

Term 3:
4th August 2023

What's Happening at RPS

Rutherglen Primary School
Newsletter



DATES TO REMEMBER:

Fri 18th Aug

- Hockey 7s Comp -
Shepparton - 5-6 Hockey
Teams

Mon 21st Aug

- Book Week Parade

Student arrival
time at school

8:40am onwards

-staff

supervision starts

at this time

Morning bell is

at 9am.

Every day
COUNTS!



School success starts
with attendance

Another couple of busy weeks for all students in and out of the classroom with lots of great learning happening across the school.

CONGRATULATIONS FOUNDIES!

A very big congratulations to our Foundation students who celebrated being at school for 100 days. What an exciting achievement and great acknowledgement of how much they have grown, not only in size, but as learners and in their personal skills. They had a great day of activities based around the number 100 and a special celebration party.

PUBLIC SPEAKING COMPETITION

Well done to Taylor Francis (Year 5), Issy Daye (Year 6), along with Amelia Colvin (Year 3) and Paige Peuten (Year 4) for doing a wonderful job in representing our school at the Rutherglen Lions Club Public Speaking Competition on Friday 28th July. They all did a fantastic job with their presentations amongst some great competition. Congratulations to Paige who was a runner-up in the Year 3-4 category.

YOUR VOICE MATTERS!

Our school is conducting a survey to find out what parents/caregivers/guardians think of our school. The Parent/Caregiver/Guardian Opinion Survey is an annual survey offered by the Department of Education that is designed to assist schools in gaining an understanding of families' perceptions of school climate, student behavior, and student engagement. The survey is optional but we encourage all families to participate. Our school will use the survey results to help inform and direct future school planning and improvement strategies. All families are invited to participate in the survey. The Survey will be open from Monday 7 August to Friday 8 September 2023. The survey will be conducted online, only takes 20 minutes to complete, and can be accessed at any convenient time within the survey period on desktop computers, laptops, tablets or smartphones. The online survey will be available in English and 10 other languages.



Regards, Karryn

Respect

Responsibility

Integrity

Empathy

RPS Values Awards acknowledges students who display our school values and expectations by the choices they make in their daily actions

Week 1 & 2

Foundation

Hudson Fleming - showing respect during cooperative play. I loved the way you took turns and respected your fellow classmates. Well done Hudson!

Jedd Prescott - being a responsible learner. Thank you for showing your classmates what a model student looks like. Well done Jedd!

Year 1-2

Zeppelin Gannon - demonstrating enthusiasm and commitment to your learning. You are always keen to share your thinking with your peers and give all learning tasks your best effort. Keep up the fantastic work Zeppelin!

Darcy Miller - continuing to persist with developing your respectful listening skills. We can see you making a greater effort to tune in to discussions and respectfully wait for your turn to share your thoughts. Keep it up Darcy!

Anna Fuge - showing independence and taking initiative with her work. McKenzie you always try your best, ask for help when you need it and continue to surprise me with your resilience and responsible attitude. It's been such a pleasure to have you settle in so well at our school.

McKenzie Gannon - showing maturity and responsibility in the classroom. You have made so much improvement in your ability to focus on your learning and follow instructions this year, and can now be relied upon to set a great example for others. Well done!

Year 3-4

Poppy Allison - consistently showing integrity in your independent work time, because you always put in your best effort and complete tasks in an organised and creative way. Keep it up, Poppy!

Sara Duursma - showing greater resilience as a learner through your efforts in reading and writing lessons especially. You are showing great improvement in these areas Sara, keep it up!

Aroura Lewis-Petrie - being a responsible and respectful member of our class since joining this Term. Aroura, you have shown a great commitment to our school values, keep up the great work.

Evie Kronsteiner - being a respectful and responsible member of our class and always willing to assist others with a helping hand and encouraging peers. Keep up the great work Evie.

