

Raise

RAISE THE CHILD CHANGE THE WORLD

ISSUE 3



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How to Develop Kids' Critical Thinking Skills

ANNA SEIDL

Increasing emphasis is being placed on teaching critical thinking at schools. While in the past, education has focused more on facts and content, in today's classrooms, there has been a shift towards critical thinking skills. Critical thinking teaches children how to think, not simply what to think. Critical thinking is now embedded across all learning areas in Australian schools. More importantly, it is a vital skill for life and work.

What is Critical Thinking?

For an area that is receiving a great deal of attention, it can be difficult to define exactly what critical thinking is. For philosopher John Dewey, who is credited for first introducing the term in 1910, critical thinking is defined as: "active, persistent and careful consideration of any belief or supposed form of knowledge in the light of the grounds that support it, and the further conclusions to which it tends."

Interestingly, he tended to use the term interchangeably with "reflective thinking", highlighting the important role reflection plays in critical thinking. This can include learners reflecting on the ways they learn best, or on strengths and points for improvement in their work.

Other elements of critical thinking include:

- **Decision making:** Thinking of different possibilities; giving reasoning and evidence to support a choice.
- **Analysing:** Thinking about a topic deeply, objectively and critically. This might begin with clarifying the topic and the issues at stake.
- **Problem-solving:** Thinking of a range of solutions to a problem and being able to identify and apply the most appropriate solution.
- **Inferring:** Considering the implications of a statement or point of view.

- **Interpreting:** Determining the meaning of information, including images, graphs, texts, etc. This can include the understandings that there can be multiple interpretations.
- **Evaluating:** Critically considering evidence to determine the strengths and weaknesses of different points of view.

Why is Critical Thinking Important?

In a rapidly changing workforce where versatility is more valued than ever, employers are increasingly seeking "soft" skills such as critical thinking that can be adapted and transferred into different contexts and roles. For example, over the years 2012-2015, there was a 158% increase in job advertisements requiring critical thinking skills.

Critical thinking skills can also support good life choices. Scientists have found correlations between critical thinking, wellness and longevity. A study by California State University has found that people who tested highly on critical thinking skills were less likely to experience a range of negative life events in areas such as academic progress, health, legal difficulties, interpersonal relationships and financial situations. Fortunately, this same study also found that critical thinking is a skill that can be learnt and improved.





HOW CAN READING FICTION SUPPORT CRITICAL THINKING?

For many families, story time is already part of their evening routine. Encouraging your child's active participation in reading, with discussion and questioning, can help develop their critical thinking skills through fiction.

Explaining:

Asking your child to tell the story back to you helps them to develop the skill of summarising. This requires a level of analysis, as retelling the story requires your child to identify what are the most important points.

Predicting:

After reading a few pages, ask your child to predict the ending and justify their prediction. On reaching the middle of the book, ask them if they have changed their prediction and, if so, why. After finishing, you can then discuss how accurate their predictions were. This can support the development of inference skills.

Open-ended questioning:

Stories can be used as a springboard to ask your child open-ended questions that do not have a single right answer. Open-ended questioning can encourage children to think creatively without being concerned about giving a "wrong" answer.

Suggested text:

The Arrival - Shaun Tan

Considering multiple perspectives:

Using a story that provides a range of different viewpoints or encourages children to see the world from a different point of view enables them to consider complexities and tolerate ambiguities. Talking about the different perspectives that characters hold can be a rich topic of conversation.

Suggested texts:

Mirror - Jeannie Baker

Shake a Leg - Boori Monty Pryor

The Sandwich Swap - Queen Rania Al Abdullah

Alternative endings:

What might happen if the story took place in a different location? Or at a different time? What if one of the characters had not been there? How might that have affected the outcome? Considering alternative endings requires thinking logically about sequences of action.

Suggested text:

The Paper bag Princess - Robert Munsch

Justifying:

Providing evidence to support a point of view is a core skill of critical thinking. Asking your child to give their opinion using evidence from the text or illustrations helps them to develop their ability to justify. Questions might include: What kind of a character is this? Why? How do you think the character feels here? Why? What kind of an environment is this? How do we know?

Suggested text:

Rosie's Walk - Pat Hutchins

Applying to the real world:

Is there a moral to the story? Is there a way your child could apply this to their own life? Is there a situation where they have encountered a similar issue? Encouraging your child to think about how issues in the story might apply to their own life can enhance inference and interpretation skills, as well as enrich the reading experience.

Suggested texts:

Lorax - Dr Seuss

Last Stop on Market Street - Matt de la Pena

Rainbow Fish - Marcus Pfister

Problem solving:

Stories are normally based around a problem or conflict. You can ask your child to identify the problem or conflict, along with any solutions that the characters employ. Discussing whether this was a good solution and considering alternative solutions helps your child to appreciate the complexities of a situation and weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of different courses of action.

Suggested text:

There was an Old Woman Who Swallowed a Spider

Alexander's Outing - Pamela Allen

Stuck - Oliver Jeffers



HOW CRITICAL THINKING SUPPORTS NON-FICTION READING AND RESEARCH

Critical thinking skills can also support children in choosing what to read. This is particularly important in the area of non-fiction, which is intended to present factual information and is used for research. Often the Internet is the first port-of-call for children looking for information. And while the Internet gives us access to more information than ever before, sometimes good quality information seems harder than ever to find, with increasing concerns around “fake news” and misleading social media posts. The quantity of information can also be difficult to deal with. As technology entrepreneur Mitch Kapor humorously puts it: “Getting information off the Internet is like taking a drink from a fire hydrant.”

Critical thinking skills equip students to deal with this online information environment. Critical thinking can help children firstly to select what to read, and secondly, to evaluate the quality of what they have read. While it is likely impossible to prevent your child from coming across misinformation or simply poor-quality information, developing a critical approach to text can equip children to identify and avoid poor-quality information in preference for information that is trustworthy and credible.

For many children, the first step to thinking critically about information on the Internet is to slow down. Research indicates that children spend a significantly shorter time on each Internet page than adults. They are less likely to glance down the page, so can easily miss relevant information unless it is in the first or second paragraph. Encouraging your child to spend a little more time on each page and look over the entire page can help them assess the quality of the information source. Considering the following areas can also help to guide your child to find good quality information.



Currency

- Is the information up-to-date? With rapidly changing fields such as science and technology, this is particularly important.

Relevance

- Is the information on topic? Does it help to answer the question your child is wanting to answer?

Purpose

- What is the purpose of the website? Is it trying to sell something?
- Is it trying to persuade its readers of a particular point of view?
- Does it contain bias?
- Does it represent multiple viewpoints?

Accuracy

- Is the information compatible with common-sense?
- Does it match the information in other sources?

Authority

- Is there an author? If so, can we find anything out about the author's credentials?
- Is the website reputable? (Eg. a government site, an education site, a quality news site?)
- If the page recommends other sites, are these also good quality sites?

Regardless of your child's age, reading and critical thinking skills go hand-in-hand. Encouraging your child to engage actively with texts, ask questions of reading material and reflect on its meaning make reading a rich and thought-provoking experience.

Anna is Consultant - Digital Learning and Library Services at Cairns Catholic Education Services



Meet:

Katarina Carroll

Katarina Carroll is the 20th (and first female) Commissioner of the Queensland Police Service. She is also a former Mount St Bernard College student who credits the school's strong female leadership with helping to build the foundation for her future pursuits. Commissioner Carroll opens up about her early life on the farm, journey into policing, inspiring career highlights and what she gets up to outside work.

What led you to pursue policing as a career?

My formative years were spent on the family farm, working in the tobacco fields, driving cars and tractors, and riding motorbikes. When we weren't at school, my brothers and I were picking or planting and hoeing in the fields. I learnt a great deal from my parents about working hard and how to be resilient. My mother had an incredibly strong work ethic; she would match the work of anyone whilst in the field and then, in addition to this, would routinely cook for 30 to 40 men. I believe this gave us a well-rounded view on life and gave us an understanding about what is important. The humility and sense of community instilled by my parents would ultimately lead to my career as a police officer.

I was 16 years old, whilst boarding at Mount St Bernard College, when I first considered a career in policing. Two of my closest friends at school had fathers who were police officers – one at Mount Surprise and the other at Ravenshoe. During school breaks, I sometimes stayed with those friends, and I was able to see how those police officers interacted with their small communities. It was a really wonderful relationship. It wasn't authoritarian, with give and take on both sides. I absolutely loved this style of country policing, where a very close relationship was established with the community. Although I never had an opportunity to work in a small country town, it was these early experiences that led me to pursue a career as a police officer.

How did your education and experience at school help to shape you into the person you are today?

My parents sacrificed a lot so that my brothers and I could attend boarding school for our secondary education. It was here that I was first influenced by strong women in leadership. The Mercy Sisters were highly educated, intelligent women responsible for raising and educating young women. By the time I left secondary school I had come a long way since I began school, where I couldn't speak much English. The Mercy Sisters' courageous, compassionate, humble and patient service taught me a great deal and, importantly, reinforced a fundamental of leadership - authenticity.

In my opinion, being authentic is the foundation of leadership. It is about being a good person.

Early learnings from my parents and the Mercy Sisters have kept me grounded. Their philosophy has transitioned into the development of my essential leadership skills that guide my day-to-day decision making. Being an authentic leader means that you:

- are true to yourself, not the expectations of others;
- deal honestly with yourself and others;
- know your strengths, limitations and values; and
- act on your personal values and convictions.

What are some of the highlights of your career so far?

I have been privileged to hold several key leadership roles, which have been a real highlight throughout my career. These include:

- the Planning and Operations Commander for the G20 Summit;
- the Commissioner of the Queensland Fire and Emergency Services;
- my current role as the 20th Commissioner of the Queensland Police Service (and first female).



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The G20 Summit was a particular career highpoint for me. It was Australia's largest peacetime security operation and involved 26 world leaders, including Barack Obama. This event was unlike any other operation undertaken by the Queensland Police Service. The host was actually the Prime Minister and Cabinet and we were the jurisdictional security lead. For me and my team of 120 personnel, it was an intense and stressful two years. The scrutiny by three levels of government and our international counterparts was quite extraordinary.

But the media certainly added another dynamic. As one journalist put it in 2014, **"Carroll, too, will be under the spotlight. Get this event right – no shootings, no out-of-control protests, no monumental transport stuff up – and the whispers about her being a future police commissioner will grow louder. Get it wrong, and well.... there'll be a lot more time to spend on the sidelines as a soccer mum"**.

Commanders and police leaders hold ultimate authority and responsibility for the outcome of any event, activity or operation they command. The success or failure of the security surrounding this G20 Summit lay firmly on my shoulders. But I surrounded myself with a truly extraordinary team and the event was a remarkable success – a true career highlight.

What advice would you give to students who may like to pursue a career in law enforcement?

I would encourage anyone that has a desire to help the community and keep it safe to pursue a career in law enforcement. A career in law enforcement is not easy and you will find yourself out of your 'comfort zone' at times. Like everything in life, you must be prepared for some setbacks but don't be discouraged from achieving your goal – remember, everyone suffers setbacks at some stage. You must always be looking at ways you can improve. Accept new challenges, learn new things and constantly look for better ways of doing things – and make sure you find others that support and motivate you on your journey.

Why should girls in future generations consider a policing career?

