



Student Wellbeing Bulletin

October 2022



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WELCOME...

"The nearer a man comes to a calm mind, the closer he is to strength."

MARCUS AURELIUS (121 AD -180 AD),

Roman Emperor and Philosopher

Life can be very busy.

Often it feels like we have a million thoughts running through our minds.

With this year being our first one continuously on-campus compared to the past couple of years, it is time for us to take a deep breath and welcome some 'normality' back into our lives.

It is important to still take the time on weekends and during holidays to engage in the things that make you happy, like being with friends, going for a walk, going out for dinner/coffee, going to the cinema, theatre shows, or music concerts. All of these contribute to the moments that are timestamped to become the timeline of our lives. We look back on these memories with joy to remind us of who we were and where we were at that moment in time.

Being happy and relaxing with loved ones, can bring a calmness to our emotions and strong sense of positive wellbeing.

Sometimes, you just need to stop and find the calm in all the chaos.





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Student Wellbeing Team:

Mr Paul Graham

Student Support & Resources Manager

Mrs Kerri Haworth

Student Wellbeing Coordinator - Senior Campus

Mrs Danielle Mott

Student Wellbeing Coordinator - Junior Campus

Jason Mann

Social Worker - Senior Campus

Aisha Paternott

Social Worker - Junior Campus

Jaimi Gerosa

Chaplain

Mrs Margaret Taylor

Inclusion and Individual Needs Coordinator

Maria Disley, Jane Horrabin, Maria Calafiore, Claire Ferguson

Inclusion Aides

Jody Clooney, Stephanie Tang, Caz Coady

School Nurses

To be calm
is the highest
achievement
of the self.
Zen proverb

KEY DATES:

OCTOBER:

10 - Yr 7 Butterfly Foundation

11 - Yr 8 GEM sessions - Wellbeing
team workshops

11 - Headspace - Junior campus - lunchtime

14 - Yr 10 Careers/Wellbeing Day

17 - Yr 12 Red Frogs - Schoolies
presentation

17 - Yr 8 Elephant Education

20 - Yr 10 to 8 Mentoring sessions -
transition to senior campus

25 - Yr 9 AOD Harm Minimisation sessions -
Access Health



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Parents or carers wanting to discuss concerns regarding their child's wellbeing, should contact Paul Graham, the Student Support and Resources Manager.

gpd@mwsc.vic.edu.au

Paul's Perspective...

Some students may not be aware, but in H5 on the senior campus and LA61 on the junior campus we have the Wellness Zone. These rooms are available for students who may need some time out and a safe space to self regulate.

If you are a student who receives external counselling via video or telehealth, you are welcome to come to Wellbeing and have your appointment on your own device in the comfort and privacy of the Wellness Zone.

Please note Headspace offers doctors appointments via telehealth on Wednesdays, Thursdays and Fridays. Phone 9006 6500 to arrange an appointment (free with a Medicare card).

If you need to attend a doctor or counselling appointment but cannot attend after school, you can make the appointment during school hours and use the Wellness Zone for the appointment. If you need any assistance at all, please let us know and we can help you set up an appointment.

YOUTH FRIENDLY DOCTORS



WHAT CAN OUR DOCTORS HELP WITH?

- Our doctors take the time to listen to you. They offer extended appointments for mental health and counselling
- general health checks
- physical health
- sexual health
- women's health
- men's health
- gender diverse health
- counselling

Appointments via telehealth | phone | in person
Free with a Medicare card
Weds, Thurs & Fri
ph. (03) 9006 6500

 **headspace**
Hawthorn



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2022 VICTORIAN EDUCATION EXCELLENCE AWARD WINNERS

On Friday, 24 October the 2022 Victorian Education Excellence Awards were held at the Regent Theatre in the Ballroom.

The MWSC Student Wellbeing team were Finalists in the category of Most Outstanding Education Support Team with our work 'regarded as being at the cutting-edge of wellbeing improvement and innovation in schools, MWSC's exemplary Student Wellbeing Model is helping others to deliver effective whole-school wellbeing initiatives'. We were up against some outstanding Education Support teams from two primary schools and one other secondary school.

