



TERM 4 NEWSLETTER



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Welcome to Term 4. We are on the home stretch to summer holidays now but, for many, the toughest school days are this term. I invite you to take the time to read about ways to help your children deal well with the stress of exams, both in this newsletter and on our facebook page. Many of us find Term 4 exhausting with exams, the lead up to changing schools from primary to secondary, formals, end of year parties and more – and that's just the kids! As Term 4 speeds up, I encourage you all to find those moments every day to really connect with your children. I know our home in Mount Gambier is a total whirlwind this term but even just a chat in the car on the way somewhere or dinner eaten together around the table can help our kids to touch base with us and know they are loved. Enjoy the special events, cherish the little moments and, most of all, be proud of your amazing young people and the things they have done and achieved this year. I wish you all a joyous Christmas and safe and happy holidays. I look forward to catching up with more parents in our wonderful Catholic school communities next year.

Kylie Ind, President



Gracious God, we turn to you in wonder and praise as we come together to celebrate Christ's birth.

Remind us in this sacred season of our collective story. May our roots extend deep into the soil of faith and spread outwards to share the good news of Christ's coming.

Invisible Children

Children's health and development

A recent report shows that in their first year of school, 22% of children in Australia (42% if Indigenous) are developmentally vulnerable in one or more areas measured in the Australian Early Development Census, with those in very remote areas twice more likely to be so than their city peers. The Centre for Community Childhood (Royal Children's Hospital, Victoria) says one way to reverse the concerning situation is to increase access to information and resources so that families and community members know how to identify and support children's developmental needs at the earliest possible time, and how to navigate diagnosis and treatment pathways.

Education should develop each child's personality and talents to the full. It should encourage children to respect their parents, their culture and other cultures.

Article 29

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

World Teachers Day

World Teachers Day acknowledges the dedication of teachers and other school staff to prepare our children to learn, live and work in an increasingly complex and technology driven society.

The Federation continued its tradition of providing a morning tea for Catholic Education SA staff on this important day and thanks Shefia Nemer-Khoury for helping to make this happen.

2017 & 2018 PIE Grants

The 2017 Parent Involvement in Education (PIE) projects are coming to an end. Most schools have now sent in their project reports and it has been fantastic to read about the success and impacts the projects have had. Here's some of the feedback:

The grant was instrumental in providing valuable learning for our parent community. Thank you for the opportunity.

I would like to thank you for your support to upgrade our outdoor learning and play spaces. The PIE grant enabled us to involve a large number of students and parents in the planning and design.

The 'parents with parents' consultation enabled families to meet each other and to share in the experience of parenting teenagers.

We have high numbers of attendees and the crèche is a

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necessary element that must continue. The sessions are always valuable, but I feel we need to continue to try and connect with the rest of our parent community who don't or who are unable to attend.

As a small school, we feel it is a real gift and vital component to be able to have the funds to pay for quality speakers around parenting.

The PIE grant provides an opportunity for parents to be informed and engaged with the teaching and learning agenda at our school, therefore strengthening the school/parent partnership. A major outcome for parents was the fact that they had the opportunity to connect with other parents that are dealing with the same big issues. We had more parents engage with the session than we could ever have imagined (and) the feedback was amazing. Thank you for giving us the means to pull our community together.

The Federation has been managing PIE grants for the state government for five plus years now. Over the past three, we have allocated funding to 67 projects.

We have asked Minister Close for a new agreement and, if successful, anticipate calling for applications in early February so that projects can be run across Terms 2 – 4.

The criteria for grants are likely to remain the same – that applications:

- ▶ are initiated with parent support (e.g. P&F, board or individuals)
- ▶ have a clear focus on parent/carer engagement and participation

- ▶ are supported by the principal
- ▶ include a well constructed budget.

We encourage everyone to put their thinking hats on now.

Another Successful Parents in Education Week

The Federation pitched two separate ideas to the Government and Opposition before the last state election, one being a state-wide parent engagement week. So it is fantastic to see Minister Close has continued to fund and actively support this event.

Parents in Education week recognises and promotes the benefits for our children when parents, carers and other 'significant' adults actively and positively engage in their home and school-based learning. 'Expert' speakers contribute to the program, offering practical information for families with different cultural and social backgrounds.

The Minister launched the week by discussing 'the 21st Century child' with Dr Kristin Alford, Niki Buchan and Jodie Benveniste.



Other speakers were Professor Lea Water who spoke on unlocking children's potential and ability to learn

through *strength-based* parenting, and Dr Justin Coulson who explained how we can support our children to be resilient.

The main message for the week was a good one: we don't have to rely on or be academic experts to parent well. But we do have to care, and it is really useful to build our skills!

The speaker sessions were screened at over 55 venues across the state and can still be viewed until 31 December.

