

# Mundulla Primary School



GROW IN KNOWLEDGE

our school values:

excellence  
respect  
responsibility  
integrity  
co-operation  
creativity

Newsletter 5

27<sup>th</sup> March 2020

## FROM THE PRINCIPAL:

We are certainly in interesting times at the moment, facing uncertainties and unknowns in all aspects of our lives. Changes are happening quickly and sometimes without time to get completely organised.

We have maintained business as usual at school – with the added handwashing, physical distancing and generally being aware of hygiene and our impact on others. Students have all taken this seriously without being alarmed. I have had discussions in a number of classes about some of the ‘what ifs’ that they were asking to hopefully allay any concerns they had about school closures, what they could do and why we are asking them to take extra precautions. Students and staff have been very good at maintaining their hand washing and have a range of songs to sing so that they complete it in the correct time.

### Parent Interviews

In the midst of this we’ve had parent interviews where parents were shown data collected about student learning and growth, some student goals were shared and questions were asked. Thank you to the parents who were able to make it in or were contacted by telephone. If you would still like to talk with your child’s teacher contact them to make arrangements to be contacted by phone.

### Naplan testing

As you would have heard, Naplan testing will not go ahead this year. Students weren’t devastated by this news, in fact I think I even got some cheers when I announced the sad news. Given everything else happening I think it is a good idea to remove this testing for 2020. We are also having to cancel a number of other events that are usually looked forward to by staff and students. We just hope that the long term sees us at school and continuing learning programs with each other.

### Sapsasa Cricket

Luckily for Hamish and Ethan they got to attend their cricket as District Sapsasa representatives last week. All other events for the year have been put on hold so they were fortunate to be able to participate, even though they missed

some of the extra activities the teams might have done in the past. Both boys did well, with Hamish scoring plenty of runs and Ethan taking a number of wickets. Their team finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in their division so a good overall result too.



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## CALENDAR

3 April Yr 5/6/7 Instrumental Music lesson  
6 – 9 April Pupil Free Days  
10 – 27 April School Holidays

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Government of South Australia  
Department for Education

**Our schools are remaining open,** (until the end of next week) however this week the teaching staff met to determine what they would put in place should there be school closures. Although we are hoping it doesn't come to full closures, we can see that this is probably going to happen to keep everyone safe. At the same time we want the learning we prepare to be accessible to everyone. We understand that not everyone has enough devices for their entire family to use for online learning, or the downloads or uploads needed for everyone to access things online. Staff are planning a blend of paper and online activities for students in the event of a closure so that you have some activities for them to continue with.

Next term our theme was to be Healthy Plants – tying in to the theme for United Nations International Year of Plant Health. Teachers have used this theme to prepare work they would have done in the class ready for the take home packs. It is a great opportunity to look in our own backyards as well.

The Department for Education has developed a site to help families with learning activities if they are at home. This link <https://www.education.sa.gov.au/our-learning-sa> will take you to the page if you are looking for extra things for your children to do.

In the latter part of the week we have seen numbers in the classes decline as parents are choosing to self-isolate on their properties. Students have been given work which teachers already had in place for the last weeks of term. The Department for Education has said this is not a requirement, but as it is in place, students will take that home. As we don't know what is happening beyond the holidays and in to next term we will email to let you know the arrangements for picking up student work packs should they be needed.

It would be impossible to think that full learning could continue for an extended amount of time under these conditions. We know this is a concern for everyone, but assure you that the students will be welcomed back enthusiastically and continue their learning from where they are after any closure.

Today students were able to borrow a number of books from the library to take home. Please take care of this larger than usual number and return them to the school when we start again.

We have also asked students to ensure they have their own drinking bottle and not to use the bubblers in the yard other than for refilling their bottles. I hope you can support them with this.



If possible we ask that you drop off your children and pick them up from the gate rather than entering the school grounds. We are being asked to reduce the contact that everyone has and this is a way of reducing this.

In the meantime, it is important to support the efforts to slow the spread of the virus. Most of our students are lucky enough to have big back yards where they will be able to roam, ride bikes, build cubbies and carry out other fun activities to keep busy on weekends. It isn't the time to have visitors over, visit family or friends or go for a roam around the area. With everyone doing their part to remain distanced we can hopefully move past this time more quickly.

As announced on Thursday the school will be closing for student free days in week 11. Staff will be at school and continue to work on preparing for term 2.

Thank you to staff who are putting aside their own concerns to ensure that students have a place to continue their daily routines and help to reduce any anxiety they may have.

I have attached some tips for coping with coronavirus anxiety which may be of use to you and your children.

Stay safe

Joann



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Dear parents and carers,

The advice from national Public Health officials remains clear – schools, preschools and early childhood services are safe to remain open, and will continue to operate.

However, COVID-19 is an unprecedented challenge and we understand that many of you would prefer to keep your children at home during this time. We support your choice.