Year 5-6

Michael Smith - for the improvement you have displayed in remaining focused and completing your work. Keep up the great work, Michael!

Lachie Hawkey - being a positive role model to your peers, and managing distractions effectively in order to complete your learning. Excellent stuff, Lachie!

Shylah Pinn - for using your initiative, and knowing when to step in when it's most needed. Your assistance is greatly appreciated by everyone from our classroom. Great stuff, Shylah!

Rio Glenn - being a kind and caring class member who includes others both in and out of the classroom. Well done Rio!

Issy Daye - being a fantastic role model and standing up for what is right. Great stuff Issy!

Sienna Whilesmith - for being on task and completing your work. Sienna, this has been recognised by your peers and you should be very proud of your efforts!

Zavier Manns - for trying your best at all times. Your peers have recognised the effort you put in to achieve the best you can. Well done, Zavier!

ART & STEM

Chloey Otin - for the intricate detail you used to decorate your mask in Art. Very clever Art work, Chloey!
Savannah Manns - excellent presentation of your learning about the Rust Experiment in STEM. Well done, Savannah!

SWPBS

Positive Behaviour in the Playground



- Keeping body parts to ourselves
- Returning equipment
- Being sun smart



- Valuing our equipment and the environment
- Keeping our school clean
- Speaking politely
- Listening to others

Izzy Miller, Erica Harder
- keeping our school clean



- Playing in the correct spaces
- Playing fairly
- Being an upstander

Ivy Briggs, Ella Donaldson, Oliver Shanks, Bonnie Ellis, Harvey Cartwright, Zane Saunders, Jed Lawler, Olli Leeman, Abbie McLeod- playing in the correct spaces
Playing fairly - Gabe Eloy, Sophie Scown, Charlie Hay



- Being inclusive
- Taking care of others

Anakiya Manly, Orin Foot, Verity Cooper - including others
Blair Prescott, Kailen McLeod - being a good friend to others



WHO'S IN THE HOUSE?

Congrats!

5-6G



3

Each fortnight we are celebrating the number of full houses (when every student in the class is at school on each day) each class has achieved over 10 days of learning.

2023 CALENDAR

TERM 3 - 2023

Mon 14th - Fri 18th Aug - Science Week

Tues 15th Aug - School Council Meeting

Fri 18th Aug - Hockey 7s Comp - Shepparton - 5-6 Hockey Teams

Mon 21st - Fri 25th Aug - Book Week

Mon 21st Aug - Book Week Parade

Wed 23rd Aug - Chess Comp @ Chiltern PS - 3-6 Chess Team

Fri 15th Sept - Last day of Term 3 - 2:30pm finish

TERM 4 - 2023

Mon 2nd Oct - Term 4 starts

Wed 11th Oct - Boys to the Bush Community Day - Year 6s - Albury

Mon 23rd - Wed 25th Oct - Canberra Camp - Year 5-6

Mon 6th Nov - Curriculum Day (students do not attend school)

Tues 7th Nov - Melbourne Cup public holiday

Sat 11th Nov - Remembrance Day service

Tues 12th Dec - State-wide Transition Day for all students

Wed 13th Dec - Year 6 Graduation

Thurs 14th Dec - Year 5 Windsurfing

Fri 15th Dec - Year 6 Windsurfing

Mon 18th Dec - Presentation Assembly

Tues 19th Dec - Whole School Pool Fun Day

Wed 20th Dec - Last day of Term 4 - 1:00pm finish

Swimming Feedback

As this was a trial year to see how a change of venue and time of year would go for our swimming program, we welcome any feedback from families. We have already sought feedback from the swim instructors and staff and will get further feedback from students post their Week 1 feedback that they have already given.

Swimming instruction and water safety is a compulsory part of the curriculum, so it won't be not included, however, as always we seek to refine and improve experiences and processes and any feedback you would like to offer is very welcome.

Please email direct to Karryn
karryn.williams@education.vic.gov.au



RPS Happenings...



