

# Newsletter

## Avoca Beach Public School

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Monday 27<sup>th</sup> April, 2020

*Avoca Beach Public School is committed to providing a safe and caring environment where individuals are respectful, responsible and strive for their personal best.  
Our innovative, collaborative and inclusive culture empowers and supports every learner.*

Dear Parents,

It's great to be back. Teachers have continued to work throughout the holidays to keep up with the ever-changing directions for education, as the COVID-19 situation evolves. The first two weeks of school will remain the same as how we finished last term, families are encouraged to keep their children at home unless they are essential workers. There will be one unit of work provided for those students at home and at school.

From the beginning of Week 3, the department has announced a phased return to school plan. Students will start this by attending one day per week and this will gradually increase, according to advice from the Australian Health Protection Principal Committee (AHPPC). We understand that this one day a week format will have its challenges, but we will endeavour to address as many needs of the community as we can, in creating our school plan. As plans become clearer, we will communicate these through our school app and email system.

### Staffing News

This term we welcome two new staff members to our school. Mr Brett MacDonald was successful in gaining a permanent position at ABPS through the merit selection process. Mr MacDonald comes with a wealth of experience and expertise. He will take over class 5/6B. We also welcome Miss Gabrielle Remy to our team. Miss Remy was appointed as a targeted graduate from the University of Newcastle and will take over class 5/6N.

### Term Calendar

I have included the Term 2 calendar in this newsletter. However, as you can see there are no major events happening at school this term.

### Wellbeing

The wellbeing of everyone in our community is extremely important to us at Avoca Beach PS, especially in these times. As such, we would like to have an additional focus on the theme of wellbeing throughout this term. We will include fact sheets into the newsletter and focus on supporting the children and families, as they begin to return to school. This week we have included information on **mindfulness**.

Finally, this week I wish all our Mums a very happy Mother's Day for next Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May.

Ben Thomas  
Principal

### Quote of the Week

*"To the world you are a mother, but to your family you are the world".*



## MINDFULNESS

*This article, provided by Smiling Mind, looks at how mindfulness can help during the coronavirus outbreak.*

We are living through an unprecedented and uncertain time, requiring each of us to navigate our way, as best we can, through a rapidly evolving global health crisis. With things changing so quickly, such uncertainty and unpredictability can take a toll on our mental and physical health. Managing our emotions and supporting each other can be challenging at the best of times. This is why, more than ever, we all need to be doing our best to regularly pause, take a breath and be proactive in looking after ourselves and others.

Mindfulness provides us with a means of cultivating greater and more objective awareness of our own emotional landscape, the emotions of others, and of external circumstance. In doing so, it gives us more choice in how we respond to challenges we may face and the ability to more consciously choose where we place our attention.

### **Fear, anxiety & denial**

Acknowledging that feeling fearful and anxious at a time such as this is not only normal but appropriate. Given the nature of the threat we are facing, fear and anxiety are adaptive responses as they alert us to the fact that we need to be taking appropriate action to keep ourselves and others as safe and healthy as possible.

It's also important to recognise that fear and anxiety can quickly escalate and reach a tipping point beyond which they are no longer helpful and can affect us in negative ways. When the acute stress response, otherwise known as the 'fight or flight' response, kicks in we're not as able to think clearly or make good decisions; we become more reactive and less responsive; and our thinking can quickly spiral, becoming increasingly negative and difficult to unhook from.

### **Warning signs**

Mindfulness helps us get better at recognising and understanding our own personal signals that tell us we're close to our tipping point. We can think of mindfulness as being like our own personal 'fear and anxiety thermometer' helping us get to know our own warning signs and recognise them as they're kicking in.

Examples include:

- irritability
- losing patience
- a sense of urgency
- difficulty sleeping
- inability to focus
- catastrophic thinking
- ruminating
- eating or drinking more than usual.



