



SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Term 2 Week 10 2023

Thursday 29th June

Rosary Park Catholic School

Station Street, Branxton NSW 2335

P: (02) 4938 1541 E: admin@branxton.catholic.edu.au

Website: www.branxton.catholic.edu.au

We acknowledge the Wonnarua people-the first custodians of this land

Built on Faith, Knowledge, Respect

The Catholic Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle has an abiding commitment to promote the safety, welfare and wellbeing of children and vulnerable adults - particularly those who participate in the life of the Diocese. All employees are required to undergo a National Police Check and, where legislated, hold a Working with Children Check. Diocesan workers are expected to personally adopt and enact the Diocese's Safeguarding Commitment Statement.

IMPORTANT DATES

Weekly Mass Times: 6pm Saturday Branxton; 8am Sunday Greta

JUNE		JULY	
Fri 30th	LAST DAY OF TERM 2 – NO ASSEMBLY	Fri 28th	PUPIL FREE DAY
JULY		AUGUST	
Mon 17th	FIRST DAY OF TERM 3	Tues 1st	P and F Meeting @ 6pm
Tues 18th	Regional Athletics Carnival @ Maitland Athletics Centre	SEPTEMBER	
Fri 21st	Grandparents & Friends Day from 12:30pm	Tues 12th	Whole School Concert @ Cessnock Performing Arts Centre – 2 performances 5pm and 6:45pm
Thur 27th	ASPIRE – Years 5 and 6 Attending		

Principal's Message

After Jesus finished teaching the crowd, the people were very hungry. The disciples came to Jesus - they had only five loaves and two fish and there were more than 5000 people. Jesus took the loaves and fish, said the blessing and gave them to the disciples for the people. They all ate their fill and there were twelve baskets of scraps left over.

Lord Jesus, you are the living bread from heaven.

May we live forever with you. Amen

Dear Parents/Carers

As Term 2 draws to a close, I want to thank you all again sincerely for your support of our children and us as a school staff.

I also wish to thank my staff for their hard work and dedication to our children. It is not just the day to day running of school, programming and lesson preparation but all the extras like Athletics Carnivals and school camps that take so much time out of school hours, but that they undertake so willingly for the best outcomes for our children.

Student led Conferences.

These were undertaken for the first time this week at Rosary Park and from the staff and parent feedback I have so far received, these were a very positive experience. These conferences are a natural extension of what we already do in class, giving our children voice and autonomy as learners so that they can set their goals, reflect, and work on these to improve as individuals. Any further constructive feedback you have is welcomed.

Term 3 Staffing

As I recently communicated, several of our staff are taking leave from next term. Following an extensive application process, we were able to secure the following staff for our vacant positions.

Nichola Ellis is currently the Learning Support Co-ordinator at All Saints College, Maitland. She will work full time as our Learning Support Teacher for Term 3 and 4, replacing Tiffany Nolan on maternity leave.

Chloe Morgan worked as Year 5 Teacher at Rosary Park in 2022. She will return to Rosary Park to teach 5 White for Term 3 and 4 to replace Brittany Reynolds. Simone Cameron will work full time on 5 Blue for Term 3 and 4.

In order to maintain continuity for 2 Blue, I have asked Mackenzie Gageler to move from Year 1 to teach 2 Blue. In her place, Jack Montgomery will complete his University Internship for Term 3, teaching 1 White full time. Jack has been employed as a casual teacher this term at our school and has regularly worked with the students in 1 White. As part of his internship, Jack will work closely with Mackenzie as his supervising teacher. Additionally, Carolyn Webber will teach 2 Blue every Thursday so that Mackenzie can continue to fulfil her responsibilities as REC.

We look forward to welcoming our new staff members as they begin their new roles next term. Thank you for your ongoing support and understanding as we work to meet our staffing challenges and ensure the best for our children.

Nikola Groves (2 White teacher) is participating with a group from our diocese in World Youth Day in Portugal from Friday 21/7/23, returning to school Monday 28 August. In her absence 2 White will be taught by Carolyn Webber (Mon-Wed) and Emily Capararo (Thurs-Fri).

Stage 4 Buildings

We are very pleased to announce that our final round of building works has been approved and is currently out to tender. This will include the removal of all demountables, the construction of our last 2 classrooms, associated practical activities areas, break out spaces and student amenities. Building should start this year.

Traffic Plan

Information for Parents/Caregivers

I alert you to our Traffic Management plan. If you use the parent car pick up line, please familiarise yourself with these procedures so that everyone's safety is prioritized

This is our preferred method of pick up and we appreciate Parents/Caregivers choosing this option to minimise adults on site as well children and adults interacting with traffic.

Parents/Caregivers must display their surname on their vehicle's sunshade (NOT dash) so it is easily seen. Name tags are available upon request from the school office.

Vehicles queue from ten (10) minute zone to the southern side of the pedestrian crossing (right of the school). They are to wait there until directed by a Staff member (5 cars at a time) to move into the pick-up zone. Staff member will call the family name and students are placed in the vehicle

– Note –

A Staff member will place your child/ren in the vehicle on the kerb side (NOT roadside).

