

Well-Being Newsletter

Term Four 2020

Better late than never! Welcome to the final Well-being newsletter for the most upside down and wrong way round year we have had! This time last year if anyone had have told us what we would go through this year, we wouldn't have believed them. Yet here we are on the other side, we made it, we may have scars and wounds that need to heal from a year that has tested our internal strength more than ever before, but as we head in to the new year we will do that together, as a community, holding each other as we always do through the highs and lows. To our families, we are in awe of how you have adapted, changed, sacrificed and adjusted to the ever changing school landscape this year. We know none of that was easy, not even a little bit, no matter what you did to get through, you have succeeded. Success this year is not measured on how many tasks you handed in on Google Classroom or if you created the best STEM experiment, it is purely making through, if that was through tears, asking for help, hibernating, leaning on a friend whatever it looked like, well done. To our teachers and school staff, it was the same, so much work and ever changing goal posts, intense feelings of not being enough, trying to support families and students when you were barely coping yourself, so many tears have flowed and continue to flow as we limp to the end of the year trying to give our students as many happy, connected experiences as we can, we know they have missed out on so much this year. An emotional and exhausting year for all of us and we are all tired.....our whole community! In true Patch style though, next year we will regroup, heal and move forward making adjustments for our kids and families as we need to. We are so lucky to have a true community a place we can rely and count on without judgement and with unconditional positive regard for all. It is worth taking

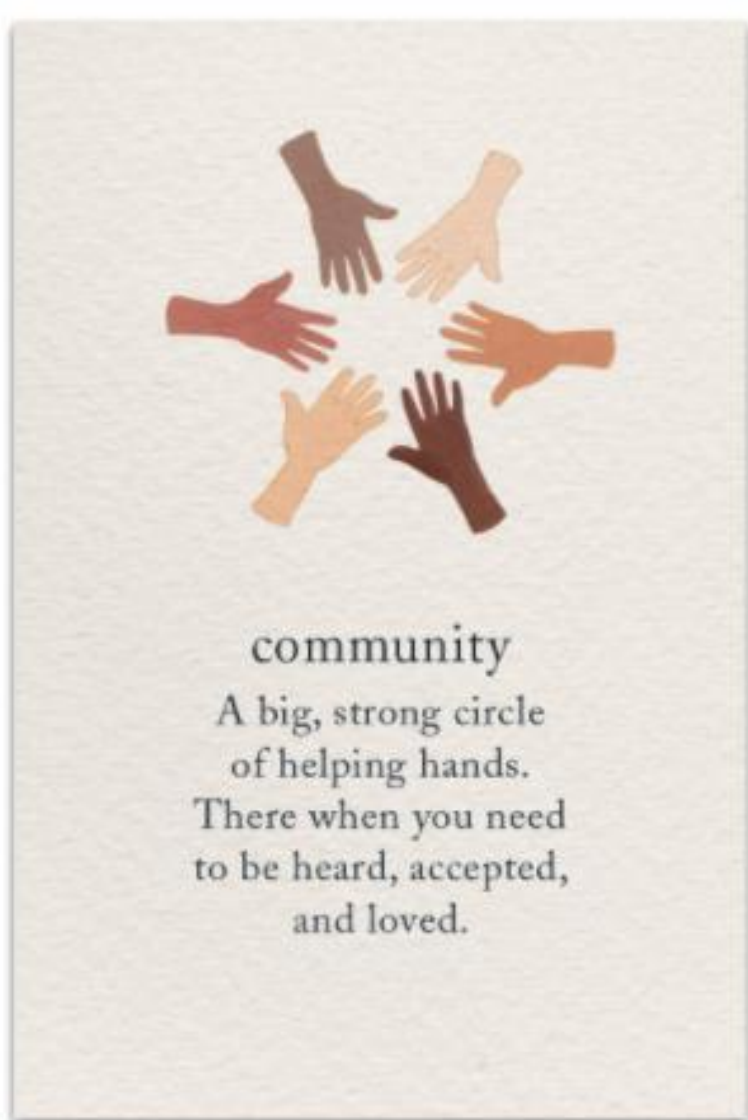
Dates to Remember

No dates or times to report until next year!