In addition to knowing and recognising our warning signals, mindfulness gives us the opportunity to respond by taking steps to settle and soothe our nervous system, which in turn enables us to think more clearly, make better decisions and respond as opposed to react.

### **Beware denial**

It can also be tempting to turn away from and deny the seriousness of what's happening. Denial may be particularly appealing given the significant impact that this outbreak will have on so many people financially, emotionally or physically. While temporary distractions can be useful for giving our minds a break, on the whole denial is not a helpful approach. It can leave us vulnerable and exhausted as it may lead to not taking appropriate precautions and it's difficult to sustain in the face of reality.

Mindfulness can help us see things more clearly, which in turn helps us strike a balance between staying informed and making sensible choices without becoming overwhelmed.

**Healthy brain breaks**

Giving your brain a break when you're nearing your tipping point can be a helpful way of deactivating the acute stress ('fight or flight') response. Even short moments of reprieve are beneficial as they help reset enabling us to find the middle ground between overwhelm and denial. It's in this place that we're able to make better choices and are best placed to support ourselves and those around us.

We recommend trying out the following as often as you need to:

**Move**

Any kind of physical movement is a great way of releasing the build-up of excess energy that accompanies the acute stress ('fight or flight') response – take yourself for a walk or run outside; do some stretching, yoga or some other form of mindful movement; or crank some uplifting music and dance around the house for a few minutes.

**Breathe**

When you slow your breathing rate down the uncomfortable physical sensations of fear and anxiety start to subside. Try the following:

- Stop what you're doing, take three long, slow deep breaths.
- Impose a rhythm on your breathing so that your out-breath becomes longer than your in-breath.
- Try a 4-2-6 rhythm – e.g. breathe for 4 counts, hold your breath for 2 counts, and breathe out for 6 counts.

If that doesn't feel comfortable, try imposing a 3-1-4 rhythm. The main thing is that your out-breath is slightly longer than your in-breath.

**Ground**

Connect to what is happening in this moment right now more consciously engaging your senses.

Try the following:

- Splash cold water on your face
- Take a hot (or cold) shower
- Cuddle your pet
- Smell and/or diffuse a relaxing essential oil (i.e. lavender, geranium, ylang ylang)
- Take a moment to enjoy a cup of tea – really pay attention to the aroma and taste
- Do one of the following short guided grounding exercises from the 'Stress Management' program in the [Smiling Mind App](#).

**Sleep**

When we're fearful and anxious it can be hard to sleep. Given the importance of sleep for our mental and physical wellbeing, including immunity, establishing good habits around sleep is particularly important at the moment.

Consider creating a pre-sleep routine by turning off news and screens at least an hour before going to bed. If you wake during the night and find you can't sleep, rather than sit lay there and worry, try a meditation from the 'Sleep' program in the Smiling Mind App.

**Connect**

While social connection may be tricky during this time when many people are physical distancing, staying connected to others is more important than ever as we are wired to connect and seek comfort and care from others. We are fortunate to have so much technology at our fingertips enabling us to stay connected to family, friends and colleagues.

Try using video conferencing technology so that you can see each other, as we communicate best when we can see each other's body language and facial expressions. Do your best to listen and interact as mindfully as you can with others – really pay attention to the people you're interacting with.

**Contribute**

Contributing to the wellbeing of others helps shift our attention from ourselves onto what we can do for them. This helps us connect with others; gain a sense of agency, even if only in a small way; plus helping others also positively impacts our own wellbeing.

Consider how you might help others at this difficult time. For example, you could support a local business you value that is likely struggling at the moment or check up on an elderly friend or relative.

**Create healthy habits**

Mindfulness can help us create healthy habits to keep us and others as safe and healthy as possible. For example, washing your hands mindfully and taking care not to touch your face.

