

August 10th, 2021

Principal's Report

Lockdown #6

The newsletter is a little late this time as it was written and ready to be posted right when we discovered that we were going into Lockdown #6. I have made a few edits to the body below, so it is now relevant to our ever-changing circumstances that we find ourselves in. I think we have all come to the realisation that it is now a case of knowing and accepting that we will be continually moving in and out of on-site learning and remote and flexible learning. This is our world situation now and the Balnarring school community has always worked together to ensure we always get the best outcomes for our students and I know we will continue to do this. **Please ensure you take the time to fill in the parent survey so we can get a true sense of parents' thoughts and opinions on how we can continually improve our delivery of remote and flexible learning during Lockdowns.**

Great start to Term 3

There has been fabulous buzz of excited learning happening here at Balnarring Primary School during the first few weeks of Term 3. The students and staff were so pleased and happy to be back learning together on-site again. We are looking forward to the time when we do this again.

A time for reflection

We do know, even more than ever, that those human connections and relationships are so vital for us all. Our COVID experiences have really highlighted the importance of our schools as vital social and learning institutions that support the whole community. We know the learning process is fundamentally social. Friendships are important, but the social learning interactions are critically important for us all to grow and develop to our full potential.

It is a good time to take the time to stop and reflect and on how incredibly resilient our students are. There was, and still is, a general state-wide feeling of finding it harder and harder to keep upbeat and positive as each Lockdown really does seem to get a little tougher and more wearing for a lot of people. Having said that, we find that our students really bounce back to learning at school and continue to grow and develop and catch up where needed in their learning. I think it really helps to focus and remind ourselves that our students are highly resilient and they do adapt to the transitions between remote and flexible learning and on-site learning **incredibly well. They bounce back quickly and so far; our results are showing that the majority of students 'catch up' on any social and academic learning they may have found a little difficult during remote learning.** Students and adults have learnt so much about resilience and we can all continually learn about and develop our resilience. As a community, we have supported our students to self-manage and how to deal with change and the unknown and the anxiety that can create in us all. We have all modelled the importance of looking after our **health, physical and mental. We can't underestimate the new set of skills our students (and us as adults) have learnt and developed to be able to thrive and meet all the future challenges that will face them in their lifetimes. We should all be so very proud of our students and ourselves for supporting them through.**

I would also like to acknowledge our staff and their agility and adaptability to quickly respond to overnight changes where they are required to transform how they deliver teaching and learning. As a school, we are continually reflecting, re-inventing and transforming our teaching and learning environments. We are continually creating new and innovative ways to move to and from remote and flexible learning. We have appreciated feedback that some parents have given us about how they feel about remote learning and would like to hear from all parents in our school community. Please ensure you respond to the survey that Anne has sent out, so that we can add as much parent feedback to our ongoing improvement processes.

Anne and I were fortunate to attend the State-wide Principal's conference last week (online) and were fortunate enough to have John Hattie as a guest presenter. John Hattie is a renowned and well-respected researcher who has written several books and papers on education and teaching and learning. He has looked at meta-analysis of the impact of COVID remote learning time on students across the world. All of these research findings are not taking away that some people have been gravely affected from the impacts of COVID. Keeping that in mind, the early research results are showing that we cannot presume that remote learning has had the huge negative effect and impact as the media headlines and scaremongering would have us believe. The effect size on student learning and wellbeing overall has been .10 and .17, which is a minimal effect. We know schools can rebound and pick up that small effect size with strategic planning of effective strategies and processes. The bottom line is **LEARNING DID NOT STOP.**

In fact, the Learner Characteristics of confidence, engagement and motivation were better in some cases and the minimal effect reported snapped back once those students returned to school. We always aim in school learning environments for high collective efficacy, constantly improving how we work and learn together to get the best results and actually, COVID did this, as a community we all became united on learning.

It is now time to stop and reflect deeply on what has worked and what hasn't worked so far and start looking forward. The reality is Lockdowns will most likely be around for a number of years to keep us all safe, so it's not about going back to 'normal'. The questions now are, 'What is our new normal? How can everyone in our connected school adapt, respond effectively and continue to be a school community of agile learners? How can we ensure we are providing the best remote learning possible for our students?

