

Semester 2 – Term 4, 16th October 2017

Important Dates

Junior Campus		Senior Campus	
18 Oct	AVID Fest – Senior Campus	18 Oct	AVID Fest 5pm Drama Room
19 Oct	Year 7 Immunisations	24 Oct	Last day Y12 VCE classes
30 Oct	Year 7 Cybersafety Presentation	1 Nov	Year 12 exams begin
7 Nov	Melbourne Cup (school closed)	3 Nov	Last day Y11 and Y12 VCAL
		7 Nov	Melbourne Cup (school closed)

Next Newsletter: 3rd November 2017

College Principal's Report

It's great to be back from long service leave feeling refreshed and keen to start the new term. The building design project is complete to the stage where the Minister of Education now has to review the initial plan and give us feedback on how many stages we should plan to build in. This will probably take a month or so, then we can get on with more detailed design. I'll share the plans with you as soon as the Minister gives approval to do so.

Once again we have successfully applied to be part of the Victorian Young Leaders to China program next year. Year 9 students studying Chinese will have the opportunity to spend 6 weeks in China in March/April 2018. A fabulous opportunity for these students.

In the last week of Term 3 and the school holidays, 11 students and 4 teachers undertook a 2 week study tour of China. They had a fantastic time visiting our sister school and seeing the sights in Beijing and Shanghai. I'm told they highly recommend it!



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Macbeth, our school production performed last term was very successful and well attended. The script was adapted by Casey Nicholls, one of our Drama teachers, and produced in partnership with Western Edge Youth Arts. The student actors were excellent and the audiences very appreciative. Well done to the students and to Casey and thank you very much to Western Edge Youth Arts for their support of our college.

The AVID Fest will be held on Wednesday 18th October at the Senior Campus. This is an opportunity for parents to catch up with what their children are doing in AVID and celebrate their achievements during the year. All AVID students' parents are invited. We look forward to seeing you there.

Year 12 exams begin on 1st November so all Year 12 classes are revising the year's work over the next few weeks. It is most important that students are at school every day to review their year's learning and gain feedback on areas to concentrate on to prepare for the exams. Year 11 exams will begin soon and the other year levels will follow. If there are any students who haven't completed their outcomes they need to get these done very soon. Remember the quality of the work is most important so strong effort is essential.

A reminder that all students should be in full summer uniform in Terms 1 and 4.

Throughout the year we have surveyed parents about the quality of the parent information and participation evenings held at the end of each meeting. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Thank you so much for taking the time to fill out the surveys. Some parents made suggestions for improvement. We are taking those on board and will implement them in subsequent meetings.

Enjoy the term.

Genevieve Simson
College Principal

VUSC News

Victorian Sister Schools Visit to Jiangsu, China

Jiangsu Education Services for International Exchange (JESIE) provided funding support for Victorian schools to visit their sister schools in Jiangsu Province. On 19th September till 3rd October, VUSC embarked on a cultural visit to China and our sister school in Jiangsu. Four staff and 11 students from the junior and senior campuses took part in educational and cultural excursions visiting Beijing, Changzhou, Nanjing, Jiangsu and Shanghai. The staff and students spent four days at our sister school and participated in their education program. The students were also involved in the Homestay Immersion Program where they were warmly welcomed by their host families and lived with them for the four day duration. Overall, the trip to China and our sister school was an invaluable experience for staff and students. Sharing ideas, knowledge and developing an understanding between the two cultures was instrumental in building relations between our sister school and VUSC.





As part of our Sun Protection Policy,

SUNSCREEN

is available for student use at the General Office throughout the year.

Homework Club

Homework Club runs in the Resource Centre at the Junior Campus from 3.03pm until 3.45pm on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. This is an excellent opportunity for students to revise their work for the day. AVID research shows that if students do not continually revise they lose most of the learnt material within a few weeks. One on one help is available if students require assistance with a particular task. Additionally the library is open Monday-Friday mornings from 8.30am.



Sports Corner

Athletics

VUSC had a fantastic end to term 3 which saw 17 of our athletes progress to the Western Metro Division Track and Field Championships. From those 17 students we saw a lot of 2nds and 3rds for students in both track and field events. We also had two students progress to the state finals taking place on 23rd October at Albert Park.



All students represented the college with respect and excellence so we congratulate all competitors. Well done!