**Preventing the spread**

The best way to help prevent the spread of COVID-19 is by continuing effective hygiene practices:



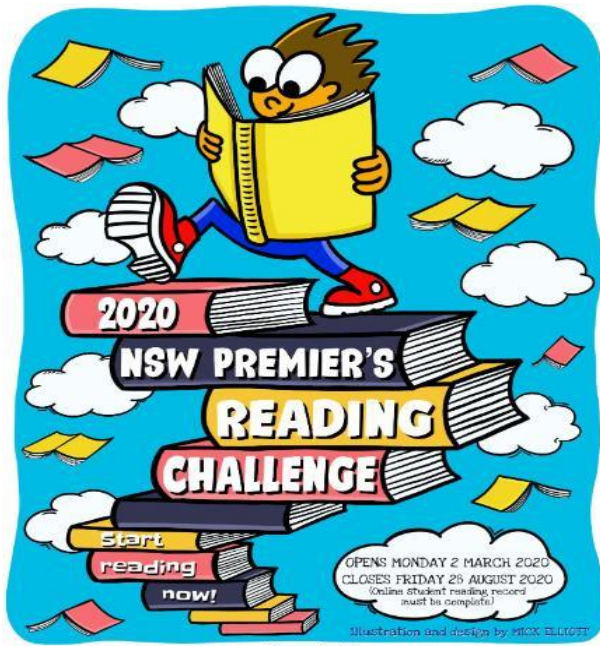
Clean your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water or an alcohol-based hand sanitiser

Sneeze or cough into your elbow or a tissue

Stay home if you are sick.

# 2020 Premier's Reading Challenge

Well done to the following students who are reading lots of books at home and have started logging on them on their Premier's Reading Challenge Student Reading Record.



www.premiersreadingchallenge.nsw.edu.au



**Kindi** – Bonnie Hurrell, Thomas Lucas, Jasmine White

**Year 1** – Jake Banfield, Sonny Carmichael, Marie Hechter, Zane Napton, Sebastian Preradovic-Buteux, Lydia Rodrigues, Harrison Sheridan

**Year 2** – Abigail Armytage, William Ceccato, Jonah Geary, Cody Gee, Owen Gillett, Zai Gunewardene, Willow Hayes, Macy Lester, Alandra McVeigh, Kai Napton, Cooper O'Brien, Chrystella Penn, Lily Rangott, Isabelle Slinkard, Anu Tandel, Stella Webster, Lily Woods

**Year 3** - Finn Casey, Isla Davies, Noah Day, Jarvis Irving, Bruce Lewis, Cameron Lewis, Juon Paterson, Ruby Rangott, Jasmine Shaw, Fletcher Thomson, Sienna White, Myles Whiting

**Year 4** – Ace Harvey, Kiki Huggett, Jett Johnson, Cohen Jones, Ariana McVeigh, Oscar Newman, Tane Rangi, Beau Ryan, Wren Sbrocchi, Elliana Shiers, Kahu Slater, Phoebe Waters, Bondi Werner

**Year 5** – Jasper Hunter, Jesse Langcake, Milla McEwan, Will Tebb, Bae Wolters

**Year 6** – James Bowmaker, Amy Goodwin, Zoe, Kneller, Imogen Nott

Log in to participate: <https://online.det.nsw.edu.au/prc/studentExperience.html#/>

Start here!

Home Rules Log in

Quickly learn about the new PRC experience!



Discover books to read

Pick a challenge level	K - Year 2	Year 3 - Year 4	Year 5 - Year 6	Year 7 - Year 9	
Choose Genre(s)	Action/Adventure	Comedy	Family/Relationships	Fantasy	Show More

Discover

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\*Many Centrelink payments are eligible, please contact your local Coordinator for more information.

Saver Plus is an initiative of the Brotherhood of St Laurence and ANZ, delivered in partnership with Berry Street, The Benevolent Society and The Smith Family and other local community agencies. The program is funded by ANZ and the Australian Government Department of Social Services. Go to [www.dss.gov.au](http://www.dss.gov.au) for more information.