Parents/Caregivers are to REMAIN IN THEIR VEHICLE. Whilst a Staff member can assist a child with their belt it is appreciated that in order to ensure the swift and smooth running of this procedure, children are able to do this themselves.

- As car pulls up, staff member opens door and asks driver if car is in park or neutral and the handbrake is on.
- All communication is to be with the driver, NOT an adult passenger.
- Staff member guides child/ren into the car.
- Once the child is secured in the seat, step away and close the door.
- Do not reach into window to assist children, assistance must happen through an open door.
- Staff member must not step back to the car without asking the driver again if the car is in park or neutral and handbrake is on.

All five (5) cars leave this zone at THE SAME TIME before the next five cars are directed to the pick-up area.

If your family name starts with A-L please arrive at school at 3pm, M-Z names arrive at 3:10 pm. This will alternate each term to ensure fairness.

To ensure the smooth running of this procedure, do not arrive before your allocated time. We will have families at the start of the alphabet ready first. If you arrive too early, you will be asked to drive around the block, this will keep traffic flowing, also it causes too much confusion trying to locate children who are waiting inside the school.

Please understand that in wet weather this car pick-up procedure will take longer as we need to keep the Students under the COLA to remain dry. On these days, if you are in the second pick up group, please delay your arrival to school until 3:20pm.

Please be patient and aware that Staff members remain on duty until 3:30pm so delaying your arrival to school helps to ensure the smooth flow of traffic.

Casual Teachers

Winter is a difficult time at school when both children and teachers are more susceptible to various illnesses. To compound this, across both Catholic and state schools in the Newcastle and Hunter regions there is a significant shortage in casual teachers. This term, there have been occasions where we have had to take teachers off their normal role of Aboriginal Education, COVID or EALD to cover a classroom teacher who is sick or one of the grade teachers has taken the entire class. There have also been times that we have had to split classes across the school. We acknowledge that this can be difficult for children, and this is always our last resort however unfortunately with limited human resources there are no alternatives. We thank our families for their understanding.

Anti-Bullying Handbook

Rosary Park adopts the Catholic Schools Office Anti-bullying procedure (handbook) to investigate and deal with issues of bullying, and to address these in a timely and procedurally fair manner. This document is attached to the newsletter.

Whilst it is important to have processes in place to address these issues when and if they arise, I encourage families to look over this document to help to raise your awareness on the many proactive strategies we use and ways that we work to empower our children when social issues arise for them.

MAT program

This term year 6 participated in this program and have included their feedback later in this newsletter. Next term year 5 will participate every Wednesday in this program. They will wear their sport uniform on Wednesdays.

The program runs as weekly sessions over a term with a group of students, and focuses on specific social and emotional skills (life skills), developing resilience and empowering students through fun and active lessons. It is a self defence program with a focus on social and emotional development.

Complaints and Grievances Resolution

In line with the Catholic Schools Office, Rosary Park has an agreed process for positively resolving concerns in our school community. Emailing the school is acceptable however do not expect an immediate response as this may not lead to the best outcome for all concerned as we need time to gather data etc. We would like to offer the following process for any concern you may have.

-Do you have a concern?

-Contact the office to arrange an appointment to meet with your child's classroom teacher

-Meet with your child's classroom teacher to air your concern allowing for open and honest discussion in a positive manner.

-If your concern is still not resolved to a mutual agreement you are to contact the Assistant Principal, Janelle Dixon

-If your concern is still not resolved to a mutual agreement you are to contact the Principal, Sallyanne Stanbridge.

We ask you give us a reasonable timeframe to address your concern, attempt to come to a mutual resolution and work in partnership with us for the good of your child. It may be difficult to find a hard and fast resolution; however, we are very open to working with you for the wellbeing of your child.

For your child:

Your child can discuss any of their issues with their classroom teacher, Janelle Dixon or Sallyanne Stanbridge. We are here to help and promote a positive schooling experience, however, if we are unaware of any issues, we cannot deal with them. Therefore, the first step for your child is to **tell a teacher!**

Caring Group

Rosary Park has a Mercy Caring Group to assist families in need. This is following in the footsteps of the founders of our school, the Sisters of Mercy, who offered hospitality, food and shelter for those in need.

If you would like to be on the caring group roster, please forward your contact details to admin@branxton.catholic.edu.au, you may like to offer to cook, provide a lift to and from school, take children to sport etc. Our Caring Group Coordinator, Mrs Jess Dougherty, will then compile a roster. Any family that needs the services provided by our Caring Group (or know a family that needs assistance), can contact Sallyanne Stanbridge directly, and all requests remain confidential.

The Caring Group is then given information about what a family might need to assist e.g., cooked meals, with the school then informing the Caring Group what assistance is required and for the length of time. If you or members of your family are experiencing any difficulties, please contact me, so that we can help you.

Thank you so much for your support this term.

Enjoy a restful break.

Kind regards, Sallyanne Stanbridge (Principal)

Assistant Principal's Message

As we come to the end of Term 2, we celebrate the positive relationships built and learning progress made by students and teachers during the first half of the year. Students have been awarded merit certificates, mercy awards, principal awards and gotchas for displaying positive behaviours. Each class has celebrated their successes in varying ways as a reward during our last week of school.

