

St Paul's Primary School

# Wellbeing & Community Newsletter

Issue 1, 2022



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**Thursday | February 17, 2022**



## Welcome Back!

We hope everyone had a safe and happy holiday and have settled in well to the new school year. We are very happy to have the corridors filled with laughter and smiling students.

The Wellbeing Team have hit the ground running this year and anticipate there will be a lot happening in the Wellbeing Area. To start with, we are revamping our Wellbeing and Community Newsletters. We are giving it a new look, but we need your help!

If you have any suggestions for topics to cover in our upcoming issues, please contact any of the Core Wellbeing Team.

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## Mental Health in Primary Schools Research Project

St Paul's School has been invited to take part in a research project. This project aims to address the gaps in the current child mental health system by building the capacity of primary schools to better support child mental health and wellbeing. The program embeds a child Mental Health and Wellbeing Coordinator within schools to help identify and manage emerging mental health issues in students and provide connections between education, social and health services. Rebeca Lopez has been appointed as the Mental Health and Wellbeing Coordinator for St Paul's in 2022.

As part of the research project, a parent survey will be distributed to all parents in Grades 2 and 4. This survey is to evaluate the impact of the Mental Health Wellbeing Coordinator model on parent experiences and engagement at school, perceived mental health support, and child mental health.

The survey can be completed online via RedCap (secure research database) or on a paper-based equivalent. The survey **will take approx. 15 minutes** and will need to be completed at two time points (Term 1 and Term 4). If you have a child/ren in this year level, more information is to come in the next few weeks.

# St Paul's Staff in the Spotlight

## Get to Know Our Staff!

*For each issue, we will put a spotlight on staff members across the school to learn a bit more about their roles and who they are.*



### **Nicole Azarnikow** **Student Wellbeing Leader**

Nicole has been working at St Paul's for 12 years. She started her time at the school as a classroom teacher with a special interest in wellbeing. Nicole completed further tertiary studies in Wellbeing and Child Safety and took on the Student Wellbeing Leader role full time in 2018. In 2020, Nicole had time off work when she had her daughter Gemma and is now back working part-time alongside Rebeca Lopez in the school Core Wellbeing Team.

The role of the Student Wellbeing Leader is to help to ensure that all of the children at St Paul's feel happy and safe. Nicole works with staff, students and families to embed this across the school and support the overall promotion of wellbeing.

#### **Three Facts about Nicole:**

1. Has a pet cat named Nala
2. Enjoys swimming
3. Loves strawberries



### **Rebeca Lopez** **Mental Health & Wellbeing Coordinator**

Rebeca has been working at St Paul's for 4 years and has been a teacher for 9 years. Previously a classroom teacher, Bec moved into the Wellbeing Team, as Student Wellbeing Leader in 2020. In 2020, Bec headed back to university to complete her Masters of Student Wellbeing, she is due to finish this in May 2022.

In 2022, Bec will be working as the Mental Health and Wellbeing Coordinator. She will work to promote a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing to students, staff and families.

The purpose of the Mental Health and Wellbeing Coordinator role is to:

1. Build the capability and confidence of teachers to better identify and support students with mental health concerns.
2. Implement effective mental health strategies aligned to social and emotional learning in the curriculum and whole-school approaches to health, wellbeing, teaching and learning initiatives.
3. Develop a clear pathway for referrals for students identified as requiring further assessment and intervention within the school and to regional and external community-based services.
4. Build connections with local health services and better navigate the service sector.



#### **Three Facts about Bec:**

1. Loves camping
2. Has 2 pugs, named Kenya and Nero
3. Loves hot weather



## **Nicola De Rosbo-Davies** **Student Wellbeing Officer (Drama)**

Nicola has completed her Masters of Creative Arts Therapies specialising in Drama Therapy. She also has a background in acting and psychology. Nicola will be working at St Paul's on Tuesdays with small groups of students with a focus on exploring Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) through drama expression.

These Drama SEL Groups will draw on resources to help students with:

- Identifying and articulating their emotions.
- Strategies to cope with day to day challenges.
- Activities to build relationships, enhance communication and further develop their confidence and resilience.

