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ISSUE 02



STUDENT WELLBEING PARENT BULLETIN

Mount Waverley Secondary College

Sensitive Topics

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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 Paternott 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

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 supports 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



COMMUNITY | CHOICE | ENGAGEMENT

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SENSITIVE TOPICS

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

What is a sensitive topic?

A sensitive topic can be described as is an issue or area of concern that typically needs to be discussed with a lot of care, consideration, and empathy. All topics in life are going to be interpreted and reacted to differently as we all have different ideas and meanings about topics are sensitive. Some common sensitive topics are:

- Sexual orientation
- Mental health issues
- Identity
- Equality
- World events
- Climate change
- Relationship and family issues
- Death of a loved one

Discussing sensitive topics with your child

As a parent and carer, you have an important role in supporting and protecting your child's wellbeing. A part of this support can look like being open to having discussions about sensitive topics when your child approaches you with them. This can feel uncomfortable at times but there are some useful tips to remember that can make the process a little easier. These include:

- If your child approaches you and would like to discuss a sensitive topic, stay calm and be prepared to listen. This will show your child that they are being heard and what they are saying is valued.
- Try to listen without judgement and instead, show curiosity in what they are saying – asking more questions about the topic will show them that you are interested in what they are saying.

- Depending on the urgency of topic, sometimes you can suggest discussing the issue at a later time. This can give you time to gather your thoughts, diffuse any overreactions and better prepare yourself to tackle what might be a difficult situation.
- Some topics are not easily solved and sometimes your child might not be expecting you to have a solution – they may just want to talk to someone that is willing to listen.
- As stated above, coming to the conversation with more curiosity rather than judgement can bring forth a different viewpoint to help your child consider the topic in a different light.
- An important thing to remember as a parent and carer is that it's okay if you don't have all the answers. You're not alone in this process and being open to seeking further information and guidance from your child's teachers, school counsellors or external services can be helpful for you and your family.

How this can impact your relationship with your child?

Some benefits from having open communication between you and your child about sensitive topics can be that it:

- Brings forth further connection in strengthening the trust in your relationship with your child
- Allows your child to feel more of a sense of safety and stability within your family
- Limits fear and anxious feelings your child might have regarding who to talk to

Discussing these topics with your child's teacher

Sensitive topics discussed within your family are a private matter but sometimes, sharing a glimpse of what your child is facing with their teacher/support person at school can be helpful for that staff to better understand and respond appropriately to the needs of your child.

Sensitive topics that your child's teacher could benefit from knowing include are:

- Family changes and separations
- Diagnosis/es of your child
- Changes in your child's behaviours
- Academic struggles that your child might be facing

Conversations you can have with your child's teacher or support person can be brief and concise without going into much detail.



Ways that you can start these conversations include:

“My child is struggling with their schoolwork, and I am concerned. Is there any extra support at school that they can receive?”

“My child has been seeing an external counsellor for mental health issues. Please be mindful of this if you notice any mood or behavioural changes.”

My child has recently been diagnosed with an intellectual disability. I want to make sure their teachers are aware so that they can support my child better.”

MENTAL HEALTH TREATMENT PLANS

When discussing sensitive topics with your young person it may become apparent that you need the support of a mental health clinician. Whilst supports are available at MWSC you can also access private mental health clinicians through completing a mental health treatment plan with your GP. The plan identifies what type of health care you need and spells out the goals you are aiming to achieve. This will entitle you to up to 20 Medicare subsidised sessions with a psychologist, mental health social worker or occupational therapist.

Tip: When booking your appointment with the GP to discuss a Mental Health Treatment Plan ensure that you book an extended consultation to allow time for the GP to ask a few questions, fill in the plan and set your goals. You don't want to have to come back a second time!

You can't get Medicare rebates for all the sessions in one go. After 6 sessions you'll need to visit your GP again to review your mental health treatment plan and discuss the need for further sessions.

WHAT'S HAPPENING ON CAMPUS?

