

From: counsellors

Sent: Monday, 9 August 2021 1:58 PM

To: counsellors <counsellors@marash.qld.edu.au>

Cc: Michael Newman <newmanm@marash.qld.edu.au>; Peter Serone <Seronep@marash.qld.edu.au>; Ty Casey <Caseyt@marash.qld.edu.au>; Liam Beatty <beattyl@marash.qld.edu.au>; Ridley <Ridley@marash.qld.edu.au>; Ephrem <Ephrem@marash.qld.edu.au>; Foley <Foley@marash.qld.edu.au>; Gilroy <Gilroy@marash.qld.edu.au>; Harold <Harold@marash.qld.edu.au>; Ignatius <Ignatius@marash.qld.edu.au>; Rush <Rush@marash.qld.edu.au>; slattery <Slattery@marash.qld.edu.au>

Subject: Brotherhood Initiative

Dear Parents and caregivers,

Those of you who were part of the MCA community last year may remember the “Brotherhood Initiative”. Given you are in quarantine because of close or casual contacts, we thought it would be a good idea to reinstate the “Brotherhood”.

Last year during our time of lockdown some of the Year 12 leaders had weekly (and sometimes more) conversations with younger students. This was done in a variety of ways (Zoom, Skype, Facetime, etc) but the purpose of it was to help to reduce the sense of isolations that some boys may feel during this time.

During times of isolation and the absence of face to face learning, it is imperative that the boys remain socially connected with their friends and peers. Some of our boys will be proficient at organising this themselves and will arrange online conversations, zoom sessions and online game tournaments with their friends. However, some boys will find this challenging and may not be having regular social interactions with others while at home. This could be for a number of reasons but could include: boys who had recent disagreements with their friendship groups, boys who don't have a developed social group as of yet or boys who are reluctant to initiate conversations with others. This lack of social interaction could lead to feelings of loneliness and a drop in school connectedness.

The sense of community at Marist College Ashgrove is pivotal to our school culture and is more important than ever at the moment. We therefore don't want any student feeling disconnected. As a result, we have enlisted, as we did last year with the class of 2020, the help of a group of Year 12 school leaders for the Brotherhood Initiative. The idea behind this initiative is that the leaders will become “big brothers” to any student, particularly those who are feeling socially disconnected, lonely or would benefit from weekly interactions via an online format.

The role of the Year 12 ‘brother’ is not to become your son's counsellor or talk through any significant personal concerns. They will simply have a conversation about what they are interested in, share ideas of what they have been doing to fill in their free time or perhaps arrange to play an online game. It is preferable that this communication occurs using a video options in order to mirror face to face communication most closely.

The initiative will work as follows:

1. Parents are asked to email the College Counsellors (counsellors@marash.qld.edu.au) and let us know that your son would benefit from talking with a year 12 leader and why. We will also email boys in year 9-12 who can refer themselves directly.

2. If the student is from the Secondary School we will pair them with a leader from their House where possible.
3. If the student is from the Primary school, in consultation with Mr Connolly and Mr Beatty, we will pair him with someone with a similar personality.
4. The year 12 leader will then be notified to confirm they are able to help with this student.
5. The parents of the student will be informed of which Yr. 12 student will be talking with their son. If a student from Year 9-12 self-referred then parents won't be informed unless we have the boy's consent.
6. The year 12 leader will then email the student offering the chance of a conversation via their preferred mode (e.g. Teams, Skype, Zoom, Facetime, online game etc.)
7. This conversation will happen during school hours, preferably during the normal break times (weekdays 11.20 am to 12.10 pm or 1.50 pm to 2.20 pm)

If the school leader has any concerns regarding your son, they will contact the school counsellors immediately.

If you feel this initiative would be useful for your son please let us know and we will be in contact.

Warm Regards,
Erin, Lisa, and Jorge

Lisa Babon, Erin Pownell and Jorge Ruiz
College Psychologists

Marist College Ashgrove

142 Frasers Road, Ashgrove QLD 4060
PO Box 82, Ashgrove West QLD 4060
Phone: 07 3858 4555
www.marash.qld.edu.au

Trustees of the Marist Brothers - Ashgrove T/A Marist College Ashgrove
CRICOS Provider No: 00670F

