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**REMANDER**

Tomorrow, Friday 26th February is a **Pupil Free Day for the School**. OSHC will be closed.

Wednesday 9th March is a **Pupil Free Day for the Preschool only**.

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**FROM THE PRINCIPAL**

**AGM**

A reminder that the school’s AGM will be held on Wednesday March 2nd at 7:00 pm in the Alluvial Hall. It would be great to see as many of you as possible. We have up to 7 one and two year positions to fill on Governing Council. If you are interested please nominate by next Monday, 29th February.

**Fire wood**

Please remember that if you are interested in some fire wood, please help yourselves to any of the piles of wood around the school. Please only take one pile at this stage. Soon we will open up all the piles to whoever wants them.

**External School Review**

At the end of this term, in Week 11, this school will be participating in an External Review. The External School Review process builds on site review practice providing an external perspective to improving student achievement. The process uses a framework which focusses on Student Learning, Effective Teaching, Effective Leadership, School Community Partnerships and Improvement Agenda. A review officer and a review principal will come to the school on the 12th and 13th of April to undertake the review. Part of the process will involve student, parent and staff discussions. If you are interested in being part of these discussions please contact me to register your interest.

**Rubbish**

Thankyou again to those of you (a great many I might add) who have embraced our “Don’t bring rubbish to school or take it home” concept. Rubbish around the school has been greatly diminished and we are seeing many children bring their food in recyclable containers. To reduce rubbish in the school and the environment, we encourage students to bring “Nude Food” (food without wrappers) for recess and lunch. We have “Chookie Food” and compost containers around the school but no rubbish bins (outside). We hope that you will continue to support our work in sustainability.

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View the newsletter on our website at [www.echungaps.sa.edu.au](http://www.echungaps.sa.edu.au)
Preteens and Teens
Here is another article from Kirrilie Smout (psychologist). Feel free to explore her website for a range of helpful articles on http://developingminds.net.au/

I was talking to Hallie yesterday in the clinic about her 11 and 14 year olds and she said: “Once upon a time, I had two happy, cheery and positive children. Now, they don’t stop complaining, being miserable and unhappy about something in their day…it’s depressing me! Where are my happy kids gone?”

Hallie's kids are pretty normal.

Here’s what to know about miserable preteens and teens:

1. It's normal for this age group to experience more negative emotions than they did when they were younger
Being miserable, frustrated, insecure and sad actually has a lot to do with thinking skills. When kids are younger they live in the moment. They are not particularly skilled at being able to predict the future, think about what others think of them and evaluate themselves or life in a negative way. However, once they get to the age of about 9 or 10, their abilities to do these things improve (which is what we want, in many ways) which means they are more likely to experience more negative moods, more often. Hello, moody preteen.

2. Feeling bad is feeling bad – whatever the trigger.
When adults tell us about being upset about losing their job, feeling rejected by friends and stressed by workload - we feel sympathetic. These things seem to be "reasonable" causes of distress. But when kids tell us about being upset about losing a netball game, a friend telling them they can't play or losing an online game – often our sympathy is much reduced, because the causes seem trivial.

This is normal. Personally I find it really hard to empathise with my child when he misses out on getting the Pokemon card he wants, especially when I've just asked him to pack away the other 500 thousand he appears to have and enjoys strewing from one end of house to other. As he tearily tells me about how powerful Jhuisola is and how much he wants him, every fibre of my being is tempted to shout “REALLY?????” and to invoke the dreaded “children in third world have no toys argument”.

But I resist because I know that feeling bad is feeling bad. Whether it is caused by what appears to us to be a “reasonable” trigger or not – the same neurological and emotional processes occur. Young people are experiencing just as much distress as an adult - regardless of the triviality of the trigger.