Microsoft School Transformation Project

Our Information and Communications Technology (ICT)/Digital Learning committee staff are fortunate enough to participate in the Microsoft School Transformation Project with other schools across the state. The ICT Committee staff will be attending numerous Professional Learning (PL) sessions this month to develop their expert ICT knowledge and skills even further. They will also develop their strategic planning skills to set up ICT strategic plans and school-wide documents around ICT teaching and learning, including the important Cyber safety teachings and safety protocols we all need to be vigilant with. It is important that we educate our students on Cyber safety and how to be responsible digital citizens. At the conclusion of the program, ICT committee members will be accredited Microsoft Trainers who can mentor and run regular PL for staff to upskill all of our teachers, support staff and students with ICT knowledge and skills in navigating the many Microsoft programs to enhance student learning.

Kinect 2 Dance

The dance sessions have been continuing this term and it is great to watch the students enjoying the program as they develop their dance skills further.

SeeSaw

Our teachers and students are enjoying posting student learning to share with their families. I hope families are enjoying being able to get a closer look on a regular basis as some examples of student learning at school on SeeSaw. I'm guessing you all can't wait until you get back to seeing school learning on SeeSaw instead of being in the virtual classroom at home!

Stay safe and well and have a great week.



Nicky Walker

Assistant Principal's Report

Congratulations on surviving lockdown 5.0! It has been fabulous seeing the smiling faces of students and staff (although they were wearing masks) as they slipped back in to normal school life. It is quite incredible how adaptive and resilient we have all had to become as we manage such challenging circumstances. Our children are the ones who are leading us in these areas.

Remote learning brings with it so many different challenges. Navigating technology and internet issues, screen fatigue and isolation from friends and family, not to mention parents trying to work at the same time as teach their children! With 268 families here at Balnarring, I believe it is very safe to say that there would not be two families with the exact same scenarios playing out in lockdown.

Remote learning cannot even begin to replicate what we do here at school. The remote learning programs that we delivered were designed to balance the wellbeing and academic needs of our children and we were very cognisant of the varying difficulties that families were facing. Rest assured, if you cooked with your child, took them for a walk, played a board game or spent time just talking with them, they were learning.

Our staff are to be congratulated on the care and professionalism that they provided throughout this time. Again, the scenarios in their homes were all completely different. Many were juggling teaching with providing their own children with remote learning whilst others were providing onsite supervision and simultaneously attending to remote learning obligations. There was such a lot of thought and planning that went into each lesson and the concern, compassion and kindness that they displayed towards their students and families was outstanding.

I leave you with this incredible Ted talk. It is not related to lockdown, but is of an inspiring 7 year old with an extremely important message for all parents. I hope you enjoy it.

https://www.ted.com/talks/molly_wright_how_every_child_can_thrive_by_five

Warm wishes



Anne McDonald

SUPERVISION AT SCHOOL
BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL HOURS, AND CURRICULUM DAYS
 Supervision before school commences at 8.30 am and after school until 3.30 pm.
 There is no supervision on Curriculum Days.

UNIFORM SHOP
 (Please note that samples only are kept onsite)-Cash only
 Onsite currently unavailable due to Covid restrictions

WHAT ACTIVITIES ARE COMING UP

PLEASE BE AWARE THAT DATES SOMETIMES CHANGE AND UNFORSEEN EVENTS MAY BE ADDED. CHECK COMPASS FOR UPDATES.

MONDAY	TUESDAYS	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
	10 August	11	12 *Kinect 2 Dance	13
16	17	18 *School Council Mtg	19	20
23	24	25	26	27
30	31	1 September	2	3 *Father's Day Stall
6	7	8	9	10
13	14	15 *Parent Teacher Interviews online *School Council Mtg	16	17

BOOK DRIVE

Attention Balnarring Community. Do you have any pre-loved children's books that are in good condition? If so, we would love to have your donations so that we can create some amazing classroom libraries.

We are looking for a range of fiction and non-fiction books as well as comics and children's magazines.

We will place a number of tubs outside the library to collect the books each day.

Your support and donations will be gratefully received and put to very good use.