Kinder Orientation Visit



100 Days of Learning Celebration



Year 5-6 Young Entrepreneurs



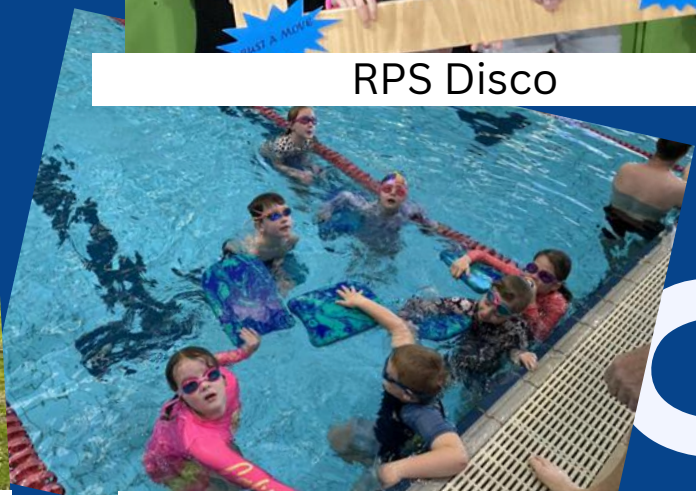
Year 3-4 Drumming



RPS Disco



Year 5-6 T-Ball



Swimming Program



During Term 3 and 4, our Year 3-4s will be working with a variety of artists in our school for 8 weeks to learn new skills, develop confidence and create something awesome to present at the combined schools' event on Thursday 26th October.

Our students are participating in workshops that include drumming, Aboriginal arts, and music & storytelling. The artists running these workshops teach these art forms through a mental health promoting lens.

This year the theme is PERSISTENCE.

This theme will benefit our students' in supporting them to build skills and confidence to give things a go, understand what being persistent means and why it is important for our mental health. Throughout the program we aim to address this as students practically learn a new art form and create a performance or presentation to share with others -experiencing the positive benefits of persisting!

After the 8 week program of workshops, schools will come together for a theatre-style festival event to share their creations. The opportunity for children to have a real life experience, performing or presenting in front of others, is where a large part of building courage, resilience and joy happens.

Our Year 5-6s are also involved in this project as they capture the journey our 3-4s will go through across the 8 weeks and use this to produce a film that will be screened at the Creative Lands Festival.

They are working with a film maker and using their ICT lessons to record, edit and produce a film.

FESTIVAL DAY DETAILS

WHERE: Henderson Pavilion,
Rutherglen

WHEN: Thursday 26th
October - during school time.

More information to follow.
BRING YOUR FAMILY!!

More Creative Lands Festival
news to come in the next few
weeks!!

To see the video of last year's
Creative Lands Festival:
[www.supergoatmedia.com.au/
creativelandsfe stival](http://www.supergoatmedia.com.au/creativelandsfestival)
Password: Rutherglen

For information about NESAY:
<https://nesay.com.au/about/>

For RCH Program information:
[https://www.rch.org.au/mental-
health/festival-for-healthy-living/](https://www.rch.org.au/mental-health/festival-for-healthy-living/)



Kindly funded by the Victorian Department of Health
VicHealth, and Indigo Shire Council



Father's Day Stall



TIME POOR BUT WOULD LOVE TO HELP? HERE'S HOW YOU CAN

WE HAVE SOME PARENTS PUTTING TOGETHER GIFT PACKS AND SEEK DONATIONS OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS:

(Simply purchase an item or two and drop off to the Office)

10 x packets Tim Tams
10 x Large Bags Lollies eg, Snakes / Party Mix
10 x Large Bags Fun Size Cadbury Chocolates
10 x large Bags Licorice Allsorts

2 x Large Boxes Nutrigrain
4 x 750g Bags Salted Peanuts
6 x Packets French Onion Soup