time to reflect on the positive things the year has brought too, it may be less commute time, spending time with family without all the sport and activities, binging on your favourite Netflix series or just realising that the simple things are all we need. For all the hardship there is also light and positives. How lucky we now are to be able to enjoy a beautiful Christmas with the people we love. Have a wonderful break, and our school thanks you all for being the flexible, positive, grateful families you are. We honestly could not have made it without you.

Alesha x



Goodbye to our lovely Madz...

Next week we have to say goodbye to our beautiful Madz. She has become the heart of our school with her warmth and kindness greeting us each day. Nothing is ever too much trouble, while we know she is a gun at the workings of the office and has helped us all with the logistics of school life, she is so much more than that to most of us, she is always there for chat and some reassuring words just when we need it most. We adore you Madz and your new community are so lucky to be getting you. xoxoxoxoxoxoxo

Thank You

Just in case no one has said it today, thank you.

For all that you've done for us all here at home,

For keeping the beat of the heart there at school,

Thank you.

For keeping the school alive still and afloat,

For being a calm beacon of light for us all.

For beautying the garden, for caring the calls,

For tending to the children who just had to go.

For sending your teaching into the screen,

Instead of to those bright faces and all their ideas.

For searching your mind for ideas sparked with fun,

For keeping our children on the hook they're meant to be.

Thank you for going with the flex of the tide,

For wrapping your goods and delivering them differently.

For listening to the talk and changing the steering,

For finding the gear shift that kept all the more happy.

For showering your hearts on each child and their home,

For making the children all feel so woven.

For laying down beautiful words on their work,

For eye-beaming love to each child on your screen.

So to the great sum of you all who've channelled us your help,

Be knowing that we're sending our hearts to you,

And just in case no one has said it today,

Thank you.

With love, Jodie Cameron

Charlie and Henry's mum ☺

Staff received
this beautiful
poem in their
pigeon hole
after remote
learning. It
meant so
much to all of
us and was
received with
gratitude.





This year we have had some absolutely fantastic sessions with Tony and Sian from Building Better Brains. They have taught us soooooo much and we feel so grateful to have had them guide our parenting and teaching through this tough year. Our final funded session was held straight after our Prep 2021 Information evening. They gave our parents some wonderful strategies to help guide transition to school next year. Check out their website and Facebook page to keep to date with what they are doing. These strategies can be used for all children not just Preps. If you would like the full slide show please email me at alesha.sangster@education.vic.gov.au



Getting Prepared Before School Starts

The best way to prepare your child for this transition, is to tackle it before the meltdowns begin!

Create a story about life at school or social story including things such as how you will get to school, the teachers there, the daily schedule etc. This allows your child to have an idea in their mind of how the day will go and therefore will reduce anxiety. Get the child to illustrate the story and take ownership of the experience.





Connect to their Emotions

Get your child to draw/paint/sculpt in playdough or clay their emotions and thoughts about school.

This is a great way of finding out exactly how your child is feeling about starting school and can help to identify any extra supports that need to be put in place.



Release Worries

Draw/sculpt/paint your worries they may have about school.
What does it look like, does it have a colour?
How big is it?
Where can you feel the worry in your body?

This helps build a healthy, emotionally intelligent, well integrated brain.

You can then brainstorm some support strategies with your child so that they can feel empowered by being part of the problem-solving process.





Contain Worries

Use a Worry Monster to help eat your child's worries. Buy the toy or make your own with a tissue box. Get your child to write or draw their worries on pieces of paper and add them to the monster's mouth.



Help your child make a Worry Box to contain and hold their worries – use lego, construction paper or a jar. Write or draw your worries on pieces of paper and add them to the jar for safe keeping.