<https://www.decd.sa.gov.au/supporting-students/parent-engagement-education/parents-education-week>

National #Parentech Campaign

The Australian Parents Council has just wrapped up its campaign on parenting in the digital age but President Shelley Hill says technology really adds to the challenges of parenting and so it's important to keep talking about the upsides and downsides:

'Negotiating rules with children of all ages can take up a lot of time and create a lot of conflict. And getting the right balance in school holidays is hard because families want to chill out and relax, or because parents have to work and this means teenagers often get to decide how they'll spend their days'.

Cyber safety teacher and parent, Pete Brown, said that high school students would probably spend 4 hours a day or 20+ hours a week online in the October school holidays. That's double what the Department of Health recommends for *all types of screen time*! What to do?

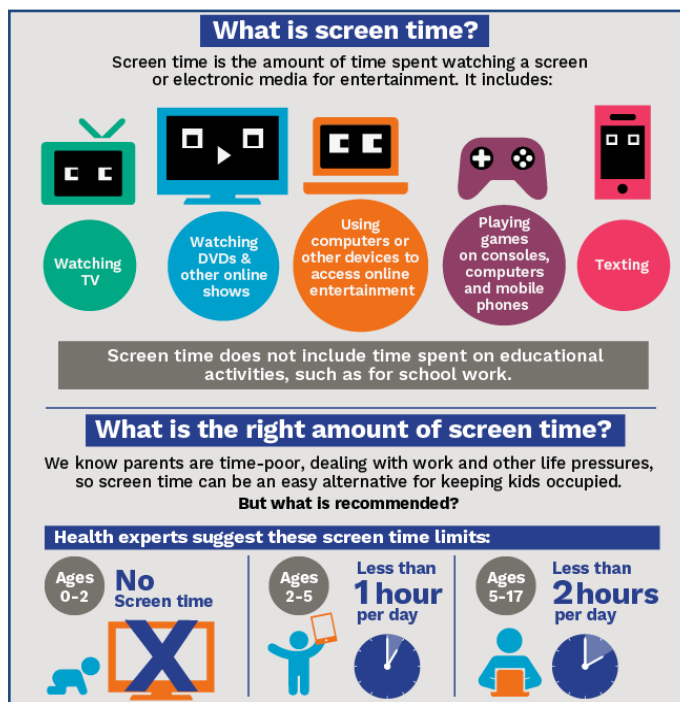
- ▶ Discuss and decide holiday screen time rules with each of your children and as a family. Review them each week.

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- ▶ Reduce your own screen time to be a role model for your children.
- ▶ Agree to stop using screens at least half an hour before going to bed to sleep. That means you too!
- ▶ Agree on 10 minute break times to mix up screen time with other time. Use a timer.
- ▶ Give them some jobs to do around the house every day.
- ▶ Have a screen-free family day. Step out of your comfort zone and do something they want to do.
- ▶ Encourage daily physical activity: basketball, gym, walk, skate, ride.
- ▶ Leave all mobiles in the car or at home when at the beach or pool.
- ▶ Get into card and board games.



Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner

Royal Children's Hospital

On average, kids spend **32 hours** a week on screens at home.

Teenagers spend **44 hours** outside of school hours.

Parents spend **almost 40 hours**.

Most parents try to limit their children's screen time but aren't sure how to do this effectively.

Federal and State Funding for Catholic School Students

Increases in school fees are always a big concern for parents. They put pressure on our family budgets and our ability to choose schools that we think will best suit our children's learning and development needs. Education costs typically rise at a higher rate than general inflation (CPI), and secondary education costs are often higher again (e.g. 4.1% in 2017).

Schools often struggle to manage costs, especially for staff salaries, and now also information technology and electricity. For years, the task has been harder in South Australia because our state government's funding for Catholic and Independent school students was lower than any other state/territory government's.

The Federation raised concerns about the new federal funding arrangements with Minister Birmingham and other federal parliamentarians. The Minister advised that federal funding for our Catholic schools is estimated to grow from \$371.0 million in 2017 to \$378.6 million in 2018, \$410.8 million in 2021 and \$481.3 million in 2017 and said 'this represents an average per student increase of 4% each year over the next four years, above current estimates of wages or inflation growth'.

Year	General CPI	Education CPI
2007	2.1%	4.3%
2009	1.5%	5.1%
2011	3.6%	5.9%
2013	2.4%	5.7%
2015	1.5%	5.4%
2016	1.0%	3.3%
2017	1.9%	3.3%

CPI: Consumer Price Index (CPI).

While this might sound reasonable there are some complex issues with federal funding that still need to be resolved.

The really good news is that this week the SA government announced it will provide new funding of nearly \$110 million to our non-government school sector (an increase of about 20%) and nearly \$11 million for school infrastructure upgrades. In the first year of this new agreement (2018), Catholic schools will receive an extra \$14.3 million in recurrent funding (for ongoing operational expenses like salaries) and \$5.5 million in capital funding. This means that state government recurrent funding for Catholic schools will be \$108.9 million compared to \$94.6 million in 2017.