We also congratulate Freeman (RED) colour house in being awarded the "Spirit Cup" for term 2. This means in a tally of all gotchas awarded in term 2, red house received the most with almost 2000 gotchas! On Friday, the children from Freeman House will have 10 minutes extra play at the end of lunch time.

Attached below is our PBL rule list for Term 3.



Rosary Park Catholic School PBL Scope and Sequence 2023

Term 3	School Rule	Behaviour Focus	Mercy Value
Week 1 and 2	I am Respectful	Kind Words: Making students feel included.	Justice
Alternate 2	I am Respectful	Kind Words: Making students feel included. Celebrating Diversity – Acceptance	Justice, Respect, Courage, Compassion, Hospitality
Week 3 and 4	I am Respectful	Kind Words: Using Manners	Respect
Alternate 4			
Week 5 and 6	I am Respectful	Kind Actions: Body Language	Service
Alternate 6			
Week 7 and 8	I am Respectful	Kind Actions: Greeting people	Hospitality
Alternate 8			
Week 9 and 10	I am Safe	Caring Hands	Compassion
Alternate 10			

You will note a designated rule focus for each fortnight of the term. Every second week is left blank for us to add a rule that needs to be a focus due to incident data or teacher reflection.

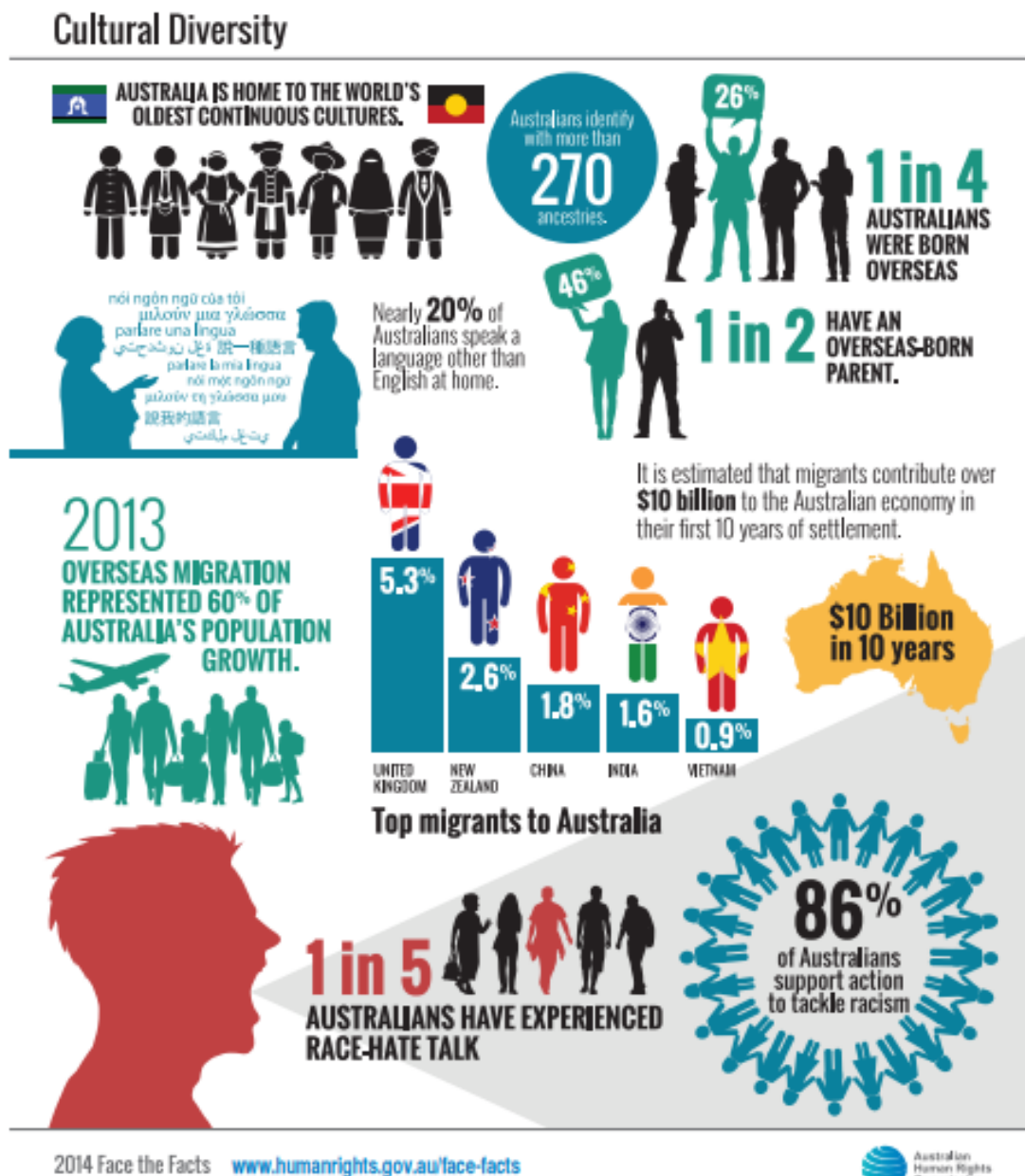
Week 2 term 3 has been set as a focus on kind words and a celebration of diversity. We have had some incidents of inappropriate racial comments being used at school. As a school community, Rosary Park does not accept this kind of behaviour. Any comment made to make fun of a person's appearance, cultural background, customs or ethnicity is inappropriate and unacceptable.

