

In This Issue

- Message from the Principal
- Message from the Wellbeing Team
- Keep Australia Beautiful Awards
- Local Job Opportunities
- Support during home-based isolation
- Mental Health - Additional support during COVID-19
- R U OK DAY

2020 Term Dates

Term 1: 28 Jan to 27 Mar

Term 2: 14 Apr to 26 Jun

Term 3: 13 Jul to 18 Sep

Term 4: 5 Oct to 18 Dec

Campus Contacts

Rosebud 5986 4623

Mornington 5977 2976

Hastings 5979 1398

Absentee Reporting

Rosebud 0439 554 119

Mornington 0439 014 666

Hastings 0437 125 858

Links

Advance College Web Site

VCAL FAQ's

Youth Central

Message from the Principal

What a year it's been so far - the amount of times the word unprecedented has been used this year is unprecedented!! The challenges and changes that Covid-19 continues to present has meant that our College has had to be very flexible, innovative and prepared for a wide range of scenarios. Both students and staff have been affected in a variety of ways in terms of delivery modes, learning and wellbeing issues, curriculum modifications and developing capacity and abilities to do things very differently than ever before.

I have to say all staff and students have responded to these difficult time incredibly well. Staff have ensured students are engaged either by on line learning or, in some cases, by dropping work off at their homes.

This edition of our Newsletter focusses very much on student and parent wellbeing. There are some great web site links to access advice and support if needed.

Although the pandemic has occupied much of our lives it is still so important for everyone to ensure health issues, apart from the virus, are being addressed. This includes ensuring all students receive the meningococcal vaccine in a timely manner. A letter was sent to all parents, with information from the Mornington Peninsula Shire, on how to access vaccinations. If parents have any questions regarding this, please contact the relevant College campus mobile.

With two weeks only of Term 3 remaining and, the usually, shorter Term 4, the end of the year is just about in sight. The staff continue to focus on preparing those students who are not returning in 2021 for employment post-school. Learning plans are complemented with vocational guidance and pathway support to ensure students leaving the College are well-equipped to secure a job or transition into further vocational training.

At the time of writing we are still in Stage 4 restrictions but I remain hopeful that we will be able to return to face to face learning at all campuses starting in Term 4 (October 5) – just over 4 weeks away. We can assume the wearing of face coverings and temperature checking will continue as well as physical distancing and increased hygiene and cleaning practices.

On behalf of our College Board and staff, I convey my strong appreciation to students, parents and carers for their on-going support.

Steve Wright - Principal – (email: steve.w@advance.vic.edu.au)

Message from the Wellbeing Team

"We hope you are all remaining positive and finding ways to stay connected during the current lockdown. Through this newsletter, the wellbeing team at Advance will be bringing you regular well-being updates and links to useful resources and websites.

Here are a few links that you might find helpful in guiding you and your family through the challenges of the current situation"

<https://emergingminds.com.au/resources/supporting-children-during-the-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak/>

https://parents.au.reachout.com/skills-to-build/connecting-and-communicating/supportive-parenting-and-teenagers?gclid=EAIaIQobChMIgqusjtjL6wIVSraWCh1rrQWhEAAAYAiAAEgJKE_D_BwE

<https://www.smilingmind.com.au/thrive-inside>

Keep Australia Beautiful Awards

Last year, the students from our Hastings campus participated in a student leadership program collaborating with Family Life. During which students identified numerous social and environmental issues that were affecting the Hastings community, and as a result became passionate about tackling littering and hard rubbish dumping, given the state of their local reserve and playgrounds.

Students surveyed dozens of community members and collaborated with the Mornington Peninsula Shire litter prevention team to improve visibility and signage. This was to increase usage of park bins, as well as establishing sustainable practices advocating hard rubbish tickets particularly for renters and people in government housing, adding additional bins in the park, and holding an Upcycle Market to encourage community members to sell their second-hand merchandise in order to reduce wastage, become an environmentally friendly and a greener community. As a result, the students were nominated for a Keep Australia Beautiful Tidy Towns award.

