

JUNE 2022

ISSUE 01



STUDENT WELLBEING PARENT BULLETIN

Mount Waverley Secondary College

Connection

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COMMUNITY | CHOICE | ENGAGEMENT

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PURPOSE

At Mount Waverley Secondary College we value a holistic approach when it comes to supporting the needs of our students. It's integral to the wellbeing of our students that families are supported in their role to nurture their young person. The Parent Bulletin is authored by Aisha Patternot and Jason Mann - Mental Health Practitioners at Mount Waverley Secondary College, and is our way of connecting with the parents of our students. We hope to offer you general parenting advice, greater awareness of what is happening at Mount Waverley Secondary College and provide links to support agencies from the community that offer a range of structured programs and supports to assist families.

We are continually thinking about topics that we may include in these bulletins and information to share. We would also love for you to have a say in what we include in the bulletin. So if there are any topics you would like us to cover please feel free to contact Aisha - pai@mwsc.vic.gov.au

Some of the ideas that we have thought of include:

- Beating the winter blues
- Family inclusive practices to self-care at home
- Tips on how to check in with each other
- How to have those uncomfortable conversations
- Recipes/activity ideas

ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

PRACTITIONERS (MHP)

Mental Health Practitioners provide direct counselling support and other early intervention and health promotion services for students, as well as coordinating support for students with complex needs. In counselling sessions, the MHP supports your child by directly, offering feedback, strategies and tools to help your child manage their concerns. Mental health practitioners provide short term interventions for students with mild to moderate mental health needs and liaise with internal and external services where students need more intensive supports. MHPs also support your child by providing feedback, strategies and tools to relevant school staff to improve your child's learning and development. MHPs may also run small group activities with students experiencing the same or similar concerns. Students are referred to the MHP program through Paul Graham (Student Support and Resource Manager). Paul can be contacted at gpd@mwsc.vic.edu.au

CONNECTION

*Aisha Paternott
& Jason Mann
(Mental Health Practitioners)*

When it comes to our own individual wellbeing or even the wellbeing of a community, connection is vitally important. Human beings are social creatures and as such have thrived when strong interpersonal connections have existed, developing a sense of belonging within the community. Throughout history, our success as a species has relied upon living in groups, finding partnerships, and sharing and receiving ideas and resources with our connections.

Research has shown that we enhance our wellbeing when we spend time developing new social connections, and when we spend time strengthening our existing friendships. Social connectedness has been tied to improvements in our:

- physical health
- living longer lives
- mental health
- cognitive functioning

A common result of poor mental health is a disconnection from others. Anxiety will often tell us to avoid social situations in a misguided effort to keep us safe. Depression tells us that we are all alone without considering contrary evidence from the world outside of our internal experience.

On a neurobiological level we can see the impact of isolation and social pain as being identical to the distress of physical pain. When we experience social rejection, the anterior

cingulate (brain region) lights up. This is the exact same area that lights up for people when they are in physical pain. On the flipside, when we engage and connect with others the body releases doses of dopamine and oxytocin. Dopamine is linked to pleasure and encourages us to go out and seek more pleasurable experiences – social connections. Oxytocin, the ‘love or cuddle hormone’ is also linked to social connections and seems to have a dual role. When we are experiencing low stress, oxytocin physiologically rewards those who maintain good social bonds with the experience of great wellbeing. However, when we experience stressful situations and oxytocin is released, it drives us towards our social contacts or better support structures.

As a parent, it's natural to be concerned about the connections that your child holds. But be aware that jumping in and labelling your child's friendships as harmful maybe well intentioned however could result in resistance from your child. As your child grows and develops greater independence, you won't always be around to save them from potential harmful friendships. Instead take the time now to teach them how to assess the nature and quality of the friendships they are forming. Most importantly remind them to continually assess their friendships as people change over time. Spend time with your child now to develop the confidence and strategies to have awkward conversations with people when they aren't treated with dignity or respect.

It takes all kinds of connections to establish positive wellbeing and there is a role for everyone. Strengthening your personal connections with your child, partner, family and friends is important for yours and their overall wellbeing. Each person in your life can play a different role in assisting you with dealing with any life stressors that you may face. Each of our contacts are unique and it should not be upon one person to fulfill all of our social needs. It's also important to remember that there are professional supports



available to assist you if needed. Professional supports will not be able to answer the phone at 3am in the morning like a friend may be able to, but they are invaluable in providing specialised advice in an area of your concern. Our hope through publishing this bulletin is that you may grow in your knowledge of local supports and also feel comfortable contacting the MWSC Student Wellbeing Team if the need arises in order to assist you with your child. It's our belief that as working as a team we will be able to best support your child in obtaining excellent wellbeing and academic results, putting them in the best position to achieve their goals.

Tips for Improving Your Social Connections

- 1. Put down your mobile phone*
- 2. Greet people with a genuine smile and act with interest*
- 3. Share personal stories, don't just 'talk shop'*
- 4. Create social events for opportunities to connect outside the office*
- 5. Join a group based upon your favourite hobby*

Tips for Improving Connections to Your Child

- 1. Schedule Family Time*
- 2. Understand the changing dynamic that occurs between the parent-child relationship throughout adolescence*
- 3. Encourage your child to take healthy risks*
- 4. Don't judge your child's friendships, instead teach them how to assess their connections*
- 5. Use open ended questions and utilise active listening skills*

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON CAMPUS?