For anyone wishing to join the Queensland Police Service as a sworn officer, we are an equal opportunity employer and recognise that modern policing in a culturally diverse society requires officers who reflect the State's gender, cultural, linguistic and regional diversity. There are some fantastic opportunities for sworn police officers around the state in an extremely diverse number of roles. The life of a police officer is certainly not routine – every day presents new and exciting challenges. Ordinarily, a newly appointed police officer will spend their first three years as a General Duties officer before having opportunities to



develop and apply for specialist positions. There is also significant scope for personal development and improvement within the Queensland Police Service and, who knows, one day you may make it all the way to Commissioner – why not!

To provide some context around my role as Commissioner, I am responsible for driving the direction of the Queensland Police Service both strategically and operationally. I lead approximately 15,500 personnel and this will increase to nearly 18,000 people by 2025. My officers attend more than 4000 jobs each day, which includes an average of 277 critical and high priority incidents. Remember though, I didn't always have the skills necessary to lead a large organisation and I certainly never imagined being the Commissioner when I was at school.

What would we find you doing outside work?

Most of my time away from work is spent with my husband and two children. My husband and I are extremely proud of our children's achievements – both of whom share our love of sport. My son represents Queensland in the Under 19 Cricket Team and my daughter has undertaken training at the Evert Tennis Academy in Florida. I try to instil in them the importance of trying their hardest, to give it their all, but at the same time to be a good person and treat everyone with respect. I believe encouraging

young people is vital to ensure we develop the next generation of leaders and community custodians.

I am also passionate about personal development and lifelong learning

– you've got to keep learning, or you will be left behind. I have managed to attain several tertiary qualifications as an adult, including an Executive Masters in Public Administration, a Degree in Criminology, a Graduate Diploma in Applied Management and an Honorary Doctor of Letters from James Cook University. I was also very fortunate to receive the Sir Vincent Fairfax Scholarship in Ethical Leadership and the Sir James Wolfensohn Public Service Scholarship, to study at the prestigious Kennedy Business School, Harvard University. I encourage everyone to adopt an ethos of continuous learning, so you are in a position to accept and embrace new opportunities as they arise throughout your life and career.

Mount St Bernard College in Herberton was established by the Sisters of Mercy in 1921 for boarding and day secondary students. It services the educational needs of students from remote areas of Far North and Northwest Queensland.

Get To Know Peta Bryan



As a former Maritime Warfare Officer for the Royal Australian Navy, Peta runs a tight ship, regardless of whether she's at home with her family, on the sporting fields with her kids, or at St John's School with her staff and students.

Tell us a little about yourself

I live on a sugarcane farm with my husband and two children. I love the outdoors and spending time with my family. I have a strong passion for coaching sport, and anything sport related.

What did your role in the Navy involve and what skills did it give you for your career as a principal?

My role in the Navy was to navigate warships around the ocean, peacekeeping operations and lead a crew of sailors, soldiers, or airmen.

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Navy life exposed me to opportunities and experiences that have thrilled and daunted me, but most importantly, provided me the opportunity to work and learn from the most incredibly gifted leaders, teaching me exceptional levels of personal discipline, compassionate leadership and the ability to work as a team player. The Navy's core values of service, courage, respect, integrity, excellence and loyalty are key values I live my life by.

How did you transition from the Navy to a career in education?

I loved the military world and still do to this day. However, my new-found passion for serving my rural community as Principal of St John's School has become my priority. This passion is driven by the same reason I joined the Navy - to serve my community and lead my school.

How do the two compare?

Honestly, 'it was a match made in heaven'. Equipped with a passion to lead and influence young adults, the art of influencing children to

learn and be captivated by learning is a fulfilling and rewarding achievement for me.

How did your own education shape you into the person you are today?

Growing up Mum and Dad always valued education as the cornerstone of success, alongside hard work and prayer. My go-to mantra: "Anything worth doing is never easy."

What advice would you give a 16-year-old?

Set goals – The world has a habit of making room for those who know where they are going. Treat all people with respect. Everyone has the potential to give something back.

What do you love most about St John's?

I love the vibrant spirit of community that exists between the families, staff and parishioners – 'Great School, Great Spirit'.

What is your vision for the school?

I want to inspire the students by instilling in them the belief of a positive mindset by teaching them that they can accomplish great things with commitment, effort and goal setting. This can create the most rewarding adventures along their life journey (as I have had... 'a country kid from a sugarcane farm').

What are some of the highlights of your career so far?

Working alongside staff who are dedicated to their vocation and providing the best outcomes for the kids at St John's, helps to inspire me to be the best version of myself. Celebrating students' achievements together with staff, parents and parishioners is simply wonderful! The community events such as the annual Christmas concert, Easter Play and Three Saints Festival showcases the amazing spirit of St John's.

When not at school, where would we find you?

Being a mum to my two children, attending church on weekends and on a sporting field, coaching kids.





Giving, Sharing, Compassion & Kindness

& how these values shape our children

CAITLIN FRANCIS

We know classrooms are no longer ‘chalk and talk’ and schools teach far more than maths and science. Now more than ever, students are exposed to a series of holistic programs aimed at nurturing their minds, bodies and overall wellbeing.

Among the initiatives being embraced by schools are strategies focused on igniting key values in our kids - things like compassion, kindness and a sense of justice and community.

But are these values the result of ‘nature’ or ‘nurture’? Can we really show kids how to achieve these skills, as we would traditional subjects? Leaders in this space say yes, and it’s important that we do.

PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Mother of Good Counsel School in North Cairns created a “Shoe Box Surprise” for local aged care residents during the 2020 COVID-19 lockdown. Each box contained a card or letter, a family photo, some homemade art or craft, soap and a pen.

Residents shed tears of joy when the brightly wrapped boxes were delivered, the school’s Assistant Principal Religious Education, Manda Young, said. She believes teaching children values such as giving and kindness helps guide them to a fuller life. “It is in giving that we receive,” Manda said.

“Young children are still developing their sense of self. If we can encourage them to learn and adapt these values, through role modelling and explicit teaching, they will grow to be happier people, in turn creating healthier and happier communities.

“Students from our earliest years display these core values and begin to understand how the way we treat others out of the kindness of our own hearts impacts others and ourselves.

“These values taught means that the students leaving our school have the tools in their toolkits to become empathetic and supportive adults.”

Maria Beswick, a teacher, has been running the Justice Squad at St Gerard Majella School in Woree for 18 years. “I’ve had contact with some students who have gone on to be vocal members of the community and have made reference to their time in the Justice Squad,” she said.

“We don’t just teach charity. We have organised postcard campaigns and petitions. These ranged from support of refugees, to maintaining the aid budget, to campaigning for sustainable fishing, to asking the Government to release children from detention and forgiving Third World debt.”

ENCOURAGEMENT

Maria believes some children have a natural disposition for empathy and compassion, but kids can equally be taught these values.

“The naturally empathetic ones discover they have a quality that is valued and important, and that gives them more confidence to be that person,” she said.

“The ones that need a little help to develop this sometimes go on to be some of the strongest members. It definitely can be taught and is so important for the complete development of a person.



"Being mindful of others is a quality we need in people, especially now. In a digital age it can be easy for students to develop other traits. Grounding them in compassion, kindness and sharing will help them through this."

HOW SHOULD PARENTS CONTINUE THE CONVERSATION AT HOME?

"Talk to your child when you see an issue worth supporting. Children understand more than we think, or want to understand at least," Maria said.

"Make sure your children are clear about your values. Don't let them second guess. Explain why you are sending an email to challenge something that's happening in our country or overseas. Tell them why you value the environment but more importantly show them what you believe. Introduce them to books and websites. Take them on a protest to show your support for something.

"Use people like Greta Thunberg as an example of how one person can change things. If you support a charity, tell them. Show them documentaries. Answer their questions no matter how hard. If you don't know the answer, look it up. The world won't change unless we have well-educated students. Educated in how the world works and what we need to do to make it a better place. Acknowledge their concerns about what's happening in the world."

THE BENEFITS

Holy Cross School in Trinity Park runs a Service and Outreach Program on Friday afternoons, for students in Years 5 and 6.

The program encompasses a range of groups, including Justice Squad, Kindness Crew, Environment Committee, Playground Group, Reporters and Photographers, and the Construction Crew.

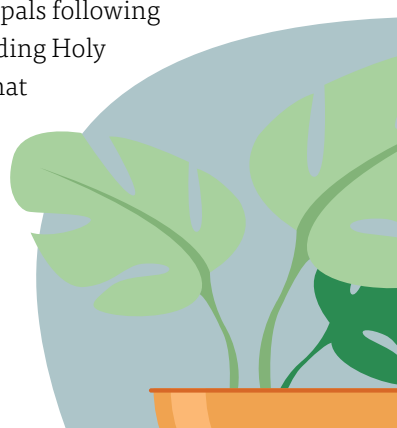
Activities are student-led, with staff assigned purely to help turn ideas into achievable actions. The groups lead a series of projects, including promoting and coordinating recycling initiatives, fundraising to assist the purchasing of items such as a motorised wheelchair for an elderly parishioner, helping at local daycare centres, growing and supplying food for outreach organisation Rosies, making care packages and cards for children in hospital, and creating safe play spaces and activities for the younger students to enjoy.

Year 6 student Danika said participating in the program helped put things in perspective.

"When you help someone, it feels really good to know that you are actually making a difference in someone's life," she said.

Luka, also in Year 6, believes: "It's about putting yourself in other people's shoes" while classmate Mia reflected: "Some people don't really understand how much impact this can have. It could change people's lives."

Principal Sarah Hamilton described how she was sought out by high school principals following enrolment interviews, commending Holy Cross students and remarking that the students were each able to talk widely about their own values, and the importance of service in the community.



She said the program was “another forum for children to find their spark and shine”.

“Some children who are really passionate and vocal during these initiatives don’t necessarily put themselves forward and shine in a traditional classroom context,” Sarah said.

“But ask them to stand up and talk about why recycling plastic is important, and they will do that with great enthusiasm and passion. These children are our future, and we need to listen to them. It is vital that we acknowledge the importance of their voice.

“For an hour each week our students are connecting with their passion, learning who they are, and what they can do to leave the world a better place for having been upon it. By having a really firm foundation and a true understanding of their spirituality and identity as a member of a Catholic community, they will be well positioned to live a happy, fulfilling life. Our Service and Outreach initiative is a living and breathing model, unpacking some of the things they can continue to do throughout their lives.”

Involvement in programs such as Justice Squad can help kids to find a sense of purpose, Maria said.

“In their daily lives they can walk tall,” she said.

“I have actually had feedback from some parents of kids who weren’t so good in class behaviorally and/or academically but they have commented how different they have been because of the Justice Squad and what they do. It has given them a confidence they didn’t have before, feelings of satisfaction and sometimes of recognition.

“Mention any person in history who is renowned for their humanitarian achievements, and people look up to them more than any politician or movie star.”

Caitlin is a Digital Media Officer at Cairns Catholic Education Services





Friendship Isn't Always Easy

SHARN WARD

Humans are social creatures with brains that are hard wired for connection.

Our ability to negotiate our needs, thoughts and feelings with others has ensured our evolutionary success. From the time we were born, much of our brain activity is wired through connection with our parents and caregivers, allowing us to take in data through our senses, read the intentions of others and find ways to fit in and be accepted.

Our need for others extends beyond the parent-child bond to a desire to develop more in-depth connections on a social level with others. Our social relationships play an important role throughout our entire life, providing us with a sense of belonging, safety, and security. While social development is a lifelong process, close friendships become more observable at around age 5 when peer bonds and relationships become stronger.

