



Reaching Higher

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Welcome to Cameron's Corner

COVID-19 UPDATE

The COVID-19 (coronavirus) is having a significant impact on the lives of all Australians. News coverage about '[Learning From Home](#)' and official statements from our state and federal leaders suggests that the teachers' enormous effort in planning for students to learn remotely is unfortunately becoming more of a certainty than a possibility.

As we do at MPPS, in considering learning continuity as we move towards remote learning (with Compass and our soon to be released Learning From Home platform), we are also cognisant of the importance of the health and wellbeing of our community.

Over the past weeks we have all seen and heard news which is unprecedented and unsettling, likely leaving us feeling stressed, anxious and worried. Sometimes stress, anxiety, fear and worry look different to what we would expect, presenting differently in different people. Children, teenagers, and sometimes adults, don't always have the words to describe their feelings and thoughts. You may notice changes in:

- Thinking: having trouble remembering things and/or concentrating; feeling confused; not being able to think clearly, and/or having difficulty making decisions.
- Body: stomach aches or running tummy; headaches or other pains; loss of appetite or eating more than usual; being 'jumpy' or nervous and easily startled; feeling less or more tired than usual; and/or having trouble relaxing or sleeping.
- Emotions: feeling anxious or overly fearful; depressed/despondent/helpless; feeling guilty; feeling angry; not caring about anything and/or feeling overwhelmed.

Generally, the guideline we use is to ask ourselves: *'are these feelings and experiences affecting my ability to do normal activities such as work, play, or to be around other people?'* If you feel that any of the above feelings, thoughts or bodily sensations are at the point where they are affecting you or your child's functioning and well-being – it is time to seek help.

Some helpful tips:

1. Learn the facts: limit persistent media exposure and instead, seek out factual information from reliable sources such as the [Australian Government's Health Alert](#) or the [World Health Organization](#).
2. Fear versus Fact: use logic. In other words, focus on what is really true instead of what you are afraid might happen.
3. Practise good basic hygiene: look after yourself. Looking after your own mental and physical health and wellbeing will enable you to keep a positive frame of mind and model that to your family and children (eg. talking to friends and family, continue doing what you enjoy, mind and body health, maintain regular routines and schedules where possible).

4. Talking to children about what they hear and see regarding COVID19: children pick up on anxiety of others through what they observe and what they hear around them. It is important for children to know that they can talk to you about their worries and fears. Ensure any explanations/discussions are age appropriate.
5. Maintain structure: keep routines (including daily exercise and fresh air).
6. Be active/creative: bake or cook something together, draw, paint, do mosaics, put music on and dance, or anything else you can think of to get children involved and creative; listen to music or read a book you have chosen and relax; connect with family and friends over the phone/facetime; share funny stories/'dad jokes', share wellbeing and share hope and be kind to yourself!

Some helpful resources for parents to direct your children to if appropriate:

- o <https://www.smilingmind.com.au/>
- o <https://gozen.com/coronavirus-anxiety/>
- o <https://kidshelpline.com.au/>
- o <https://raisingchildren.net.au/>

Protecting the health and wellbeing of all our community is important.

Like other parts of the community, our staff are maintaining high standards of hygiene and cleanliness. We thank parents who have given teachers the time and space to plan this week, and have been grateful the social distancing when picking up resources from classrooms.

On Tuesday we collectively (and in line with social distancing protocols as you can see from the picture) began to set up home learning activities that will come into effect at the beginning of Term 2 if we are instructed to. We continue to work remotely with a firm commitment to you that we will do everything in our power to provide learning continuity for your children. As you can see from Alison's post below and on Facebook "Its ok, we have this"

We will be working over the holidays to have this up and running and you will be alerted as soon as it is active but until then relax and enjoy time with family.



REVIEW

Thank you to those families who provided feedback to our review panel recently. Whilst our final panel day has been postponed, we have some extremely valuable information that will assist us to create a dynamic and ambitious School Strategic Plan for the next four years.

Kind Regards,

Cameron.

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL'S WELLBEING REPORT

Many of you may have seen this on our Facebook Page but for those who didn't

Dear Parents,

It's okay. We have this. I wish you could peek and see what your children's teachers are doing right now. You do not need to go out and purchase curriculum. You do not need to find apps and assignments for them. That's our job. Yes, you'll need to help your kids through it, but we are still here to teach them. You might see so many emails and advertisements telling you how to homeschool your child now. You may feel pressure to make a schedule, or suddenly be an expert on math. You don't. You aren't alone.

You have trusted your children to our care for many years. You can trust us now. It may look like our support is gone. It isn't. We're working very hard to bring your child what he or she needs.

Just hug them and tell them you love them. Tell them we love them. Play with them. Joke with them. Sure, have them read, or even write a little.

We're still here. We're still your village.

Love,
Teachers

THE COVID-19 CRISIS

Navigating the balance of responsibilities we have as adults during this unprecedented time is certainly a weight for us to carry. Please reach out to others via technology, email, phone, social-media etc. in order to remain connected and know you are not in this alone.

You will no doubt be hearing a lot of mixed messages about how to support your children's learning at home, how to keep your family isolated and how to continue with your own work under completely foreign circumstances. Please don't allow this to overwhelm you. You are the best judge of how to manage your family during this time. If you are managing things differently to the way your friends or neighbours are doing things, that is okay, we all need to get through this time however best we can for our families.

The most important thing for children right now is stability from their primary carers. Talk to them about what is going on and why, but try and remain calm and let them know above all else that they are safe and that you will continue to follow the directions of the medical experts as it comes through, in order to continue to keep everyone healthy.

We are in an extended school holiday period, so there is no need to have expectations of having them complete school type work right now. We encourage children to read for pleasure, play games, play with toys, exercise and relax. It has been an overwhelming time for them and for us and placing expectations of school work on them right now is not what they need.

Next term, if school does not resume on-site, communication around how you can support your children's ongoing learning and assist them to connect with their teachers remotely, will come through. There will be plenty of time to work out how these learning platforms will work and how to access various resources and teachers.

We will be working with you every step of the way and do what we can to ensure students are catered for as best we can as we navigate this uncharted territory!

GOODBYE ☹️

Dear Mentone Park Primary School Community,

I have some news. I have been successful in gaining promotion to a Principal position in another school network. From the beginning of Term 2, I will be moving to Waverley Meadows Primary School. It is obviously a bitter-sweet feeling, having to leave the community here that I know so well and love so much. We are all moving through uncharted territory at the moment, with an inability to have any social contact and so saying my goodbyes to you all in person will have to wait until later in the year. I would have loved to talk to the kids in person before leaving but unfortunately it will not be possible under these circumstances. I am going to miss everyone in this wonderful community. Thank you all for everything over the past 6 years.

Alison

All parents/guardians, visitors & volunteers to the school MUST sign in & out of the school and display their WWCC in a lanyard, which is available at the school office.

The Department of Education requires any person involved in an activity where children may be present to have a current WWCC or have supplied proof that they have applied for a WWCC with the Department of Justice. All schools are required to comply with the Working with Children Act 2005.

Volunteers are expected to carry the WWCC card on their person at all times when working or volunteering at the school or during school related activities.

There is no fee for this check. Apply now by visiting: www.workingwithchildren.vic.gov.au



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PLEASE DON'T HESITATE TO CALL FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO BOOK YOUR TIME

Lessons Also Available via Video Link