

ST JOSEPH'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

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Term 2 Week 9A

Dear Parents, Students, Staff and Friends of St Joseph's Community,

Farewell Fr David Catterall

The extended St Joseph's Catholic High School community offers our very heartfelt thanks and appreciation to Fr David, as he concludes his current appointment as Parish Priest of St Paul's Parish Albion Park, for his many years of guidance and pastoral support. Besides being a very proud ex-student (Class of 91) Fr David has supported the St Joseph's community in so many ways. We have appreciated his sincerity, friendship, wisdom, insight, spiritual guidance and faith-filled example of *'making Jesus known and loved'*.

We wish Fr David all the very best and our prayerful support as he commences his new ministry as Foundation Parish Priest of the newest parish in the Diocese, St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Parish, Oran Park.

'Let God guide you in all your life'

Mary MacKillop - 1909

(Source: The Little Brown Book)

Year 7 ~ 2016

All families who applied for a placement in Year 7, 2016, will receive letters on Monday informing them of enrolment placement decisions. There has been a very healthy demand for placements at the school one again, reflecting the high esteem and regard that the local community has for St Joseph's Catholic High School.

Reports and Parent Teacher Interviews

Years 7 to 10 Reports will be issued next week to students as Term 2 concludes. Term 3 commences on Monday 13th July (Week 1A). Parent Teacher Interviews for Years 7-10 are being held on Thursday afternoon/evening 16th July from 3:50pm to 8pm and Friday morning 17th July from 8:40am to 11:10am. These interviews are an important opportunity for you to discuss your child's progress with their class teachers. The feedback to students will assist them with future goals and directions for the second half of the school year.



And don't forget the School Musical!

Seven Brides for Seven Brothers

Tickets are on sale now!!!!

Show times this year are:

Wednesday 24th June @ 7:30pm

Friday 26th June @ 11:30am and 7:30pm and

Saturday 27th June @ 2pm and 7:30pm

To purchase tickets please go to the school website and access the link or click [here](#) or visit <http://www.trybooking.com/HXRU>.

Mr John Barrington
Principal

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Not far behind reports are Parent Teacher Interviews. This experience should be a positive, collaborative one, where student's best learning is the focus. I often find myself convincing students in my office that teachers "don't wake up each day and aim to make a student's day hard"! The best message, we as parents and teachers can pass to our students is that we are a united front, working together to get the best learning outcomes for our students. This week's article is all about the Parent Teacher Interview; how to make it productive and the best way to go about it. Please take the time to read this information. *Mrs Megan Schibeci, Pastoral Care Coordinator*

Vinnie's Winter Appeal

There are now less than two weeks left until the end of Term 2, which means that we are almost out of time to donate cans of soup to the Vinnies Winter Appeal. Luckily, Coles and Woolworths have great specials on cans of soup this week. Down, Down, the prices are down at Coles with cans of Heinz soup slashed to half price! Although Woolworths are known for being the 'fresh food people' they have discounted their canned soup to only \$2! At these prices, it would be crazy not to pick at least one can of soup for the winter appeal.

All students are encouraged to bring in at least one can of soup this term.

Thank you to those who have already done so. These can go to the Vinnies Van which is based in Coniston and delivers food and provides social engagement for people experiencing homelessness in the region. The cans will provide the homeless in our region with something warm and comforting to eat on a cold winter's night.

"The measure of the greatness of a society is found in the way it treats those most in need, those who have nothing apart from their poverty" - Pope Francis 2013



School Reports Years 7-10

Parents and students are reminded that Semester One Reports will be distributed next week on the following days: Years 9 and Year 10 on Thursday 25th June and Years 7 and Year 8 on Friday 26th June. Reports will not be

available for collection before these dates and if students are absent, the report will be held in the Curriculum Office for collection when school returns after the holidays. No reports will be posted home this semester. Reports for students involved in the school musical will be sent to the theatre to be distributed there.

