

BE SAFE & WATCH YOUR MATES

You've finished Year 12 AND you did it during a pandemic – congratulations! For many, it's a time of mixed emotions. You may be relieved, you may be excited, you may be sad it's over and for some, it hasn't even sunk in yet.

2020 sure loves to throw a curve-ball and it's no surprise that Schoolies events are cancelled. Yet, no matter if, how or when you choose to mark this milestone in your life, there are a few things you should be aware of. Celebration plans of any type come with associated risks. Check out the tips below to help you to make great decisions during this momentous time in your life.

CHECKLIST FOR 2020 YEAR 12 SCHOOL LEAVERS

REMEMBER

- ❑ **Pat yourself on the back:** pause and take a moment to acknowledge this achievement, you've finished school. Forever!
- ❑ **Understand that you will feel many things at this time in your life:** highs, lows and everything in between. It's perfectly normal. Recognise these feelings and talk with friends, connect with trusted adults or mentors in your life.

IF YOU ARE MAKING PLANS TO CELEBRATE – BEFORE YOU DO:

- ❑ **Evaluate:** you are encouraged to carefully consider your celebration plans for 2020. Do what's right for you and don't feel peer pressure to do anything you don't want to do.
- ❑ **Stay local:** and remember you don't have to celebrate on pre-determined dates – make your own plans for when it suits you.
- ❑ **Make sure:** any plans you do make are COVID safe and you are aware of the current health directives – check online at [covid19.qld.gov.au](https://www.covid19.qld.gov.au) for the latest info on gathering limits for your area and other relevant health instructions.
- ❑ **Talk:** to your friends in advance. Agree on the ground rules and what you all want to get out of it. Remember – making up room numbers by agreeing to stay with strangers really isn't wise.
- ❑ **Download:** the **Emergency+ App** – this app helps provide critical location details to emergency services if it's needed.
- ❑ **Set up:** your emergency SOS/emergency contacts/Medical ID on your phone – this will be located in 'Settings' under 'Health', or 'Security' or similar (each phone type is slightly different). Make sure all the information is correct and up to date.
- ❑ **Research:** investigate where you are going to see if there are any support services in the area. Download the **'24hr Emergency Contacts'** from the Safer Schoolies website for a handy list of important 24hr contacts.

- ❑ **Read:** the House Rules. If you are in paid accommodation, read and make sure you understand the House Rules. In a COVID environment, there is also likely to be additional requirements for contact tracing.
- ❑ **Understand:** the risks associated with your plans. Remember that every choice you make has a consequence. Be sure to understand your rights and responsibilities, know your limits and make your own decisions – and stick to them!

WHEN YOU'RE THERE

- ❑ **Take the time to care for your mental and physical wellbeing:** eat well, get enough rest and drink plenty of water. Remember that support is always available 24/7:
 - Kids Helpline **1800 55 1800**
 - 1800RESPECT **1800 737 732**
 - Red Frogs **1300 557 123**
- ❑ **Don't drink and drive or get in the car with a drunk driver:** make sure you have a plan B/C/D to get home or back to your accommodation. Remember, you can still be over the limit the next day – the effects of alcohol and other drugs only wear off with time.
- ❑ **Stick together:** there's safety in numbers and remember that if you need to, seek help together.
- ❑ **Phone home:** if you're away from home, agree on days/times to call your parents/guardians to let them know you are OK.
- ❑ **Balconies:** pose a significant risk to you when you are celebrating. Stay well away if you are under the influence of alcohol or other drugs.
- ❑ **Social media:** consider setting your account to private and always think before you post. Seek permission before sharing or tagging. While you're at it, follow **@SCHOOLIESGC** for more handy tips on staying safe and healthy through this time.

@SCHOOLIESGC



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WHEN YOU'RE THERE

- Slip, slop, slap, seek:** the Queensland sun is strong! Dehydration and sunburn are two things you want to avoid. Slip on a shirt and sunnies, slop on 50+ sunscreen, slap on a hat and seek shade.
- Spending time and marking this moment with friends:** is the best part – in 2020 there are some extra considerations. Make sure it's the appropriate number of people and follow these tips on practising physical distancing as much as you can:
 - keep at least 1.5 metres away from other people (two big steps)
 - wash your hands regularly with soap and water or use alcohol-based sanitiser
 - avoid hugs, kisses and handshakes.
- Respect the local community:** people live, work and holiday alongside you. Be mindful of noise late at night and be respectful of others.
- If you're not having a good time:** it's OK to go home early. Call home whenever you need to – no matter how late, or whatever the situation.

WHEN CAMPING OR IN REMOTE LOCATIONS

- Check at the weather forecast:** and keep an eye out for extreme weather events. Be prepared with adequate supplies and safety equipment and remember: if it's flooded, forget it.
- You may be out of mobile range:** make plans for charging your phone and consider how you will pinpoint your location if you need to (the Emergency+ App can help).
- Be bushfire aware:** check conditions for the area and be aware that there may be a fire ban in place. Many national parks do not allow open fires. Properly extinguish all fires with water – never bury a fire as this is a burn risk.

- Water and hydration:** is there drinking water available where you are going? Make sure you have access to drinkable water and stay hydrated.
- Pack a suitable first aid kit:** you never know when you may need it.
- Secure your belongings:** or leave them at home.
- Driving:** the same rules apply wherever you find yourself behind the wheel. Drive to the conditions. Don't drink/use drugs and drive, buckle up, and stick to the road rules. If near the beach – be aware of the tides, make sure you have the proper equipment, stick to the speed limit and be aware of hidden objects such as rocks, or even pedestrians who may also be using the beach.
- Make sure other people know your plans:** where you are going, who you will be with and when you are returning home.

WHEN NEAR WATER

- Swimming:** alcohol and other drugs DO NOT mix with swimming. Don't swim at night and never swim alone.
- Beware of hidden dangers:** in creeks, lakes, rivers and dams. Never dive into any waterhole. Queensland is home to some very dangerous marine life – be sure you understand the risks and use precaution.
- When at the beach:** swim between the red and yellow flags. Beware of rips and currents.

**DON'T RISK IT
ALWAYS CALL 000
IN AN EMERGENCY**