We have adopted a number of strategies to eliminate these incidents at our school. A main focus will be on educating children about racism in age-appropriate ways through structured lessons designed to help them identify racism, learn and understand the law, research events in history, empower them to take an active stand against it and to report incidents to trusted adults.

The resources used come from the Australian Government and Department of Education resource pack "Racism-No Way". The main aim of the lessons is to build an understanding of what racism is, and encourage children to speak up against it. The Australian Human Rights Commission campaign slogan "It stops with me," shows children they have the power to make a stand on such behaviours in their community, whether they are a victim or a bystander.

RacismNoWay
Anti-racism education for Australian schools

RACISM.
IT STOPS
WITH ME



More information can be found at <https://racismnoway.com.au/>

Wishing everyone a restful, safe, and enjoyable holiday time and I look forward to continuing to work with you all in the second half of the year.

Warm Regards,

Janelle Dixon

Assistant Principal

Religious Education Coordinator's Message

Rosary Park is founded on the Mercy tradition. We draw inspiration from Catherine McAuley, who founded the sisters of Mercy in Ireland in 1831. Catherine recognized the needs of those who were marginalized and oppressed by unjust social attitudes and practices of the day. She responded by establishing a House of Mercy in Dublin which provided educational, religious and social services for women and children who were at risk of homelessness through exploitation and entrenched poverty.

We look to Catherine McAuley as a role model, a sign of hope and of courage.

How can we show Mercy towards others in our everyday lives?



Parish Mass:

Thank you to the families who joined us celebrating the Family Mass on Saturday night 17th. It was lovely to have a strong presence from Rosary Park, and many parishioners commented on how nice it was to see so many children at Mass.

St Brigid's at Branxton celebrates Mass at 6pm Saturday nights.

Grandparent's Day

Friday 21 July will mark our celebration of the Feast Day of Saint's Anne and Joachim, and all our grandparents and elderly friends. Kindergarten will host a liturgy from 12:30. This will be followed by shared afternoon tea and activities for students and their visitors. We look forward to seeing you there.

May God bless you,

Mackenzie Gageler

Acting Religious Education Coordinator



Year 6 MAT



It has been a great exercise to learn about physical and emotional strength I have learned so much it's been so fun we even got to hold a samurai sword.

- Robert Campbell



My favorite part was when I had to hold my arms up for thirty minutes but after it I felt good and like I could do anything! That is why the MAT program is the best!

- Bailey

The MAT program is hard but enjoyable. We learnt lots of things during the MAT program, especially when we had to keep our arms up in the air for as long as we could - Lacey



The MAT program has taught all of Year Six how to do wonderful things. They taught us how to push through hard times. They even taught us mental strategies to help us in stressful situations.

- Lily



TRAINING HARD!



THE MAT PROGRAM VALUES - THE CODE



Be Strong

in body, mind and heart. Physical, emotional and psychological health



Be Calm

to believe in yourself and be able to make better choices under pressure



Be Kind

towards yourself, others and the environment



Try Hard

because effort is the currency of success



BREAKING THE BOARD!





Year 6 excursion to Canberra!

PACER REBATE

Our Year 6 students have recently undertaken an education tour of the National Capital. Students were given the opportunity to participate in a variety of educational programs with a focus on Australia's history, culture, heritage and democracy. The Australian Government recognises the importance of all young Australians being able to visit the National Capital as part of their Civics and Citizenship education. To assist families in meeting the cost of the excursion the Australian Government is contributing funding of \$45 per student under the Parliament and Civics Education Rebate program towards those costs. The rebate will be paid directly to the school upon receiving our documentation. This rebate reduced the cost of the Canberra excursion by \$45 for our families.

CANBERRA EXCURSION

In Term 2, Week 9 Mrs Stanbridge, Mr Standing, Mrs Nevin and Mrs Pringle took Year 6 away to Canberra to learn all about Australia as a Nation. We had a wonderful time learning about Australia's history, culture and future plans and consolidate our learning through a variety of learning opportunities.

We were so proud of the respect and maturity Year 6 showed towards our wonderful guides, workshop facilitators and Dan Repacholi in Parliament house.



REGATTA POINT NATIONAL PLANNING EXHIBITION

The National Capital Exhibition tells the Story of Canberra as the capital city of Australia. We explored displays featuring the people, events, history and design of this unique, modern, planned city. We also enjoyed learning about the people behind the design – Walter Burley Griffin and his wife Marion.

It was fun to make and design our own city! - Indy.