Senior Campus

On Monday 23rd May, our Year 11 students attended a workshop led by Brad Felstead entitled 'Study Calm'. Brad created a great environment for students to learn the positive benefits of diaphragmatic breathing, ensuring that students could breathe through their diaphragm rather than taking shallow breaths. Brad was also able to link the benefits of mindfulness to memory recall, alerting students to the focus of the examiner of how much students can remember under time pressure. We encourage our students to continue to find effective ways to study and perform during assessments. The student wellbeing team is on hand to further develop these skills with any students who wish to address this.

On the 1st June YSAFE delivered a presentation to our Year 9 students on the importance of keeping safe online. They covered the relevant laws that pertain to online bullying and harassment, including what they can do if they experience any difficulties on social media.

On Tuesday the 17th May the Mount Waverley Secondary College community celebrated IDAHOBIT day (International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia and Transphobia). Led by the Respect Group, our students celebrated with music, chalk drawings (see image above) and recognising the contribution of allies in the fight against LGBTQIA+ discrimination.



IDAHOBIT DAY: Senior Campus

Junior Campus

On Thursday May 27, the Junior Campus engaged in different activities to commemorate Reconciliation Week and to celebrate and reflect on the theme of "Be Brave. Make Change." These activities included chalk drawings outside of what being brave and making change means to us as well as watching short films of Indigenous stories. It was great to see so many students involved and eager to learn about our shared histories and cultures as well as exploring how we can contribute towards reconciliation in Australia.

The Breakfast Club has been running on a Tuesday and Thursday morning from 8am on the Junior Campus. It has been wonderful to see so many students come in and for staff and students to have the opportunity to engage in a non-classroom environment and to converse over a slice of toast and a cup of tea

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE COMMUNITY?

The Push-Up Challenge is a National Event aimed at supporting measures to tackle the suicide rates in Australia. From the 1st June to the 24th June, each person or team will complete 3,139 push-ups in recognition of the number of people who lost their lives to suicide in 2020. Staff and students at Mount Waverley Secondary College have signed up to The Push-Up Challenge with funds being raised going to support Lifeline, Movember or Push For Better.

The City of Monash have a great website outlining the upcoming events in the area. You can check out the details here <https://www.monash.vic.gov.au/Things-to-Do/Events>

Here are some events that might be of interest to you:

Teen Fit: A class specifically for teens designed with gym and bodyweight exercises which increase fitness, strength and cardio.

Emerge: Explore the amazing grounds surrounding the Mount Waverley Community Centre from Friday 24th until Tuesday 28th June 5pm - 9:30pm.

Allow your imagination to run wild as you explore the art installations by The Lanternist!



You can even become part of the experience with UV lighting and body paint that glows.

Your mind will be spinning by roving artists who reflect, twirl and heat up the night.

Important Dates

1st-24th June: Push-Up Challenge

13th-19th June: Men's Health Week

3rd-10th July: NAIDOC Week



'Spider' by The Lanternist

Spotlight on...



Headspace Syndal is a free or low cost service where young people aged 12-25 can access qualified mental health professionals, GPs, drug and alcohol counsellors and vocational service providers. You can self refer, however a mental health treatment plan is required to see a clinician offering private practice services. Headspace Syndal have other workers and programs you can access without a mental health treatment plan. This includes the Session By Session Stream whereby the clinician will apply a goal oriented framework to equip the young person with the necessary skills to handle the situation. Further sessions can be booked in following the completion of the session, allowing time for the young person to apply the skills learnt with the clinician. Likewise, a referral into Family Therapy at Headspace Syndal does not require a Mental Health Treatment Plan.

Whilst waiting to access a clinician from Headspace Syndal and also during your work with the service, clients have the choice to access MOST (Moderated Online Social Therapy) to further enhance their wellbeing. MOST is a digital mental health platform which offers continuous and integrated face to face and digital care to young people. MOST offers wrap around support from online peer workers, online clinicians and vocational support workers, working in tandem with face to face clinicians. MOST uses evidence-based therapies to:

- reduce wait list times, visits to emergency and relapse rates
- improve vocational outcomes and social connections
- provide opportunities for young people to engage with clinicians before, during and after their sessions
- provide greater access for young people to high quality, engaging and evidence based support after ceasing formal sessions

You can contact Headspace Syndal directly on the phone number below or chat to a member of the Student Wellbeing Team and they can support you with a referral

Contact Details

Address: 265-267 Blackburn Rd, Mount Waverley

Phone: 8552 0800

Email: headspacesyndal@alfred.org.au

Hours

Monday: 8:30am-5:00pm

Tuesday: 8:30am - 5:00pm

Wednesday: 8:30am - 5:00pm

Thursday: 8:30am - 5:00pm

Friday: 8:30am - 5:00pm

Saturday: Closed

Sunday: Closed



MOUNT WAVERLEY SECONDARY COLLEGE STUDENT WELLBEING MODEL



YOUR WELLBEING TEAM CONTACTS

Paul Graham

Student Support and Resources Manager

Kerri Haworth

Student Wellbeing Coordinator - Senior Campus

Danielle Mott

Student Wellbeing Coordinator - Junior Campus

Aisha Paternott

Mental Health Practitioner - Junior Campus

Jason Mann

Mental Health Practitioner - Senior Campus

Margaret Taylor

Inclusion and Individual Needs Coordinator

Maria Disley, Jane Horrabin & Maria Calafiore

Inclusion Support Staff

Jody Clooney, Caz Coady & Stephanie Tang

School Nurses