Parent Teacher Interviews Years 7-10

Parent Teacher Interviews for students in Years 7-10 will be held on Thursday Evening 16th July (3:50pm-8pm) and Friday morning 17th July (8:40am-11:10am) which is Week 1, Term 3. Once again, bookings for interviews can be made through the Parent Portal. Bookings will open on Monday 22nd June at 9am and close Wednesday 15th July at 3pm. The link will NOT appear on the portal until the opening day! It is hoped that parents take the time to attend these interviews to keep up to date with your child's academic progress.



School Choir

The Choir will be singing at Fr David's Catterall's last Mass this Sunday morning at 9:30am at St Paul's Catholic Church. Students are asked to arrive at 9am and Mass should be finished at 10:30am. There will be a rehearsal on Friday afternoon with Corpus Christi and St Paul's school choirs from 2pm-3pm. Students are asked to meet Mr Comensoli at the front office after the second lunch bell to walk over to the church. Please let Mrs Quinn know by Thursday if you can come.

Mrs Angela Quinn, Choir Master

**Uniform Shop Helper
25th June
Janelle James**

Year 9 Commerce Market Stalls

As part of their studies in Commerce, on Monday 15th June, the Year 9 Commerce class ran a number of successful mini-business market stalls. In groups of 4-6, students were required to develop and operate a successful small business, which included a well researched formal business plan and the running of a market stall. For their formal business plan, students were required to meticulously design and plan their business. They needed to consider their business name, vision, logo and structure, promotion and selling techniques, target markets, cost calculation as well as the assessment of relevant laws and regulations relating to their product/s. Students then had to run their business in the COLA.

The mini-businesses included:

FAMS Pizza Planet, LBJR Sausages, Scoops Ice Creams, LOL (Lots of Lollies), Oh Snap! (A polaroid photo booth) Chip off the Block (Hot chips) and Bake Out (Cupcakes and cookies)

Despite the rain, the day went exceptionally well. All students were highly organised and did an excellent job in coordinating their stalls and then promoting and selling their products during lunch. By the end of lunch all stalls had sold out of stock! The students made a collective profit of \$423.25. Well done to all students involved.

Miss Melanie Muniz, Commerce Teacher





Congratulations

- ◆ *Ruby Sawtell* came 10th at the NSWCCC Cross Country Championships and has made the NSWCCC team to compete at the NSW All Schools Championships at Eastern Creek on Friday 17th July. Well done Ruby!
- ◆ *Kaelah Austin, Kade Sampson Bailey Warren, Jarrod Coomby, Mitchel Heffernan and Taylah Vella* who represented the Wollongong Diocese at the NSWCCC Touch Championships last Tuesday and Wednesday in Port Macquarie.

Best of Luck to

- ◆ *Danielle Vasquez* who is competing in the NSW All Schools Golf Tournament from the 23rd June to the 25th June.
- ◆ *Open Boys Basketball Team* who are participating in the NSWCCC Basketball Championships in Penrith on Friday.

Waratah Cup 1st Rugby

On Tuesday 15th June, the 1st XV Rugby team travelled to Canberra to contest the Southern, Western NSW and ACT finals of the state wide Waratah Cup competition. The weather was an abysmal 8-10 degrees and it rained cats and dogs the entire day. Game 1 saw the team play Yanco Ag College in a bruising encounter. The final score was 7-5 to St Joseph's. A pretty grand start to the day with stand out performances from *Brodie Ford, Phoenix Box, Alan Stewart and Michael Davis*. Game 2 placed the team against Erindale College, the ACT champs and last years overall winner. They were a team of man mountains! Our much smaller boys matched up to them both physically and mentally. Off the kick, *Alan Stewart* took one of the biggest hits we have ever seen in a schoolboys game, splitting his lip and forcing him to leave the field and seek medical attention in Canberra Hospital. The game displayed the true grit of our team and although losing 10-0 they did not give up for the entire match in either defence or attack. Game 3 was against James Sheahan Catholic High School from Orange. A well drilled and very competitive team who only lost to Erindale by 2 points. Both teams were looking to secure second place and a reserve spot for the next round in Sydney. The action was fast and furious from the kick off. The rain pelted down making the free flowing catch and pass game of the St Joeys backs near impossible. So *Simiki Lufe, Chris Davis and Ryan Greenland* stepped up to pick and drive the ball up field at any opportunity. Lineouts were dominated by *Chris Davis and Damon Dropulic* and at full time the score was 12-0 to St Joseph's, a fine result on a hard day of rugby.