It was fun to learn about Canberra and the names it might have been called. - Sophia

It was exciting to make our own version of Canberra as a futuristic city - Layla



MUSEUM OF AUSTRALIAN DEMOCRACY OLD PARLIAMENT HOUSE

The Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House is a living museum of social and political history, located in a nationally listed heritage building in Parkes, Canberra. We enjoyed visiting the Museum of Australian Democracy at Old Parliament House. It helped us understand Australia's social and political history by interpreting the past and present and exploring the future.

We enjoyed learning about the clothes Governor General use to wear.

We had to wear gloves, so we didn't damage anything with the oils from our skin.
We liked the digital scavenger hunt to learn about democracy and how it works.

- Owen, Cade and Ashton



ROYAL AUSTRALIAN MINT

At the Royal Australian Mint we learnt about the history of Australia's currency.

I enjoyed the mint because you got to see how the coins were made and the different robots that helped, and when different coins were made and found and what they were worth. - Indiana

AUSTRALIAN INSTITUTE OF SPORT

Sport is Australia's passion and also a strong passion of Year 6! We had fun testing out what it takes to become a high-performance athlete! At Sportex, we tried wheelchair basketball, virtual downhill skiing, rock climbing, football penalty shootouts and more.

AIS was so fun I love the hands on activities, the pull up bar, the bike races, the football kicking, The basketball and the netball jump. It was so FUN -Ava

I loved AIS because we got to learn how to be a great sports player and we got to play a lot of Olympic games and playing some sports that we have never played before - Lara



AIS was fun because we got to compete with friends and teachers - Archer



PARLIAMENT HOUSE

Parliament house was cool, we got to see the Lego room. It had the whole parliament house made Lego in there. We also got to meet Dan Repacholi. - Lacey

My favorite part was parliament house I was chosen to be the speaker. It was the best! I got to say when to start and I enjoyed Canberra - Bailey

Parliament house parliament house was fun we saw the house of representatives and the senate and met Dan Repacholi we saw how bills are made then approved by the senate. - Chelsea



AUSTRALIAN WAR MEMORIAL



The war memorial was really interesting. They had a lot of interesting things about war. There would have been so much more to see and so many more stories to hear - Isabelle

NATIONAL ART GALLERY

I liked seeing the famous artworks in the gallery. I enjoyed the details and the different forms of art. - Layla, Sophia and Lacey



GOVERNMENT HOUSE



I enjoyed Government house because we got to see how the Governor General lives and we got to learn about his duties. - Lily



I enjoyed going to the National electoral education centre to pretend to vote and learn about how the voting process works - Ella

QUESTACON

Questacon was great. The giant slide was my favorite part of the trip. The earthquake room was exciting and fun. I had so much fun, and I would love to go back to it. - Lisa.



Weekly Awards

Congratulations to those children who have received awards this past fortnight.

Week ending Friday 9th June 2022 (Week 7)

Class	Class Award One	Class Award Two	MJR Award
Kinder Blue	Louis E	Miya W	Baylee H
Kinder White	Zoey A	Jack C	Lara T
Year 1 Blue	Reeve W	Amelia H	Olivia D
Year 1 White	Maya S	Alfie W	Teagan S
Year 2 Blue	Brailyn L	Reid E	Holly N
Year 2 White	Megan N	Mackenzie H	Baxter A
Year 3 Blue	James S	Hunter I	Isaac L
Year 3 White	Susan P	Emmett C	Elke B
Year 4 Blue	--	--	--
Year 4 White	Sylvester R	James D	Darby T
Year 5 Blue	--	--	--
Year 5 White	--	--	--
Year 6 Blue	Ashton P	Olivia L	Indiana S
Year 6 White	Lawsom M	Victoria A	Isabelle W

Week ending Friday 16th June 2022 (Week 8)

Class	Class Award One	Class Award Two	MJR Award
Kinder Blue	Bradley S	Addison M	Amarni L
Kinder White	Connor T	Darcy J	Johan C
Year 1 Blue	Lleyton L	Grayson B	Charli C
Year 1 White	Maici B	Harley R	Finn R
Year 2 Blue	Jaxon C	Will M	Addison R
Year 2 White	Stanley H	Jenny N	Aubree M
Year 3 Blue	Flynn C	Ellie A	Jackson I
Year 3 White	Leah W	Anika F	Charlize L
Year 4 Blue	--	--	--
Year 4 White	--	--	--
Year 5 Blue	Sharni L	Scarlett T	Lewis C
Year 5 White	David H	Nicholas L	Charlie B
Year 6 Blue	Holly W	Ashton P	Indy Y
Year 6 White			Lina P

Principal's Awards:

Lacey N, Cameron N, Megan N, Louis D, Allie D, Logan B, Liam P, Jaegar D, Claire D, Sophie Cos, Charli F, Mikayla C, Shelle C, Jack C, Hunter G.



\$35/DAY
\$100/3 DAYS

8:30am
to 11:30am

TUE 4/7
WED 5/7
THU 6/7

**KIDS
HOLIDAY TENNIS**

BOOK ONLINE
WWW.SINGLETONTENNISCOACHING.COM

PHONE
02 6572 3889

EMAIL
hello@singletontenniscoaching.com

**Use Your
Active Kids
Voucher**
(Only available
for 3 Day Bookings)

**AGES
4-17**

Find us on
 + 
@SingletonTennisCoaching

Emerging Minds.

