

St Paul's Primary School Wellbeing & Community Newsletter



Issue 3, 2024

Monday 7th October, 2024



The St Paul's Community acknowledges the Wurundjeri people as the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we teach, learn and pray. We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship that Aboriginal and Torres Strait people have to Country and pay our respects to Elders, past and present as we commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of reconciliation.



October is Mental Health Month

October is Mental Health Month, with a focus on World Mental Health Day on October 10. This year's theme, 'Let's Talk About It,' invites us all to reconnect and have open conversations about mental health.

By talking openly with family, friends, and our community, we can help break down stigma and create a supportive environment for everyone. These conversations are powerful—they can improve our wellbeing and make it easier for others to seek the help they need.

Let's come together this Mental Health Month to support and empower one another.



Mental Health & Wellbeing for Children

Just like our bodies, we need to keep our minds healthy too!

Mental health, like physical health, is something everyone has, starting from before we are born and continuing to develop throughout our lives. It's not just about coping with difficulties; it's about our overall emotional, psychological, and social wellbeing.

For children, mental health affects how they think and feel about themselves and others, how they behave and interact, form relationships, learn, and play. Positive mental health is crucial for children to thrive in daily life — whether at home, school, or in their communities.

Wellbeing is about feeling good both mentally and physically. When children's mental health is strong, they can manage their thoughts, emotions, and actions effectively, helping them handle challenges and navigate life's ups and downs. Good mental health doesn't mean being happy all the time, but it does mean understanding and managing emotions.

If a child's mental health or wellbeing needs support, there are strategies that can help—like listening to music, going for a walk, talking to a friend, spending time with a pet, or seeking help from a trusted adult. It's important to find what works best for each child to support their overall wellbeing.



St. Paul's Commitment to Mental Health and Wellbeing

At St. Paul's, we prioritize the mental health and wellbeing of our entire school community. We have a Student Wellbeing Leader and a Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader, supported by a Core Wellbeing Team that meets weekly to find new ways to enhance support.

In 2022, we launched The Mental Health and Wellbeing Hub (The Hub), a dedicated, calming space where students can access Social Emotional Learning and support during class times, recess, and lunch.

Here are some of the key ways St Paul's actively supports the mental health and wellbeing of our students and community.

- Social Emotional Learning: Lessons on emotional literacy, personal strengths, positive coping, problem, stress management and help-seeking.
- Counselling Services: Access to a school psychologist through Catholic Care.
- Safe Environment: Policies that promote inclusivity and safety.
- Student Leadership Program
- Behaviour Support: Through Restorative Practices
- Child Safety: Child Safety lessons through Respectful Relationships and Day for Daniel
- Peer Support: Buddy systems.
- Staff Training: Professional development on mental health.
- Physical Activity: Encouraging regular exercise and play.
- Early Intervention: Identifying and supporting at-risk students.



Mental Health in Primary Schools Project

In late 2021, St. Paul's joined the Mental Health in Primary Schools (MHiPS) pilot project, which has since proven successful in our school and 100 others. In June 2022, the Andrews Labor Government announced additional funding to expand MHiPS to 1,800 Victorian primary schools from 2023 to 2026.

This expansion allows St. Paul's to continue benefiting from the MHiPS Model, including a full-time Mental Health Wellbeing Leader (MHWL). The MHWL supports staff, aids students with mental health needs, establishes referral pathways, and monitors student progress.

We are fortunate to be one of the first schools involved in this project, enhancing our ability to foster a mentally positive community.



Five Ways to Support Your Child's Mental Health

Adapted from Emerging Minds, [visit here for more information](#).

Every family is unique. As parents and family members, there are five key areas you can focus on to support children's development, learning, mental health and overall wellbeing:

1. Parent-child relationship: Build a strong bond with your child by responding warmly and consistently to their needs and making time to connect with them.
2. Emotions and behaviours: Tune in to your child's feelings and be curious about what's behind their behaviours, so you can help them understand and express all their emotions in healthy ways.
3. Routines: Create family routines to help children feel secure, reduce stress and find time for connection and fun.
4. Communication and meaning-making: Talk openly with children to help them understand and make meaning of what's happening in their world.
5. Support networks: Know where you can get support and how to ask for help when you need it, and how to help your child build their support team, too.

These approaches will help nurture and protect your child's mental health, regardless of the challenges you may face.