A massive congratulations to the team for their success and an even bigger thank you to the parents who drove all the way to Canberra to support the boys! We also wish Alan a speedy recovery as he spent the night in Canberra.

Mr Heath Dennelly, Rugby Coach

Mrs Michelle Garbutt and Mrs Jodie Linsley
Sports Coordinators

Remember - "Too much sport is never enough"

Canteen Roster 2015

22nd June	Megan Wilson, Terry Thomas, Christine Callaway, Venessa Henson
23rd June	Colleen Walsh, Dianne Meharg
24th June	Karran McIlvain, Angela Walker, Joanne Wallace, Jan Collins
25th June	Sandy O'Connor, Lee-Ann Ginsburg, Karen Ladlow
26th June	Jenny Quinn, Agnes Gibbons, Jaime Hart, Linda Doonar

**** Important Dates for your Diary ****

- 24 June - School Musical Opening Night**
- 26 June - School Musical
Final day Term 2**
- 27 June - School Musical Final Night**
- 13 July - Term 3 Commences**
- 16th July - Parent Teacher Interviews 7-10
(from 3:50pm)**
- 17th July - Parent Teacher Interviews 7-10
Pupil Free Day**



Shop Assistant Position Vacant - Charcoal Chicken Albion Park are looking for a shop assistant to work weekends and week nights. 15-16 year old students preferred. Please call into the store and ask to speak to Vera.

UOW Early Admission Important Dates!

Monday 3rd August - Applications OPEN. Friday 28th August - Applications close at 5pm.

10th -12th September - Applicants will be notified if they have been shortlisted for an interview.

28th - 30th September - Early Admission interviews held.

7th - 11th October - Early Admission outcomes sent to applicants.

1st December - all successful applicants will need to have their UOW Early Admission place as their first UAC preference by this date so that they can be made a formal UAC offer on 3rd December.

UOW Pre-Medicine Degree

The UOW Bachelor of Pre-Medicine, Science and Health is a 3 year full-time undergraduate course with an ATAR of 95. Click [here](#) for further information.

Teach.NSW Scholarships

Applications close Friday 18th September. Teach.NSW has a number of scholarships and cadetships available for anyone looking to study teaching in 2016. Some of the scholarships available include Teacher Education Scholarships, Aboriginal Teachers Education Scholarships, Rural Scholarships, Great Teaching Inspired Learning Scholarships and Incentive Scholarship. Click [here](#) for details.

Aviation Australia: Flight Attendant Career Days

Wednesday 26th August, 6:30pm, Qantas Centre of Service Excellence, 70-80 Euston Road, Alexandria.

A chance to explore courses, experience some of the most advanced training equipment and speak to industry experts to discover what life as a Flight Attendant is really like. Click [here](#) for details.

International Film School Sydney Open Day

Saturday 29th August, 41 Holt Street, Surry Hills. Click [here](#) for details.

The Hotel School Sydney Open Day

Saturday 12th September, 60 Phillip Street, Sydney.

Prospective students and their families are welcome to visit The Sydney Hotel School to speak to lecturers, current students and graduated students about the Bachelor of Business in Hotel Management. Attendees may discuss study options, student life, fee help, career opportunities and university expectations. Click [here](#) for more information.

Year 11 Work Experience

A reminder that ALL Work Experience forms should be completed and returned by Thursday 25th June (NEXT WEEK) to Mrs Kennedy. Work Experience is October 12-16th. An electronic copy of the form has been emailed to all students. DON'T MISS THE DEADLINE!!!!!! Forms need to be processed and your host employers contacted so it is imperative that this information is received by the due date.

