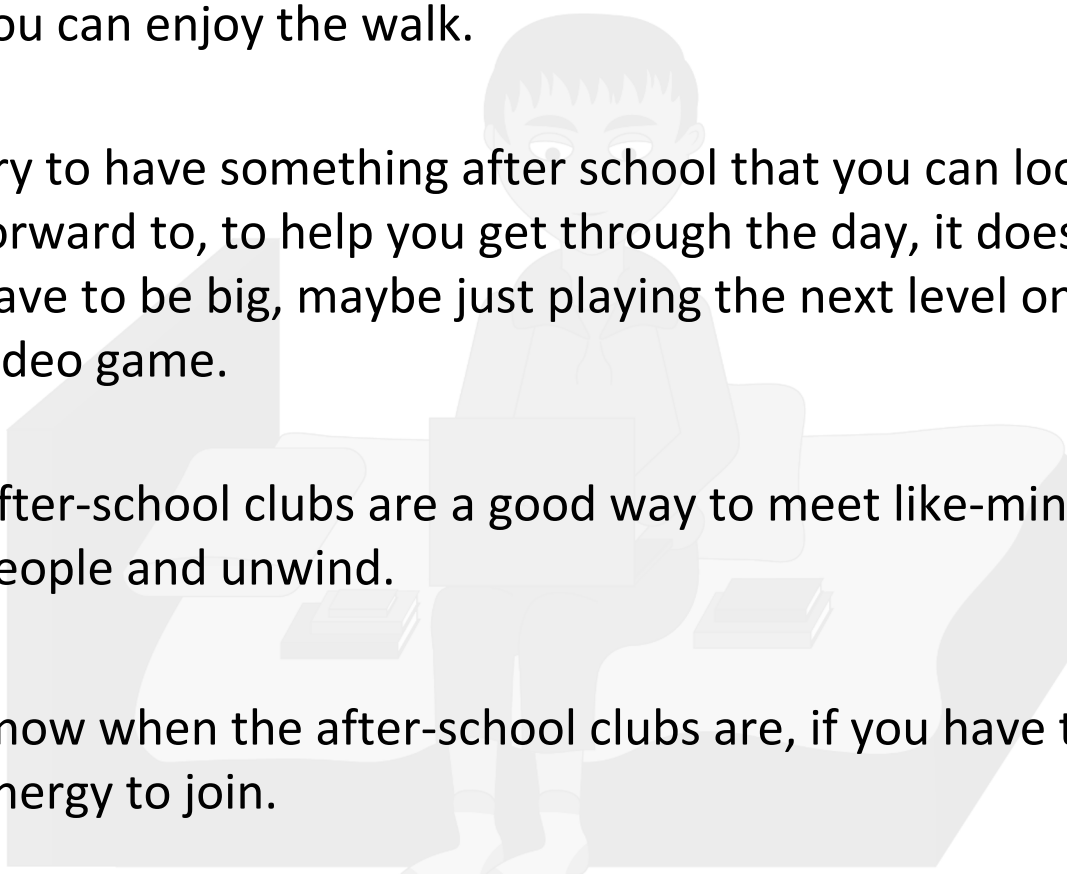
Getting Around High School

- ❖ Spend some breaks familiarising yourself with the school.
- ❖ Have someone in an older year group (a prearranged mentor/buddy) that you can go to for help or who can speak up for you on your behalf, may be helpful if you don't feel confident speaking to a teacher yourself.
- ❖ Find out what clubs are on at break and lunch times, so you can spend time with your friends, or if you need a quiet space use the library to chill out.
- ❖ Don't forget that your family will have spoken to the school about the help you might need, the school might just need reminding occasionally.