This is usually a time when parents and caregivers become acutely aware of the impact that friendships can have on their child's well-being and mental health.

HEALTHY & UNHEALTHY FRIENDSHIPS

There is a clear correlation between a child's friendships, their growth and development and healthy behaviours. Research shows that healthy friendships in childhood and adolescence promote positive mental health improving resilience, self-concept, a sense of purpose, academic performance, and attitudes to learning (Vitaro, F., Boivin, M., & Bukowski, W. M., 2009). This results in overall better wellbeing. Interestingly, as we get older healthy friendships can also lower blood pressure and help us to live longer and have healthier lives (Kent de Grey, R.G., & Uchino, B.N., 2020).

So, what about unhealthy friendships? Most of us have experienced difficulties or conflict in at least one important friendship, that has had an adverse or negative impact on our well-being and mental health. Children can also experience emotional and psychological difficulties when they feel stuck in conflict in a meaningful friendship. When friendships are unhealthy children can display internalising symptoms such as

anxiety, psychosomatic complaints and depression, and externalising symptoms such as inattention, hyperactivity, and aggression, as well as be at a greater risk of academic underachievement.

EMOTIONAL PAIN & PHYSICAL PAIN

Did you know that the brain experiences emotional pain in the same way it experiences physical pain? Social pain caused by unhealthy social interactions causes negative emotions and can have negative effects, similar to physical pain. This helps us to understand why parents are usually quick to respond to their child's emotional upset when they are distressed. Understandably, parents often want to jump in and fix the problem and provide their child with ways to avoid the person responsible for the anguish. It is important to understand that conflict in relationships is inevitable, and with the right support, it is healthy for children to experience difficulties in their friendships.

If we can view social problems as an opportunity for learning new skills that will be important for the duration of their life, a child's social,

emotional, psychological, and moral development will develop and strengthen.

It is clear to see why healthy friendships are important but what about the other factors that can complicate a child's ability to develop and maintain healthy friendships? Some children can have delayed social and emotional skills due to a pre-existing mental health condition, trauma, learning difficulties, a disability or personality traits such as being bossy, mean, shy or arrogant, that can impact on their ability to develop the skills to maintain healthy friendships.

Fortunately, there are many credible resources available to schools and parents to assist children to develop the social and emotional skills needed for healthy connections and relationships. Here is one of them:

FRIENDOLOGY 101 FRIENDSHIP PROGRAM

The Friendology 101 friendship program is internationally recognised and evidence based. Many Catholic schools in the Far North, such as St Joseph's, deliver this program to students to help them learn the skills to develop and maintain healthy friendships. Friendology provides a common language that is easy for students to understand and practical skills, through role-playing and activities, to improve a student's ability and confidence to deal independently with problems and conflict. The program is taught in the classroom, though parents are strongly encouraged to support their child's learning by familiarising themselves with the

program through information and resources available online. Parents who use the Friendology language at home and have conversations with their child about managing friendship difficulties can help to empower them to deal with difficult situations independently, and in kind and respectful ways.

The program teaches children how to deal with 'Mean on Purpose' behaviour, 'Tricky Situations' (such as not being invited to a birthday party when everyone else is) and being stuck in a 'Friendship Sandwich'. It also discusses putting out 'Friendship Fires', measuring the quality (unhealthy or healthy) of friendships through the 'Friend-o-Meter', understanding the 'Friend-o-Cycle' to help work through conflict and how to put out a 'Friendship Fire' with a 'Quick Comeback'. At St Joseph's, we also use Friendship Journals to support the Friendology 101 program. The journals were donated by IFYS Foster Care.



If you would like to know more about the Friendology 101 Friendship Program and resources available to parents visit: urstrong.com/parents

*Sharn is a School Counsellor/
Psychologist at St Joseph's School,
Parramatta Park*

Advice for parents concerned about their child's social wellbeing and friendships:

- Discuss conflict as a normal part of relationships and friendships.
- Do not be over-involved in the issue or harsh about other children. Remember we are wanting to teach our children to always be kind and respectful; the way we want to be treated.
- Do not step in and fix your child's problems or expect your child's teacher to fix their problems. In some situations, this may be necessary, but it is more beneficial to empower a child to develop their social and emotional competence. This is more powerful in the longer term.
- Ask your child's school about the social and emotional programs they deliver and be familiar with the programs' language and practical skills to use at home.
- Provide opportunities for friendships to develop. Invite or suggest other children come over on the weekend to play or hang out.
- Encourage face-to-face interactions over online interactions. The internet and social media provide virtual, not real, friendships that are not meaningful and often don't allow authentic engagement with others. Ironically, the internet can serve to keep people apart.
- Communicate with your child's school to discuss supports available such as their School Counsellor or Pastoral Leader.
- Seek further assistance from a Child and Adolescent Psychologist or Community Service.

Age Appropriate Chores

CAITLIN FRANCIS

Perhaps there is a reason why the word 'chore' rhymes with 'bore'. The very mention of the word can send the best of us scrambling with shouts that we are "busy!"

The fact is that chores are a necessary part of life and experts say there are huge benefits to starting them early on. Helping out at home can teach children important skills that will assist them throughout their lives while instilling a sense of responsibility, motivation and work ethic. Sharing the load at home can also make things a little less hectic for busy parents.

It can be daunting to implement a chore routine in your home if you're not sure which tasks are right for your kids, or how to keep track of each person's duties on a long-term basis. This guide should help to take a bit of the guesswork out of chores and make them a somewhat pleasant experience for the household.

Which chores are right for my child?

Not all chores are created equal. We wouldn't ask our four-year-old to mow the lawn, for example. It is important to choose tasks that are suited to your child's age and abilities. This will help to ensure chores are completed to a decent standard and kids are happy and safe while they are bustling around doing them. Here's a list of age-appropriate chores, with help from the Australian Government's Raising Children Network, that you may like to integrate into your home:

Ages 4 – 5:

- Pick up toys and books
- Make the bed
- Bring dishes to the sink
- Help to feed family pets
- Set the dinner table
- Help to do the groceries and put them away
- Sort clean laundry into piles for each person

Ages 6 – 11:

- Vacuum or sweep the floor
- Put away clean dishes
- Help with some basic cooking, under supervision
- Take out the rubbish
- Hang out clean clothes and fold laundry
- Water the garden and indoor plants
- Help to do the groceries and put them away

Ages 12 – 18:

- All of the above, but with less supervision
- Cleaning the bathroom or toilet
- Stack the dishwasher
- Mow the lawn
- Walk the dog
- Preparing meals

* When choosing chores for teenagers, think of the skills you would like them to learn!

While it is all well and good to have a list of chores at the ready, is there a simple way to get your kids happily involved? There are a few tips and tricks available to make the experience easier for everyone.

Write things down

Make things simple by listing each family member's chores, preferably in an area everyone can see it (like a whiteboard on the fridge). This makes it harder for things to be forgotten and less room for error. It is also easy to check off each item as it's completed.

Pick your timing

Try not to make things harder for yourself – chores are meant to be helpful, after all. Mornings are often hectic for many families as everyone rushes around getting ready for school and work. It may be easier to leave most chores for quieter moments in the afternoon or evening. Conversely, kids may like to finish their chores in the morning on school holidays, so they can make the most of the rest of their day. Parents may also like to ensure

children finish their chores before they can play with electronic devices or watch television. This helps the child learn that responsibilities should be met before they can have free time.

Play to their strengths

Start things off on the right foot by getting everyone in the family involved when chores are being planned. Ask your children whether they have any preferences when it comes to their chores and try to facilitate their requests. Do you have a green thumb in the family? They may enjoy watering the garden. Is one of your children particularly fond of the family pet? They may like to be responsible for daily feeding duties. It could also be helpful to discuss with your child the type of rewards or incentives they may like to receive for doing their chores, if you decide to go this way. You will find more on rewards further down.

Help them out

It is a great idea for parents to help children with their chores when they're initially learning about each task and what is required. This helps the child learn to do the chore correctly, and eventually by themselves. It is also a great bonding opportunity. Try to show an interest in what your child is doing and praise them as they successfully master a new skill – they will be keener to continue doing it and more likely to remain optimistic when faced with future challenges.

INCENTIVES

Many experts suggest parents should avoid using chores as punishment. Instead, parents may wish to adopt a reward system to foster positive reinforcement and help children learn along the way.

Reward chart

A reward chart can help children track their chores as they complete each

one and it also provides them with a clear, visual incentive to continue doing their tasks daily. Rewards can come in many different forms.

It's also important to remember that children do not need to be rewarded for EVERY chore they do.

A tally system is easier to implement and execute – for example, a child may get to choose a show for the family to watch on television once they have five stars on their chart.

Pocket Money

Giving pocket money to children helps them learn about money management – whether they are spending or saving it. Pocket money can also open up an important conversation about what money is used for and why saving can be a good option. It is up to you how much money you may wish to give your child. Parents may like to consider what their budget will allow, what the pocket money will be used for and the types of chores their children will be doing when they decide upon a sum. The most important thing is consistency; if your child is doing regular chores and knows how much pocket money they will earn and when, they can start to plan ahead and get into the habit of working for money.

Caitlin is a Digital Media Officer at Cairns Catholic Education Services



Day On a Plate

GEORGIA BROCKMAN



Everywhere we look we hear that nutrition is important...and would you believe it...it really is! From the get-go we are swamped with healthy eating advice and GOSH it can be hard to decipher what's what. We know food is important for a range of different reasons such as assisting with growth, bone development, concentration, and energy levels. So, let's get into the hard facts.

WHAT IS A BALANCED DIET YOU ASK?

Having a balanced diet means eating a wide variety of foods from each of the five food groups. We know it's difficult and let's face it – some kids are not great eaters, but keep trying!

1. Fruit - Provides vitamins, minerals and dietary fibre
2. Vegetables – Should be encouraged at two meals per day and provides vitamins, minerals and dietary fibre (Even if you have to hide them!)
3. Dairy and/or their alternatives – Great source of calcium, needed for healthy bones and muscle function. It's also high in protein to keep those tummies full.
4. Lean meat, fish, eggs, beans, lentils, tofu and nuts - Provide protein which helps build, maintain and repair muscle tissue.
5. Grain foods – Choose wholegrain varieties of breads, cereals, rice, pasta, noodles etc.

Now if you're saying, 'my child doesn't eat any of that!' that can be normal and picky eaters gravitate towards more processed, higher sugar foods.

Here are some of our top tips to help kids eat a balanced diet:

- Make food fun! Getting creative in the kitchen is a great way to help children become more interested in eating healthy. These include making food into different shapes and sizes, making faces with food and fruit/vegetable kebabs, etc.
- Eat the rainbow – no single food provides all the nutrients we need, so the key is to encourage a variety of colourful fruits and vegetables!
- Get kids involved – by getting your children

involved in the preparing and cooking of meals, they're a lot more likely to eat it! It also helps them to learn how to make good choices about the foods they eat. This could involve preparing the lunchbox together, washing and cutting up or choosing a recipe together for a family dinner meal.

DON'T SKIP BREAKFAST

Whilst it's typical for busy parents to skip out on breakfast, kids that skip breakfast are more likely to feel tired and irritable – and no one wants that! Breakfast helps to give children the energy they need to start their busy day. Without at least a little something in their stomach, their energy levels can crash by the time they start school. We know with the morning school rush, it can be hard to fit in a nutritious breakfast.