Mrs Sue Kennedy, Careers Advisor



Important Dates for your Diary:

26th June - Applications for Work Experience close for Year 11

1st July - BlueScope Cadetships for 2016 posted on their website

3rd August - UOW Early Admission Opens

29th, 30th June - BlueScope Cadet Snap Shot Days

12th-16th October - Year 11 on Work Experience

EXCURSIONS		
Excursion Name	Date	Payment/ Permission Note Closing Date
UOW HSC Mathematics Revision Day		CLOSED
Leadership Breakfast		CLOSED
NSW CCC Open Boys Basketball Championships - Updated Permission Note		CLOSED
1st XV Rugby Union Waratah Cup: State Finals (No Cost)	16 June	CLOSED
South Coast Primary Schools Netball Gala Day - Umpires	16 June	CLOSED
Under 13's Boys Soccer Gala Day 2015	17 June	CLOSED
HSC UOW Business Studies Study Day 2015	17 June	CLOSED
HSC Chemistry Excursion 2015	18 June	CLOSED
Yr 10 Child Studies Westmead Children's Hospital, Kidsafe House and Ronald McDonald House Tours	18 June	CLOSED
Secondary Dio Netball Carnival 2015	20 July	13 July
Ancient History Museum Tour and Exhibition 2015	23 June	16 June
Year 7 School Musical Excursion	24 June	12 June
Yr 12 Formal 2015	20 Nov	4 Nov
<p>NO LATE PAYMENTS WILL BE ACCEPTED. PLEASE DO NOT PLACE INTO THE BOX AFTER CLOSING DATE - REMINDER THAT ALL PERMISSION NOTES ARE ON THE SCHOOL WEBSITE.</p>		

REFUGEE WEEK

Talking about refugees and asylum seekers in some circles can be a dubious endeavour. Before you know it, words like “illegals” and “queue jumpers” are ricocheting back at you, and you’re entangled in an angry debate.

In some parts of Australia, the good ol’ welcome mat has yet to make it out the front doorstep for the small number of refugees and asylum seekers who arrive in this country. And as the debate spirals on about the motives and choices faced by this vulnerable group, facts often lose out to fiction and speculation.

In the lead up to Refugee Week, Australian Red Cross surveyed people across the country to discover just what they do and don’t know. In the process, we learnt the public is pretty misinformed on some basic facts.

Fact 1: It’s not a crime to come to Australia by boat without a visa and ask for protection

But we found seven out of 10 people believe it is.

The truth is that it is not a crime to arrive here by boat without a valid visa and ask for protection. In our experience – in almost 100 years working with people affected by migration – those who do so often feel it is their only chance of finding a place where they’ll be safe from persecution.

Nor is it illegal to flee persecution, to cross borders without documents or passports in order to seek asylum – people have been doing it for centuries. Everyone has the right to seek asylum from persecution, which is enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Human rights are basic freedoms and protections that everyone’s entitled to.

Fact 2: There’s no official queue for people coming to Australia seeking a safe place to live

But six out of 10 people think there is.

The United Nations process of resettling refugees in other safe countries doesn’t operate like a queue. It’s not a matter of lining up, waiting for your number to come up – this is not the supermarket deli counter. The resettlement system operates as a discretionary process, based on changing criteria. It’s more like a lottery than it is like a queue.

If this mythical global queue did actually exist, based on the number of refugees there are in the world, people joining the end might wait 170 years to get to the front.

Fact 3: Only 1% of the world’s refugees is likely to be given safe haven in any given year

Our survey found six in 10 people don’t know that.

Only a small group of countries offer resettlement through the UN system. Need consistently

far exceeds supply and in any given year about 1% of the world's refugees is likely to be granted safe haven in another country – in fact the UN says fewer than 1% of refugees will ever get a resettlement place.

Fact 4: There are almost 18 million refugees and asylum seekers in the world

According to the most recent statistics there are 16.7 million refugees and 1.2 million asylum seekers worldwide, most of whom are currently living in developing countries such as Pakistan and Iran.