Make or buy some worry dolls that your child can whisper their worries to -

The key is practice moving our worries from taking over our brains to a symbolically contained space.



Contain Your Worries - Worry Jar

Write or draw your current worries in the jar.

How does it feel to offer them some containment, instead of taking up space in your brain?

What would you like to do with your creation now?
eg rip it up, burn it at home (safely), scribble it out etc.

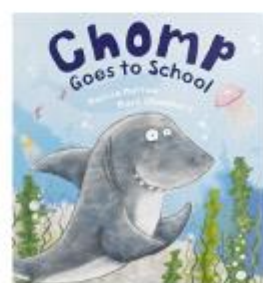
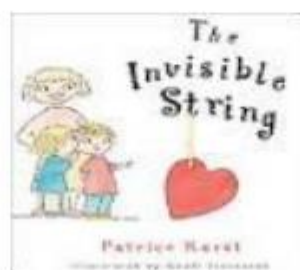




Bibliotherapy – Using Stories to Prepare

Read books about starting school/write your own school story

This is another way of helping to reduce the anxiety of going to school and will allow your child to feel more in control and aware of the process, what to expect, feelings they may have etc.



Recommended Books

The Kissing Hand – Audrey Penn

The Invisible String – Patrice Karst

The Things I Love About School – Tracey Moroney

I Am Too Absolutely Small for School - Lauren Child

Wombat Goes to School –Jackie French

Starting School – Jane Godwin

Chomp Goes to School – Melissa Mattox



Food, glorious food for wellbeing!



Here is a recipe from one of our lovely Prep mums Amanda Logan for a 3-ingredient Zucchini Soup

1 cup raw cashews (swap to a cup of peeled cubed potatoes if you can't eat nuts)

3 ½ cups vegetable stock

1 kilogram peeled zucchini roughly chopped

sea salt (optional)

pepper (optional)

1 tbsp vegan butter spread (optional)

Combine the cashews (or potatoes), stock and peeled zucchini in to a medium soup or saucepan over medium heat and bring up to a simmer.

Reduce heat to low and cook for 15 minutes or until the cashews and zucchini is tender.

Remove from the heat and carefully transfer the soup to a blender. Season with salt and pepper and add the vegan butter (completely optional). Blend until the soup is completely smooth to serve. You may have to blend in batches depending on the size for your blender.

Do I have to peel the zucchini?

Yes and no. Sorry, it's not a straight forward answer. I created this recipe when our builder gave me a bunch of zucchinis from his garden. They were huge and the skins were tough so I peeled them. If you can get your hands on small, young zucchini you can forgo the peeling. The larger a zucchini is, the older it is and the more tough and bitter the skin. My rule of thumb is, anything bigger than my hand I peel for this soup.

Do you listen?

For the full article head over to

<https://raisingchildren.net.au/pre-teens/communicating-relationships/communicating/active-listening>

Active listening: the basics

Actively listening to your child is more than just simply hearing him. Active listening is a skill.

You can actively listen by:

- getting close to your child when she's speaking
- giving your child your full attention
- allowing your child to talk and not interrupting her
- avoiding questions that break your child's train of thought
- focusing on what your child is saying rather than thinking about what you'll say next
- looking at your child so she knows she's being heard and understood
- showing your child that you're interested by nodding your head and making comments like 'I see', 'That sounds hard/great/tricky ...' and so on.

Listen earnestly to anything your children want to tell you, no matter what. If you don't listen eagerly to the little stuff when they are little, they won't tell you the big stuff when they are big, because to them all of it has always been big stuff.

12 Christmas Tips to Help You Get Through the Silly Season!



The holidays present a crazy array of demands — parties, shopping, baking, cleaning, entertaining, trying to get things wrapped up at work before you go on a break, or if you're working through just keeping track of the days at this dizzying time of year can be a challenge. It's no wonder the festive season often brings with it extra stress, anxiety and sometimes depression.

1. Acknowledge your feelings.

It is perfectly okay if you are not filled with Christmas joy! Some people live for this festive time of year, but others seriously dread it.