After School



After School

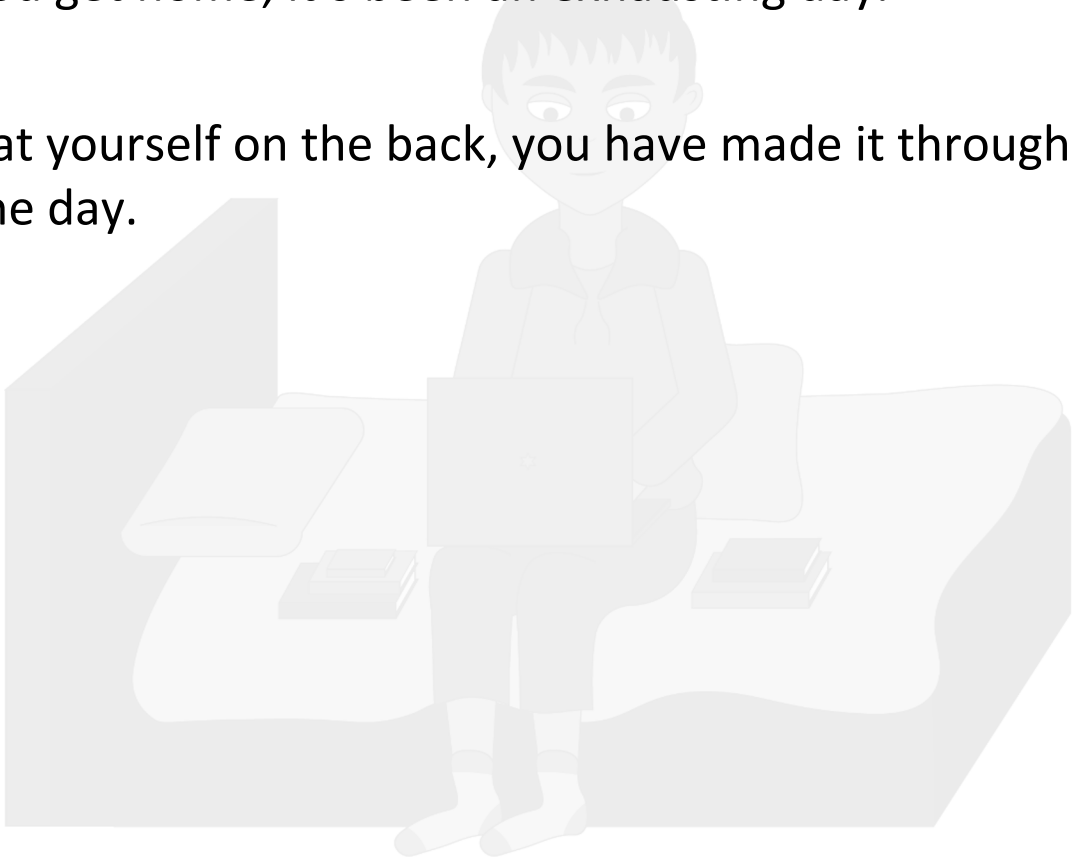
- ❖ If you walk home, if possible, walk with friends so that you can enjoy the walk.
 - ❖ Try to have something after school that you can look forward to, to help you get through the day, it doesn't have to be big, maybe just playing the next level on a video game.
 - ❖ After-school clubs are a good way to meet like-minded people and unwind.
 - ❖ Know when the after-school clubs are, if you have the energy to join.
 - ❖ Know the route home if you're walking home or get a lift home if you're tired.
 - ❖ Try spacing your homework out, so you don't have too much at any one time.
- 
- A faint, stylized illustration of a young boy sitting at a desk. He is wearing a dark jacket and is looking towards the viewer. On the desk in front of him are several books and a laptop. The illustration is rendered in a light, semi-transparent style, serving as a background for the text.

After School

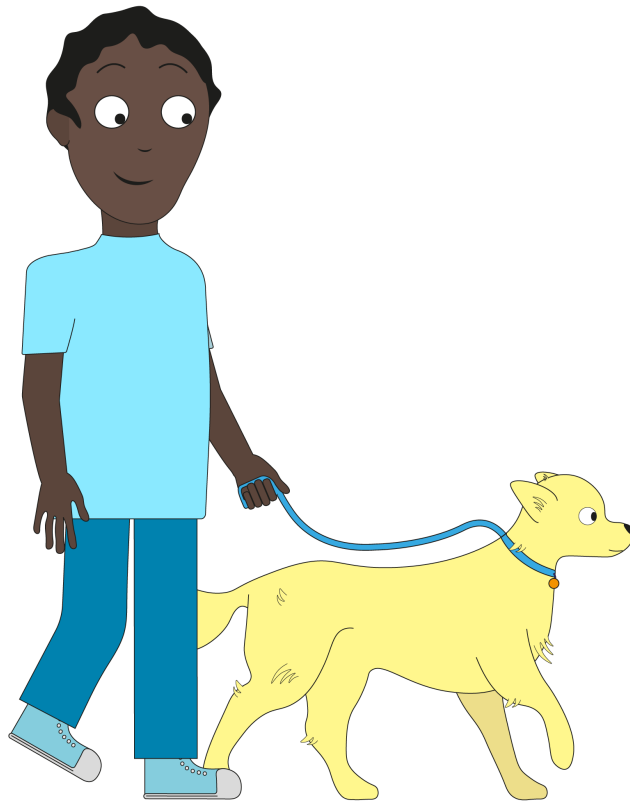
- ❖ Set specific homework days, have lots of fun on the other days.
- ❖ You might find it easier to get your homework done as soon as possible and then pack it away in your bag, so it's ready for the next day.
- ❖ You might find doing your homework in your school uniform keeps you focused.
- ❖ Ask teachers to check that you have the right homework written down.
- ❖ Ask for extensions on homework, to allow you plenty of time to finish it.
- ❖ Use spare time effectively.
- ❖ Rest when you get home.