Here are some of our top tips to make breakfast time easier for the whole family:

- Stock up with healthy breakfast options, such as fresh fruit, whole grain cereals, yoghurts etc.
- Prepare what you can the night before – e.g. setting the table, pre-chopping fruit and boiling eggs.
- If your kids really aren't hungry, try something like a smoothie instead, or bringing some fruit and a milk drink for their drive to school.

PRIMARY SCHOOL VS HIGH SCHOOL NUTRITION

Whilst a healthy diet is important for both primary school and high school students - energy needs are very different between the two! Typically, as children grow, they require more energy – this will mean slightly bigger meals and more snacks. It's normal that your child's appetite will start increasing as they get older, which is their body's way of saying "I need more food!"

Fun fact – by the time they reach 18-20 years old, about 90 per cent of their bone mass is already built, and puberty is the key time for this process. Having adequate calcium intake helps to ensure development of strong healthy bones.

In summary, feeding your child can be TRICKY! But it's important to keep in mind that they are developing their taste preferences and learning what foods sustain them! Most importantly they learn from you - the way you describe food, the way you eat, and the amounts you eat. Encouraging a healthy diet is key, but remember not to force them. If you suspect your child is lagging in their eating development or becoming increasingly fussy, reach out to a health professional such as a dietitian, who can help.

*Georgia Brockman is an Accredited Practising Dietitian at Health Management Dietitians
www.healthmanagement.com.au*

DAY ON A PLATE

PRIMARY STUDENTS:

Breakfast: 1-2 x slices grain bread + thin spread of peanut butter OR overnight oats with chopped fruit and yoghurt

1st Break: 1 x piece fruit + 1 x low sugar yoghurt

2nd Break: Wholegrain sandwich with cheese + tomato + ham

After school: Wholegrain rice cakes with ricotta or cottage cheese + sliced capsicum or carrot sticks + hummus dip

Dinner: Smaller portion of the family meal e.g. spaghetti bolognaise – packed full of veggies (tomatoes/mushrooms/onion etc) OR Taco's (hard or soft) - loaded full of salad vegetables + small amount of lean mince + avocado

SECONDARY STUDENTS:

Breakfast: Porridge – 1/2 cup oats (raw) + 1 cup skim milk + 1/2 cup fruit + yoghurt to top

1st Break: 1 x piece fruit + 1 x boiled egg + chopped carrot & celery sticks with hummus dip

2nd Break: Wholegrain wrap with chicken breast or ham + salads (e.g. lettuce, cucumber, tomato) + 1 slice cheese + 1 x low sugar yoghurt

After school: Wholegrain sandwich with peanut butter OR 1 x 95g tin tuna + 2-4 x wholegrain rice cakes and tomato

Dinner: Portion of the family meal – e.g. beef stir fry (with lots of veggies!) OR chicken casserole (loaded with veg and served with brown rice)



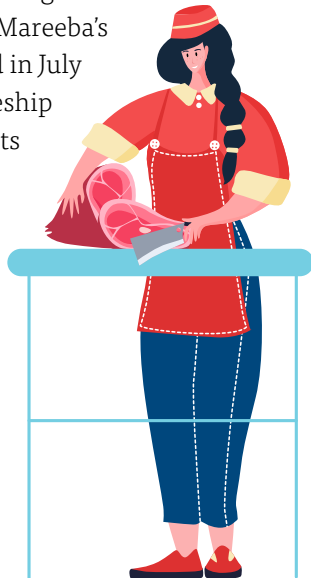


Cutting Edge

Meet: Sienna Alba

Sienna Alba, 17, is already carving out her pathway to success by completing a school-based apprenticeship in butchery. The Year 11 St Stephen's Catholic College student is juggling school with butchery and is loving every minute of the unusual apprenticeship.

Sienna is almost one year through her the three-year indenture at Mareeba's Beef Joint, which she started in July 2020. During the apprenticeship she will learn the ins and outs of a butchery and what it takes to run the business. In addition to a butchery trade, Sienna is also hoping to get a diesel mechanic or mechanic trade in the future.



Why did you decide to pursue butchery as a career?

It was actually all an accident. When we were home from school during COVID, I was going crazy so Mum went in to our butcher to see if they had an afternoon clean up job.

Turns out I wasn't too bad on a knife and I was offered an apprenticeship, shortly after. I'd never even considered butchery. When it was offered to me I thought, "Why not give it a go?" I love doing our annual salami day with my family and like playing around with that sort of thing.

What do you enjoy most about your apprenticeship?

Learning new skills and working with knives.

How has your school supported you through your apprenticeship?

They've been really good with the whole thing. I was a

bit worried how school was going to go with it all but Mr MacCallum [St Stephen's Pathways Leader] was great. Nothing was too much of a problem.

Butchery is not a common apprenticeship. What did your family and friends say when you told them you wanted to pursue this career path?

My family are proud of me. To be honest, they are just happy that I'm keen to have a go. Most people have been really good and positive about it. Some people have said, "That's a strange choice for a girl". I find it strange that people would think that.

What would you say to other students who may be considering a career in butchery?

Go for it. If you are interested in something, anything, no matter what people think or say... have a go. You will never know unless you try.

What do you like to do during your free time?

I love fishing, camping, hunting and just the outdoors in general. I have a big supportive Italian/Spanish family that I love spending time with.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years' time?

Working on a station with my good mate Alyssa and eventually owning my own property. I'd also like to have a diesel fitting or mechanic trade under my belt.



Model Citizen: Harrison Oates



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At just 17 years old, Harrison Oates is proof that with the right attitude, commitment and passion, anything is possible.

The grade 12 St Augustine's College student has recently been awarded the Cairns Regional Council's Young Citizen of the Year and Lions Youth of the Year for his fundraising and community work.

He also holds the dual roles of Public Speaking Captain and co-Captain of the Student Representative Council at St Augustine's.

The avid public speaker and debater has won several public speaking awards since his first contest – the Calanna Junior Speaking Contest in Year 3.

He's also an accomplished sailor, competing in the Laser Radial at the Oceania and Australian Championships, and he teaches others to sail through the Cairns Yacht Club Tackers' program.

Harrison's list of additional activities and accolades include peer tutoring programs, UN Youth, Relay for Life fundraising, the College's R U OK? Day student committee, the Australian Youth Climate Coalition's Student Climate Leadership Program and he recently took part in the National Youth Science Forum.

As Harrison tells Raise, "When an opportunity comes, I always put my hand up, if I can."

What drives you to take part in so many different initiatives, outside school?

I take part in so many initiatives because I strongly believe that we have a moral obligation to build a future of which we can be proud.

How do you juggle your schoolwork with other commitments?

I'm incredibly lucky because I enjoy everything that I'm studying. Someone will always make time for the things they enjoy.

What's your favourite thing to do in your spare time?

Whenever I can, I try to go for a sail. The combination of strenuous activity, the sound of water lapping gently against the hull, and a cool breeze gives me a space to reflect on life and plot my next moves.

What advice do you have for other students who may want to get involved in similar activities outside school?

If you want something, chase it. Don't be afraid to be wrong. Admit your mistake, self-evaluate, and see what can be done to fix the issue. Make time for your friends. You never know when you'll need their support, or they'll need yours.

What do you hope to do when you finish school?

As a broad goal I want to complete a PhD before making my foray into national politics. Somewhere in between I'll work on a variety of interesting scientific projects that will hopefully touch on some of our most pressing issues, such as algorithmic bias, the role of artificial intelligence in strategic settings, and cybersecurity.

Who is your role model?

My mother. She's wise, patient, compassionate, and always going the extra mile for her friends.

WHAT'S NEW IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Spirited Schools



**Catholic
Education**
Diocese of Cairns
Learning with Faith and Vision

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Parent, student, staff voices shape priorities

Consultation with parents, students and staff has provided some valuable insights that have informed Cairns Catholic Education's Strategic Directions for 2021-2025, said Executive Director Bill Dixon.

"In shaping our future directions we listened to the voices of our students and parents, and those views have really come through in our strategic priorities going forward," he said.

"We've finished up with 10 key priorities that answer the brief's challenge: 'What should we be doing in the life of the plan that will make a significant positive outcome in the achievement of our vision'."

"We were able to distil our priorities into three interrelated themes expressed through three words – our **encounter** with Catholic faith, our students' **engagement** in their education, and the **capability** of our system and its people to make it all come together," he said.

He said 400 parents had responded to an online survey and the 'Student Voice' part of the consultation engaged student leaders at nearly all diocesan schools in Zoom videoconferences. Staff responded to a survey to take part in the consultation.

"Parents and students both told us they wanted to see more emphasis on extension and extra-curricular programs and that these should be available to all students. The strong message was that these should not be just for the gifted students but should also target students who would benefit from catch-up programs.

He said a related priority would address developing learning pathways for every student.

"Some deeply felt comments from parents said they did not want their child to become invisible in their school community," he said.

"So we made our focus on every student rather than all students, so that our way of thinking reflected seeing the face of every child in everything we do."

Another priority addresses student transitions within, across and beyond school.

Mr Dixon said the key transitions were entering Prep and moving from primary to secondary but there also needed to be consideration of year-to-year transitions and students moving across schools. The Student Voice consultation had also highlighted transitions beyond school into employment, tertiary education or training.

Mr Dixon said other aspects of the new Strategic Directions prioritised students with significant learning needs, the needs of rural and remote students, and honouring and respecting First Nations culture and beliefs and a commitment to Closing the Gap. There would also be a big push on recruiting, developing and retaining staff, particular teachers, at all diocesan schools.

"Over the next five years we expect these initiatives will transform education in the Diocese of Cairns for every student in every school," he said.



Bill Dixon, Executive Director
Cairns Catholic Education
Services



The 10 priorities and the consultation input that shaped them



1. ***Our Catholic Education community experiences a Catholic Faith formation that deepens our understanding of the Church's mission and which offers an encounter with the person of Jesus.***

What we learned from the consultation:

The consultation question on the 'point of difference' of a Catholic school provided the most insight. There was universal agreement across staff, families and students on the core values of our schools and those values were named – inclusion, acceptance, support, preferential options for the poor, social justice etc. Only a relatively small number drew the link between these values and an encounter with the person of Jesus, but for them it was part of a deeply held commitment to faith and a Catholic education. There is an emerging awareness of First Nations spirituality.

2. ***Every student benefits from an engaging, contemporary and personally relevant religious education curriculum.***

What we learned from the consultation:

A small number of families and students questioned this as a priority (as opposed to spending more time on other subjects) but this was broadly supported as part of the 'point of difference'. Perhaps the broad view is that this was seen as the means to an end – the creation and development of a 'good young person'. For this and the goal above, the Catholic School Identity data provided a context for staff to reflect on the challenges of maintaining and enhancing Catholic school identity.

3. ***The Catholic Education Community co-creates consistent system Learning and Teaching documentation.***

What we learned from the consultation:

Support for this came largely from the Principal/System Advisory Committee workshop and from some of the specialist teams, less so from families and students although their call for consistency in practices might apply. An emphasis on co-creation rather than top-down, an understanding we could make better use of our human resources, and that consistency could make life easier and more focused for our teachers and students.