National Workforce Centre
for Child Mental Health

Traumatic events, the media and your child



When disasters or traumatic events occur in Australia or elsewhere in the world, they're often given constant media coverage. It can seem like every time you turn on the TV, radio or go online there is more news about the event, who has been hurt and what is happening in the immediate aftermath.

Media coverage during times of disaster or traumatic events is important: it can provide those who are affected with news and information about where to go, how to get help and when it's safe to return to their homes. However, many people, including children and families, can become absorbed by the constant news stream about the event and sometimes they can watch or listen for hours.

Impact of too much media exposure

Adults need to be mindful of how much exposure their children have to coverage of disasters or traumatic events on TV, radio or the internet. The media often focus on the most frightening aspects of an event and this coverage can contain graphic, scary and disturbing images. Seeing this type of media coverage can cause distress or worry for children. Children will also often discuss what they have seen in the media with each other. As a result, even though your children may not watch coverage constantly at home, they are still exposed to it through their friends and chatter on social media.

Media coverage can have an impact on children in the following ways:

- they can feel that they are unsafe and that something bad may happen to them or their family
- they can be led to think this event is happening constantly, rather than one event being replayed
- they can spend a great deal of time thinking about the event, which can affect their sleep and time at school
- they may be anxious that the same sort of event may happen to them or their family.

The more media coverage children see, the more likely they are to become afraid or upset.

Delivery partners:



The National Workforce Centre for Child Mental Health is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health under the National Support for Child and Youth Mental Health Program

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How to help your child

It's important that parents, carers and other family members help children to cope with the media coverage that they may see of a disaster or traumatic event.

Some recommended ways to manage this include:

- try to be there with your children when they are watching coverage of the event. This way you can talk to them about their fears and answer any questions they may have
- speak to children about the event in language they will understand, and set limits on the amount of time that they are able to watch TV or internet coverage of the event
- explain to your children why you are doing this, that you don't want them to worry unnecessarily, and that adults are managing things
- provide alternative activities for your children to take them away from the media coverage, such as watching a different TV show or playing a game
- give your children information to help them to understand what's happened, why it's happened, how likely this is to happen to you and your family
- remind your children that while what's happening in the traumatic event is upsetting, there are also lots of good things happening in the world, though these don't always receive the same level of attention
- reassure your children that they're safe and that you're there to answer their questions
- provide support and comfort to them if they're upset or feeling unsafe.

Talking to your children and continuing to follow the normal routines and rhythms of your daily life are important ways to help them feel safe and secure. Keep in mind that if your children begin to show signs of excessive worry or distress at the media coverage they have seen, you may need to speak to your GP or another health professional.

This resource was written by Professor Beverley Raphael and Amanda Harris, with updates in June 2018 by Nicola Palfrey. Professor Beverley Raphael is a psychiatrist former Chairperson of the Australian Child & Adolescent Trauma, Loss & Grief Network (ACATLGN). Amanda Harris is a psychologist and former Director of the ACATLGN. Nicola Palfrey is a clinical psychologist and Director of ACATLGN.



Delivery partners:



The National Workforce Centre for Child Mental Health is funded by the Australian Government Department of Health under the National Support for Child and Youth Mental Health Program

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mental health support for australian students, teachers, and schools following large scale incidents

Large scale distressing events impact our school communities in many ways.

support for students

- students may have been exposed to distressing images published by the media or streamed on social media
- content can be extremely distressing and triggering for adults, children and young people
- parents and schools should try to take steps to minimise their exposure to graphic and distressing content
- schools may see a change in behaviour for some students, who may be finding the recent incident confronting and distressing



Students may want to discuss the incident with friends or in the classroom and share opinions and views, which is a normal response to a tragic incident. It is recommended that staff listen carefully and answer questions based on fact and avoid personal commentary or value statements. School staff should guide conversation with messages of safety, self-care, and seeking help

- at times like this students look to teachers to make sense of the world. It can be hard to provide responses which make sense and reassure students. It is appropriate to recognise and respond to students in distress
- any staff concerned about particular students should make this known to counselling and support staff within their school or refer them through normal counselling pathways

- it will be important to monitor students who may feel vulnerable, and ensure those who have experienced trauma in the past have access to additional support
- **common causes of distress may be related to:**
 - having been directly at risk from the events
 - being concerned about family and friends
 - feelings and memories related to previous experiences
 - other grief and loss.
- for some, where the harm has been caused intentionally, this may be an added source of stress and generate a sense of insecurity or distrust
- for most people, these feelings usually settle within a few weeks, particularly when support has been provided. While most will manage with the support of family and friends, there are still times when someone may need extra help and support. **Support you may be able to offer includes:**
 - check in regularly with students that you're worried about to see how they are coping
 - encourage students to reach out to friends for support in addition to adults
 - provide information and access to student counselling services
 - discuss with parents and carers about support services that can be accessed outside of school.

monitoring students

Distress may include some or all of the following:

- anxiety associated with a sense of loss of security and safety
- reactivation of previous problems
- increased sensitivity to issues of justice and equity
- behavioural changes, such as withdrawal or acting out
- peer conflict
- carrying the anger of others and seeking to express it.

what can teachers do?