3. The “Buck up/Snap out of it” approach is rarely helpful – and sometimes is harmful
In the busy-ness of life, it feels like we don’t have time for our kids to be miserable about getting a black drink bottle instead of a red one. So we give them messages like – “cheer up”, “get over it” to save time and get things back on track. We also give these messages because we don't want our kids to be "soft" and we are worried we will make kids less resilient by telling them to get over it. Also - there is a "social pressure" in many parent circles which is disapproving of "soft" parents and this makes parents uncomfortable with anything other than "buck up”.

Unfortunately, in my experience - telling kids to "get over it" rarely works.
And in some cases it makes things worse. If we repeatedly minimise, ignore and trivialise kids' suffering, they are in danger of getting these messages from us:
"I don't have time for you”.
"It's not okay to be upset”
"You are silly/wrong for feeling like this"
Not surprisingly, these messages are not helpful. Research is starting to pile up to tell us that children and teens who get these messages in their younger years have a greater number of mental and emotional health issues as adults.

Instead, when children or teens express distress - we should empathise with them. This does not mean an over the top, dramatic and anxious reaction by parents which blows pain up. It is simply calm sentences such as:

"Hey I’m sorry you went through that"
"That sounds really annoying"
"Oh no, what a pain"
"Sorry that you feel upset about that"
"I’d be really disappointed about that if that was me too"

4. **On the other hand – we don’t need to sit in misery with them for hours**

The flip side of this coin is also important. Some parents I’ve worked with will sit and discuss a troubling issue with the young person for hours and hours. They will empathise, and analyse and listen without any boundaries for themselves. This is exhausting and unhelpful for both parent and child alike. It’s okay to put some limits around how much a child talks to us about their worry, frustration, disappointment and sadness.

5. **Part of our job as parents is to help kids and teens find ways to help them improve their mood**

Kids and teens need coaching in how to manage these negative moods which are descending upon them. They can’t manage them on their own – and they need ideas, strategies, reminders and gentle encouragement to put them in place. Talk with young people about what helps them feel better. Get them to write a list of coping strategies. Talk about what helps you when you are in a “bad mood”. Get them to notice the links between their mood and sleep, exercise and diet.

6. **It’s okay to ask for the positives**

Often preteens and teens are quite optimistic and positive during the day and with others – but being around a parent might automatically prompt them to remember and think about the stuff they are unhappy about. In this case, in order for a parent to look after their own well being, it is quite reasonable to ask young people to tell you about some of the positives. Let them know that for your sake, you need to hear some of the things they are happy about. Come up with a “gratitude” exercise that everyone (parents, kids, teens) engages in. Make habits so that family members tell each other about the good and the bad about the day.

7. **Be on the look out for long periods of bad mood – and think about getting outside help**

We know that at least 30% of teens will experience more serious mental and emotional health struggles through their adolescence. If a child or teen seems persistently down, worried and frustrated about many issues – it may be useful to get some outside help from a school counsellor, GP or psychologist.

Finally,

If your young person is being miserable with and around you more often than you’d like – try to take solace in the fact this means they trust you. They feel safe enough to let you hear their pain. Not all kids/teens can do this. Also take time to look after yourself. It’s hard – sad, disappointing, worrying – to be with your child when they are suffering. Be kind to yourself first – and then it’s easier to be kind to your child.
What a busy start to the Term in the Ibis Room, we have seen already some fantastic work being produced, with students taking ownership and great pride in their learning! Keep up the great work.

A Big Welcome to Makaidee, Anna and Liam W and their familes, who joined our school community this year.

We have started our first few weeks by spending time getting to know one another and our expectations and goals. The Ibis students’ set the class expectations this year, brainstorming and wording the “rules” to reflect our class and students. We each then agreed to try our best to always follow the rules, understanding that at times we may forget or make a mistake, but we will always try and learn from it. We now have a great display of interpretations of our expectations and rules on display in the classroom.