IF YOU SOME TIME TO SPARE, THEN WE WOULD GRATEFULLY WELCOME ANY

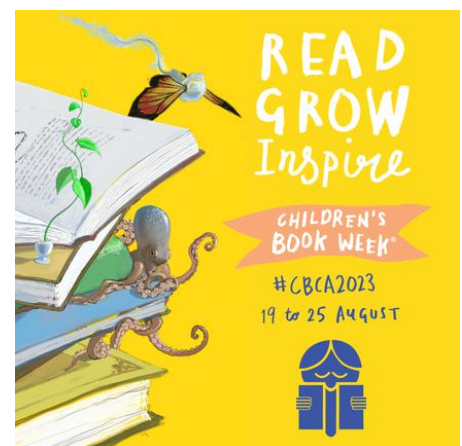
- Baked Goods - biscuits, slices, rum balls etc. (please list ingredients)
- Plants
- Other gift items

HELPERS NEEDED:

Monday 28th - pricing and sorting items into containers. Time TBC depending on helpers' availability.

Friday 1st Sept - helping run the stall, 9am-11am (or any available time within this)

Thank you to families that donated to our Rotary Dinner catering. Our scheduled turn on the roster for this week has been cancelled due to the Golf Club Venue being unavailable and Rotary going to a local hospitality venue. We will use your donation for our next scheduled catering in Sept, however if you would like your donation returned please let Karryn know.



Book Week Parade
Monday 21st August
9am in the BRS

3 Proven Ways to Strengthen and Protect Children & Teens Against Anxiety



www.heysigmund.com

Anxiety comes from a part of the brain called the amygdala. The amygdala is like that friend who loves you loads, but takes everything personally and always assumes the worst.

The amygdala's job is to constantly scan the environment looking for threat. When it senses something that might be a threat – and separation, humiliation, exclusion count as threat – it will surge our bodies with a neurochemical fuel to get us ready to fight or flee the threat.

This is what strong, healthy amygdalae do, and they've been doing it since the beginning of forever. They are mighty masterful at the job – experts, actually – but sometimes they can work too hard to protect us, organising our bodies for fight or flight even when there is no need. When there is no fight or flight, there is nothing to burn the neurochemical fuel surging through us, so it builds up and creates the symptoms of anxiety. For our kids and teens – for any of us – this can feel awful, but there is a way to turn it around.

First though, about change ...

The brain changes and wires through experience, so the more of something it does, the easier that something will be. This will happen for better or worse. Brave behaviour will lead to more brave behaviour, and avoidance will make avoidance more likely.

If anxiety has been around for a while, this is a sign that the amygdala is a strong, powerful, active one. This is absolutely not a sign of breakage. It's a sign of a strong, healthy, powerful brain that has learned the fight or flight spectacularly well. It might take a little while to teach that amygdala to let go of that well-learned response, but absolutely this can be done.

For a while, moving through anxiety and towards brave behaviour might feel awkward and scary for your child, as any new behaviour does. When things feel awkward and unfamiliar, the temptation will be to go back to what's familiar – for you and your child. This is how it is for all of us.

This might mean that when you encourage your child or teen towards brave behaviour, things might get a little worse before they get better – but they will get better. Just be aware of this, so you can give yourself and your small human some big love when you're feeling mean for pushing them forward, or when they're pushing against you with everything in them.

Something to keep in mind – 'Does my response support them, or their anxiety?' Avoidance will strengthen their anxiety, brave behaviour will strengthen them.

Anxiety can be a shady character. Sometimes it can feel as though our response is supporting our child, when actually it's supporting his or her anxiety. This is a breathtakingly easy trap to fall into, and it's likely that anyone who has a child who has been anxious at some point, has fallen into it. As parents we want to protect our children from harm. The thing is though, our role isn't only to keep them safe, but to raise them to be strong, resilient and brave, so they can help themselves to safety.