Teachers can support in the following ways:

- acknowledge students' feelings
- let students know that it is difficult to deal with the feelings provoked by events of such magnitude
- discuss issues in a manner that takes into account students' age and maturity
- answer questions in a simple honest way, using language that is age appropriate and without including personal views and opinions
- be honest and stick to facts. Don't speculate about what has happened or where an attack might happen. Don't dwell on the scale or scope of the event, particularly with young children
- assist students to communicate their concerns to parents and carers
- express hope in the future
- report any incidents or concerns you have regarding a student's wellbeing or behaviour.

help students feel safe

- reassure students of their safety at school; comfort them, remind them that they are safe and that these events are very rare
- maintain normal routines and schedules
- deal with fears by reminding students that many good things still occur in the world
- encourage students to participate in their faith community if relevant

- help children to separate angry thoughts and feelings about specific people, who behave in violent ways, from the larger cultural or religious group to which those people may belong
- remind students that it is important to talk to someone they trust, such as a family member, friend, teacher or school counselling staff member if they are feeling distressed.

sources of support for children and young people

School counselling staff will be available to support students. If students would like to speak with someone anonymously, confidential sources are:

- Kids Helpline (1800 551 800 or kidshelp.com.au)
- headspace (1800 650 890 or headspace.org.au)



school community

An incident relating to specific communities is likely to have emotional impacts on those communities and other groups within Australian schools. You may like to seek opportunities to reassure those in your school community that the school will provide the structure and support for all students, including those feeling vulnerable or distressed by this incident.

support for staff

School staff may also require additional support, especially if they have family or friends who have been affected by a large scale tragedy. It is important to take the time to identify if any are affected and discuss the types of support that are available to assist.

support options for staff include:

- general counselling services through your school or education sector
- external support services, including their local GP, Beyond Blue, Lifeline, or other local community services
- encouraging them to reach out to family and friends for support.



if a young person you know is going through a tough time they can get help and support from headspace.org.au or your local health provider. For more information, to find your nearest headspace centre, or for online and telephone support, visit headspace.org.au



if you need immediate assistance call 000 or to speak to someone urgently, please call Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Suicide Call Back Service on 1300 659 467.

The headspace Clinical Reference Group have approved this clinical resource. Fact sheets are for general information only. They are not intended to be and should not be relied on as a substitute for specific medical or health advice. While every effort is taken to ensure the information is accurate, headspace makes no representations and gives no warranties that the information is correct, current, complete, reliable or suitable for any purpose. We disclaim all responsibility and liability for any direct or indirect loss, damage, cost or expense whatsoever in the use of or reliance upon this information. 19 March 2019

Disaster news and distressing news events: supporting children 6-11 years

Key points

- School-age children will hear and see media coverage of disasters and other distressing news events.
- Children might not understand all the news they're exposed to, but they can still feel upset by it.
- Children cope better with disaster news if you give them accurate, age-appropriate information, plus opportunities to talk.

Disaster news, distressing news events and school-age children

School-age children hear and see TV, radio, social media and other media coverage of natural disasters and distressing news. This includes coverage of bushfires, floods, earthquakes, terrorism, wars, accidents, violent and sexual crime, the COVID-19 pandemic and more. They also hear adult conversations about disasters and other distressing news.

You might not be able to shield your child completely from disasters and distressing news. But **talking with your child can help them understand and cope with these events.**



Children need to feel safe and secure to keep growing and developing well in the primary school years. You can create a sense of safety in your family by being warm, loving and responsive. This includes being available to talk about disaster news.

How media coverage of disasters and distressing news events affects school-age children

Children won't always understand the news on the radio, TV and social media, but media coverage of disasters and other distressing news events can affect them.

For example, **children might feel:**

- frightened by what they see or hear
- upset by the stress or distress that adults around them are feeling
- worried that they or their families might get hurt
- overwhelmed by constant coverage – they might even think the disaster is happening over and over again.

Children are more likely to be affected by distressing news stories if the event or issue:

- is close to them in some way – for example, if there's a nearby bushfire, or if there has been an attack on a group that their family belongs to, like a religious group
- affects them personally – for example, if a loved one is injured or dies, or if their home, school or community is damaged
- gets a lot of coverage, especially if there's graphic video of the event, if video shows distressed people, pets and other animals, or if coverage includes emotional commentary
- reminds them of a distressing experience they've had in the past
- makes them feel powerless – for example, if they feel they can't influence adults to do something about climate change.

Children's reactions to disaster news and distressing news events are also affected by how:

- big the event is
- long the event goes on for
- many people are affected.

But sometimes large-scale events and loss of life are harder for children to relate to than smaller events. For example, a child might be more upset about the death of a mother of young children than the deaths of thousands in a mudslide.