4. ***First Nations communities and families are honoured, their cultures and beliefs respected, and our schools committed to Closing the Gap imperatives for every First Nations student.***

What we learned from the consultation:

There was a broad understanding across the consultation that now was a time to foreground this goal, that there was a moral imperative to close the gap on First Nations education outcomes, but that an important part of this imperative was a recognition and honouring the contribution and benefits to all in understanding First Nations culture and spirituality within our school communities and that their wisdom is aligned to the mission of the Catholic school.

5. ***Every student accesses opportunities that extend their learning and personal horizons.***

What we learned from the consultation:

This was a significant point for families and students. Parents want their children to be extended (learning growth) but to apply to all students not just the gifted learners. Significant comments about not wanting their 'quiet' children to be 'invisible' in their schools. Calls for extension and catch-up classes, more activities and opportunities both curricular and extracurricular, better use of facilities including ICT etc. Interesting that this was a strong input from the

student voice consultations. The challenge of how not to add to an already high workload for teachers and staff will require innovative and creative solutions.

6. ***Every student benefits from inspiring, engaging, and highly professional teachers, school leaders and support and professional staff.***

What we learned from the consultation:

This was the significant issue for most schools and their leadership – the growing challenge to recruit and retain quality teachers and other staff. Even more significant for rural and remote schools and some specialist subject areas. 'If we can get this right, we will be happy'. A feeling that we have a lot to offer (lifestyle, professional development etc) but we could offer more to continue to attract the right people (support, conditions, transfer opportunities etc).

7. ***Every student's learning pathway enables adjustments to learning experiences, targets interventions and initiatives, and monitors improvement over time.***

What we learned from the consultation:

Comments on the focus on growth for every student, continue to refine the use and analysis of the available data to be able to target the needs of every student. Acknowledging this might be a big step but it is where education is going. Resonance for 'invisible' students from the parent feedback.

8. ***Every student with significant learning needs (eg. disability and English as an Additional Language or Dialect) receives adjustments and interventions to enable equitable access and participation in learning.***

What we learned from the consultation:

A need to continue to effectively implement the Shaddock* recommendations to create a consistent and supportive culture and practice from initial enrolment enquiries through to school graduation. Recognition of the need to enhance the support for families in their often difficult role. Further enhance staff capacity and skills. Need for consistent practices across all schools.

* The Shaddock Report (2016) reviewed inclusive practices for students with disability

9. ***Every student experiences a seamless and positive transition through and across schools.***

What we learned from the consultation:

This was a significant issue for parents and students, perhaps partly a reflection of the challenges of transition, but also an issue for schools. An increased need to share information and expectations, especially between primary and secondary, was clear. The consistency addressed by the priority on consistent learning and teaching documentation is also relevant here. There is a recognition that each school has a unique context but that moving across schools should involve shared and familiar settings.

10. ***Every student from rural and remote communities benefits from targeted support for their schools.***

What we learned from consultation:

Rural and remote schools told us that generic approaches to school management often overlooked the needs and nuances of their schools, often to the disadvantage of positive student outcomes. Respondents identified the need for better staff recruitment, support and retention practices, delivery of professional development and training, support service practices from Cairns Catholic Education Services, and support and opportunities for students.



Focus on Certainty, Support

Far North families need “certainty and support” as the region continues to weather the effects of the COVID-19 crisis, the head of Cairns Catholic Education says.

Executive Director Bill Dixon said the Far North seemed to have escaped the worst health effects of COVID-19, but the economic impacts remained.

“From the start of the COVID crisis, we took the view that our families wanted certainty that their children’s education would continue and that we would find ways to make that happen. And they also needed a sense that we would support our families if they were affected by the financial impacts of the pandemic,” he said.

“We put a number of measures in place, but the key ones were to adapt our digital platforms to a learning from home experience, and to provide consistent tuition fee relief for families in difficult financial circumstances.”

Local mum Gabrielle, whose daughter attends St Joseph’s School in Atherton, said she was “really impressed” by the response.

“The online tools provided for at-home learning were exceptional,” she said.

“The teachers went above and beyond to make things as easy as possible for parents. A lot of families commented on how well the school coped with the transition.”

It comes as Catholic schools in Cairns delivered a record number of Year 7 enrolment offers amid unprecedented demand for placements.

“Catholic schools across Cairns have had waiting lists for several years, particularly in the peak enrolment phases of Prep and Year 7, and this trend has persisted,” Mr Dixon said.

“Newman Catholic College in Smithfield, which will open in 2022 to its first cohort of Year 7 students and was opened to help ease the demand for Catholic secondary schooling, already has a waitlist.

“MacKillop Catholic College in Mount Peter, which opened in 2016 with Prep to Year 3 and welcomed its first Year 7 group in 2020, also continues to contribute to the growing enrolments.”

In 2021, Catholic schools across the Far North had an intake of about 900 students in Year 7. The 2022 figure has already grown to more than 1050.

Mr Dixon said although some fee relief options

would wind back in 2022, families in financial difficulties would still find a place for their children in Catholic schools.

Concessions are also an option for families who wish to enrol at a Catholic school but cannot afford it, depending upon vacancies.

While most schools in Cairns are at capacity, places may still be available at regional and rural schools.

“Challenges in 2020 allowed our schools to grow and adapt like never before,” Mr Dixon said.

“Catholic schools in the Far North have never been more ready to nurture the minds of the next generation.”

How to apply to Catholic schools

It is quick and easy to apply to one or more Catholic schools in the Far North. The online application process is simple and only needs to be completed once, even if enrolling more than one child.

The form can be found on the Cairns Catholic Education website, cns.catholic.edu.au/apply, or at any school website, and can be saved and returned to as often as needed for up to 30 days before submitting.

For those who prefer a more traditional method, a printed application form can be collected from each school’s office.

Prospective families are encouraged to apply the year prior, to have the best opportunity to secure a spot. However, applications are welcome at any time and where vacancies exist, successful applicants will be offered a place.

Catholic schools in the Far North welcome students and families of all faiths, abilities, and socio-economic backgrounds and there is no geographical catchment.

For further information, visit:

cns.catholic.edu.au/enrolling/apply-to-enrol



Building a Bright Future

More than \$50 million worth of building projects are underway at Catholic schools around the Far North as new colleges take shape and existing facilities are upgraded.

Among the major capital works projects in the pipeline are Stage 1 of Newman Catholic College in Smithfield, Stage 4 of MacKillop Catholic College, Mount Peter and the St Mary's Catholic College Hugh O'Brien Centre Redevelopment Project.

St Mary's Catholic College Principal Wayne Wood said the redevelopment was integral to the Woree school's core values.

"This is an exciting project for our community and it brings together a key strategic priority for us, which was to be able to bring our whole community together as one family," he said.



Above and Left: St Mary's Catholic College – Hugh O'Brien Centre Redevelopment Project.

Below: interactive outdoor play space project at St Thomas'

Other projects:

Newman Catholic College, Smithfield

WHAT: The \$25 million first stage includes construction of a four-level building of approximately 7,000m² containing five design technology classrooms, four science lab classrooms, food technology kitchen, general classrooms, diverse learning area, a library and the administration area, as well as an indoor PE court.

WHEN: Construction began late in 2020 and the project is due for completion at the end of 2021, ahead of the school's opening in January 2022.

MacKillop Catholic College, Mount Peter

WHAT: The P-12 College's \$14 million fourth stage includes eight additional classrooms and administration space in the primary school area, and music, dance, drama classrooms, food technology kitchens, general classrooms and extensions to administration areas in the secondary school.

WHEN: Construction commenced in January and it is due for completion late in 2021.



St Thomas' School, Mareeba

WHAT: A \$1.25 million interactive outdoor play space project, which includes playground areas, a friend circle and contemplation space, tiered seating overlooking the oval, sandpit and balance beams.

WHEN: Construction commenced in May 2021.

A number of other projects are being planned, including a multi-million dollar outdoor learning area at Our Lady Help of Christians School in Earlville, which will go to tender mid-year. A development application has also been submitted for a two stream Prep-Year 6 school at Kewarra Beach. The school, with a planned capacity for up to 380 students, would not open until at least 2025.

Milestone for Far North Catholic Schools



Catholic Education
CELEBRATING 200 YEARS
Faith in the future

Schools across the Far North and the nation have commemorated 200 years of Catholic Education in Australia, celebrating the millions of young people who have been taught and nurtured, and the staff who helped them succeed.

One of the centrepieces of the celebration included a national mass involving thousands of students and staff, held simultaneously across the country on May 24, 2021.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison congratulated students, families and staff in a video message.

"You, the young people of Australia, are the love of your family and you are the hope of our country," he said in the message.

"Since the day that Fr John Therry set up that small school in Parramatta 200 years ago, your schools, early childcare and universities have been investing in that hope.

"I want you to know on this anniversary that you matter more than you can ever imagine. Australia needs the happiness, the joy and skills and passion that you give. I want to encourage you, as your teachers and lecturers do every day, to be someone who gets involved, who shows responsibility, who looks out for others and is kind and respectful to other people.

"I'm grateful to you, your parents, your teachers, your lecturers and to the church for what you give to our country every single day."

Catholic schools across the country today educate one in five Australian students. The bicentenary commemorates the anniversary of the first official Catholic school in Australia, founded in 1820 by Irish Catholic priest Fr John Therry.

The school, which Catholic historians believe was located on Hunter Street in Parramatta, taught 31 students.

Masses were held in most cathedrals across Australia, including St Monica's Cathedral in Cairns.

National Catholic Education executive director Jacinta Collins said the simultaneous celebration was a highlight of the bicentenary year.

"As a faith community, our national mass to celebrate 200 years of Catholic education holds significant meaning, particularly on the Feast of Our Lady Help of Christians – the Patroness of Australia," she said.

"The scale of Catholic education in Australia is unique in the world, serving over 777,000 students and employing over 100,000 staff.

"We are blessed to have the support of governments and our families that ensures we can make a Catholic education accessible to families in every major town and city, and in many regional, rural and remote parts of Australia."

Catholic Education in Queensland celebrated its 175th anniversary in 2020. The oldest school in the Cairns Diocese is Our Lady of the Sacred Heart School on Waibení (Thursday Island), which was founded in 1887.

"You, the young people of Australia, are the love of your family and you are the hope of our country"

Scott Morrison, Prime Minister





New Technologies, New Opportunities

Catholic school students are using virtual and augmented reality kits to explore new landscapes, journey into 3D classrooms and study the solar system in brilliant detail.

Teachers around the Far North continue embracing new, cutting-edge technologies to blend digital learning with the traditional as part of Project Alpha, which tailors 21st Century learning methods to Generation Z and Generation Alpha students.

Cairns Catholic Education Services Consultant – 21st Century Learning (Secondary), Wendy Tisbury, said these generations benefitted greatly from blended learning, because they were born into the technological era.

“Teachers are using experiences and environments that meet students’ needs and engage them in learning. Kids are no longer chalk and talk alone. They learn by doing, seeing and hearing – in both actual and virtual worlds,” she said.

“By incorporating digital with traditional, students are more able to learn.”

A mix of face-to-face instruction and online learning reflects how people operate in the real world; many experiences in our daily lives are a combination of these elements. For students, blended learning can provide a more personalised learning experience by diversifying activities, allowing more autonomy and providing different ways of learning that suit their preferences.

Blended learning can also provide additional opportunities for teachers to work with individual students. The Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority, as part of its recent general capabilities review, has proposed a renewed and enhanced focus on students’ digital literacy.