For this reason, it is important to begin with the mindset that your child or teen has everything they need inside them to move towards brave behaviour. Anxiety drives avoidance, and the more avoidance is the chosen response, the more the brain will wire around that. This will drive a fierce tendency to avoid, as it will feel like the only way to stay safe.

The beautiful flip side of this is that the more our children and teens move towards a brave response, even when they're feeling anxious, the easier brave behaviour will become. The right experiences can rework the neural wiring on two fronts. First, they can make an overprotective amygdala less likely to fire up unnecessarily. Second, they can strengthen the parts of the brain that can actually calm anxiety. No doubt about it, this will require patience and persistence. Understanding how it works will make it easier to move forward when everything in you or your child is telling you to retreat to somewhere that feels softer and less frightening.

Strengthening against anxiety is a process, and given that we are working with a strong, powerful, highly experienced amygdala that performs its job with fierce commitment, retraining it to be less active will take time and consistency – as all worthwhile things do.

There are three things that have been proven to change the structure and function of the brain to protect and strengthen it against anxiety. **Mindfulness, exercise and gratitude** can, quite literally, create new pathways in the brain that can support your child in being calmer, braver and less anxious. At the same time, they can work towards fading the pathways that have strengthened around fight (anger, tantrums) or flight (avoidance). Let's look at how these work.

Exercise

Exercise is the wonderdrug-but-not-a-drug of the mental health world. The effects of exercise on mental health are profound. In the same way exercise strengthens the body, it also does amazing things for the brain. Research published in the Journal of Neuroscience has found that one of the ways exercise strengthens the brain against anxiety is by boosting levels of important neurotransmitters. One of these is GABA (gamma-aminobutyric acid). GABA has a number of functions, and having the right balance is particularly important for anxiety. Research has found that people with lower levels of GABA within the hippocampus (a part of the brain involved in memory) are less able to block unwanted thoughts. These include the 'what-if' thoughts that feed into excessive worrying and rumination.

GABA also acts as the brain's calm down chemical. Some neurons are easily excited and quick to fire up. In the right amounts, they're little gems. We need them to help us think quickly, act quickly and remember. When there are too many of them firing up though, anxiety can happen – but not if there is enough GABA to calm things down. GABA has the very important job of settling these neurons when they get a little too playful. If GABA is low, there is nothing to calm these over-excited neurons.

Mindfulness

A research analysis of 19 separate mindfulness/anxiety studies found that mindfulness was, 'associated with robust and substantial reductions in symptoms of anxiety'.

Think of mindfulness as paying attention to one thing at a time in the moment. Mindfulness trains the brain to let thoughts, feelings, sensations come and go. Thoughts in themselves aren't the problem. The trouble comes when they stay for longer than they need to and fuel feelings and behaviour. With regular practice, mindfulness builds the capacity for children and teens to be with their thoughts and feelings, without reacting to them. Eventually, this makes way for anxious thoughts and feelings to be there, but without the intensity and persuasiveness that can drive fear and avoidance.

Here's how mindfulness changes the brain:

- it decreases activity in the amygdala;
- it increases activity in the prefrontal cortex – the part of the brain that is responsible for calming our big emotional responses (such as anxiety, fear, anger);
- it strengthens connectivity between the reactive amygdala ('oh no we're in trouble') and the rational, calming pre-frontal cortex ('nah, all good here'). When this connection is strong, the pre-frontal cortex is more able to calm the amygdala and reduce anxiety.
- it increases GABA (the neurotransmitter that also gets a boost with exercise);
- it decreases cortisol (the stress hormone);
- it strengthens the neural connections that activate the relaxation response, which is a response that has been found to neutralise the neurochemicals connected to the fight or flight response;

Gratitude

Anxious thoughts are often driven by anxious memories, but research has found that these memories don't need to come from actual experiences. When children hear about an emotional experience, such as through the news, a friend, a movie, or a story, this can be enough to influence the amygdala. These experiences don't have to be big to have influence. Hearing about an experience that was embarrassing, confusing, frightening or confronting for someone else, can be enough. These stories might not always be in awareness, but they can sit behind the scenes and drive worries, fear and negative thinking.