St Paul's Art Show: By Eunice, Fiona (SRC), Shanel (SAS) & Giulietta (SHG)

On the 12th of September, St Paul's held our 2024 Art Show, and it was a huge hit! Lots of families came to see the amazing artwork made with care by our students and staff.

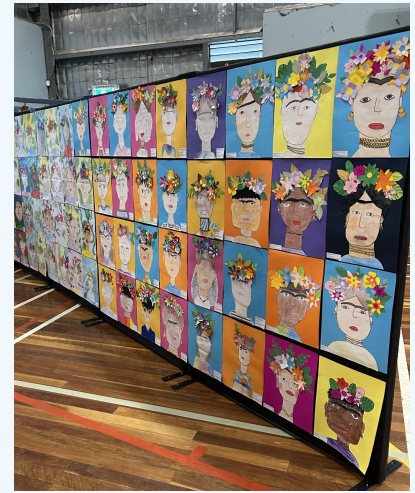
At the event, Ms. Ashlea and Mr. Casamento revealed our huge Indigenous mural, which is now outside the Performing Arts room. Ms. Ashlea, Ms. Gallus, Ms. Lynette, Miss Michele, and many other staff members worked really hard to make this beautiful piece. Each student put their fingerprint on the stones to add their own special touch. The choir also did a fantastic job kicking off the show!

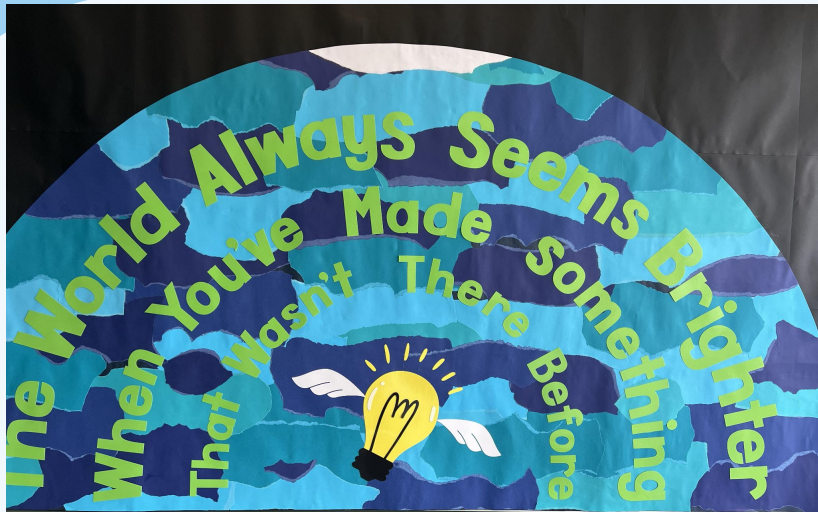
We also had clapping stick design and weaving workshops run by our Art Monitors, where students and families learned new art skills. Our staff got creative too, showing off their self-portraits. Families tried to match each portrait with the right staff member—it was harder than we thought!

We recorded a special podcast during the event, hosted by Mr. Turner, our ICT teacher. It includes interviews with students, Ms. Ashlea, our Koori Education Officer, and a proud message from Mr. Casamento. Check out the QR code on the next page to listen—we hope you enjoy it! We also had awesome STEM projects on display, showing off students skills in both art and science. Plus, there was a fantastic Indonesian dance by students in traditional dress, with beautiful music directed by Ibu Santi, adding a special cultural highlight to the night.

A huge thank you to all the students and staff who made the Art Show such a success. Special thanks to Mrs. Gallus for her incredible preparation and organization, and for helping students create fantastic art pieces in Visual Art lessons. Thanks also to Ms. Lynette and Ms. Michele for all their work with the choir and their support in ensuring everything was ready for the night. A big thank you to the staff art team for their support with setup and planning, and to parents Kayla Strinovic (Frankie's mum- JMC) and Tana Degala (William's mum- MAK) for their help preparing our workshops.

And, of course, a big thanks to all the parents and guardians who came out to support the event
— the energy and excitement were amazing!







Check out the Art Show Podcast by scanning the QR code —we hope you enjoy it!



[Click for link here](#)



If you would like any further information about the content presented in this newsletter or have any suggestions regarding topics to cover in our next issue, please feel free to contact Bec Lopez rlopez@spsunshinewest.catholic.edu.au

To view previous issues of the Wellbeing and Community Newsletter, [visit our school website.](#)