### **Three Facts about Nicola:**

1. Loves making things
2. Has a puppy named Joey
3. Loves eating dumplings



## **Chloe De Rosbo-Davies** **School Psychologist**

Chloe is a psychologist who has been working at St Paul's for over 2 years. Chloe works two days a week (Tuesdays and Thursdays). The School Counselling Program is a confidential service offered free of charge to students.

Chloe will be available to discuss child-related issues such as:

- Behavioural concerns, both at school and at home.
- Emotional problems such as anxiety, grief, depression, low self-esteem.
- Family issues, such as separation/divorce, parenting difficulties, parent-child or sibling relationships.
- Peer and social issues include bullying, peer relationships and social skills.
- Developmental and academic concerns where appropriate.

Counselling may involve a number of therapeutic methods including play and art therapies, individual/small group/class programs, skills training, as well as consultations with parents and teachers. This year we are excited to announce that Chloe will also offer Animal Therapy for certain students with consent from families. Students may be referred by school staff, parents or other professionals (e.g. family doctor), or students may refer themselves. Written parental consent is required for all children prior to the commencement of counselling.



### **Three Facts about Chloe:**

1. Speaks French
2. Grew up in Switzerland
3. Loves to ski



If you would like further information, feel free to contact Rebeca Lopez or Nicole Azarnikow



## ***Poppy*** **Therapy Dog (and Good Girl)**

Our newest and furriest member of staff, Poppy will be working at the school this year as our therapy dog. The therapy-dog program will be operating in conjunction with the existing school counselling program delivered at St Paul's by CatholicCare Victoria. Select students who engage with the counselling program will be invited to work with Poppy the therapy dog. Poppy is a 'Lead the Way' certified Therapy Dog. If you have any questions or concerns about Poppy and the Therapy Dog Program, please contact the Wellbeing Leaders, or the school counsellor (and Poppy's handler) Chloe ([chloe.derosbo-davies@ccam.org.au](mailto:chloe.derosbo-davies@ccam.org.au)).



Poppy is a Standard Schnauzer born on the 13th of November 2020. She is a friendly and outgoing dog who loves pats and cuddles from people. When she's excited she wiggles her whole body and gives a little 'Awoooo'. This is her way of saying "hello! Please give me cuddles!" She loves to play tug of war and enjoys a game of fetch (though she does not always like to give the ball back!).

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## ***Parent Education Sessions: School Refusal and Anxiety***

This year, St Paul's School will be running parent education sessions. The sessions will be run by Chloe, our school psychologist. They aim to provide information and support on a variety of topics. Our first session will be on school refusal and anxiety.

Due to current restrictions, the first session will be presented online via a pre-recorded video. If you have any questions relating to school refusal and/or anxiety, please fill out the survey below. We will aim to answer your questions in the session.

To further ensure that we are meeting the needs of our community we would like to know what topics you would like covered. Complete the survey below, to express interest and make suggestions for future sessions.

### **English Survey**



<https://forms.gle/LGTKWp7fF42BkYhn7>

### **Vietnamese Survey**



<https://forms.gle/SEgcpfwGjLRLJ9Sx7>

# The Respectful Relationships Program

*Everyone in our community deserves to be respected, valued and treated equally. We know that changes in attitudes and behaviours can be achieved when positive attitudes, behaviours and equality are embedded in our school.*

This year, St Paul's will continue to implement the Respectful Relationships Program to teach social-emotional learning. The Respectful Relationships program supports schools to promote and model respect, positive attitudes and behaviours. It teaches our children how to build healthy relationships, resilience and confidence.

Respectful Relationships is about embedding a culture of respect and equality across our entire community, from our classrooms to staffrooms, sporting fields, and social events. This approach leads to positive impacts on students' academic outcomes, their mental health, classroom behaviour, and relationships between teachers and students.

At St Paul's, we want to lead the way in saying yes to respect and equality, and creating genuine and lasting change so that every child in our school has the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

**Keep an eye out for student work completed in SEL lessons in future editions of the Wellbeing Newsletter!**



## Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

Social and Emotional Learning is essential in supporting students to understand themselves and others, to manage their relationships, lives, work and learning more effectively. Teaching SEL involves students learning to recognise and regulate emotions, develop empathy for others and understand relationships, establish and build a framework for positive relationships, work effectively in teams and develop leadership skills, and handle challenging situations constructively.

