

Somers Primary School



SPS NEWSLETTER

Term 3 - Issue 1

Thursday 22nd July, 2021.



Principal's Report

Dear Families,

Welcome to Term 3! I hope you had a nice holiday break and managed to spend some quality time together as a family. Whilst we had a great start to the term, it was unfortunate for our school community to return to remote learning last week. Thank you for your flexibility and support for your child's learning over the past fortnight, and for staying up-to-date with school communications as restrictions rapidly changed.

The cumulative effect of repeated lockdowns can be really challenging for all of us, and we recognise the negative impact that not being physically at school can have on many students. There is evidence in our local data sets that some students have made less progress over the past 12 months, and much of this can be attributed to lost time and opportunities for quality point-of-need teaching and learning to take place. We also understand the impact that lockdowns and remote learning can have on students' health, wellbeing and engagement. We know that some students are struggling with maintaining their resilience and motivation. It's important to recognise that we all play a role in helping our children approach their learning with confidence and positivity.

Our school is currently implementing a number of initiatives to ensure that student wellbeing, engagement and progress is supported to the fullest extent possible at the moment, including:

- Daily live classes via WebEx with a focus on ensuring all students have access to the planned curriculum
- Remote delivery of the Tutor Learning Initiative for approximately 45 students requiring targeted support for learning catch-up and extension
- Flexible use of our Educational Support staff to provide alternative approaches to remote learning for students requiring extensive adjustments
- Loaning of devices to enable access to remote learning
- Providing on-site supervision for students who cannot learn from home



Agnes is remote learning overseas!



Claude getting active during remote learning.



For some families, the added stress and demands of helping children access their learning from home can be very challenging. We all play a role in ensuring that students can thrive to the fullest extent possible at the moment. Schools need to be flexible and responsive to meet the health, wellbeing and learning needs of students, and wherever possible, we will provide reasonable adjustments to help your child during this challenging time.

Families also play a role in helping children access their learning from home at the moment. Continued engagement in learning for your child is vitally important – and helps prevent children falling behind in their learning. Department guidelines for the provision of remote learning state that schools ensure that the following should be in place to support students:

- Daily check-ins with teachers and recording of student absences (and processes for following up non-attendance / non-engagement)

Learning programs with the following minimum daily guidelines:

- In years Prep – 2, literacy programs totalling 45-60 minutes, numeracy activities of about 30-45 minutes, additional learning areas/play-based learning/physical activity of about 30-45 minutes.
- In years 3 – 6, literacy programs totalling 45-60 minutes, numeracy activities of about 30-45 minutes, physical activity of around 30 minutes and additional curriculum areas of around 90 minutes.

We use these guidelines to help determine the expectations for your child's engagement, and ensure that over their week, they have comprehensive access to the curriculum whilst maintaining a focus on wellbeing. Our aim is to provide a mix of online and offline remote learning activities to ensure students spend developmentally appropriate periods on and off devices.



ABOVE: Julian's great Keith Haring inspired artwork.



BELOW: Mabel did some great artwork too!



Please remember that we are here to help! You can message your child's teacher, Kirsty or myself via class dojo, or send an email, or call our school.

Promoting Student Excellence

In 2021 we are excited to have students participating in the Student Excellence Program. Already this year we have had 12 year 5 and 6 students participating in online extension sessions with Virtual Schools Victoria. Well done to Ethan B, Lukas C, Matthew C, Jamie E, Lara H, Lachlan J, Molly K, Madeleine L, Lucinda M, Aaron M, Max M and Anya V on their selection and engagement in these 10 week Maths and English extension programs. These students showed excellent learning behaviours and approached these sessions with diligence, often attending online sessions that spilled into recess or lunchtimes. We are very proud of you all. Thanks to Tracey Mills for facilitating these students' access to these programs.

This term we are pleased to announce that our school will fund 100 entries into the ICAS Maths and English competitions to recognise and reward student excellence. Approximately 10 students in Maths and 10 students in English from each year level (Years 2 – 6) will be offered a funded entry into this competition, which will take place in August and September. Students will be selected using a combination of achievement data and teacher judgement, and information for invited students will go home over the next fortnight.

Principal's Report continued...

Woorabinda Camp Cancellation

Our upcoming network camp for selected year 4 and 5 students to Woorabinda in Gippsland has unfortunately been cancelled. Work is currently underway to ensure that facilities at the camp meet current building codes, which have been updated since the camp's construction.