Until the end of Term 1, some teachers will have capacity to offer take home work, but others will not. Please continue to support our teachers, as they are doing their very best in this unprecedented situation.

To support our transition to flexible teaching and learning ready for term 2, there will be 4 pupil free days from 6 to 9 April 2020 inclusive. This time will allow our staff to plan and prepare for new models of school based and home based learning.

To support learning at home, the Department for Education has launched Our Learning SA – a curriculum portal where you can access quality learning materials. These resources will be regularly added to. Please visit [www.education.sa.gov.au/ourlearningsa](http://www.education.sa.gov.au/ourlearningsa).

We are also working with schools and preschools to develop options for OSHC and vacation care over the pupil free days and school holidays for children of essential workers. Please speak to your child's school or preschool for more information.

Thank you for being flexible and understanding as we work through a new way of teaching and learning during this extraordinary time.

We are working very hard to support you and ensure that essential school and early childhood services remain available to you.

If you need any more information, please talk to your child's teacher, or visit the Department for Education website – [www.education.sa.gov.au](http://www.education.sa.gov.au).

Yours sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Hon John Gardner MP.

Hon John Gardner MP  
Minister for Education

26 March 2020

Handwritten signature of Rick Persse.

Rick Persse  
Chief Executive

26 March 2020



## Tips for coping with coronavirus anxiety

As the number of coronavirus cases rise across Australia, the level of anxiety within the community is increasing.

Feelings of worry and unease can be expected following a stressful event, such as the recent declaration of a global pandemic, however, it is important that we learn to manage our stress before it turns to more severe anxiety and panic.

This information sheet outlines some useful strategies which can help both adults and children cope with the stress or anxiety experienced as a result of the coronavirus outbreak.

### Learn the facts

Constant media coverage about the coronavirus can keep us in a heightened state of anxiety. Try to limit related media exposure and instead seek out factual information from reliable sources such as the Australian Government's [health alert](#) or other trusted organisations such as the [World Health Organization](#).

### Keep things in perspective

When we are stressed, it is easy to see things as worse than they really are. Rather than imagining the worst-case scenario and worrying about it, ask yourself:

- *Am I getting ahead of myself, assuming something bad will happen when I really don't know the outcome?* Remind yourself that the actual number of confirmed cases of coronavirus in Australia is extremely low.
- *Am I overestimating how bad the consequences will be?* Remember, illness due to coronavirus infection is usually mild and most people recover without needing specialised treatment.
- *Am I underestimating my ability to cope?* Sometimes thinking about how you would cope, even if the worst were to happen, can help you put things into perspective.

### Take reasonable precautions

Being proactive by following basic hygiene principles can keep your anxiety at bay. The World Health Organization recommends a number of protective measures against the coronavirus, including to:

- wash your hands frequently
- avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
- stay at home if you begin to feel unwell until you fully recover
- seek medical care early if you have a fever, cough or experience breathing difficulties.

## Practise self-care

To help encourage a positive frame of mind, it is important to look after yourself. Everybody practises self-care differently with some examples including:

- maintaining good social connections and communicating openly with family and friends
- making time for activities and hobbies you enjoy
- keeping up a healthy lifestyle by eating a balanced diet, exercising regularly, getting quality sleep and avoiding the use of alcohol, tobacco and other drugs to cope with stress
- practising relaxation, meditation and mindfulness to give your body a chance to settle and readjust to a calm state.

## Tips for talking with children about the coronavirus

Children will inevitably pick up on the concerns and anxiety of others, whether this be through listening and observing what is happening at home or at school. It is important that they can speak to you about their own concerns.

### Answer their questions

Do not be afraid to talk about the coronavirus with children. Given the extensive media coverage and the increasing number of people wearing face masks in public, it is not surprising that some children are already aware of the virus.

Providing opportunities to answer their questions in an honest and age-appropriate way can help reduce any anxiety they may be experiencing. You can do this by:

- speaking to them about coronavirus in a calm manner
- asking them what they already know about the virus so you can clarify any misunderstandings they may have
- letting them know that it is normal to experience some anxiety when new and stressful situations arise
- giving them a sense of control by explaining what they can do to stay safe (e.g., wash their hands regularly, stay away from people who are coughing or sneezing)
- not overwhelming them with unnecessary information (e.g., death rates) as this can increase their anxiety
- reassure them that coronavirus is less common and severe in children compared to adults
- allowing regular contact (e.g., by phone) with people they may worry about, such as grandparents, to reassure them that they are okay.

### Talk about how they are feeling

Explain to your child that it is normal to feel worried about getting sick. Listen to your child's concerns and reassure them that you are there to help them with whatever may arise in the future.

It is important to model calmness when discussing the coronavirus with children and not alarm them with any concerns you may have about it. Children will look to you for cues on how to manage their own worries so it is important to stay calm and manage your own anxieties before bringing up the subject with them and answering their questions.