Storm Cup Champions

The end of our Senior Rugby League season saw our team compete for the coveted Melbourne Storm Cup against Mount Ridley Secondary College. The boys played exceptionally all day and the leadership from our departing Year 12's was phenomenal with the absence of our head coach. With some great on field coaching from Uala Salia and Trent Toelau **VUSC was able to secure its 4th Melbourne Storm Cup!** Massive congratulations to all involved!!



VET Sport and Recreation – Primary School Coaching Visits

Last term both our Sport and Recreation Rugby classes (Year 11 and Year 12) had the opportunity to go out to schools in our area and deliver an 8 week Rugby League program (Derrimut Primary) and Touch program (Deer Park North Primary) to Year 5 & 6 students. Both programs were very well received by the students at each school and a lot of improvement was shown by all the participants. Many lessons were learnt by the VUSC students on how to engage and deliver a sport program in a logical, progressive and enjoyable manner. Overall, the VUSC students did an outstanding job delivering a vibrant and highly energetic program that was well received by all the students. They received many accolades from the teachers on their professional manner and enthusiasm in which they went about the program.



Australian U/18 Rugby League

During the holidays our Rugby League Coach, Mr Adam was privileged to travel to New Zealand to coach the Australian U/18 Schoolboys Team in a 2 match test series v New Zealand U/18 team. Playing at Rotorua and Auckland the Aussie team managed to win both Test matches 26-18 & 40-8. This was a fantastic achievement by the team and we would like to congratulate Mr Adam on the prestigious honour of being selected as the Australian coach.



Sport-Coordiators and Sports Academy Staff

If students and parent would like further information about the College Interscholastic Sport Program, please contact the below staff members:

Senior Campus Sport Coordinator – Mr Tony Adam

Junior Campus Sport Coordinator – Mr Lee Maieron

Rugby Coordinator – Mr Tony Adam

Netball Coordinator – Ms Abbey White

Soccer Coordinator – Miss Carlè Rooks

Athlete Development Program – Ms Rebecca Hogarth and Mr Tony Adam

Sports Academy Strength and Conditioning Coach – Mr Lee Maieron

Research shows the importance of parents reading with children – even after children can read

By Margaret Kristin Merga, Murdoch University.

Many of us will be able to recall the enjoyment of shared reading: being read to and sharing reading with our parents. However, [my research](#) has found that of the 997 Year 4 and Year 6 respondents at 24 schools who took part in the 2016 Western Australian Study in Children's Book Reading, nearly three-fifths reported that they were not being read to at home.



A sample of these children also participated in interviews, where I asked them how they felt about shared reading. While a few children did not mind no longer being read to, others were disappointed when it stopped. For example, when I asked Jason about his experience of being read to by his parents, he explained:

... they kind of stopped when I knew how to read. I knew how to read, but I just still liked my mum reading it to me.

His experience is common, with other recent research suggesting that more than one-third of Australian respondents [aged six to 11](#) whose parents had stopped reading to them wanted it to continue.

But why is it so important for us to keep reading with our children for as long as possible?

Research has typically found that shared reading experiences are highly beneficial for young people. Benefits of shared reading include facilitating enriched language exposure, fostering the development of [listening skills](#), [spelling](#), [reading comprehension](#) and [vocabulary](#), and establishing [essential foundational literacy skills](#). They are also valued as a shared social opportunity between parents and their children to foster [positive attitudes](#) toward reading.

When we read aloud to children it is also beneficial for their [cognitive development](#), with parent-child reading activating brain areas related to [narrative comprehension and mental imagery](#). While most of the research in this area focuses on young children, this does not mean that these benefits somehow disappear as children age.

As young people's attitudes towards reading reflect their experiences of reading at home and at school in [childhood](#) and [beyond](#), providing an enjoyable shared reading experience at home can help to turn our children into life-long readers.

However, not all shared reading experiences are enjoyable. Some children described having poor quality experiences of being read to, and children did not typically enjoy reading to distracted or overly critical parents. In some cases, parents attempted to outsource this responsibility to older siblings, with mixed results.

While many children really enjoyed the social aspects of reading and being read to as valuable time with their parents, they also felt that they learned from these experiences. For example, listening was felt to provide an opportunity to extend vocabulary, and improve pronunciation. Gina recalled the advantage she lost when her parents stopped reading to her, as:

... when they did read to me when I was younger, I learnt the words; I would like to learn more words in the bigger books and know what they are so I could talk more about them.