We have been exploring numbers and place value, with Kayla, in Maths. Today using a hands on approach we created a variety of number patterns, which involved Ibis students writing a random number and then finding other numbers in the class they could form a pattern with.
SCHOOL NEWS

SCHOOL BULB FUNDRAISER

Fundraising has started for 2016. We are beginning with a Garden Express fundraiser to make your garden look great for spring. Order forms will be sent home today.

Funds raised will be going towards the School and also the Year 6/7 Canberra trip later this year.

Please ask your friends, family and neighbours if they would like to help Echunga Primary School and make their gardens look great at the same time.

All orders and money are due back to the Front Office by Wednesday 9th March.

Happy fundraising.

BARKER SAPSASA IS NOW ON FACEBOOK!

Follow our new Facebook page to keep up-to-date with all things concerning district SAPSASA and more.

Visit www.facebook.com and search for ‘Barker Sapsasa’

Keep your kids smiling

Have you received a letter from Medicare about the Child Dental Benefits Schedule? The School Dental Service is a Child Dental Benefits Schedule provider.

Dental care is FREE for ALL babies, pre-schoolers and most children under 18 at the School Dental Service.

Please call now for an appointment.
Mount Barker School Dental Clinic
Phone: 8391 0858
OSHC NEWS

OSHC Awards Term 1

And the OSHC Awards go to……
3. Kym K
4. Bethany D

Pupil Free Day and Public Holidays

Due to insufficient bookings for the Pupil Free Day Echunga OSHC will be closed on Friday 26th February.

We are also closed on all public holidays too, and unlike child care we do not charge you for public holidays.

Vacation Care December 2015/January 2016 Program

We had a great time over the holidays. We really enjoyed our annual Gingerbread House day and the Christmas Extravaganza at the Mount Barker Library. We went to the movies to see The Good Dinosaur. We went to the Stirling Theatre as a joint excursion with 4 other Hills OSHC services to see a Pantomime Cinderella. We went bowling with Meadows OSHC and then visited their OSHC another day for a Disco. In house we made several stop motion (Claymation) mini movies with the iPad. We enjoyed lots of different arts and crafts, games, outside play, cooking and watched the Tour Down under ride by. It was a very busy program.

April Vacation Care Program

This will be available in Week 6. All permanently booked families are welcome to book their normal days before the program comes out.

OSHC Educators

Through Vacation Care Carly Pickett, a Year 2/3 teacher from Oakbank Area School, worked as the other qualified educator in our room. The children had so much fun with Carly and we wish her well in her new teaching position in Mount Gambier.

Until we find another suitably qualified person to work during the term and the holidays, Jodie will be working at all sessions.

OSHC Policies and Philosophy

It’s that time of year again and we are in the process of reviewing all our policies and philosophy at OSHC. If you wish to have your say on any of our policies we welcome your input and feedback. Our policy folder is located by the sign in desk in the OSHC Room.
ECHUNGA UNITING CHURCH EVENTS

Better Mums Make a Better World

20 mums enjoyed the first 2016 Echunga MOPS gathering last week. MOPS is a group for mothers of preschool children and continues 9:30-11:30am next Thursday (March 3) in Wandeen (Echunga Uniting Church). Theme: ‘Eyes to See...Creativity’ with Kay Morrison.

A Term 1 program and newsletter are available at www.echunga.unitingchurchsa.org.au/MOPS.

NET SET GO

The Echunga Netball Club will be running the Net Set Go program again this year. The sessions commence on Sunday 13th March, 10.00am to 11.00am. This program is for children aged, 5, 6 and 7.

The dates for the program are as follows:

March 13th and 20th (not 27th due to Easter); April 3rd & 10th (not 17th or 24th due to School holidays); May 1st, 8th, 15th, 22nd and 29th and June 3rd (final session).

The cost will be $55 full price, or $5.00 if your child has not yet claimed a sports voucher in 2016. This price includes the sessions, a netball, NSG shirt and end of programme, Participation Medal.

For more information please contact Carolyn Downing 0404 898 471 or email echunganetball@internode.on.net.