

Sydney Road Community School

September Newsletter

Principals' Report

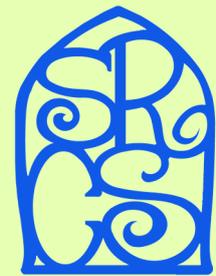
As we approach the end of the term it is difficult not to notice that most of it has been spent in lockdown which has resulted in our students learning remotely. We have endeavoured to provide an engaging and meaningful curriculum in all areas of learning. Whilst remote online learning can never be the same as being onsite, both staff and many of our students have risen to the challenge.

There have been a few things that have been organized during the term which have helped make the lockdown a bit more exciting. Thank you to Paul for organising the SRCS Olympics and Bella and her group for launching the SRCS radio. We have been fortunate that circus skills with Ryn and Rich have been able to continue online.

Despite the lockdown we have continued to meet with the architects, the Victorian Schools Building Authority (VSBA) and the Region to continue with the designing and planning of our new school site. We are on target to begin construction of the new site in December with the view to start the 2023 school year there.

You may not be aware but we have been working vigorously behind the scenes to find a location for our school buses. Our buses are an important feature of the school and assist us in maintaining our 'no fees' policy including for camps and excursions. To hire buses every time we scheduled a camp or excursion would incur a huge cost to the school which would be difficult not to pass on to you. The School Council made the decision in order to maximise the amount of outdoor space at the new site, that the buses needed to be parked offsite. Karen Harris the principal of Brunswick Secondary College has offered her school site to be the new home for our school buses. This is very generous from Karen, we sincerely thank her and this is an excellent example of local schools supporting each other.

The VSBA is in the process of informing all our new neighbours that we are moving into the area and planning meetings on the new site so



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Special dates of interest

Sept 16	Student Led Conferences
Sept 17	End of Term Music
Sept 17	Last day term 3
Oct 4	First day term 4

**STUDENT LED
CONFERENCES
THURSDAY
16 SEPTEMBER
NO CLASSES**

We acknowledge that we are meeting on the traditional country of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation and pay respect to Elders past, present and emerging. We recognise and respect their cultural heritage, beliefs and relationship with the land, which continue to be important to the Aboriginal people living today. Sovereignty has never been ceded. It always was and always will be, Aboriginal land.



Principals' Report continued

they as well as you can view the plans. Dates for these meetings have not been locked in due to the current restrictions however you will get the opportunity to view plans and talk to the architects hopefully in Term 4.

This term whilst we lost one of our youth workers Gen Bubo to the AFL and the Northern Territory we gained Sussan Rezaee. Check out her profile further in this newsletter.

Irene and Tess, Co-Principals

Professional Leadership—Irene

As the State Government extended the lockdown once again it was inevitable the GAT would be rescheduled to the first week of next term. Whilst the GAT can be stressful for many of our students, its constant rescheduling has had its own challenges.

The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA) appears to be determined to avoid any further disruptions to Year 12 students so are pushing ahead with all external assessments taking place on the dates first published.

The State Government has also set aside specific doses of the COVID vaccine so final year students are able to get vaccinated before the start of next term. I would encourage all students (and their families) who are eligible to get vaccinated, to do so.

Students completing their scored VCE will again use the Consideration of Educational Disadvantage (CED) process to finalise their results. The CED process accounts for the disruption to student learning caused by the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic. It applies to every student completing one or more VCE or scored VCE VET Unit 3–4 sequences in 2021, including Year 11 students.

It restores a student's results to where they would have been without the disruptions that have occurred throughout the year and makes sure that final VCE results are valid and fair for all students. Special consideration will also be available for final year VCAL students to make a judgement about the level of impact on students and adjusting assessment activities to reflect this.

Teachers have been reviewing our VCE program and have developed a number of changes that will increase the opportunities of our students undertaking a VCE certificate.

The most immediate change will be that we will be running our VCE program for both year levels for two weeks in the previous year. For our 2022 cohort the program dates will be:

- Year 12 early start: 8 November -19 November
- Year 11 early start: 22 November - 3 December

Positive Climate for Learning—Tess

Tips for coping with lockdown

The unknowns of this relentless virus is taking its toll and there are some strategies that can help make this time more enjoyable, or at the very least – less hard. Below are some ideas you may like to put into place and some links to Reach Out Australia which provide more detail.