The team waited with anticipation for our category and when we were announced as the WINNERS, we were absolutely thrilled. This would have to be regarded as one of the biggest highlights of all of our careers. What an honour to be recognised by Victorian Education as the best in our field.

We are so proud of the work that we do, the support we offer to our students and the whole program that we have developed to support and enhance the social and emotional development of every student at Mount Waverley Secondary College.





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If you need any support from the Wellbeing team on the Senior Campus, contact Kerri or Paul

mkd@mwsc.vic.edu.au (Kerri)

gpd@mwsc.vic.edu.au (Paul)

What's happening on the Senior campus?

With the end of Year 12 and the final exams fast approaching, the Wellbeing team is available to provide counselling at home via Google Meets, or face to face when students are on campus, to support any Year 12 students who may be feeling anxious or overwhelmed at the moment.

Naturally, the Wellbeing team is always available for support for all students throughout the day, but we are happy to prioritise any appointments for our Year 12 students during what can be a stressful time in their school life.

October has been busy for the Wellbeing team on the senior campus with the Year 10 Careers/Wellbeing day that included a fabulous presentation from Daniel Merza on how to become the Leader of Your Life by getting the monkeys off your back, presentation to the Year 12's from the Red Frogs organisation on how to stay safe during Schoolies celebrations, and sessions for our Year 9's from Access Health on the dangers of alcohol and other drugs.



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Words of Advice from our Social Worker (From Jason - Senior Campus)

At times, life can demand a lot from us. Whether it's the pressure of completing your education, trying to balance the demands of your extra-curricular activities, school and family commitments or the stress that comes with competing in sporting events, it's very easy for us to become overwhelmed. In these situations (and many more) it becomes invaluable to be skilful in the ways of promoting calm. There are numerous ways to create a sense of calm. Some may lean towards breathing practices (box breathing, diaphragmatic breathing), meditation, and other 'slower' activities. Whilst some people may benefit from going for a run, hitting the gym, and calming down through expending energy. With so many ways to calm down it can be interesting to discover how you can create calm in your own unique way.

As much as it's beneficial to experience calm in your life, don't make the mistake of seeing this as the end goal or confusing avoidance with calm. Creating a calm mind and body is the steppingstone to continue to take action, even when things are stressful. A calm mind allows you to learn the skills to utilise when things do get a little hairy out there and succeed despite what's going on internally and externally.

So go out there and come up with your own unique plan of how you create calmness in your life and equip yourself with the skills to rise to the challenges that life presents to you!



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If you need any support from the Wellbeing team on the Junior Campus, contact Ms Mott or Paul

mot@mwsc.vic.edu.au (Ms Mott)

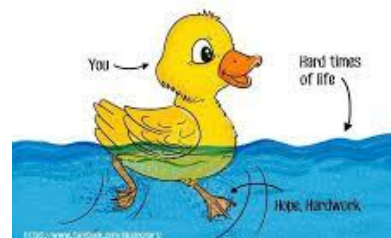
gpd@mwsc.vic.edu.au (Paul)

What's happening on the Junior Campus?

This time of year always brings a sense of panic and unsettled emotions for some of our junior campus students. As our year 8 students begin to wind up their journey on the junior campus, some of them begin to feel anxious about moving to the senior campus worrying about unfamiliar teachers, rooms and students. This is a perfectly normal emotion to experience. However developing a calmer thought process around this transition is something I talk to many of the students about. The excitement of studying a wider range of subjects with greater choice, developing new friendships with like minded students that enjoy similar subjects. The year 9 explore program and wellbeing day are two programs I often highlight to students as they are exciting and engaging programs. By helping the students draw on the key skills of resilience that the year 8 students explored early in term 1 in a wellbeing workshop can help them to remain calm and excited. I have no doubt that by the end of ECP, all year 8-9 students will feel a greater sense of calm and ease about the year ahead.

The year 7 students are completing the last round of CAT's over the next few weeks leading to a much calmer and content cohort. They are looking forward to being the leaders of the school and have been fortunate enough to experience one full year on site. Some students are exploring the opportunity to apply for a school leadership position in 2023. Many exciting opportunities ahead.