After School

- ❖ Relax and have a cup of tea, or even a powernap when you get home, it's been an exhausting day.
- ❖ Pat yourself on the back, you have made it through the day.

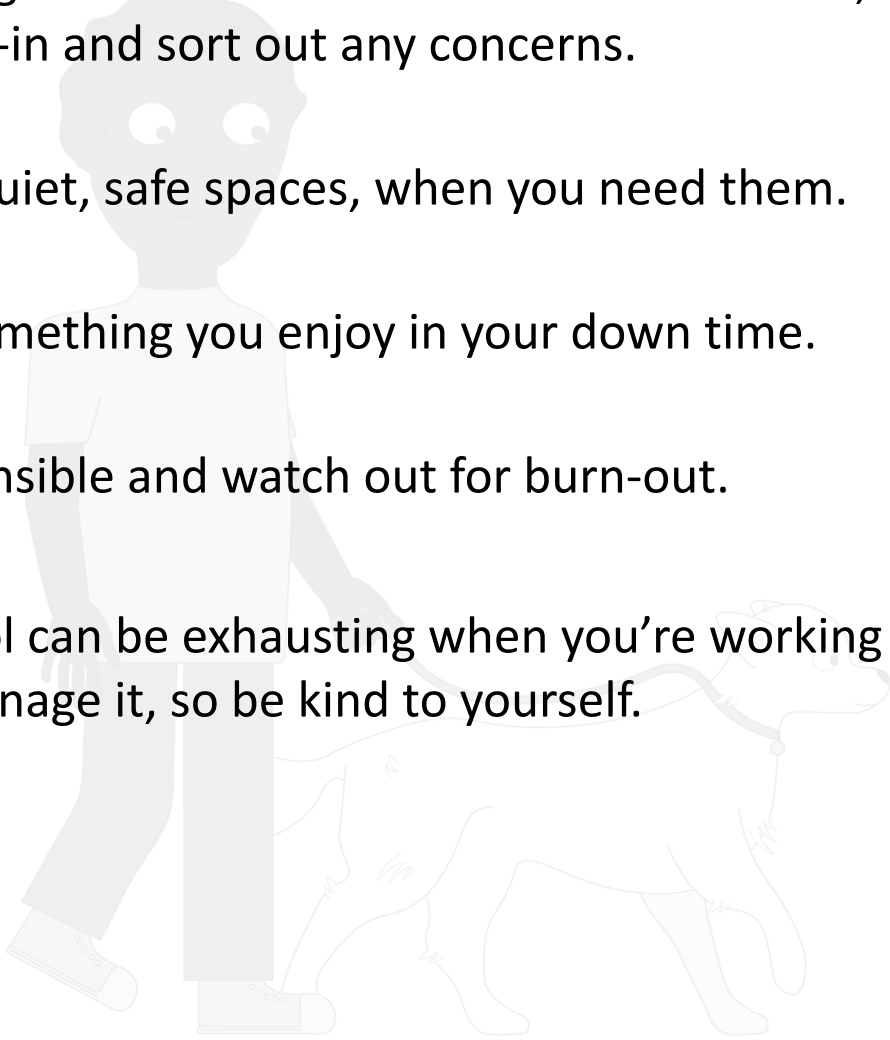


Looking After Yourself



Looking After Yourself

- ❖ Arrange a session a week with a trusted adult, to check-in and sort out any concerns.
- ❖ Use quiet, safe spaces, when you need them.
- ❖ Do something you enjoy in your down time.
- ❖ Be sensible and watch out for burn-out.
- ❖ School can be exhausting when you're working so hard to manage it, so be kind to yourself.



Your Tips

We've left this page blank for you to add any tips that have worked for you.

Moving On Up!

We would like to thank the co-authors of this resource, who gave up their time to share their expertise and experiences with us. We hope that some of the strategies that the co-authors have identified as useful for them, will also be useful for you.

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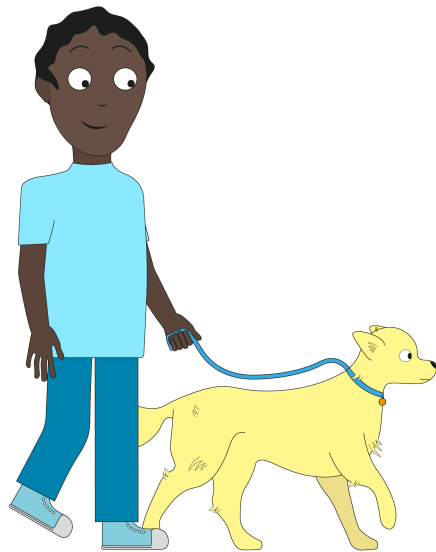
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