- Keep in tune with how your young person is coping

Even with good routines and habits in place, mental health can suffer during this time. If you are noticing signs that your young person may be struggling and feeling depressed or anxious please try to spend time with them. Make yourself available to listen and validate their concerns. They may just need time to vent and feel heard and understood. You don't have to have the solution, just the ability to listen and agree with them that covid sucks!

Help them problem solve; what could they do to feel better? What options have they got? What do they need at the moment? What has worked in the past? What skills can you share with them - how do you cope?

Does your young person already have a support network? You may want to encourage them to talk to their psychologist or support worker about their concerns.

During the term consider liaising with your students contact teacher and wellbeing team. At SRCs students have access to Youth Workers, School Nurse, Mental Health Practitioner who may be able to provide individual support or assist with referrals to services in the community.

It's common for young people to feel unable to cope at times of stress which can leave them feeling overwhelmed and distressed. You may consider supporting your young person in contacting:

- Kids helpline 1800 55 1800
- Lifeline 13 11 44
- eheadspace provides free online and phone counselling 1800 650 890
- Mindspot is a free online and phone service 1800 61 44 34
- Public Mental Health Services are available if someone is in significant crisis- a directory for public child and adolescent mental health services is available at www.health.vic.gov.au/mentalhealthservices/child/index.htm
- Sleep, Move, Eat

Check in with the basics every day: prioritise getting enough sleep, eating nutritious and regular meals, and moving your body every day.

Develop a routine

Lockdown has totally changed usual routines and school and work look dramatically different. A planned family routine will help your young person feel safe and secure. Regular bed and meal times, and routines around household chores, school work, fun

Positive Climate for Learning cont.

activities and down time, are great for physical and mental health. Help your young person plan how to structure their time, and to break large goals into smaller, achievable daily goals. It can be tricky to know how to adapt and keep things running in the household and stick to a daily routine. A planner template to help you make a schedule and routine for your family is available via this link [Help your teen stick to a routine during COVID-19 - ReachOut Parents](#)

- Do things that make you feel good

It might feel like you're in survival mode at the moment, but doing things that feel good can help top up your physical, mental and emotional energy. Try including something pleasurable in your regular daily routine, even if it's just for two minutes. Such as listening to music, gardening, dancing, baking (sourdough anyone?!), drawing – the possibilities are endless! Your young person will take cues from you; so if you're taking care of yourself they will be more likely to follow. Teens may have difficulty initiating these activities and inviting them to participate with you may increase their engagement.

- Take the time to develop skills and learn something new

Lockdown can feel like you're treading water and wasting time. Deciding to learn something new or develop specific skills (art, running, writing, cooking etc) helps provide a sense of purpose and a sense of achievement. These are key in maintaining mood and developing healthy esteem.

- Stay in touch with supports – including those you live with

Making time to connect with friends and family is essential for your wellbeing – we may be physically distant, but we don't have to be socially distant. Make time for a cuppa or a meal with a family member you live with, perhaps getting thrashed in video games by your young person will be enjoyable, sitting down for a meal with no devices, or watching trashy TV together – anything that helps the family to de-stress together will make for a calmer household.

It's also important to connect with people outside of the house, so try video chatting (e.g. using FaceTime, Zoom, Google Hangouts or Skype), calling or messaging a friend every day or so. Covid restrictions allow for you to go for walks with one other person for up to two hours each day; as long as you're both within your 5km zone and wear masks. Stay safe on your walks and please remember to check Covid exposure sites in the local area and to adhere to advice regarding testing. <https://www.coronavirus.vic.gov.au/exposure-sites#exposure-site-table>

Some online resources with more information are listed below.

Home - ReachOut Parents:

[How to maintain your own wellbeing during coronavirus - ReachOut Parents](#)

[Supporting your teen through mental health challenges during coronavirus - ReachOut Parents](#)

[Tips on avoiding teenage depression during lockdowns \(theparentswebsite.com.au\)](https://theparentswebsite.com.au)

Positive Climate for Learning—Tess

COVID19 - Priority vaccination for Year 12's students and education staff

The Victorian Department of Health is running a priority vaccination program for senior students and educators. The following individuals are highly encouraged and have priority access to get the Pfizer vaccine:

- Any final year students (including VCAL)
- Any students doing Unit 3 or 4 subjects
- Teachers and exam supervisors for final year students



Although getting vaccinated is highly encouraged, it is not compulsory.