Programs that have been rolled out or are being trialed at many Far North Catholic schools to enhance learning include:

- ✓ *Canvas – a platform where teachers can put resources, work and assessments, enabling easy engagement for students even if they are absent.*
- ✓ *Google Classroom – a system that enables students in years P-6 to log in to different learning and teaching activities and submit completed tasks; and*
- ✓ *SeeSaw – a tool used in primary schools that enables students to complete tasks and share them with their parents, while developing an electronic portfolio. It also provides an opportunity for teachers to give students feedback and can be used as a communication tool between teachers and parents.*

Other tools include:

- ✓ *an artificial intelligence writing tool that helps students to check spelling, punctuality, readability, grammar and sentence structure as they go, therefore improving performance.*
- ✓ *software that provides curriculum-aligned online content and quizzes, tailored for students’ independent learning.*
- ✓ *a tool used in primary schools to complete assessment and identify learning pathways for mathematics.*

Cairns Catholic Education Services has purchased a number of virtual and augmented reality kits, which can be borrowed by teachers. Both primary and secondary schools have already used the new technologies to enhance a variety of lessons.

Wendy said there were countless ways in which blended learning could be used to bolster student understanding and engagement.

“A teacher in a history class might have some students sitting and talking in a group identifying key themes, while another group accesses a variety of software programs, and yet another group of students research and then produce their own books, videos or other content. These activities combine to provide that deep learning,” she said.

“It’s deep learning enhanced by the technology, not just technology for the sake of technology.”

Cairns Catholic Education Services’ Learning and Teaching team works closely with schools to create bespoke training packages for professional development in the blended learning field, while offering tailored support.

Cairns Catholic Education Services Consultant – 21st Century Learning (Primary), Christine Stratford, said: “We need to teach the way the students want to learn.”

“We need to meet their learning styles, their learning preferences, and for the students that do not know a world without WIFI, internet or connected devices, that is their preference,” she said.

The Australia 2030 plan, published in 2017, states: “Ninety-two percent of future jobs will require some form of digital skills, making digital literacy an essential foundation workforce skill, in the same league as basic literacy and numeracy today.”

“If students are engaged in learning, student learning outcomes will improve. That will ultimately help them now and into the future,” Christine said.



Commitment Leads to Change

Cairns Catholic Education's inaugural Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP) has forged a series of positive and wide-ranging developments in the year following its launch.

The RAP, launched in 2020 during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic, included 14 key actions aimed at empowering Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander staff, building respectful relationships, raising awareness and embracing histories, cultures, languages and spiritualities.

Leader Formation – First Nations, Antoinette Cole, Chair of the RAP Working Group, said the RAP had led to significant and constructive changes across schools and the broader organisation, that align as a direct consequence of the First Nations Education Policy including:

- ✓ Increased support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander cultural learning and development, including weekly First Nations briefings for all Cairns Catholic Education Services staff and inaugural 'First Nations Knowings' modules for senior leaders and school principals
- ✓ Support and celebration of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander protocols is visible. All Cairns Catholic Education Services email signatures now include an Acknowledgement of Country
- ✓ Always seeking to utilise First Nation suppliers and providers, and ensuring a variety of companies are used
- ✓ Promotion of positive race relations through anti-discrimination strategies
- ✓ In and On Country experiences to support staff

"Staff in a number of school communities are engaging in dialogue about Reconciliation as they start to envision what it means for them. They are also exploring how they capture the voices of their parents and wider community," Antoinette said.

"Students across many schools have created their own

school or college icon representing what Reconciliation means in their school community.

"Whilst the RAP has had positive outcomes, it has also provided an opportunity to explore some of our challenges over the last 12 months as we prepare for the next 12 months ahead. This includes exploring further employment opportunities for First Nations peoples, increasing shared understanding of our history and building capabilities of all staff across our Catholic Education community."

The Cairns Catholic Education Community also embraces the names of Traditional Owners across the Far North, including in the Torres Strait where Thursday Island and Hammond Island are referred by their traditional names of Waibeni and Kiriri.

All schools across the Cairns Catholic Education community are seeking to capture their reconciliation journey in a formalised way, in line with Reconciliation Australia's Narragunnawali: Reconciliation Education Program.



ABOVE: Staff from the Cairns Catholic Education community during one of the recent On Country experiences.



To take a look at the RAP, visit:
cns.catholic.edu.au/reconciliation

Seeing Double:

Meet Thipnida & Chonlada Namma (Nat & Nan)

Nat and Nan are Good Counsel College's only set of identical twins and frequently get mistaken for one another – and it's easy to see why! The girls are in their final year at GCC with plans to take a gap year before attending CQ University's Nursing program.

After moving from Khon Kaen in northeast Thailand to Innisfail in 2016, Nat and Nan have settled into the Good Counsel College's community. Neither spoke English when they first arrived but have come a long way in just five short years. The girls remain best friends and there is rarely a time when they are not together.

Why did you come to Australia?

Mum and Dad were married in 2011 when we were nine years old, then Mum moved to Australia and then we saw her only when her and Dad came to visit us on holidays. Our grandmother wanted us to stay in Thailand, but in 2015 we all decided we should move to Innisfail and live as a family with Mum and Dad.

When you left Thailand, what were the things you missed most?

Helping our grandmother on the rice farm – putting out fertiliser especially - and helping in her small shop. We also miss our friends, visiting the temple on the weekends and giving a food offering to the monks.

What were some of the main differences?

Language was the biggest challenge and difference. Dad is Australian and speaks English and Thai so that made it a little easier.

Australian culture is also very different to Thai culture, even down to the way in which we address teachers or other students in Thailand.



What is it like going through school as a twin?

Without a doubt, the most common question we are often asked is, 'Are you guys twins?' Most people cannot tell us apart. It doesn't bother us when people get us mixed up – even our mother does sometimes!

How has GCC supported your education journey so far?

In our first year at GCC, we sat in on all classes but could not understand most of what was being said and did not know how to use the technology which Australian students are brought up with.

Teacher's assistants would sit with us and help us to use laptops and tablets. We had English as a Second Language (ESL) classes with Mrs Henry to help us develop our language skills.

We are very thankful for all the help the teachers, staff and our friends and classmates have given to us.

Do you have any advice for other non-English speaking students?

Don't be afraid to try and speak the language despite the accent or misplaced words. Most people are happy and willing to help and explain things that you do not understand.

"Speak to your children
as if they are the wisest,
kindest, most beautiful and
magical humans on earth,
for what they believe is
what they will become."

| BROOKE HAMPTON



WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ENROLMENT INTERVIEWS

JACQUELINE JACKSON

Parents – please don't stress about enrolment interviews! Think of them more as a great opportunity for us to get to know you, and for you to find out more about us.

Every school (and therefore, every enrolment interview) is different, but most will follow a fairly similar sort of structure.

The process usually involves a friendly conversation with the principal about what the school can offer, a tour of the school site and a discussion with the family about the needs of the child and family.



For example, I may ask a parent:

- What led you to apply for a place at St Michael's?
- What are your child's strengths and interests?
- What are your expectations of schooling in general and what are your hopes for the future?
- What are your child's most important needs?

And when it's the student's turn, I may ask them questions such as:

- What do you like to do at kindy/your other school?
- What are your favourite subjects at school (for older students)?
- What do you do for fun at home?

When I meet a family in an enrolment interview, I'm really looking to ascertain what the parents' expectations are of the school and what supports we can offer to help ensure it's a smooth transition for everyone. The simplest way to prepare for an enrolment interview is to come with some idea about what has attracted you to the school and what you are looking for in a school for your child.

Jacqueline is Acting Principal at St Michael's School, Gordonvale

HELPING TEENS COPE WITH STRESS

PETER HUME

Stress is a normal part of life and can help our bodies overcome difficult situations. For example, it ensures the muscles have energy to run from the crocodile, or the endurance to keep writing through an exam. Although stress has evolved to help us in times of trouble, prolonged or overly intense stress can be detrimental.

In my experience, teenagers may be more prone to stress during times of change, such as the transition from primary to secondary school. The wellbeing teams in our schools do a great job supporting students and families through this process, however it may be trickier for some students such as those who do not move up with a large cohort or struggle with change.

Students may also be more prone to stress in years 11 and 12 when it feels like the stakes are higher. It is helpful for parents to maintain good communication with their teenager and to help develop study routines at home; for example, studying around the family table as opposed to hiding in a bedroom. Encourage your child to break up their study into sections. They may like to work for 20 minutes, check their messages for five minutes and then move the phone away to study for another 20-minute block.

Signs your teenager is stressed could include poor sleep, a change in eating habits, rapid breathing or heartbeat, being moody or having angry outbursts and displaying avoidance behaviours, such as excessive video game use or refusing to go to school. If you believe your teenager may be affected by unhealthy stress it is best to seek help as soon as possible – prevention is better than cure. Encourage them to seek support from teachers, a school counsellor or psychologist.

Healthy eating, exercise, sufficient sleep and positive friendships can also help us cope with stress. There are some useful resources readily available, including Beyond Blue, headspace, ReachOut and Kids Helpline.

Peter is a Guidance Counsellor at Good Counsel College in Innisfail

Managing Kids' Behaviour In The 21st Century

CAITLIN FRANCIS



It has been suspected for a while and now a study has also identified a link. Young children who spend lots of time on mobile screens are more likely to have problems sleeping and managing their behaviour, new research has found.

Deakin University researchers Sumudu Mallawaarachchi and Dr Sharon Horwood found that the more time toddlers and preschoolers spend on smartphones and iPads, the greater risk of negative impacts on their social, emotional, and cognitive development.

40

And mobile screens may have a different impact in comparison with older technologies such as televisions, Dr Horwood said.

"Given how critical early childhood is in terms of the vast amounts of brain development that occurs, the sooner we can establish healthy habits and lifestyle behaviours, the less challenges young children are likely to face as they develop," she said.

ON THE FRONTLINE

The study does not specify what impact this has on children once they reach school age. But those in the field believe excessive technology use is negatively impacting some children.

Lucas Felstead, Principal of Our Lady Help of Christians School in Earlville, said he believed it could be "stealing time" from some families and reducing kids' exposure to important character-building experiences.

"This is being compounded by the distortions of social

media, where everyone is 'living their best life'," he said. "Imagine for a moment the impossibility of an overly protected 'reality deficient' individual engaging with social media as a life raft to what is normal in the world. A world polarised by bullying, trolling and pornography at one end, and the mirage of beauty and popularity at the other. This is a world many adults struggle to navigate, let alone the mind of a child."

Angela Bulmer, a Prep teacher at MacKillop Catholic College in Mount Peter, said most of us being "time poor" with "deadlines to meet, places to go and people to see" was a major issue, and maintaining a work/life balance could be challenging.

She also believed, in some cases, that excessive screen time could be replacing key developmental activities such as exercise, play, reading aloud and social interactions.



"Interestingly, the Active Healthy Kids Australia Report Card from 2018 found that: In a house where television was on two hours a day or screens for the same amount of time, the occupants of that house will speak 6000 words combined to each other in a day. In a house where screens were on whenever anyone was home, the occupants of that house would speak 500 words combined," she said.

WHAT NEXT?

Lucas said getting involved with their child's school was a great place for parents to start. "We aim to partner with parents, to teach our young people the skills to strive to be their best, have a go and how to respond to failures and setbacks so that they can be a valuable learning opportunity, instead of experiences to be avoided."

"We aim to teach young people how to think critically about the information they may read or see online, and work in partnership with parents about online safety. None of us are perfect. But together we are better."