Friday Assemblies

Last Friday we held our first ever remote assembly whilst students were learning from home. We had over 70 attendees at this assembly, with many siblings attending together. It was a great way to end the week, celebrate engagement and learning and recognise the effort that everyone had put in that week. During remote learning, we will continue to run our assemblies remotely via WebEx on Friday afternoons from 2:45 – 3:15. Keep an eye on Class Dojo for the link to my room. Attendance is not compulsory, but we would love to see students there to keep in touch with their school.

Improving Individual Education Planning

We are currently making some changes to the way that we support students with additional needs, with a particular focus on improving Individual Education Plans. Individual Education Plans (IEPs) (also known as Individual Learning Plans, or ILPs) assist students who require a range of supports with their education. IEPs are required for students in out of home care, Koorie students, students supported under individualised disability funding programs including the Program for Students with Disabilities (PSD) and Disability Inclusion, students in youth justice (custody and community), students in re-engagement programs under contract arrangements with another school or provider, and students undertaking Flexible Learning Options (FLOs). They are also recommended for students with additional needs, students not achieving to their potential, students at risk of disengagement, and any other students as determined by the school.

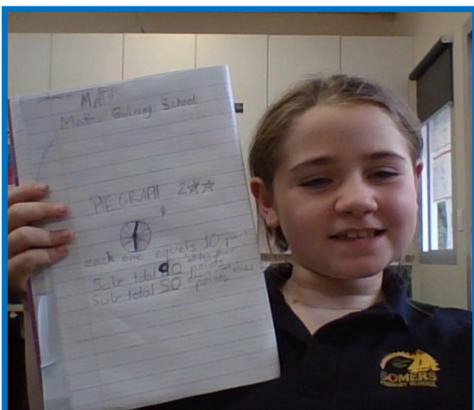
An IEP is a written statement that describes the adjustments, goals and strategies to meet a student's individual educational needs so they can reach their full potential. For many students, an IEP is essential to their education, as it helps plan and monitor a student's unique learning needs.

Our staff are currently undertaking professional learning into improving our capacity to write meaningful and precise plans for students, and we are investing in additional time for staff to produce high quality IEPs. We plan to conduct Student Support Group meetings with families later this term using this improved approach, and we look forward to seeing the impact of more targeted support for students with additional needs throughout the year.

Hugh Greer

Principal

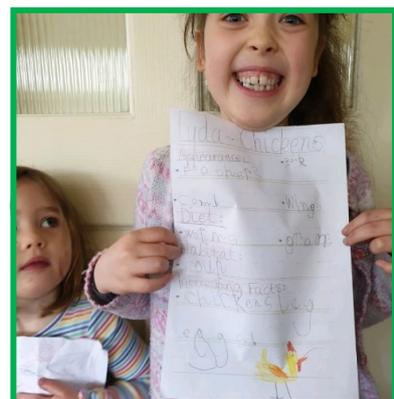
Email: hugh.greer@education.vic.gov.au



LEFT: Harper happy and doing her best learning at school.



RIGHT: Well done Lyda! Your sister looks impressed!



Assistant Principal's Report



Dear Families,

Supporting the mental health and wellbeing of our students remains our priority this year, especially as we find ourselves in yet another period of remote learning. To support our school community during this time, there are a number of resources available to support the mental health and wellbeing of our students.

Many of these resources can be accessed through the Department of Education and Training Quick Guide to Student Mental Health and Wellbeing via the link below.

[Quick Guide to Student Mental Health and Wellbeing resources](#)

Despite the majority of our staff and students working and learning from home, our processes for responding to and supporting student wellbeing and student learning remain in place. As always, we encourage families to contact either myself or Hugh at the school if they have concerns about how their child is travelling.

Staying Active during Remote Learning

We know that when children participate in regular physical activity, it boosts their physical and mental health and improves academic performance. Physical activity throughout the day also improves concentration, and the ability to retain information and solve problems. It is recommended that 15 minutes 4 times a day is all it takes and that whatever gets children moving, gets them active.

There are many benefits to being active. It can be challenging to do, particularly while learning from home and with the recent weather making it difficult to get outside. To help support children to stay active while learning from home, families can access a range of free COVIDSafe ideas to stay active and games through [Get Active Victoria](#).