Disaster news and distressing news events affect children of different ages in different ways. You can read more about [helping young children cope with disaster news](https://raisingchildren.net.au/preschoolers/play-learning/media/disaster-news-supporting-children-2-5-years) (<https://raisingchildren.net.au/preschoolers/play-learning/media/disaster-news-supporting-children-2-5-years>) and [helping teenagers cope with disaster news](https://raisingchildren.net.au/teens/entertainment-technology/media/disaster-news-supporting-teens) (<https://raisingchildren.net.au/teens/entertainment-technology/media/disaster-news-supporting-teens>).

Talking with school-age children about disaster news and distressing news events

Your child will cope better if they have **accurate, age-appropriate information** about disasters and other distressing events in the news. Your child also needs plenty of opportunities to ask questions and talk about feelings.

Here are some ideas for talking with school-age children about things like terrorism, natural disasters, violent crime, climate change and other disaster news and distressing events.

Make time to talk

Find the right time to talk with your child. If your child has heard distressing news at school, this might be when they get home. Or your child might want to talk at bedtime. It's always best if you make plenty of time to talk and give your child your full attention.

If the event has also affected you, try to choose a time when you're feeling OK to talk too.

Acknowledge what has happened and find out what your child knows

It's always best to acknowledge that a disaster or tragedy has happened. If you pretend that nothing has happened, your child could feel confused and unsafe. Your child might also worry about things by themselves.

It's a good idea to start by asking your child what they know and whether they have any questions. For example, 'On the news this morning, there was a report about a man with a gun in the city. Were people at school talking about that? What were they saying?'

Explain what has happened

Stick to the facts, reassure your child about what has happened, and try to give some context. Here are some examples of what you could say about different news events:

- 'A man in the city attacked some people, and unfortunately one person died. We're not sure why the man tried to hurt people, but the police have arrested him. He's locked up so he can't hurt anyone else.'
- 'It hasn't rained in parts of Australia for a very long time, and many families are struggling to pay bills and look after their farms. This has made them sad and worried. This story was about some of these families.'
- 'I heard you talking with your friends about how the earth is getting hotter. Climate change is a problem, and there are many very smart scientists working on it.'

Talk about feelings

Ask your child how they're feeling and listen to what they say. Let your child know that it's OK to feel worried, angry or sad, and that over time they'll start to feel better. You can also ask your child what they need to feel better. It might reassure your child if you share your own feelings and tell your child what you're doing to cope with them.

Here are some examples of how to talk about feelings and reassure children after different news events:

- 'I feel really sad for the people whose homes have burned down in the bushfires. I'm going to take Pup for a walk and think about how I could help. Would you like to come?'
- 'The story about the man who hurt those children is very upsetting. The man is locked away now, and good people are looking after the children. I'm trying to think about the good people.'
- 'It's really scary about the people with the hostages in the city. It's good to remember that the police are trained to handle this situation. Let's have a big hug to help us feel better.'

Keep making time to talk

Let your child know that you're always available to talk. And when your child wants to talk, make sure that you stop everything so you can listen and respond. You might need to check in occasionally with your child if the event goes on for a long time.

If you encourage open conversations about disaster news and distressing news events, **your child learns they can always talk to you**. Your child will understand that you'll be there to listen when something is worrying them.



It's important to monitor and limit how much media coverage of distressing news events both you and your child are seeing. It's not helpful for anyone to watch distressing images over and over again. If you have the facts you need or you don't need emergency alerts, it's often best to switch off or switch to something else.

Discussing media coverage of disaster news and distressing news events

Major news events are often covered in children's news programs like [Behind The News](https://www.abc.net.au/btn/) (<https://www.abc.net.au/btn/>). You could watch a program like this together and discuss it afterwards.

With older school-age children and pre-teens, you could talk about how rare events are considered more 'newsworthy' and that's why they're on the news. It's also why we don't hear about ordinary events on the news.

You could also talk about differences your child has noticed in media coverage. For example, are some radio or TV news programs more fact based than others? Do some seem more interested in the most sensational parts of the event? Do some presenters calmly give you the facts, whereas others seem very emotional?



It's natural to feel upset about disasters, terrorism, accidents and violent crime. But your child will cope better if you're coping. If you're finding things difficult, there are many people you can talk to, including your [GP](https://raisingchildren.net.au/guides/a-z-health-reference/general-practitioner) (<https://raisingchildren.net.au/guides/a-z-health-reference/general-practitioner>). You can also call Lifeline on 131 114 or call a [parenting helpline](https://raisingchildren.net.au/grown-ups/services-support/services-families/helplines) (<https://raisingchildren.net.au/grown-ups/services-support/services-families/helplines>).

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External links

- [Australian Child & Adolescent Trauma, Loss & Grief Network \(https://earlytraumagrief.anu.edu.au/\)](https://earlytraumagrief.anu.edu.au/)
- [Australian Red Cross – Helping children and young people cope with crisis \(PDF: 2.2mb\) \(https://www.blue.redcross.org.au/getmedia/a924521e-236a-4c16-9755-a37336ee4dca/19060-RED-Crisis-Children-Booklet-D11-176x250-Web.pdf.aspx\)](https://www.blue.redcross.org.au/getmedia/a924521e-236a-4c16-9755-a37336ee4dca/19060-RED-Crisis-Children-Booklet-D11-176x250-Web.pdf.aspx)

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