Similarly, Craig explained how being read to enabled his academic advantage in literacy, as “they were teaching me how to say more words”, and “that’s why I’m ahead of everyone in spelling and reading and English”. When this stopped “just because my mum thought I was smart enough to read on my own and started to read chapter books”, Craig was disappointed.

In addition, children were sometimes terrified of reading aloud in the classroom, and this fear could potentially be alleviated through greater opportunities to practice at home.

Hayden’s anxiety around reading aloud at school related to his lack of confidence, and his tendency to compare his skills with those of his peers. He described himself as “always standing up there shivering, my hands are shivering, I just don’t want to read, so I just start reading. And I sound pretty weird”. No-one read with him at home, so he had limited opportunity to build his confidence and skills.

This research suggests that we should not stop reading with our children just because they have learned to read independently.

We should continue reading with our children until they no longer wish to share reading with us, ensuring that these experiences are enjoyable, as they can influence children’s future attitudes toward reading, as well as building their confidence and competence as readers. It is worth the effort to find time to share this experience with our children in the early years and beyond.

When is a Friendship Toxic?

By Claire Orange

Friendships can be complicated. The childhood fantasy of a BFF who is always nice, kind, empathetic, available... is generally shattered relatively early when they come to the realisation that friendships are complex relationships that ebb and flow, weaken and strengthen and have other relationships attached to them.

We all want and need friends. One, two, a huge group – friends are a part of all our lives and serve an important role in wellbeing. However, friendships can sometimes become toxic, hurtful and vengeful – and for the child who has experienced being at the end of a wildly yo-yoing friendship – there are some stories to tell.

So, when is a friendship toxic?

All friendships have some sort of hierarchy and those at the top can wield their power kindly – or not. These power differences can lead to uncharacteristic behaviour as a usually kind child tries to claw their way up the hierarchy. Ever witnessed this in your own child?



The powerful child at the top can deliver a lot of pain. If your child has come home tearful and hurt because a friend has been particularly nasty, you can bet your bottom dollar that it's all about position in the hierarchy. They've been:

- Demoted – someone has taken their place
- Demonised – that's unpleasant
- Demoralised – someone's told a secret or betrayed a confidence as they've attempted to climb the hierarchy
- Ditched – the on-again-off-again nastiness

The signs and symptoms

"I'm just kidding", the eye rolling or, "I just want to hang out with someone else today!" Has your child heard these - and felt hurt and embarrassed? Called 'relational aggression' this within-friendship toxicity is bullying by harming someone's relationships or social status. Social manipulating, on-again-off-again friendships, malicious rumours and gossip, ignoring, excluding, alliance building, intimidation, manipulative affection – this is what we're talking about.

The impact

This form of bullying is difficult to spot and often labelled by adults as 'friendship dramas' brushed aside with a casual, "It will pass; just a kid/girl/teen drama!"

Typically, the impacted child won't report it – rejection is embarrassing, and complaining about it risks the friendship. Instead, the child tries harder and harder to please as the way back to acceptance and inclusion. (Is this making your heart go clunk?) And so begins a cycle where the bullied child works harder to please, and the power of the 'bullyer' in the hierarchy grows.

Solutions- for parents and children

It is important for children to be taught that healthy relationships require boundaries. Boundaries with friends are often much harder to patrol and enforce. Here are some suggestions that help a child at the pointy end of relational aggression:

- Encourage inclusion in both school and community social networks to avoid dependence on one.
- Encourage your child's involvement in positive, affirming relationships.
- Teach your child to be assertive – that are helpful in managing close relationships (these are different skills to managing other bullying behaviours). These are especially important for our girls who often find these skills difficult for fear of hurting someone's feelings or appearing aggressive. At BEST Programs 4 Kids we call this 'Straight Talk' – and you can read more about it in our Kids' & Parents' Guides to Friends, Fitting in & all that stuff.
- Don't dismiss your child's complaints, but listen...really hard – when your child's actions or comments show concern about friendship incidents.
- Identify practical, effective solutions and practise them – repeatedly – both at home /in class until they are 'in the muscle'.
- Research books and movies about friendship relationships – and share them.

What does this all mean?

While friendships bring much love and joy, they are not without their complexities. A toxic relationship has impact across all areas of life – and it's no different for children. So, reach out and find help if these events are part of your child's life, and teach the skills that will help them early.