Senior Campus

Our Year 12s started Term Three with a powerful workshop from Reach. The facilitators created a space for the students to have a study break and reflect on their final days of school. They discussed how successful they felt, how they felt about the future and what their passions were. The Year 12s had a vulnerable and productive discussion about all the changes that come with finishing school and some of the challenges that might be involved. The workshop finished on a positive note, with students encouraged to make the most of their last days at school, before they begin a new chapter in their lives.

On the 28th of July, Reach ran a workshop with our Year 9s. The theme was peer dynamics, and the facilitators prompted the students to reflect on their comfort zone, confidence, and how they can look out for each other at school. A key message from the workshop was that you don't always know what someone else is going through, so treat everyone with kindness. Students were asked to reflect on how they can continue to create a welcoming, inclusive environment for each other at school.

On the 18th of July, the Year 12s listened to a presentation from Declan Fay (comedian and co-writer of Ronny Chieng: International Student). Declan painted a vivid and entertaining picture of his high school experience: feeling like an outcast; stealing, holding for ransom, and eventually returning a 1kg chocolate bar from the school office; and having no idea what he wanted to do with his future. Held back from class one day, a stern PE teacher gave Declan a piece of advice that stuck with him ever since - "Don't wonder what if." Declan encouraged the Year 12s to take on this message and give things a go even if they're out of their comfort zone. He spoke of his career path and told the year 12s to just keep doing things they enjoy and opportunities will emerge.



Declan Faye: Spoke to our Year 12 students

Junior Campus

We have started the term in our usual form – breakfast club running on a Tuesday and Thursday morning from 8am (if your kids are early risers, please encourage them to come down for a milo and a piece of toast!). Year 7 students have also been involved in aquatic and gymnastic sessions and Year 8 students have participated in a self defence/bounce program.

In regards to student workshops, we were very fortunate to have the REACH foundation pay us a visit during the first week of term. REACH is an organisation who runs workshops to empower young people and students, helping us to understand ourselves and each other better. The theme for the workshops was based around connection. I had the privilege to sit in on a couple of workshops and observe students engage with each other as well as openly discuss their barriers around connecting and how we can improve this in a safe and trusting space.

On the 10th of August, it is Languages Day. Students will enjoy activities that are focused on Japanese and German culture as well as a Japan vs German soccer match at lunchtime. This will be a great opportunity for students and staff to engage in fun and exciting activities while learning and embracing different cultures.

WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE COMMUNITY?

Monash Youth Services always have something exciting going on. You can check their events calendar here. Here are some programs your child may be interested in:

Activate: Every Wednesday from 4-6pm under 17s can join in a free recreational program to play games, do activities, eat snacks and make friends.

Monash Youth Film Festival: Young filmmakers can submit a short film by August 14th. Or, come along on September 21st to watch the film festival.

Quiksound: On Mondays from 5-6pm young musicians come together to create music and plan cultural events. Check out the website for details on how to apply.

Study space: Every Tuesday from 3-5pm, students can study in a free and supportive space supervised by Youth Workers.

University Open Days

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| University of Melbourne - | 7th August, 21st August |
| Monash University - | Peninsula 6th August, Caulfield 7th August, Clayton 7th August, Parkville 21st August |
| Victoria University - | 21st August |
| La Trobe University - | 7th August |
| RMIT- | Bundoora 7th August, City 14th August |
| Swinburne University - | 30th August (online) |
| William Angliss- | 13th August |
| Deakin University - | Burwood 28th August |



Online Event

Women in STEMM Infographic Workshop

Women in STEMM Panel Discussion,

Free, 18th August 4:30-6pm

<https://www.swinburne.edu.au/events/2022/08/stemm-infographic-workshop-1-women-in-stemm-panel-discussion.html/>

ACU Exam Webinars

During August and September, ACU are running a series of free online webinars for a variety of Year 12 subjects, run by markers and assessors, with tips on how to respond to exam questions.

<https://www.acu.edu.au/about-acu/events/year-12-revision-webinars/vic>

Spotlight on...