Students this year have commenced planning for another Upcycle Market, which we hope to run later this year.



Local Job Opportunities

THE GRAND HOTEL MORNINGTON

The Grand Hotel Mornington is looking for casual bar and wait staff. Must have strong customer service skills. The successful employee must have the flexibility to work varied hours including nights and weekends. Please send your resume to nicky@grand.net.au

Studio Seven Design

We are looking for a motivated and enthusiastic first year plumbing apprentice.

If you are interested in joining our dynamic plumbing/building and construction team based in Mornington. Please contact Brendon on 0407 552 260 or email brendon@studiosevendesign.com.au

Supporting your children and adolescents during home-based isolation

SAFETY

This is the main priority. Your children need to be provided for and reassured.



- Is the home secure? Does your child have a space to call their own?
- Make sure your children are aware of any safety limits at home and remind them of these as situations arise and change.
- Do you have emergency information at hand and if appropriate are your children aware of what to do if they have a serious concern or an emergency?
- It is common for adolescents in this developmental stage to withdraw from their parents. Respectfully discuss with them the importance of their safety and health and any necessary changes that may need to be implemented. Try and keep things as normal as possible and allow for independence and freedom of choice when appropriate.
- Are the vital needs of your family being met? Shelter, food, water, medical needs, mental and physical health, exercise, connection and creativity?
- Monitor your child's wellbeing and mental health. Take action if concerned. Encourage them to talk with you but also make them aware of online and phone-based support lines if they need to seek support independently.
- Reassure your children that these adjustments are different, but okay. Be truthful, but clear that as their parent/caregiver it is your job to take care of things and you are up for the job!
- Be aware of your own reactions and responses as a caregiver.
- If you are feeling overwhelmed, take some time-out. Reach out to your partner, friends, family and/or seek support from professionals.

SOOTHE

Look at you home environment with a different lens: Is it a calming place to be?

- Is the house clean and mostly organised or is there clutter and mess everywhere?
- Encourage your children to reorganise their spaces, set up a space for quiet reflection / reading /napping. A space for schoolwork. A space for creative play. A space for togetherness as a family.
- Does it feel like a home? Is there adjustable lighting, a suitable temperature, soft furnishings, plants. Does it have life? Is it overly sterile or does it feel cosy, a place you would like to be? A place you can feel secure and relaxed in?
- Don't discount the importance of family pets, encourage your children to care for them and connect with them more than they may have been doing previously.
- Create a ritual at night of herbal tea, warm milk. Instigate a story or a chat before bed. Develop 'good-night' connection, especially with your adolescents.
- Good quality sleep needs to be prioritised. Encourage ALL technology to be stored and charged in a communal area at a set time each evening. Times may differ depending on the age and needs of the family.

- Be conscious of how you are accessing your information and the impact this may have on your child. Is the TV news on constantly? Try and be mindful of how and when you need to be updated, but allow everyone, especially children to switch- off from outside news sources.
- Use social stories to help younger children understand what is occurring and why.

SPACE

Discuss as a family the importance of having space and how this will be encouraged and respected when required.

- Work on finding a balance between connecting and allowing for your children to have their own autonomy and space when needed.
- Be respectful of each other's space. Knock before entering bedrooms, seek permission to use each other's personal things.
- Have a family meeting once a week to discuss any concerns, and changes that your family may need to address together.

SCHEDULING

When in isolation a weekly schedule is vital to assist in the reduction of anxiety and stress. Collaboratively work with your children to develop their Monday to Friday routine. Keep it as regular as possible.

