



Term 2 2024 Newsletter

Week 2

Dear School Representatives & Families,

Firstly, we would like to thank everyone for attending the Family Challenge Day at Blackwood. We hope everyone enjoyed the day, the activities and have more of an understanding of how your young person is going on the Newstart program.

Week 2 was a great week for building connections. On Wednesday, we picked the young people up from Footscray Station and headed out to Hanging Rock in Woodend. The group challenged themselves to tackle the short walk up to the summit, making sure to look out for each other on the way up and take breaks when needed. Once we reached the bottom, we had lunch in the picnic area and prepared for our short drive to Edgar's Mission. Upon arriving at Edgars Mission, the young people presented the staff with an impressive donation of Weet Bix. The donation is used as a treat for the animals that the organisation care for. Our guide Daniel took us around for a tour of the farm, meeting a variety of animals who all have different experiences and circumstances which led them to the care they now receive at the mission. We learnt about how the staff cater and provide a safe home for these vulnerable and injured animals. We were shown ways to read body language, as well as how to safely and respectfully approach them. Some of the highlights of the day was hearing the stories of the animals and being able to relate these back to interactions that we have with those around us. The group highlighted the importance and positive influence of showing kindness and treating others as you would want to be treated.

Thursday, we had a big day of learning at Travancore School. We started the morning spending time setting up our values & trademarks, with the group creating the following statement for this terms program based on the agreed values and trademarks; *Our group will build **trust** and show **loyalty** for one another. We all value showing **respect** to everyone. We want to give each other the **freedom** to be who they are and be accepted. We want to have **fun** while we work to achieve our goals.* After this we learnt about the Hand Model of the Brain and the impact that stressful situations can have on us and what it means to 'flip your lid'. We also did a session on Character Strengths where we completed the VIA character strengths survey, finding out our personal top 5 strengths. As a group we related to others with similar strengths and identified what it means to recognise strengths in others. In the afternoon we went for a short bike ride along the Moonee Ponds Creek to test everyone's riding skills and familiarise ourselves with the school bikes. Soon after fitting our helmets, checking tire pressures and brakes of the bikes, we headed to the riding trail. After roles were negotiated each person took turns in key roles such as leading the group and carrying the first aid equipment.

Friday was of course our Family Challenge Day at Blackwood Special Schools Outdoor Education Centre. It was wonderful having the opportunity to meet the families and carers that we hear so much about. We would like to thank you all for making the time to support your young person and participate in some fun challenges over the course of the day and for participating in our end of day debrief (a big shout out to the little ones for their contributions!). We hope that you all had a great time and were able to gain more insight into the program, the activities that we do and the purpose behind them.



We look forward to another busy week on program and thank the schools and families for their support. Your continued encouragement of your young person to attend both school and Newstart is greatly appreciated.

Have a great week 😊 Jamie, Paul & Marie.



Coming up this week:

Tuesday to Thursday: Blackwood Camp – We will meet the young people at Footscray Station at 10:30am tomorrow and we will drop the young people to Footscray Station at 2:30pm on Thursday.

A reminder of what is needed for camp:

- Young person to bring:
- 2 x Sturdy shoes for walking
- Sandals/thongs for camp
- Pillow and Pillowcase
- 1 x Warm jumper
- 1 x Pants
- 2 x shorts
- 1 x Long sleeve shirt
- 2 x T-shirt
- Underwear for each day
- Socks for each day
- Hat & Sunglasses & beanie
- 2 x Towel
- Water bottle
- Sunscreen & insect repellent
- Toiletries
- Personal medication

We will provide:

- Hiking pack
- Thermals
- Gaiters
- Fleece jumper (s)
- Rain jacket & rain pants
- Sleeping Bag & liner
- Swag or Tent & sleeping mat
- Cooking equipment & cutlery
- Headtorches

Things not to bring:

- Electronic devices. Phones will be in Yondr pouches.
- Deodorant spray cans (roll-on is okay)