Get Active Kids Voucher Program

To support physical activity participation and to keep kids active, eligible families with a Health Care Card or Pensioner Concession Card can now apply for vouchers through the Get Active Kids Voucher Program to support their children to get involved in organised sport and recreation activities.

Under the program, children may be eligible to receive up to \$200 to help with the cost of membership and registration fees, uniforms, and equipment.

Special consideration also applies for children named on their own Australian Government Health Care Card or residing in care services as well as temporary or provisional visa holders, undocumented migrants or international students.

Applications for vouchers in round two of the program close at 5pm Friday 30 July.

For eligibility requirements and to apply, visit the [Get Active Victoria website](#).

Kind Regards,

Kirsty Egglestone

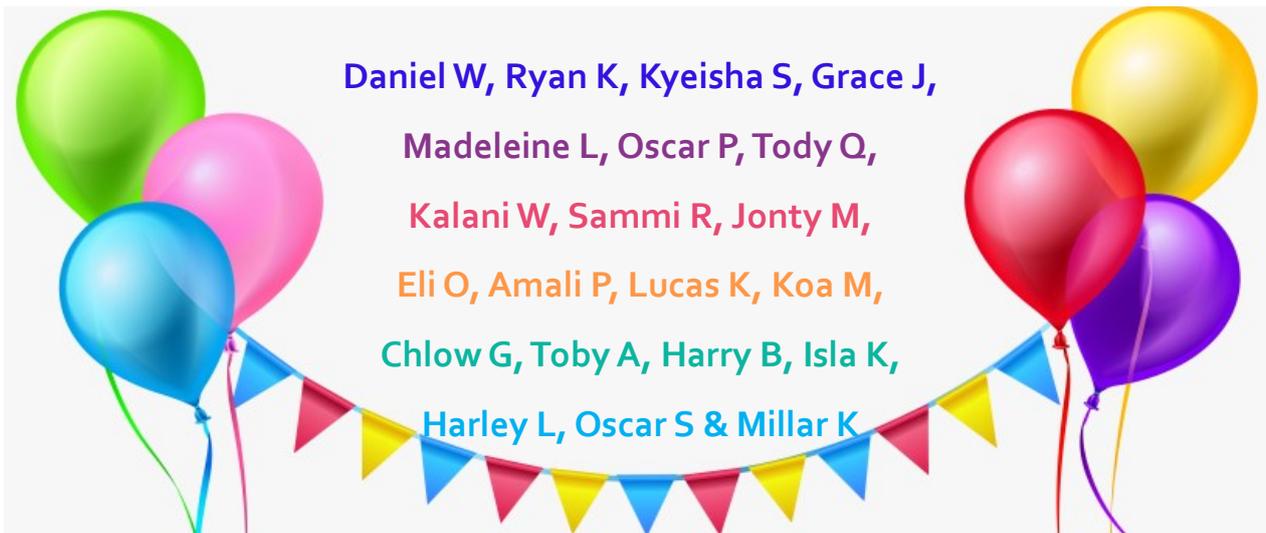
Assistant Principal

kirsty.egglestone@education.vic.gov.au



STUDENT BIRTHDAYS

**WISHING THE FOLLOWING STUDENTS
A VERY HAPPY BIRTHDAY FOR THE MONTH OF JULY
FROM YOUR TEACHERS & FRIENDS @ SOMERS PS!**



COMMUNITY NEWS



Southern School
of Creative Arts

BOOK NOW FOR OUR WINTER HOLIDAY PROGRAM

3 x day short filmmaking course for kids.
Make a film and enter it into a festival!

Mon 28 - Wed 30 June @ Somers YC

**TERM 3
BOOKINGS
NOW
OPEN!**

SOMERS PS

DANCE & DRAMA ALL-STARS (P-3)
Wednesdays at lunchtime

SCRIPT TO SCREEN (Grades 3 - 6)
Wednesdays 3:45 - 4:45

SCRIPT TO STAGE (Grades 4 - 6)
Fridays at lunchtime



NEW CLASSES & LOCATIONS!

Pre-schooler classes at Somers YC
Troupe for Teens at Balnarring Hub

Adult 'Dance in the Dark' sessions coming soon!

hello@ssoca.com.au
0431 109 3430
www.ssoca.com.au