The priority hotline for final year students and teachers is open on **1800 434 144**. This priority hotline is for the State Run Vaccine Clinics. If students or teachers already have an appointment booked through the GP or another location, it is recommended to keep that booking. Individuals can then book their second dose through the hotline number if they want. Individuals in this priority group will be able to get their second Pfizer dose 3 weeks later.

It is recommended to chat to the GP if anybody has any concerns or questions about getting the vaccine. Students under the age of 18 are able to consent to receiving an immunisation without parental consent. The immuniser will ensure the person is capable of making an informed decision. This is currently happening in general practice.

Everyone aged 16 years and over is eligible and can make an appointment to get the Pfizer vaccine

- Young people aged 12 -15 years are eligible and can make an appointment for the Pfizer vaccine if they: have an underlying medical condition, are an NDIS participant or Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander
- Young people aged 12-15 years will be able to book a COVID-19 Pfizer vaccine from September 13, 2021.

Parents are encouraged to check the [Vaccines Eligibility Checker \(healthdirect.gov.au\)](https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/vaccines-eligibility-checker) to book in their young person's vaccination. Bookings will be available through GPs, Commonwealth Vaccination Clinics and Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations. Vaccines are totally free.

Parents and the broader school community are also encouraged to get vaccinated as a matter of urgency to increase the safety of all and to help meet vaccination targets which will decrease current restrictions.

[Who can get vaccinated against COVID-19 | Coronavirus Victoria](https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/vaccines-eligibility-checker)

[Children aged 12 to 15 years now eligible for COVID-19 vaccine | Prime Minister of Australia \(pm.gov.au\)](https://www.pmc.gov.au/children-12-15-years-now-eligible-for-covid-19-vaccine)

Introducing Sussan Rezaee our new Youth Worker



Why I choose to work at SRCS:

I believe Sydney Road Community School stands out from most other schooling environments. I feel privileged to work within a school which considers the unique aspects of each student, and applies a holistic approach to nurture their wellbeing and schooling needs. This approach to schooling I believe will help students tremendously, to feel accepted, and empowered to believe in their abilities.

The school's focus on student wellbeing is wonderful to witness, as it will help them to tackle any difficulties and strive towards achieving their goals, both at school, and outside the schooling environment.

I believe the schooling environment at Sydney Road Community School is what is most required so that students have the opportunity to become engaged, and excel.

What I can offer students:

I am excited to be an advocate for the students at Sydney Road Community School. I look forward to offering students an empathetic and non-judgmental environment where they can feel supported and comfortable to share any concerns.

With a counselling background, I can offer students with face-to-face or offsite support, including safety planning. I strive to assist students in feeling empowered to achieve their goals, better their overall wellbeing and school engagement. I hope to guide the students at Sydney Road Community School to become better equipped with different tools and strategies to assist with their emotional, behavioural, sensory, and learning needs.

Additionally, I aim to develop and offer wellbeing programs, targeting factors such as social nervousness, school disengagement, and respectful relationships.

What I can offer parents and caregivers:

I endeavour to offer support to parents and carers through various means, including regular contact to see how they are coping themselves and to provide them with an opportunity to request any extra support for their young people. I would also like to offer assistance with completing appropriate referrals for the parent's/carer's themselves where necessary.

I look forward to providing parents and carers with various strategies which they may utilise at home to assist with the wellbeing and learning needs of their children.

Sussan's work days: Monday to Friday.

Learning Spaces—Nick

The Learning Spaces programs are progressing into the latter part of Term 3, in what has again been testing times for all, as we navigate through Lockdown number six. All Learning Spaces students have shown varying levels of engagement with all checking in at certain times which is a real testament to their resilience.

The increased levels of confidence, both socially and academically being displayed are evident in some capacity within each individual student. The Learning Spaces Wellbeing team is also playing a vital role in supporting not only our students but also the families they are working with on a daily basis. We have our fingers crossed that we can all be back on-site very soon and wish all a safe upcoming holiday.

Excellence in Teaching and Learning—Matt

Teaching and learning at SRCS continues despite being in this extended lockdown. We appreciate that many parents and caregivers are taking on additional responsibility for student learning right now.

Staff at SRCS have student engagement in learning high on our agenda. Throughout this lockdown, we have set aside regular times to discuss what hits the mark with students.