Maybe you don't have positive Christmas memories from your childhood. Maybe someone close to you passed away recently or around this time of year. Maybe you just can't be with your loved ones this year. It's ok to feel sadness, or grief and it's ok to cry or express your feelings.

You can't force yourself to be happy just because it's the holiday season. Acknowledge it, accept it, and remember this tried and true saying that... 'this too, shall pass'.

2. Reach out.

If you feel lonely or isolated at this time of year then reach out to your friends, extended family or to the community you live in through religious or social events. They can all offer you support and companionship.

Volunteering your time to help others also is a good way to lift your spirits and broaden your friendships. Doing something for others who are less fortunate is also a great way to put things in perspective.

3. Have realistic expectations.

Christmas doesn't have to be perfect, or be just like it was last year.

Families change and grow, and traditions and rituals often change too. Choose a few of your favourite traditions to hold on to, and be open to creating new ones.

For example, if your adult children can't come to your house, either go to them or find new ways to celebrate

4. Set aside differences.

Try to accept family members and friends as they are, even if they don't live up to all of your expectations. Set aside your issues until a more appropriate time, and try and be understanding if others get upset or distressed when something goes awry.

Chances are they're feeling the effects of holiday stress and depression, too.

5. Stick to a budget.

Before you go gift and food shopping, decide how much money you can afford to spend. Then stick to your budget. No one needs the stresses that come with overspending after Christmas.

Try these alternatives; donate to a charity in someone's name, give homemade gifts, make shortbread shapes or homemade jam, start a family gift exchange or organise a secret santa.

6. Plan ahead.

Set aside specific days for shopping, baking, visiting friends and other activities.

Plan your menus and make your shopping list well in advance in order to prevent last-minute scrambling to buy forgotten ingredients or having to deal with the Christmas parking rush or over-packed shopping experiences!

7. Learn to say no.

Feeling pressured to say yes to something, when you know you should say no, might end up making you feel resentful and overwhelmed.

We all lead busy lives with pressures from a lot of different angles and rest assured your friends and colleagues will understand if you can't be part of every social engagement or activity.

8. Don't abandon healthy habits.

Don't use the excuse of the festive season allow it to also become a free-for-all. Overindulgence will only add to your stress and guilt after the festive season.

Try these suggestions:

- Have a healthy snack before holiday parties so that you don't go overboard on sweets, cheese or drinks
- Get plenty of sleep
- Incorporate regular physical activity into each day
- Don't indulge in too much alcohol – no one feels good with a hangover!

9. Take a breather.

Make some time for yourself. Spending just 15 minutes on your own without distractions, may refresh you enough to handle everything you need to do or deal with at this time of year.

Find something that reduces stress by clearing your mind, slowing your breathing and restoring inner calm.

Some options may include; taking a walk at night and stargazing, listening to soothing music, getting a massage, having a bath or reading a book.

In your breaks at work sit outside in the sunshine for 5-10 minutes or go for a walk to clear your head.

10. Have a 'Great Escape' Plan!

It's a good idea to have some pre-planned excuses to escape from proceedings if they get too stressful.

Be imaginative and use things such as leaving the room to make a phone-call to a friend or perhaps checking on a neighbour. Just by having planned a couple of escape routes you'll probably feel less stressed anyway but actually leaving the situation, even for 10 minutes, will help clear your mind and relax you.

Don't let the Christmas lunch table get you down.

11. Fore-armed is fore-warned.

If you already know the things that cause you stress at this time of year, then next year start thinking about clever solutions a bit earlier!

Do you find gift shopping stressful? Make a list of the people you need to buy for and set yourself a budget for each. Work out how much you need to set aside each week and set up a direct debit into a separate account each pay check to cover what you will need for the year.

As great gift ideas come to you through the year jot them down in your phone, in your daily diary or just a notebook. Often friends and family will mention things they want, need or are interested in throughout the year. Make note of it and save yourself the stress later. Often it's something cheaper, but it shows you have been listening – and that will mean a lot more to the recipient.