"Be like a duck, paddling and working very hard inside the water, but what everyone sees is a smiling and calm face."
—Mandy Jenks, from the first stage to financial freedom





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Words of Advice from our Social Worker (From Aisha - Junior Campus)

In a world of chaos, we often crave moments of calmness and the desire to quiet our minds (which can sometimes be hard to do!)

One of my favourite quotes is "you cannot pour from an empty cup." This essentially means that if I am not prioritizing myself and my needs, I then cannot be the best version of myself for others. To do this, I require my moments of calmness (otherwise known as "me time").

In the spirit of Mental Health Awareness Month and with this year's theme being "tuning in", I ask that we all take the time to tune into ourselves, take a moment to be still and allow yourself to experience the present.

There are lots of great and easily accessible apps that can support us in getting to a state of calmness. These include:

- Calm App
- DreamyKid
- Headspace Guided Meditation and Mindfulness
- Smiling Mind (a personal favourite!)
- Breathing Bubbles

I hope these apps can be of use to you. Continue to be kind to your mind and prioritize your "me time"!



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Junior Campus:

jsnurse@mwsc.vic.edu.au

Senior Campus:

mssnurse@mwsc.vic.edu.au

From Your Caring Nurses...

What is happening to our body when we don't feel calm?

Blame the amygdala hijack! The amygdala is a collection of cells near the base of your brain. There are two, one in each side of the brain. The amygdala is considered to be part of the brain's limbic system. It's key to how you process strong emotions like fear and pleasure – it engages when you laugh really hard or are really excited and happy as well as when you're stressed, when it activates the 'fight or flight' response.

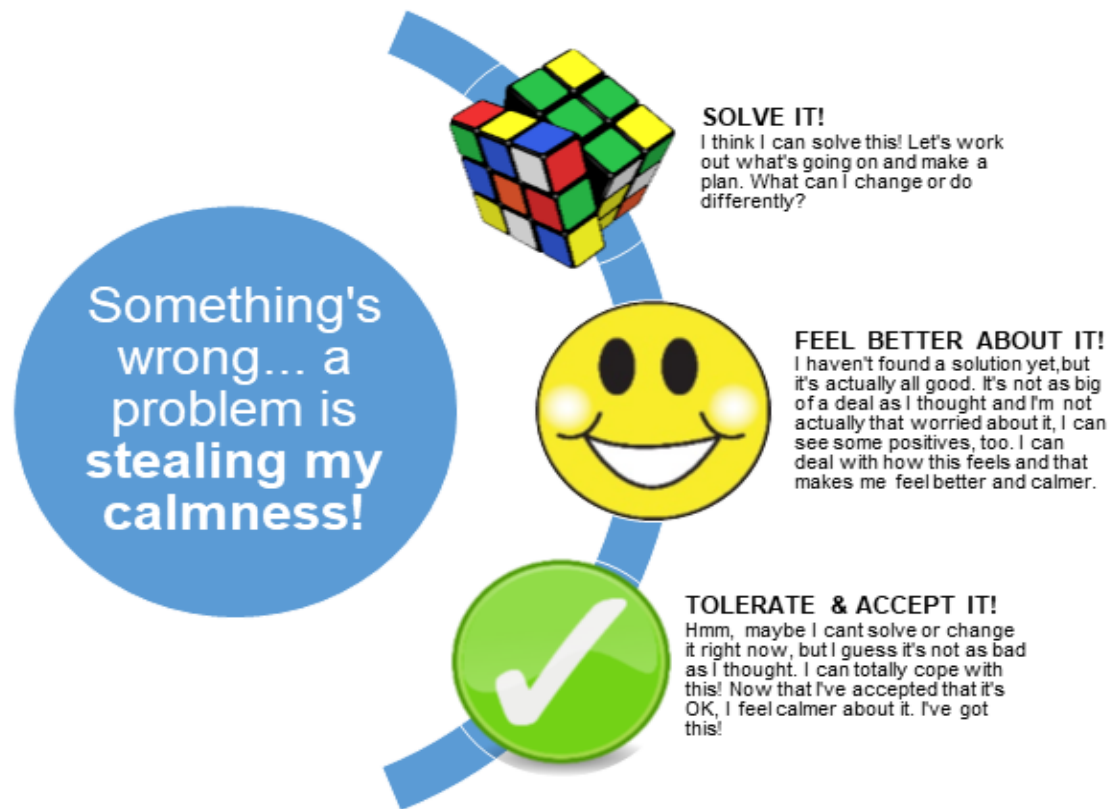
You also have the frontal lobes, which are the two large areas at the front of your brain. They're part of the cerebral cortex, which is a newer, rational, and more advanced brain system. This is where thinking, reasoning, decision making, and planning happen. The frontal lobes allow you to process and think about your emotions. You can then manage these emotions and determine a logical response. Unlike the automatic response of the amygdala, the response to fear from your frontal lobes is consciously controlled by you.