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Surviving Exam Stress

Exams can be a very stressful period for many students and their families. Here are some things that parents can do to help:

- ▶ Have one-on-one and whole-family discussions about how to make things work best for the student doing the exams.
- ▶ Encourage the development of a structured and visible study plan with 45 – 60 minute subject sessions and regular breaks 'booked in'. Also a commitment to at least 30 minutes of completely screen free time before turning out the lights.
- ▶ Commit to maintain a sense of calm in your household and to be as supportive and tolerant as possible.
- ▶ Keep the kitchen stocked with healthy, quick-to-prepare meals, snacks and drinks. Warn against too much coffee and caffeine drinks like Red Bull.
- ▶ Some students say music and multi-tasking don't affect their concentration. But they usually do. Encourage quiet and focused study with regular breaks to get fresh air, exercise, deal with social media and have some down time.
- ▶ Give trust and autonomy (independence). It is their 'show' and they have actually been preparing all year. But do let them know you care and are there for them. Help them to see the bright side and to have a laugh.
- ▶ Offer words of encouragement and reassurance like 'Do the best you can. That's all that matters'. Limit your advice unless you are asked for it. Offer help with revision where you can.
- ▶ Listen with your ears and your eyes. An amount of stress can be motivating but too much for too long can have many negative consequences.
- ▶ Exempt your student from some household chores but not all. S/he will benefit from some normality.
- ▶ If your student or you need some help to cope, seek support from teachers, other parents, the principal or a local GP. National Help Lines can also help.

Career Conversations

Believe it or not, parents are usually the first people students turn to when they want information and advice to guide them in their career decision-making.

Family conversations about careers can happen anytime but often become more important - and harder - when students are looking at post-secondary study and work options, or choosing their subjects for Years 10 – 12.

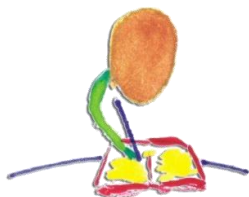
Young people often get frustrated when they feel they are not being listened to or are being pressured to go down a path they don't want to. So the most helpful parent-student career conversations are casual ones where ideas are explored with good listening, and with real respect for feelings and dreams.

Some parent tips to support career decision-making:

- ▶ When young people share their future dreams, talk about these with an open mind. Don't jump straight in with advice on what they'll have to do or how they'll have to change right now!
- ▶ Encourage them to 'try on' different study, work and career ideas – the more the better. Be positive about these ideas and explore the 'ins and outs' with them. Encourage them to gather more information.
- ▶ Talk about your own work experiences and the paths you took or didn't take. Emphasise that career pathways often change in life.
- ▶ Don't just talk about jobs. Talk about attitudes, values and skills (e.g. communication, teamwork, problem solving, initiative) that are important in many different study and work settings. Many jobs our young people will work in have not yet been invented. Many that exist now will disappear across their lifetimes.
- ▶ Understand the idea of a career has changed and is now thought of as *a lifetime of experiences* that will include periods of education, training and paid and unpaid work.
- ▶ Encourage part time work. It helps young people to develop their identity, explore what's out there and develop important skills.
- ▶ Take a look at the new *Beyond School Study Guide*.
<http://studyassist.gov.au/sites/studyassist/beyond%20year%2012>

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Early Learning Parent to Parent Program

Successful Learning

The Successful Learning parent workshop series helps young students and their parents/carers to make the best possible start to school and sets the tone for effective parent engagement and partnership.

Tailored to become an integral part of induction, teaching and learning in the first two years of school, *Successful Learning: The Parent Factor* is a parent-to-parent program that encourages and supports families to positively and productively engage in their children's early learning and literacy. The workshops communicate and affirm the important and influential role of parents and families in children's motivation for learning, their confidence as learners and their progressive academic success. They also emphasise that when parents and teachers work together as partners, valuing each other's separate but complementary roles, there are enormous benefits for children, families and schools.

Successful Learning workshops empower participant knowledge and confidence, and actively build parent skills. They are offered in both early learning and school settings to support positive and successful transitions. In 2018, a mathematics workshop will also be available.

Successful Learning comprises two workshops, one focused on reading and the other on writing. The workshops run for two hours each and draw on parent interest and experience to contextualise and deepen understanding of:

- Home-based learning and practical ways that parents and families can and do facilitate this.
- The way schools are teaching reading and writing.
- Reading and writing conventions and how to respond appropriately to children's early literacy.
- Developmental milestones.
- The importance of positive communication and relationships between parents and teachers
- The importance of becoming partners in children's education.

Successful Learning is a practical response to the evidence that positive parent engagement makes an important difference to children's motivation to learn, school readiness and adaptation, sense of personal competence and academic success. The workshop series encourages:

- Parent appreciation and recognition of their powerful role as first educators and co-educators
- Parent confidence and competence to more actively and effectively engage in their children's learning and their schools
- Parents to actively partner with teachers and consider becoming a workshop presenter to help build and sustain partnership practice in their local school community.

For more information contact the Federation Office.

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