If you're looking for something specific, then call the stores you would normally visit to make sure they have what you want. Save yourself the stress of trudging from shop to shop searching! And don't forget that a lot of the bigger stores will price match or at least be negotiable. It's worth a try.

TIP: Shopping online is a perfect solution to avoiding the madness of festive season shopping. You can find exactly what you need and have it delivered right to you without having to leave the comfort of your lounge. Perfect!

12. Seek professional help if you need it.

Despite your best efforts, you may find yourself feeling persistently sad or anxious, plagued by physical complaints, unable to sleep, irritable and hopeless, and unable to face routine chores.

If these feelings last for a while, talk to your doctor or a mental health professional.

Don't let the holidays become something you dread. Instead, take steps to prevent the stress and depression that can descend during the holidays. Learn to recognize your triggers, such as financial pressures or personal demands, so you can combat them before they lead to a meltdown. With a little planning and some positive thinking, you can find peace and joy during the holidays.

*One child, one teacher,
one book, one pen can
change the world.*

MALALA YOUSAFZAI



Great News for The Patch in our Well-Being space!!!

We have secured Funding for a Wellbeing facilitator (name to yet be decided) for the next 2 years. We have a Deet approved and we will select someone that fits our Patch values and families.

Thanks to Deb H, Ange and Emma for all their work on the grant submission- it has paid off and we are now looking forward to working in partnership with our agency to provide our students and families some wellbeing support. For those who remember our wonderful Jodie this is who she worked for when she was counselling and they come highly recommended. Let hope we find someone as wonderful as she was.

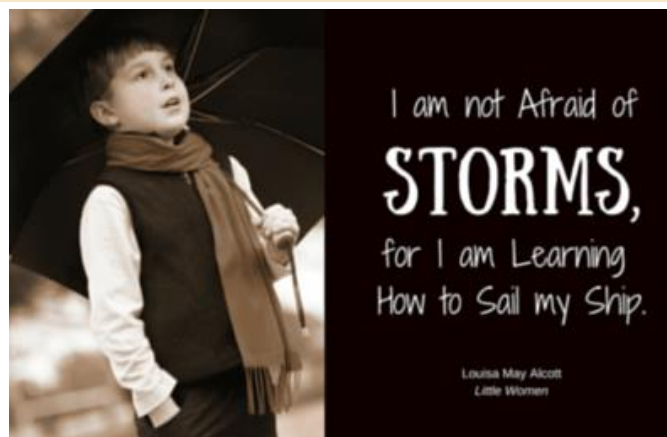
More information to follow next year.....

Building Resilient Children

One thing this year has shown us is how resilient our children can be. It is not always easy however and our natural instinct as parents is to pave the way for our children, to steer them away from disappointment or sadness. We see these bumps in the road arise every day at school. Perhaps they did not get the teacher they hoped for or the friend they wanted in their grade. Perhaps someone else was chosen for a role they wanted. They may not have got a lunch order when everyone else always seems to have them. Why are they having a play date tonight and not me? Everywhere you look there are times when our kids need to draw on their resilience store, so as parents and teachers it is our job to help them navigate this. Here are a few ways to help build resilience in your child, if we facilitate this for our children, in the long run they will have less pain than if we smooth the way for them. It's not easy and sometimes your heart will hurt seeing them have to navigate things that are sad, hard or disappointing but know that little by little, you are preparing them to be strong, happy and independent.

8 Ways to Build Resilience in Children:

1. Let them experience disappointment so they learn sadness doesn't last forever.
2. Validate their fears and help them make plans to do things even if they're scared.
3. Let them take (reasonable) risks and experience natural consequences.
4. Encourage them to try new things, make mistakes, and learn from their mistakes.
5. Give them opportunities to make their own decisions and help them problem solve.
6. Tell stories of people who faced hard times, persisted, and grew stronger as a result.
7. Reframe challenges as short-term problems, and opportunities for learning.
8. Remind them that although we can't control everything that happens to us, we *can* control how we respond.