Positive memories can push against the power of frightening or emotional memories, and their capacity to fuel anxious thoughts and behaviour. Thoughts and memories also create pathways in the brain, so the more a thought or memory is accessed, the easier it will be to access in the future. Research has found that gratitude can increase our tendency to recall positive memories. When positive memories more accessible, they will have a greater influence on thoughts, feelings and behaviour.

Nurturing gratitude and building a store of positive memories can be done simply. Before school or at bedtime, ask your child or teen to name three things they is grateful for. Encourage them to write them in a journal, or on pieces of paper that get popped into a gratitude jar or box. This will create a visual cue, as well as a place they can go to when they need a little boost.

And finally ...

We will never get rid of all anxiety our children feel – and we don't want to. When there really is something to steer away from, the fight or flight response can be a lifesaver. What we want them to do is to read their anxiety, and to take charge. We want them to see that anxiety is a warning, and sometimes an unnecessary one, not a stop sign. Most importantly, we want to empower them to respond to anxiety with strength and courage, and to move towards brave behaviour whenever they can.

Any progress is great progress. Anxiety is difficult to deal with, but it is manageable. There will be steps forward and steps back, but over time the forward steps will become more and the backward ones will become less. Each one of these strategies will make a difference, and you don't need to do all of them. Choose one to start with, and try to be as consistent as possible with that then, when they're ready, introduce another. Be patient, and be kind to yourself. It takes time to nurture brave little people into brave big ones. And don't underestimate the difference you're making by being one of the people who believe in them, and who can see them for the capable, brave, magic-makers they are.

When the kids of RPS had their say...

Toward the end of Term 2 our Year 4-6s completed the Attitudes to School Survey. A survey that is done every year to give students the chance to provide feedback on a range of matters. We use the feedback to celebrate what is going well, to affirm improvements in areas we focused on based on the previous year's results and to gather students' views to help inform future planning and direction of the school.

The results presented below are the percentage of positive responses from all students surveyed.

Effective teaching time	91%
My teacher tells us what we are learning and why	92%
My teacher asks questions to check that we understand	95%
My teacher asks me questions that challenge my thinking	95%
My teacher explains difficult things clearly / My teacher helps me understand things*	81%

Differentiated learning challenge	91%
My teacher understands how I learn	83%
My teacher helps me to do my best*	95%
My teacher gives extra help when students need it	96%

Effective classroom behaviour	92%
Students at this school treat teachers with respect	86%
My teacher expects students to pay attention / My teacher expects me to listen*	99%
My teacher sets clear rules for classroom behaviour	99%
Students at this school treat each other with respect	83%

Sense of inclusion	94%
I have lots of chances to be part of class activities	95%
I have friends at this school*	99%
My teacher makes me feel like I matter	87%
My teacher makes sure all students feel included	96%

Attitudes to attendance	91%	90%
I always try to attend school	94%	92%
My parent(s), caregiver(s) or guardian(s) believe(s) that going to school is important	100%	100%
I try to catch up on my work if I am absent from school	79%	79%

School connectedness (Sense of connectedness)	88%
I feel proud about being a student at this school	94%
I like this school*	91%
I am happy to be at this school*	95%
I feel like I belong at this school*	82%
I look forward to going to school	79%

Emotional awareness and regulation	84%
I know the emotions I feel*	91%
I know when my feelings are making it hard for me to focus	92%
I know ways to calm myself down	85%
I know how to be patient even when I am really excited*	73%
I know how to get through something even when I feel frustrated	78%

Managing bullying	91%
I feel safe at this school*	91%
This school deals fairly with bullying problems	87%
I know where to get help if I feel bullied / I know where to get help if someone hurts me or if I feel upset*	95%