But we found close to one-third of people reckon there's 80 million, more than four times as many as there actually are. And almost another quarter of people think there are 9 million, half the actual figure.

These four undeniable facts can help give context to any discussion on refugees and asylum – they provide scale and parameters for debate. It matters, because if some of these myths were dispelled we believe we would have a more compassionate, understanding, welcoming and stronger Australia.

We know from our decades and decades of experience working with vulnerable migrants that the vast majority of asylum seekers and refugees flee to escape persecution, torture and death – dangers inflicted on them because of their race, religion, nationality, social group or political opinions.

Some have seen their closest relatives and friends murdered, and their homes and villages burnt to the ground. They've suffered torture and their bodies, like their minds, are covered in scars that will never disappear. They are survivors. They come from all walks of life, rich and poor. They flee, simply, because they want to live.

This year for Refugee Week (14 to 20 June) we are taking on some of the myths and misconceptions that ultimately serve no one. The next time you find yourself in the midst of this debate if you don't recall anything else at least remember these four basic truths.

Source: Robert Tickner – The Gaurdian – 15 June 2015

More from Michael Carr -Gregg

Apps to Boost Wellbeing

Teens and their phones are almost inseparable. Most parents and teachers are troubled by this – and rightly so. Excessive or inappropriate device usage is shown to interfere with **sleep, relationships, academic difficulties, and physical activity and health**. These each influence wellbeing in important and positive ways, so when devices interfere, outcomes are sub-optimal. Additionally, some early research has indicated that excess device use is associated with increased risk of being bullied, increased aggression, and even increased risk of disordered eating. Most importantly, adolescent use of electronic devices of all kinds is associated with decreased relationship quality between parent and child, or teacher and student. Put simply, phones and tablets are a continual source of conflict in many homes and classrooms, regardless of how clearly the rules are established.

Devices can help us all be appy

In recent years there has been a surge in the development of apps designed to bolster mental health and wellbeing. Some of these apps are best used in consultation with a psychologist to monitor wellbeing and inform therapeutic delivery. Others are fun and clever ways to monitor happiness, mood, or other variables related to wellbeing (like fitness).

There is **limited evidence** that these kinds of apps work to significantly improve psychological wellbeing. However, if the kids are on the phone, they may as well be focused on good things rather than Snapchat, Kik, itube, or other apps less associated with bolstering wellbeing.

Here are 7 apps that can be helpful for youth to check in, see how they're going, and find motivation to achieve greater wellbeing, health, or other goals.

Mood Meter

Developed in association with the Yale Centre for Emotional Intelligence and their RULER program, this app requires the user to check in as often as they want in order to record the emotions they are feeling, and what they are doing. The app is designed to expand the user's emotional vocabulary (great for building emotional intelligence), spot behaviours that are precursors to different emotions, consider strategies for improving their emotional regulation, and even see reports linking emotions with outcomes.

Mindshift

A tremendous app for teens and young adults to deal with anxiety in effective ways. The app is designed to help teens develop more helpful ways of thinking, and become proactive in dealing with anxiety-inducing situations.

Optimism

Once again, along the same lines as other mood-tracking apps. I found it particularly interesting that reviews for this app all referenced the way the program helped users share data with their doctors. A mood-charting app that helps users monitor their moods, develop and monitor strategies for dealing with difficulties,

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and identify when things start to go pear-shaped.

My Mood Tracker

This was rated as the best health app a few years ago (so it's been around a while). The app is similar to the Mood Meter, but provides more information, and it can collect information on additional things like sleep, menstrual cycles, and so on. A lite version is available for free, but the paid version is superior because it gives a full history.

Deep Sleep

You will have to pay for this app, but it's a ripper. Sometimes it can be hard for our teens to get to sleep. They're wired, buzzing, and want to keep going. This app works through a progressive muscle relaxation session, helping listeners get to sleep fast. It is a smart choice for teens always buzzing and resisting rest. (Also, check iSleepEasy as an alternative.)