### Limit media exposure

It is important to monitor children's exposure to media reports about the coronavirus as frequent exposure can increase their level of fear and anxiety. Try to be with your child when they are watching, listening or reading the news so you are able to address any questions or concerns they may have.

## Seek additional support when needed

If you feel that the stress or anxiety you or your child experience as a result of the coronavirus is impacting on everyday life, a psychologist may be able to help.

Psychologists are highly trained and qualified professionals, skilled in providing effective interventions for a range of mental health concerns, including stress. A psychologist can help you manage your stress and anxiety using techniques based on the best available research.

If you are referred to a psychologist by your GP, you might be eligible for a Medicare rebate. You may also be eligible to receive psychology services via telehealth so that you do not need to travel to see a psychologist. Ask your psychologist or GP for details.

There are a number of ways to access a psychologist. You can:

- use the Australia-wide Find a Psychologist™ service. Go to [findapsychologist.com.au](https://findapsychologist.com.au) or call 1800 333 497
- ask your GP or another health professional to refer you.

## More information

### Australian Government Department of Health

The Department of Health has developed a collection of resources for the general public, health professionals and industry about coronavirus (COVID-19), including translated resources.

<https://bit.ly/380OwHe>

### Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention provides reliable information about the coronavirus such as its symptoms, steps you can take to protect yourself, and what to do if you are affected.

<https://bit.ly/39MEml8>

### World Health Organization

The World Health Organization provides information and guidance regarding the current outbreak of coronavirus disease.

<https://bit.ly/3cQUwCw>

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## Curbing the spread of Fear

With everything going on in the world and increasingly more restrictions here in Australia, there's something I've noticed spreading a lot quicker than any virus: *FEAR*. It's been evident for a few weeks now from panic buying and empty shelves to a general fear of the virus itself and what will happen with it. If you are fearful, chances are the children around are also picking up on that fear. That fear can look like anything and can include being more shy, or acting out, or wanting more time with Mum or Dad. What can be done?

In regards to COVID-19 a lot of this fear is around getting sick and what that will be like as well as a lot of misconceptions from what they hear on media. In order to help ease young ones about this, the facts are a good place to start. Find out what your child believes then assure them of truths such as, yes many people will get sick but most people who get sick will have mild symptoms and it might be like having a cold. Yes, some people will get more sick and some have unfortunately died but this seems to mostly be people who are older, or those that have other illnesses. I know that part can be the scary especially when they know people who are at greater risk. But that's also why we have the social distancing/self-isolation. We do this to try to stop the bug spreading so that less people are sick at the same time so that the doctors and nurses can take care of them. And most of all, assure them that we will get through this. The sun will rise tomorrow and we as a whole will go on living. Another practical way is to keep as best as you can to a routine.

Just about the best thing we can do for our young ones is to try to be present. Hear their concerns, and let them know that you hear them and that you are there to help them through. Of course to be present with them it helps if we are looking out for ourselves. It can help if you are staying connected to community through technology, be it a phone call, face-time, skype etc.

Together we will get through this.

Look out for your neighbour, and stay well.

Amy Pietsch

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If you need any mental health support you can contact:

- 13 11 14 Lifeline operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Lifeline Text 0477 13 11 14 operate 6pm – midnight (AEDT), 7 nights a week
- Lifeline webchat will continue to operate 7pm – midnight (AEDT), 7 nights a week
- Kids Helpline – for children that may need support 1800 55 1800 <https://kidshelpline.com.au>
- Beyond Blue – 1300 22 4636 <https://beyondblue.org.au>



**COVID-19 AND KIDS**

Tips for parents and carers during this challenging time.

**Connect, Talk & Reassure**

Speak calmly and let them know you're looking after them. Ask how they're feeling and what they have heard about the virus - clarify misunderstandings.

**Make Safety Fun**

Show them how to wash their hands while singing a song. Celebrate when they cover their coughs and sneezes.

**Limit Media**

Take a break from 24/7 media. Be with your child when they are watching, listening or reading the news (from reliable sources) so you can address any worries.

**Go Outside & Try New Things**

Enjoy the sunshine. Play ball in the backyard. Plant some seedlings together and watch them grow. Play a board game. Bring out a jigsaw. The wellbeing benefits are huge.

It is normal to be anxious at a time like this, and children will pick up on how you're feeling.

Do your best to be kind and understanding at this trying time.

Government of South Australia | Wellbeing SA

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# Class 2/3's wonderings

*This term the 2/3 class has been working on their comprehension skills by reading picture books and asking questions.*

## *Wonder Wall*



*As a class we read The Gingerbread Man, after the story was over the students were placed into 2 groups to submit their wonderings. Here are some of our questions:*



*Next term we are going to incorporate our STEM lessons with our wonderings and create different options for the Gingerbread man to survive*