Working in both Professional Learning Communities and Key Learning Area teams, staff are sharing strategies and resources. We have regularly discussed how to tweak the schedule to keep it engaging and relevant to young people whilst ensuring topics and tasks align with the Victorian Curriculum.

On Thursday, September 16th contact teachers are running Individual Education Plan (IEP) meetings. **There will be no classes on this day.** We hope this will be an opportunity to ask questions about your young person's learning and collaboratively set goals and strategies for Term 4.

Community Engagement in Learning—Mel

As the lockdown progresses we recognise that things are getting harder, not easier. We have pivoted our healthy eating program from feeding students a healthy hot meal at recess to using the same donated food from SecondBite to deliver food parcels to families in our school community.

SecondBite provides an innovative and extremely important service. They rescue food from supermarkets that is destined for the bin, not because it's old or unusable but because there is no space to store it.

The type of food and the quality of food is generally fabulous and we are stumped to think how it could end up in landfill. The fact that good food could end up in landfill because of a storage issue is a problem with how our food system works and this is where SecondBite step in. SecondBite collect food, sort it and make packages up for different organisations.

We are lucky to receive food from SecondBite and also to have a parent volunteer who delivers all over the northern suburbs to drop food parcels for families in our school community.

This service is provided no questions asked and delivered anonymously. If you would like to receive food parcels or discuss how it works, please send Mel an email on melissa.alexander@education.vic.gov.au

Staff contact information

Year 7/8 Jn1—Keren, Pete & Jo: 0401 193 015

Keren works full time— keren.shlezinger@education.vic.gov.au

Peter works Wednesday to Friday -

peter.tarrent@education.vic.gov.au

Jo works full time—Josephine.mills@education.vic.gov.au

Year 7/8 Jn2—Duane & Bron 0423 447 717

Duane works Tuesday to Friday -

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Bron works full time—Bronwyn.curran@education.vic.gov.au

Year 9/10 Md1 Ben & Bella: 0401 751 831

Ben works full time - ben.waincymmer@education.vic.gov.au

Bella works on Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday -

bella.ambrose@education.vic.gov.au

Year 9/10 Md2—Eliza & Paul: 0421 356 277

Eliza works full time - eliza.smith@education.vic.gov.au

Paul works on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday & Friday—

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Year 9/10 (MD3) Re-engagement -

Tess and Dan: 0497 562 933

Tess works full time - tessa.abbottsmithyoul@education.vic.gov.au

Dan works on Wednesday and Thursday -

Daniel.west@education.vic.gov.au

VCAL (SR1 & SR4) - Mel and Dom: phone 0411 594 866

Mel A works Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday -

Melissa.alexander@education.vic.gov.au

Dom works full time - dominic.vaughan@education.vic.gov.au

VCE (SR2 & SR3)- Irene and Stefan: phone 0413 301 936

Irene and Stefan work full time - irene.savakis@education.vic.gov.au

Stefan.grudza@education.vic.gov.au

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A big thank you to Brunswick Bound Bookshop for donating 20 “pay it forward” vouchers for students at SRCS.

If you have received a voucher, you can claim it at: <https://shop.brunswickbound.com.au/>

They are doing “click & collect” or free local delivery.

They are located at: 361 Sydney Road Brunswick VIC 3056 (across the road from SRCS)

For more information:

PHONE 03 9381 4019

EMAIL info@brunswickbound.com.au

Mindfulness activity - Ben Cook Mental Health Practitioner



Try one of these either on your own or as a family

Eat Mindfully

Take one piece of chocolate.

BUT, slow down.

Use all your senses.

What does it look like? What does it feel like?

Describe its smell.

Then gently put it in your mouth – but don't eat it!

Savour it; the texture on your tongue. Is it melting? What does it taste like?

What's happening in your mouth? Are you salivating?

Let it linger.

Then wait.

Wait some more.

What is happening in your body? Do you feel tense? Do you feel excited?

Now - bite it, start chewing.

Is it gooey? Has it melted?

Wait. Wait.

Finally, swallow.

Mindful Breathing

Close your eyes and notice where you feel your breath.

That might be the air going in and out at your nostril, the rise and fall of your chest or stomach, down the back of your throat.

Place your hand on your stomach and notice how your hand gently rises and falls with your breath.

Breathe in for 3 seconds, hold for 3 seconds, breath out for 3 seconds.

Do this ten times.