Depression Check

This app asks, 'What's my M3?' It is a 3-minute depression and anxiety screening tool that uses validated assessment to help identify risk of depression, bipolar, and anxiety disorders. Simple reports are provided that recommend a way forward, and a history log is also kept and available.

Strava

This is one of dozens of fitness apps that teens who want to exercise more should get hold of. The Strava app (which means "to strive") is switched on when exercise (for example, a run) begins. It measures distance and time. The route is mapped via GPS so the user can see precisely where they've been and what they've done. And kms and time are tracked over weeks and months so cumulative totals can be reviewed. The user can also create 'segments' and compare him or herself to track improvement over time. They can also compare themselves to others on their own segments, or segments others have created. Plus it has a positive social aspect. 'Kudos' are given by friends when someone achieves a goal. Apps like strava promote goal-setting, optimism, social connection, and physical health – all of which are powerfully linked to wellbeing.

It is worth remembering that many of the 'wellbeing' apps available are nothing more than pop-psychology. Some are made by app-developers and have no psychometric (or psychological) testing. Several that I wanted to refer to in this article make claims that extend well beyond what science teaches us. And I have left out the therapeutic apps because they're best used in consultation with a psychologist or other health professional.

But with minimal effort and by using the technology at our fingertips, we can guide youth to greater emotional intelligence, increased motivation, and potentially greater wellbeing – all while using their smartphone.

- Justin Coulson PhD

More from Michael Carr -Gregg

1. [Balanced](#) is an iPhone only application designed to motivate and support clients to achieve positive and healthy tasks (such as being grateful or exercising more). My clients can set their own tasks or chose from an extensive list and decide how often they would like to complete that activity. With a satisfying swipe, they can indicate that they have completed an activity or have the option to skip. Gentle push notifications remind the user to complete an overdue task or congratulate them for achieving goals. It is particularly useful for young people with organising and planning difficulties and for those with limited access to other forms of motivation (e.g. social or family support). Balanced allows users to select up to five activities for free. At first users may be over-excited and want to purchase more activities, only to later find them all too hard to attain). It is recommended to start with only one or two activities, and then slowly add more if and as needed. Introducing five new activities all at once can soon become overwhelming and unachievable. The creator of Balanced, Jai is happy to give free upgrades - just send him a message using the app's "Send feedback" button and he'll give you an unlock!

2. [Beddit](#) is an every-day sleep measurement device for anyone interested in sleep, wellness and recovery. The Beddit sensor is made up of three connected components: A 30mm wide, 700mm long ribbon and an 1800mm long USB cable which are both interconnected to a 900mm x 40mm x 7mm recording/transmitting device. Beddit's extremely sensitive force sensor measures mechanical forces caused by heartbeat, respiration and movements of the person in bed. Using these three different signals, it is possible to analyze person's sleep time and sleep quality. Perhaps the most impressive feature is that Beddit does not require you to wear anything, instead resting on your mattress, under the sheets. To effectively monitor sleep, the Beddit needs to work in tandem with either a relatively modern iDevice or Android equivalent, running the free Beddit app. The device must remain on all night in the same room. T The Beddit transfers data to your device in realtime via bluetooth and utilises your device's microphone to listen for snoring. The App allows you to set a preferred wake up time and like the SleepTracker Pro, not only monitors and analyses your sleep but also wakes you (with your device's speaker) during a light period in your sleep cycle.

3. [Life Charge](#) is a simple journaling app, that allows clients to log events that happen throughout the day, and rate how positive or negative the event was. The app uses clever visuals to demonstrate to the young person the balance of positive and negative moments they are experiencing, and has a graph to show them how this changes over time. I encourage my clients to use Life Charge as an easy way to integrate some reflection time into their day-to-day life. Once they know what is making them happy or unhappy, they can learn from the past, and repeat the positives and work to prevent the negatives. Each day is a clean slate: they start fresh every day, no matter how good or bad yesterday was. Privacy is assured, with all entries locked behind a passcode to prevent unauthorized reading and their entries never leave their device (unless they share or export them). A neat feature is flashback, which gives clients daily reminders of positive achievements.