- Use their school weekly timetable as a guide and get creative together in how classes or activities can be replicated in the home environment.
- Set up opportunities online with your child's friends, fellow students. This could be a daily quiz, reading to each other a creative writing response or an art class.
- Use the web as a source of learning tools, how to videos such as an indoor exercise class or how to learn a new skill or talent.
- Allow for weekend to be more relaxed and an opportunity to be together as a family, connect in with friends and reduced stress.
- Brainstorm as a family creative ways of how to maintain connection with others when in isolation.

SOCIAL

Allow your children to connect in with their friends via social media platforms, especially visual ones.

- Encourage a video chat, watching your favourite show while Face Timing with a friend.
- Family movie and game nights. Allow family members to take turns in running the night. Choosing the game, preparing a snack and being the 'host'.
- Use this as an opportunity for your children to educate you on how they use social media platforms. You might want to set up a family Instagram account and post a daily photo, make a silly family Tik Tok.
- Be more vigilant around online bullying. Make sure you children are safe online and know what to do if something occurs. Discuss and remind the importance of responsible use of technology.
- Aim for 'screen free' time each day for all family members.

STRENGTHS

As a family talk about your individual strengths.

- What is each member of the family good at? How their strengths might be used to support one another, contribute to the family from a practical and psychological perspective. Who is the encourager of the family? Who is the 'truth teller'? Who likes to brush the cat? Who likes to create new recipes?

SHARE

Helping others and encouraging random acts of kindness, can allow your child to focus beyond their own current circumstances and develop empathy. It lowers anxiety and stress and increases feelings of hope, connection and well-being.

- Draw and/or write letters of introduction, poems, funny jokes, a weekly 'Joe's family update' and pop them in neighbours letterboxes or send to friends and family.
- Plant herbs in small pots and gift to people.
- Cook or make something for a neighbour who may be elderly or lonely and drop it at their door.
- Write 'thank-you' cards for healthcare workers, teachers, shopkeepers, truck-drivers.

"Remember to be gentle and patient with yourself as a caregiver of young people. Don't expect yourself to be the perfect person as you navigate this. Embrace the challenge but also accept that some moments will be easier and more successful than others. You've got this!"

Additional COVID-19 Mental Health Support

For some, the current restrictions due to COVID-19, can lead to negative impacts on our mental health including increased uncertainty and anxiety, reduced motivation and social isolation.

The Federal Government has announced there will be 10 additional Medicare subsidised psychology sessions available between August 7 and 31 March 2021, to anyone in areas impacted by the second wave of COVID-19. <https://www.health.gov.au/news/additional-covid-19-mental-health-support-for-people-subjected-to-further-restrictions>

If you, or your child, would benefit from this support, please speak to your GP about obtaining a Mental Health Care Plan. Many psychologists are offering consultations via Telehealth under the current restrictions.

Young people (age 12-25) can access the usual services of Headspace on 1800 650 890, or Kids Helpline (ages 5-25) on 1800 55 1800.

Please feel free to contact the school to speak to me further if you would like.

Julia, Clinical Psychologist



R U OK?Day is Thursday 10 September 2020. It's our national day of action when we remind Australians that every day is the day to ask, "Are you OK?" if someone in your world is struggling with life's ups and downs.

How to be a good friend and ask are you okay?

We're never too young to look out for one another and lend support. In this video, Alec shows you how to be a good friend and ask "Are you OK."

For teachers, parents and carers:

While children can't be expected to fix someone's problems, they can be encouraged to listen to what their friend is saying, show they care and tell a teacher, school counsellor or trusted adult if they are worried about their friend. This video shows them how to do that.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KEKhTSagJ3I&feature=youtu.be>



1. Ask



2. Listen



3. Encourage action



4. Check in

The Newsletter is one of the methods of communication with our school community – but don't forget to check out our school website - www.advancecollege.vic.edu.au

and Facebook page –

<https://www.facebook.com/AdvanceVCAL/>

Advance College can facilitate accredited training in short courses such as Food Handling. It also runs beginner computer classes and career guidance programs. Please check www.advance.vic.edu.au or call your local campus for further details.