Wavecare is a counselling and support service that works in the city of Monash and is staffed by professional counsellors and psychologists. Having run for over 40 years with the mission of 'keeping lives on track', Wavecare provides affordable counselling and mental health services to individuals at any and every stage of life. Wavecare also provides inclusive care to support people with diverse cultural and linguistic backgrounds, as well as those who identify as LGBTQI+.

Wavecare offers counselling services to individuals and families for a broad range of issues, these include but are not limited to:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Stress
- Child and adolescent development
- Grief and loss
- ADHD
- Transition Counselling
- Autism
- Social Avoidance
- Custody Disputes

Counselling isn't just for those who struggle with issues in their life, it can also help people to better understand their thoughts, feelings, and emotions. Counselling is provided in a safe and confidential environment by qualified and experienced practitioners.

If you would like to access these services for yourself or on behalf of another, you can contact Wavecare by phone or you can submit a request for an appointment through their website.

Contact Details

Address: Level 1, 2 Euneva Ave, Glen Waverley 3150

Phone: (03) 9560 6722

Website: <https://www.wavecare.org.au/>

Hours

Monday: 9am – 8pm

Tuesday: 10am – 6pm

Wednesday: 9am – 5pm

Thursday: 9am-9pm (evenings by appointment)

Friday: Closed



Free mental health webinars

High school students

| | |
|-----------------------|-------------------|
| Mental fitness | Insight |
| Thu 25 Aug 11AM | Fri 12 Aug 12PM |
| Wed 14 Sept 11AM | Thu 1 Sept 2PM |
| Tues 27 Sept 2PM | Tues 20 Sept 11AM |

Adults, parents & carers

Navigating your teen's mental health

- Tues 16 Aug 7PM
- Tues 6 Sept 7PM
- Thu 22 Sept 12PM

Breaking down depression

- Thu 12 Aug 12PM
- Thu 8 Sept 12:30PM
- Wed 28 Sept 7PM

A WORD FROM OUR COLLEGE NURSES

A QUICK REMINDER

If your young person is feeling under the weather for any reason please think twice before sending them to school. Sending a young person to school whilst symptomatic places their health and the health of others at risk. Let's act together in keeping the community safe by ensuring that we stay home when unwell.

PUTTING THE RIGHT FOOT FORWARD

Shoes are not just a fashion item; they are essential in protecting our feet. A proper fitting shoe can cushion the underfoot, support spine alignment and can also prevent injuries such as rolled ankles.

Unless your child complains that they are uncomfortable, you may not know when it's time for a new pair of shoes. It's a good idea to periodically check your children's shoes to make sure what they're wearing is still working for them. Look for particularly worn areas, or stressed seams. If the sides are bulging or wearing out more quickly than the rest of the shoe, then they may not be wide enough. Toes that bend upwards are also a sign of shoes that don't fit properly; worn out toes or heels can also mean it's time for a new pair of shoes.

While it may be tempting to buy shoes that are bigger for your child to grow into, a shoe that is too big will not provide a safe base and increase the likelihood of slips, trips and falls. In order to counteract the extra movement in the shoe due to their loose fit, children will hyper-flex their toes for 'grip' and this can lead to toe problems.

Tying the laces each day is a better practice than slipping them off and on; it will also extend the life of your shoe since forcing a tied shoe off wears out the heel counter and makes the shoe sloppy.

Look for shoes made from breathable materials, such as canvas or leather. In addition to being more durable, they will help to keep the child's foot cooler and dryer, helping to prevent blisters, discomfort, and smelly shoes.

Look for a pattern or textured sole, as this will provide traction and help prevent your child from easily slipping on slick surfaces.

Soles should be sturdy and thick enough to protect the feet from pain and injury, but the sole also needs to be flexible too so that it will bend with the foot.



<https://www.betterhealth.vic.gov.au/health/healthyliving/childrens-feet-and-shoes>

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, Kathy Ragavan, Claire Ferguson & Maria Calafiore

Inclusion Support Staff

Jody Clooney, Caz Coady & Stephanie Tang

School Nurses