"If your child is having friendship issues, getting in trouble at school or sport, ask them what role their behaviour played in this. Challenge them, as it is through this challenge that they grow in character, developing personal agency and responsibility. Teaching them to bounce back, rise up and overcome their struggles, instead of blaming, is a gift many of us never saw our parents giving us, but it was definitely given."

Children needed to feel valued and supported, Angela said. "Every child is different and what strategies may work for one child, may not work for another. The key is to find their strengths, build their skillset and find what they are interested in," she said. "Making the time with them is ever so important. Listen to what your child is saying and try to understand them from their perspective. Build on problem-solving skills especially when there are issues."

"Have fun with your child. New experiences sometimes ignite new interests and learnings. Develop skills for managing distressing situations – for example, find as many calming activities as you can. When faced with emotional hurdles, learning and knowing how to regulate your emotions is an important life skill."

The Triple P – Positive Parenting Program is available free to all Queensland families and aims to give parents a raft of ideas to help them raise happy kids, set routines, respond to challenging behaviour and more.

Carol Markie-Dadds, the organisation's Country Director, said while there had always been a percentage of children with challenging behaviours, the disruptions

of COVID-19 and online bullying had added new dimensions, including more anxiety and worries.

"Children do best when their parents stay calm, no matter what is happening around them," she said.

"Rather than solve problems for them, parents can help guide their children through the process. Listen and identify the problem you're trying to solve, brainstorm solutions together, put your plan into action, and review it with the teacher at regular intervals."

Excessive screen time could eat into sleep and study time and lead to children missing out on other activities important for their development, Carol said.

"There are also more subtle problems such as parents having less time and being distracted, and kids being exposed to alarming news headlines and conspiracy theories – and adult content," she said.

"While technology has many benefits and is a part of everyday life, it's important to have times when we all switch off, such as at mealtimes or an hour or two before bedtime.

Agree with your child on when and where devices can be used and take an interest in what they are viewing. Store or charge devices in a family room overnight. "Challenges can occur when it's time to switch off and at first it can be helpful to set a timer to signal when it's time to start ending their screen time. Praise your child when they follow the routine."

Triple P offers seminars, individual sessions, groups, online programs, and more. Parents can tailor the advice to fit what works best for their family.

Find out more about Triple P at triplep-parenting.net
Caitlin is a Digital Media Officer at Cairns Catholic Education Services



“One of the most powerful truths we can offer our children is the knowledge that we’re all still learning. None of us have arrived; we all have room to grow.”

ERICA LAYNE



VET IN A COVID-19 ENVIRONMENT

BRECK NIELSEN

The terms 'pivot' and 'agile' quickly became the order of the day for educators around the country in 2020. As we witnessed the cavalcade of restrictions unfold as the COVID-19 pandemic progressed, we observed how schools and departments grappled with the new normal. From the outset, I genuinely had some concerns regarding our ability to deliver quality Vocational Educational training in areas that are inherently practical in nature.

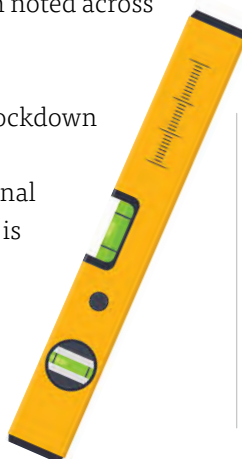


At first, teachers and trainers focused on the theoretical side of things. But there was soon a shift toward practical lessons. I found the Automotive Trainer under the bonnet of a car with a GoPro attached to his head "Zooming" his class. Students were at home looking at their own cars and identifying key components. Meanwhile, our Construction Trainer was also on Zoom completing a safety induction. Over in Hospitality, our chef was completing an assessment with his students who had all purchased the correct ingredients to make a home-cooked meal that night.

Notably, during this period of rapid change, our School-Based Apprenticeship rate unexpectedly increased. There has also been an increase in student interest in Vocational Courses within our college. In talking to other VET coordinators in the region, similar experiences have been noted across the board.

Although I would not wish another lockdown on anyone, I feel the experience has highlighted that the future of Vocational Education and Training in our region is bright indeed.

Breck is Trade Training Centre Director at St Mary's Catholic College, Woree



HELMETS ON HANDLEBARS – WHAT'S THE USE?

LEA MARTIN

When I was growing up, helmets were not a part of our safety thinking when riding bikes, skateboards or scooters. How times have changed!

As a parent, former principal and paramedic, I now can't imagine life without these important pieces of safety equipment. So, why are they so necessary?

Statistically, head injuries are responsible for more than 85 per cent of deaths related to bicycle accidents and wearing a helmet cuts down the risk by 50 per cent.

The cost of a helmet is a small price to pay to protect such a vital part of our body and whilst it won't totally prevent an injury, a helmet increases the rate of protection from serious harm.

Helmets can also ensure increased visibility of the rider to other road users as reflectors and other visibility enhancers increase the safety of our young people.

A parent's role is not only to keep little ones safe, but also to guide them in learning how to make wise choices. The best way to do this is to lead by example. If your kids see you wearing a helmet every time you climb on your bike, they're more likely to follow suit without giving it another thought.

Talking to our young people about safety, including the wearing of helmets when riding bikes, skateboards, scooters and other devices, and leading by example ensures that we are providing our children with the safest way of engaging in fun and exciting outdoor activities.

Lea is Director of School Effectiveness – Primary at Cairns Catholic Education Services. She is also a former primary school principal and a registered paramedic.

Things Taught at School that will Help You at Home

CAITLIN FRANCIS



Many parents do not get to spend a lot of time with their children at school. This is normal – we all lead busy lives! However, it can mean school feels a bit foreign to some parents; a place where kids have separate identities and learn about topics that might be different to the subjects we encountered in the classroom years ago.

But school and home life do not have to be divided and experts say they shouldn't be. In fact, there are huge benefits to both children and parents when the two mesh together successfully. Many things taught at school can help parents at home immensely, and in turn, there are plenty of practical things parents can do to help their children learn more effectively.

PARTICIPATE

Madonna Lawrence, a teacher at St Joseph's School in Atherton, says there are plenty of ways for parents to make learning fun at home.

"Ask questions, answer children's many questions, discuss things, be honest, ask how they feel, play, look things up, get the extended family involved," she said

. "Read books together, ask your child to teach you something they've learned or use online learning platforms that the school offers to practice skills at home."

"There are so many ways to enhance learning to ensure it is fun and positive, and to show children that education is valuable and important." Now more than ever, schools are investing in the emotional and social wellbeing of students.

Talking through emotions at home can help children develop vital life skills and values such as kindness, respect, tolerance, confidence, persistence and resilience, Madonna says. "Children need to learn that their emotional range is not limited to simple words such as sad, bad, or mad, but is better explained by more definitive words such as shy, embarrassed, disappointed, unwell, impolite, hurt, disgusted, excited or overwhelmed," she said.

"It's surprising how quickly a child's vocabulary will expand if it is modelled to them, and if they're given the chance to use these words.

"Building the social emotional stamina of our children is essential and critical in this crazy, busy modern world."

Following a simple framework modelled on classroom guidelines may also help to keep conversations and behaviour on track at home.

Andrea O'Grady, Head of Religion at St Mary's Catholic College in Woree, said the "P rules" she uses - "Punctual, Prepared, Polite, Participating" - can be easily reinforced by parents.

And the "sieve questions" (Is it true? Is it necessary? Is it kind?) may also be helpful for families when discussing others or posting on social media.

PRACTICALITY

So, what are some other practical steps parents can take to blend school and home life successfully? Andrea says families need to figure out their own unique "rhythm". "It is important to set aside regular time for homework each night, but equally important to get outside and play with the dog, kick the football, or hang out with friends face-to-face," she said.

"We increasingly see sleep-deprived students or students showing behaviours associated with addiction to technology.



These students are unable to focus during class time. Phones and laptops need to be charged overnight in “public spaces” of the house like the dining room, entry hall or lounge and not in children’s rooms.

“Another idea is to use the car travel time to debrief the day - practise spelling lists, chant times tables, chat about friendships and what happened at lunch.”

“In our house, home study is completed at the dining room table, that way I can help if necessary, keep an eye on what is on the computer, and my kids feel they are being held accountable, all while cooking dinner or folding the washing.”

“There is no “right” time to do home study, other than regularly. Work out what works for you. I run early in the morning, so I wake my teenage son to do some homework before school each day from 5.30 – 7am. Every family has a rhythm, work out what yours is and use it.” Consistency and routine are key,

Madonna said, because they help children to understand boundaries.

“Visual timetables on fridges, reward charts for helping out at home, and having responsibility for jobs or tasks to help the family out is a great way to give children purpose and encourage children to be involved and responsible,” she said. “Schools and classrooms will have rules, tasks, expectations and boundaries and if children are used to having consistent routines and expectations at home this helps them understand the value of these things at school.

“Another skill essential to a healthy life is the ability to take time out, to relax, to meditate, or to appreciate the world around us.”

Renee Grima, a Year 2 teacher and Leader of Learning and Teaching at St Gerard Majella Primary School in Woree, agrees routine and structure at home help to support students at school.

“For upper primary students who are close to transitioning to high school, have a visual timetable based on when they do homework and set aside a particular time or amount of time to get them into the habit,” she said. Renee also believes parents should contribute to reading at home.

“Sound out the words, interpret what is happening in the story through the images and talk about what is happening in the story while reading and after reading,” she said.

“Talk to students about everyday events and improve their general knowledge.”

PARTNERSHIP

Schools, teachers and parents all want children to succeed. If parents and school staff can establish positive partnerships, everybody is working towards a common goal, Madonna says.

“That goal is to help children learn and grow, to be happy people who are resilient, and who have the skills and values they need to help them achieve happiness, fulfilment and success in their lives,” she said. Renee says good communication between parents, children and teachers ensures everyone is on the same page.

“Encourage children to seek support if needed and that this doesn’t mean failure,” she said.

“School is all about learning and not about being able to do everything.”

TIPS AND IDEAS:

- Libraries are full of books and resources
- Find online programs and apps that align with curriculum, such as Reading Eggs, Mathseeds, Spelling City and Study Ladder
- Take time out to relax and meditate
- Use car travel time to debrief about the day
- Implement visual timetables and reward charts at home
- Try a diary that includes wellbeing and organisational sections, such as a timetable and positive mental health tips.
- Talk to kids about everyday events and improve their general knowledge.

TEN-Ager

What Your Daughter Needs To Know About Transitioning From Child To Teen

MADONNA KING

The teenage years now start at 10, with girls navigating a world delivered online with little white space and too much comparison. Anxiety, friendships, body image worries, and a lack of resilience are keeping too many girls awake at night, and they are not always confiding in us.

That's my take-out after researching Ten-Ager: What your daughter needs to know about the transition from child to teen. It includes the counsel of 500 10-year-old girls, 2000 parents, 100 middle-school teachers and dozens of school principals, counsellors and parenting experts. Here are five lessons as discussion-starters:

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FITTING IN AND FRIENDSHIPS

Friendship is the biggest concern for this group, which itself is so varied. Some girls had a Build-A-Bear; others asked whether there would be a chapter on boys. But that need to be like the next girl, or the perfect-looking girl on social media, is driving our children to change who they are and what they believe. The smart phone means many girls haven't learnt to socialise face-to-face. Educators say this is the generation where pacifiers became smart phones, and we now need to teach them how to be friends. They see friendship akin to a hot chocolate: instant and delicious. Experts told me we need to teach them how to talk to each other, how to set boundaries and how to communicate those in tricky moments. They need to know that friendship takes time and forgiveness when one of their peers makes a mistake. "I find it hard to make friends because I am so worried about if they like me or not," Aisha told me. And dozens of others did too.