SEL supports students in becoming creative and confident individuals with a sense of self-worth, self-awareness and personal identity that enables them to manage their emotional, mental, spiritual and physical wellbeing, with a sense of hope and optimism about their lives and the future. On a social level, it helps students to form and maintain healthy relationships and prepares them for their potential life roles as family, community and workforce members.

Adapted from Victorian Curriculum:  
Personal and Social Capabilities Rationale

## Know Show Grow Festival March 21st to March 25th 2022

Sunshine Heights Primary School has created The Know Yourself, Show Yourself, Grow Yourself Mental Health Festival as a way reconnecting people and creating a safe and inclusive place where people could know themselves, show themselves and grow themselves. The weeklong festival will run from **Monday 21st March to Friday 25th March**, at Sunshine Heights Primary School, and feature a free public program bustling with workshops, guest speakers and experiences centered on core tenets of mental health and wellbeing; fostering diversity, inclusion, connection, courage and belonging along the journey line.

For more information and to see the Festival Program visit

<https://www.knowshowgrowfestival.com/>



# Wellbeing and Catholic Faith

Here at St Paul's Sunshine West we are blessed with a growing diversity of cultures and faiths. Our young people are immersed in a society which is becoming increasingly diverse and one that is marked by rapid scientific and technological growth. These progressions in society have been recognised by the Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools which developed the vision for a creative Religious Education Framework that encourages dialogue, understanding and responding to the mysteries of life enlivened by the Holy Spirit.

William Butler Yeats once said "Education is not filling the pail, but lighting the fire". Thinking about this quote, my mind automatically turns to the great teacher Jesus Christ. Jesus taught in such a way that was thought provoking and lit the fire in the minds of those he crossed paths with.

Some understood the message Jesus was trying to relay, others it took a little longer for the penny to drop and perhaps there were some that didn't understand at all. Jesus taught in such a way that allowed others to make their own meaning, which for some would have proven very frustrating, as we all want the answers.

The aim for our students here at St Paul's School is to engage students in making sense and meaning of everyday life in the light of the teaching of the Catholic Church and the traditions of the Catholic community. In 2017, I completed my Masters in Religious Education. The focus of my research assignment explored the correlation between quality Religious Education Teaching and Student Wellbeing.

The results showed that when students were given the opportunity to explore the Catholic Teachings and Traditions through an inquiry based approach, students were able to think about what these teachings could mean for them today and dialogue with others to come to their own meaning and truth. As a result, students believed the religious education they receive had a positive impact on their overall wellbeing.

The Pedagogy of Encounter is the name given to this inquiry based approach to Religious Education. Although, the focus is inquiry through the Catholic faith, students of all faiths are encouraged to share with others the teachings, beliefs and traditions of their faith. With the growing diversity of cultures and faiths at St Paul's, this approach allows all students to learn from one another, support positive wellbeing and strengthen the St Paul's School Core Values of Respect, Diversity, Learning and Care and Compassion.

**Lisa Peplow**  
Religious Education Leader

## Core Wellbeing Staff at St Paul's - Term 1, 2022

Nicole Azarnikow: Student Wellbeing Leader (Mon-Wed)  
Rebeca Lopez: Mental Health and Wellbeing Coordinator  
Lisa Peplow: Child Safety Officer  
Kara Hande: Learning Diversity Leader  
Mareta Parsons: Family Engagement Leader /  
Learning Diversity Leader (Mon-Wed)

If you would like any further information about the content presented in this newsletter or have any suggestions regarding topics to cover in our next issue, please feel free to contact us.  
Rebeca Lopez  
[rlopez@spsunshinewest.catholic.edu.au](mailto:rlopez@spsunshinewest.catholic.edu.au)  
or Nicole Azarnikow [nazarnikow@spsunshinewest.catholic.edu.au](mailto:nazarnikow@spsunshinewest.catholic.edu.au)

**St Paul's would like to acknowledge the Wurundjeri people, the Traditional Custodians of the land. Who have, since the Dreamtime, walked on and cared for the lands upon which our school stands. We acknowledge the continued deep spiritual attachment and relationship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Country and pay our respect to elders, past and present, as we commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of reconciliation.**