4. [Coach.me](#) is a great app for setting goals for fitness and wellbeing. Use it to set goals for personal development, track progress, and to get coaching and support. Clients can use

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it to find and set themselves goals for personal improvement, in areas like eating, exercise, mindfulness and wellbeing, habits and more. It can help them stay motivated by giving them tips and reminders. They can also learn from the community of other people who are working on their own goals, and track their progress over time to see how they are going. I encourage clients to use [Coach.me](https://coach.me) if they are keen to improve an area of their life, and need a hand with setting/achieving related goals.

5. [Phobia Free](#) was one of the first smartphone apps to be approved by the UK National Health Service and included in their app library. It uses exposure therapy or systematic desensitisation to help overcome arachnophobia or a fear of spiders, which has a prevalence of 3-6% in the general population. The app teaches relaxation using animations and demonstrations from a virtual therapist. It also uses the same format to give an overview of what a phobia is and how to manage it. It then uses games featuring progressively more realistic spiders in different every day situations. The last sessions are spent with a realistic tarantula that the person eventually interacts with in augmented reality.

6. [Stress Check](#) is a stress test developed by clinical psychologists with expertise in Stress Management. The app's manufacturers claim to have over a million users, and it provides users with an overall stress score that illuminates their current level. After receiving their overall score, clients can deepen their insight by examining the specific areas their stress affects them (interpersonal, physiological, situational, control). All results are paired with useful descriptions and actionable recommendations. With this deeper level of insight, clients, in consultation with their psychologists, can more effectively target and reduce high stress areas. With the latest version of Stress Check, users can now save their scores and track the development of their stress over time. This is an excellent way for clients and therapists to monitor progress on a stress reduction initiative, or to simply achieve a baseline of stress over a period of time. For a small fee, Stress Check now also offers optional stress management tools including Office Yoga videos and mindfulness meditation exercises. Office Yoga videos are designed to relieve work stress and restore energy through special techniques that can be done in a small office space. Mindfulness meditation are designed for deep relaxation and maintaining optimism in the workplace.

7. The [1 Giant Mind Learn to Meditate](#) app teaches clients how to meditate so that they feel calmer, more rested and present. It offers three levels of instruction that can be practiced anywhere, at any time. Clients can change the length of each session via a sliding timer to set their meditations to a length that suits them and select the background sounds, tones and music. There is a step-by-step audio and video guide to support them through each meditation, with a journal tool that logs their progress. They can redo any of the sessions as many times as they like. A set of optional short surveys pop up from time to time in the app. These are a part of a research program the app developers are conducting to better understand how they can continue improving their program and to give them insight into the benefits of learning meditation via a smartphone app.

8. [The Sorter](#) is an app created by [ReachOut.com](https://reachout.com), Australia's leading online youth mental health service. [ReachOut.com](https://reachout.com) is a useful destination when clients are looking for accurate, up to date and reliable information, support and stories on everything from finding your motivation, through to getting through really tough times. The Sorter app has all the answers on sex, love, friends, family, work, cash, study, booze and drugs. It

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encourages clients to quit floundering, get the ball rolling, and as the app's website says, "get sh*t sorted" with The Sorter. It offer three levels of advice, everyday stuff, tough stuff and really tough stuff. It uses geo location so the services it recommends will be relevant to where the client lives. New advice is updated directly in the app. The app maintains a list of the issues that the client has sought advice on and hopefully sorted. It also provides clients with a crowd-sourced answering service. Clients can enter their question into The Sorter Q&A to hear what other users have got to say.

9. [BellyBio Interactive Breathing](#) is a free app that teaches a deep breathing technique useful in fighting anxiety and stress. A simple interface helps clients use biofeedback to monitor their breathing. Sounds cascade with the movements of their belly, in rhythms reminiscent of waves on a beach. Charts also let them know how they are doing. A great tool when clients need to slow down and breathe.