Early humans were exposed to the constant threat of being killed or injured by wild animals or other tribes. To improve the chances of survival, the 'fight-or-flight' response evolved. It's an automatic response to physical danger that allows you to react quickly without thinking. When you feel threatened and afraid, the amygdala automatically activates the fight-or-flight response by sending out signals to release stress hormones – cortisol and adrenaline- that prepare your body to fight or run away. This response is triggered by emotions like fear, anxiety, aggression, and anger.

Unfortunately, your brain still releases these same hormones even when the threat isn't putting us in danger and we can feel just the same – really stressed! These hormones can make you feel tense, you might breathe a little fast, your heart starts to race, and you might feel really worried about the situation you're in or what might come next.

When the threat is mild or moderate, the frontal lobes override the amygdala, and you respond in the most rational, appropriate way. However, when the threat is strong, the amygdala acts quickly. It may overpower the frontal lobes, automatically triggering the fight-or-flight response. However, at the same time, your frontal lobes are processing the information to determine if danger really is present and the most logical response to it.

The good news is that you can learn to calm yourself and remain calm by re-engaging your frontal lobes to override the amygdala hijack.



Remaining calm under pressure is not an inborn trait, but a skill that *anybody* can learn.

Here's how:

Slow your breathing, slow down, focus your thoughts

Consciously breathe more slowly and deeply. Count from 1 to 10 as you inhale, then count from 1 to 10 as you exhale. Breathe slowly and evenly. Think about the speed and rhythm of your breaths, and focus on what's going on in your body as you inhale and exhale. These deep breaths bring more oxygen into your lungs and then into your bloodstream, which is the exact opposite effect of the fight or flight reaction. You're telling your body and brain that it's no longer necessary to increase the intensity of your fight-or-flight reaction.

Think about the emotions you might be feeling and see if you can re-label them from negative emotions to positive ones, for example:

Fear ð Anticipation

Frustration ð Desire

Worry ð Concern

Dread ð Caution

Flustered ð Excited

Alarmed ð Curious

When you re-label your emotions, you are using controllable parts of your brain to convince your amygdalae that this is not a fight-or-flight situation but instead a "stay aware and watchful" situation, or even a "sit back and enjoy" situation.

As you continue to breathe slowly and deeply while holding the re-labelled emotions in your mind, notice the speed at which your heart is beating. You will find that it gradually returns to a normal pace.

You've regained calmness.

You will find that this technique takes a little practice, but it's well worth the effort. You can now think about what the problem is really about and whether you can solve it.



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If you need any support from the Chaplain, contact Jaimi

gej@mwsc.vic.edu.au

CHALLENGE

Chaplain's Challenge

Hello!

My name is Jaimi and I am the new Chaplain at the Junior Campus! You will find me in the Wellness Zone on Mondays and Wednesdays this term.

I am a part of the Wellbeing Team and here to provide social, emotional and spiritual support and pastoral care to students. This can come in a variety of forms, such as one-on-one conversations, mentoring, programs and extracurricular activities.

I am also here to support the MWSC families and staff, and am looking forward to coming alongside them in support of their goals, visions, programs, activities and making myself available to help where there is a need!

I am passionate about resilience, community connectedness and encouraging and empowering individuals to live a fruitful and connected life with the world around them.

If you have any questions about my role, ideas and suggestions or would like to chat, feel free to email me at:

gej@mwsc.vic.edu.au