Contacts

Need support or information around depression and anxiety, for yourself, a friend or family member?

Please visit [Get immediate support](#) to contact the Beyond Blue Support Service and for details of other [national crisis and help lines](#).

The [Beyond Blue Support Service](#) provides advice and support via telephone 24/7 (just call 1300 22 4636), [daily web chat](#) (between 3pm–12am) and [email](#) (with a response provided within 24 hours).



National services

If you're looking to talk to someone about sex, sexuality or gender but you're outside the local call area of a capital city, you can contact the number/website below to get connected with your local sexuality and gender support service.

QLife

A national service that aims to keep LGBTQI communities supported and connected.

Phone: 1800 184 527 (3pm–midnight AEST)

Online chat (3pm–midnight AEST)

1800RESPECT

1800 737 732

This 24-hour national sexual assault, family and domestic violence counselling line for any Australian who has experienced, or is at risk of, family and domestic violence and/or sexual assault.

Other Useful Contacts...

For Men

No To Violence: Male Family Violence Prevention Association

Peak body for individuals and organisations who want to contribute to male family violence prevention.

03 9487 4500

www.ntv.org.au

Men's Referral Service

Anonymous and confidential telephone service provided by men for men. It offers a central point of contact for men who want to stop violent or abusive behaviour towards their family members.

1300 766 491 (Mon-Fri 8am-10pm, Sat-Sun 10am-4pm)

MensLine Australia

Professional telephone and online support, information and referral service for men, specialising in family and relationship concerns.

1300 789 978

www.mensline.org.au

For Women

Women's Safety After Separation

Information for women facing separation, particularly where there is violence and abuse.

ncsmc.org.au/wsas/welcome.htm

WIRE (Women's Information and Referral Exchange) is a Victoria-wide free generalist

information, support and referral service run by women for women.

1300 134 130 (9am - 5pm)

wire.org.au

Women's Health Victoria

Free, confidential and statewide health service offering information, support, a library and referral options for women. Run from the Royal Women's Hospital.

thewomens.org.au/WomensHealthInformationCentre

Centres Against Sexual Assault (CASAs)

Centres offer 24 hour crisis support to recent victims of sexual assault, as well as counselling, legal and medical support and information.

www.casa.org.au

1800 806 292 (all callers are automatically transferred to their local CASA within Victoria)
(Eastern CASA is in East Ringwood - **9870 7330**)

Adults Surviving Child Abuse (ASCA)

Counselling support line, information, support, referral for survivors, supporters and health professionals.

1300 657 380 (7 days, 9am-5pm)

For Children and Young People

DHS Child Protection Crisis Line

131 278 (24 hours/7 days) - statewide

Australian Childhood Foundation

www.childhood.org.au

1800 176 453 or **03 9874 3922**

Parentline Victoria

www.parentline.vic.gov.au

132 289 (8am-midnight, 7 days)

Kids Helpline

<https://kidshelpline.com.au/>

1800 551 800 (24 hours/7 days)

Australian Childhood Foundation

Works to protect the rights and ensure the safety of children. Provides trauma counselling, professional training, advocacy, research and parent support.

www.childhood.org.au

For LGBTIQ

QLife Australia (formerly Switchboard Victoria)

Australia's first nationally-oriented counselling and referral service for people of diverse sex, genders and sexualities. Provides nationwide early intervention, peer supported telephone and web-based services to support LGBTIQ people of all ages.

www.qlife.org.au

1800 184 527 (3pm-midnight, 7 days)

Gay and Lesbian Health Victoria (GLHV)

GLHV is a lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex (LGBTI) health and wellbeing policy and resource unit.

www.glhv.org.au/

03 9479 8760



If you would like to include an article in our Term 1 2021 Well-being newsletter please email me your article

(maybe next year 😊)

alesha.sangster@education.vic.gov.au