10. [Deep Sleep with Andrew Johnson](#) is designed to help overcome insomnia. Getting enough sleep is one of the foundations of mental health and the research says that young people are particularly sleep deprived. If you like the voice of Sean Connery, this app is for you. This straightforward app features a warm, gentle voice guiding listeners through a Progressive Muscle Relaxation (PMR) session and into sleep. Features long or short induction options, and an alarm.

Parenting *ideas* INSIGHTS

Building parent-school partnerships

WORDS Michael Grose

Michael Grose's top 10 parenting tips for school meetings



Conferences and meetings between parents and professionals offer an opportunity to discover a child's progress; share information or resolve social and learning challenges. They can also be the source of conflict and stress as views can differ so it helps to remember that everyone's goal is to work from the best interests of a child or young person. Here are some tips to help make the meeting or conference more productive and less stressful for everyone involved:

1 Confirm the meeting

If the meeting has been called by someone at the school then confirm that you will be attending. Confirm also if someone such as another parent, family member, friend or professional will be attending the meeting. If in doubt, find out if more than one person will be attending from your child's school, including an outside professional such as a speech therapist or other specialist.

2 Work from a fresh slate

Sometimes meetings can be marred before they start as negative past experiences can carry residual resentment. Every new meeting offers

a fresh opportunity to create better outcomes for your child.

3 Prepare well

Before a meeting or conference, list any questions that you want to raise. Keep the questions short and to the point. Similarly, it may be useful to list some of your child's strengths and areas of improvement that you've seen at home. Writing information down in advance ensures that your point of view is expressed and that critical information is covered. Similarly, make sure you take notes during the meeting so that vital information isn't missed.

4 Listen first

Give the teacher a chance to make an assessment of your child's progress or behaviour. This may sound obvious but some meetings never get off the ground because an enthusiastic parent takes over.

5 Ask specific questions

Clarify the information you don't understand, asking for concrete examples. Drill down to get a clear picture of any issues involving behaviour

or learning. "So he doesn't listen in class. Specifically, when does he seem to tune out?" If your conference is student-led then take your cues from teacher and your child. Be prepared to ask specific questions that show your interest; display your understanding of what your child is showing you and also may help you form a true picture of your child as a learner.

6 Stay solution-focused

If your child's behavioural or learning challenges are discussed it's tempting to be defensive or sceptical. Ask for concrete examples to help you gain a clear understanding from the teacher's perspective. Look over the proof offered such as observational records or testing results using these as the basis for moving towards a solution. Ask the teacher and other professionals what any test results may mean in terms of progress, strengths, needs and further support.

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7 Remain calm

If the meeting doesn't go well, stay calm. Meetings involving your own child can be very emotive because you and your child's teacher are often discussing issues that are outside your direct control. Calmly stating your needs and views is far more effective than general accusations or inflexibly taking a stand. Ask for a break if you need one, even suggesting you meet at another time if your emotions are taking over.

8 Consider there are many ways to be right

Keep in mind that everyone wants the same thing- your child to make progress. Teachers view your child through a different lens than you and their conclusions and solutions can seem at odds with your own views. It maybe at these times that you need to trust the professionalism of your child's teacher who has more than likely experienced these same challenges before.

9 Ask what you can do

Show your commitment to producing better results by asking for exercises that you can do at home to develop skills. It may be a good opportunity to ask for recommendations for outside resources to help you and your child. Often teachers know about camps, activities, organisations or events that can encourage educational and social growth.

10 Consider how to discuss at home

Once a meeting is over consider how you will talk about it with your child. Discuss areas that need work in positive, specific terms. "We talked about your reading and your teacher suggested that we need to..." Involve your child in discussing plans for improvement. Make sure these plans are doable rather than overwhelming him or her with an exhaustive list of suggestions. Small inroads in progress or improved behaviour have been found to have a snowball effect, impacting on broader areas of improvement.

Parent teacher meetings and conferences take many formats including the direct involvement of children. Regardless of the format you will be more effective if you go in with a positive attitude, an approachable demeanour, and a willingness to work collaboratively with you child's teacher to reach the best outcomes possible for your child.



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