PUTTING A CEILING ON THEIR OWN POTENTIAL

"I can't do Maths," girls said repeatedly. "I'm not a science girl." Science girls? Maths girls? Girls repeatedly put a ceiling on their own potential and decide too early what might limit them. Many experts put this down to expectations. "They feel," one told me "even in a small group of four or five, that if they sit at the bottom in marks, the message is clear. I'm not a smart girl. I won't be doing Maths and Science in high school." Male educators explained this was not the case with boys who often didn't take results personally. Girls are more likely take on the messages of those around them. They listen to those Instagram messages. They look at those on social media and the comparison they deliver on themselves is just brutal.

ANXIETY

"I worry about my dog dying," one 10-year-old said.

"I'm worried I won't have good enough grades," another said.

"I'm too tall to be 10," a third said.



What might your daughter worry about? The death of a pet came up almost as much as the death of a parent. The judgement of friends registered strongly for many of these 500 10-year-old girls, along with fighting between parents, the difficulty of school work, and concern over physical features, particularly weight and height. Educators and professionals are seeing an epidemic in anxiety and so are health professionals - particularly among girls. Professor James Scott says girls worried about what others - like parents and educators - thought of them, and were aware of the need to do well academically.

RESILIENCE

Ask 100 middle-school teachers what they see as the strongest challenge facing the 10-year-olds they teach and dwindling confidence levels tops the list. They see it in class teamwork, shrinking passions to try new things, who they choose as friends, and in their frenzied attempts to fit in. Teachers told me how they saw so many lose some of themselves in order to be more like someone else. 'I wish they could find their own identity among their peers,' one Year 5 teacher says. And while friendship and social media and body image were raised as key challenges, 'self-confidence' was the constant theme.

SLEEP

Paediatricians believe tween girls need between 9 and 11 hours' sleep. But it's not just the amount of sleep. Studies show the time (all other things being equal, going to bed early is better than going to bed late), consistency (the same bed time on weekdays and the weekend) and the quality of sleep are also important. Children who sleep fewer hours might do better academically (probably because they are up late studying) but fare worse on other measures like mental health. It's a fascinating science - where we can really make a difference. Experts warn we shouldn't underestimate the role of sleep in areas as diverse as fitness, mental health, behaviour and blood fats.

Being aware of this stage in our daughters' lives, and how they may be feeling along the way, can help parents understand what they need to know, what to say, and when to stay silent and listen.



Madonna King is a journalist and social commentator. Her latest book *Ten-Ager: What your daughter needs you to know about the transition from child to teen* guides parents through this stage with advice from experts. It is available online or at book stores.

10 THINGS NO ONE TELLS YOU ABOUT STARTING SCHOOL

JULIE DORE



1. Toileting.

Your child will need to do all the steps independently. From taking off clothing, checking the toilet seat, wiping correctly, putting on clothing, flushing, washing and drying hands. Not to mention just getting in and out of the toilet stall! And pack spares, just in case.



2. Separation.

Think of saying goodbye to your child like pulling off a Band-Aid. Make it short and sweet. A simple 'Have a great day, I'll see you after school, I love you.' Show your child that you're happy to be leaving them in a safe place.



4. Other Parents.

While your child is trying to make new friends, you can too! Pay attention to who your child talks positively about and chat with their parents. Organise play dates to encourage positive friendships. Avoid parents who gossip and make parenting a competition.

5. Bullying.

This word gets thrown around a lot! Bullying is repeated verbal, physical or social behaviour intended to harm another. Talk to your child to determine whether issues they may have are teasing or more. Know the difference and get help if needed.



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3. Lunches.

Mornings are hectic so try to make lunches the night before. Make them simple, with things your child will actually eat. Practise opening containers, packets and water bottles independently. Aim for healthy, nut-free choices and an ice-brick helps.



6. Teachers.

See them as partners in your child's learning journey. Keep communication with them open and honest. If you are concerned, talk to them. If your child has issues, let them know what they are and what works best for them.



7. Homework.

Children, parents and teachers have different views on homework. So why do it? It's important. It helps children develop independent work habits and it shows parents what and how their child is doing at school. Whatever age, read each night.



8. School Traffic.

In the mornings, leave earlier than you think and have a plan, plus a back-up plan, of where you will park. You will also need a wet weather plan and a plan for if/when you're late for after school pick up.



9. Let Them Do It.

Your child can carry their own school bag. Buy one big enough to fit all their belongings. Make sure they wear it properly and don't get tricked into carrying it for them. And stay away from shoes with laces until they can tie their own.



10. School Events.

There will be a lot of events at school throughout the year and it's okay not to attend all of them. Negotiate with your child some events that you will come to. This is more realistic than promising you'll come to everything.

Julie is a teacher at St Gerard Majella School, Woree, a guest speaker and an author. Check out her website for free resources and to buy a copy of 'Prepping for School Success'.

www.preppingforschoolsuccess.com



"Art has the role in education
of helping children become like
themselves instead of more like
everyone else."

| SYDNEY GUREWITZ CLEMENS



TIKTOK: ONE PARENT'S VIEW

ANN BARR

After hearing my young adult children discuss a video or two found on TikTok, I downloaded the app and started exploring this worldwide phenomenon.

I soon travelled down a rabbit hole of lip-synching videos, quick recipes and house cleaning hacks. As I was blissfully escaping the realities of the Year 8 curriculum (which I was struggling to assist my son with), I needed to know why there was so much adult angst over children accessing this site – and there in the question lies the answer.

As an adult, I am able to process and scroll quickly past any content that does not appeal to me. But TikTok comes with risks and may expose young people to inappropriate content that can be harmful. TikTok can be used for:

- In-app purchasing
- Live streaming
- Messaging/online chats
- Online relationships
- Photo/video sharing

Parents should consider these safety tips:

- Know how to block and report accounts and be aware of bullying.
- Set up the app with your email address if they are under 13, so you can see who is following them and messages.
- Set their profile to private. Make sure they are only connected to people that they know and are following legitimate sites.
- Encourage them to speak up.
- No videos in school uniform, don't give away any personal information and turn location tracking off.

The app's community guidelines all seem adequate and include information for parents on how to pair an account with their child's so they can set controls. However, this does not replace the need to provide some level of oversight.

Ann is a Senior Student Protection Officer at Cairns Catholic Education Services

KEEPING THE FAMILY PHOTOS FOR GENERATIONS

STEPHEN NUTT

Our generation generally takes photographs to share with our friends and family. The idea that images will survive beyond our lifetime typically slips our minds.

Images being printed has drastically decreased with the emergence of social media, and as digital storage technology increases. The thing is, future generations of your family will lose your iCloud password. And your digital storage devices will fail over time.

Enter cloud storage. It is so important, because it offers an alternative to the risk of hard drive storage failure. The more places you have your family photos stored, the less likely you are to lose them.

Google Drive and Dropbox both offer cloud-based storage, including free and paid plans. I prefer Dropbox over Google Drive in nearly every aspect, but Google Drive is a good option to try out because the free version has some of the same features of Dropbox and includes 15GB of storage.

Both systems have some handy features, including being able to view your images on all devices including your phone. This is great when you are with friends and want to show them your latest family shots. Another nice feature is being able to send a link to photos in an email, rather than having to attach large files and risk your email bouncing back.

Finally, regardless of which system you use, try to name files and folders with important information such as date, location and people, so that others who need to access your images don't have to guess what is in the folders.

Continue capturing those precious family moments and store them carefully so that they can be shared with your children, grandchildren, great-grandchildren, and generations beyond.

Stephen is a Digital Media Officer at Cairns Catholic Education Services

Nurturing the Next Generation of Writers and Illustrators

JACQUE DUFFY

“Every child is an artist. The problem is how to remain an artist once we grow up.”

- Pablo Picasso

As a child I dreamed of being like Dr Seuss, Picasso, Sydney Sheldon's creation Jeannie (I Dream of Jeannie), the animators from Hanna-Barbera and Walt Disney. I wrote to Mr Disney asking for work as an animator, including drawings to show I could do the work. He wrote back, told me my art was just what he needed, then kindly suggested I wait before moving to the other side of the world as my parents would miss the twelve-year-old me. Undeterred, I have since written and illustrated 12 published books, am recognised nationally as a professional artist and writer, but to date, I have not mastered levitation nor blinked my way out of a problem.



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Was my artistic ability nurtured as a child? I cannot say my creativity was specifically nurtured, but it certainly wasn't discouraged. However, one horrific instance from my childhood remained with me and is a driver for my determination to do the best I can creatively. In front of my Year 9 peers, the Head of English and Year Master informed me – after telling students X, Y, and Z they could be doctors, architects, and plumbers – that it was impossible for me to become a writer and artist and I should get a job at Kmart. Fortunately, her words ignited the 'I'll show you' part of my personality. Not all children are so resolute; many would see a stop sign. Perhaps I should track down that teacher, thank her, and let her know (even to my surprise) universities across Australia use my books as a teaching tool.

Sometimes it only takes one person, one instance to take a child away from their love of creating stories and art. How do you reinstall their faith in their abilities? One answer is to consistently nurture their creativity at home. But how do you nurture your child's inner-creative without overwhelming them? How can you judge

appropriately when individual personalities respond differently to praise and encouragement? How much praise for a job well done is too much?

SHOW, DON'T TELL

Model creativity. Rather than watch children create, or help them, make your own art. They will be inspired seeing you creating, watching you trying, failing, and learning. Especially if you're one of those people who think you have no artistic talent, practise it for your children. You will surprise yourself.

Speaking of having no artistic talent, we need to avoid that kind of talk. It's NOT true... IT IS ART... it can be any way YOU want it to be, and just because the horse on your page doesn't look like the elephant you started drawing... get over it, adapt.

If your child is a storyteller, find videos of illustrators and animators at work, watch together, talk about what they're doing. Illustrate and write stories together. Create your own library. Investigate; illustration is not all drawing and painting, it can be digital, Claymation (Wallace and Gromit/Chicken Run), collage (Jeannie Baker/Eric Carle) and diorama (The Visitor/Waiting for Goliath). If you're unsure what to write about, make up silly stories. Use the 'and then' trick - make strange things occur!

Expose your children (in small doses) to galleries and talk about what you're looking at. Discuss favourite books, what they like best and what they would change if they wrote/illustrated it. Attend talks by children's authors and illustrators. They love what they do and are very generous with time and advice.

PLAY GAMES OF IMAGINATION

How often do you see things in clouds? My sister and I had a dinosaur tree living at the end of our street. Encourage your kids to cloud-watch. Another outdoor imagination activity is tracing outlines of our shadows and drawing ourselves as something i.e. a superhero,

mermaid, or astronaut. I play 'Mr Squiggle' style games with children and adults. It's great fun and builds drawing confidence whilst exercising the imagination muscle (that's right, it's a muscle – if you don't exercise it, it will get flabby). For the game, each person does a simple scribble on a piece of paper and exchanges it. Look hard, turn it sideways, upside down and see what you can turn it into.

Drawings from imaginative play can become the stars of stories written by your children.

LANGUAGE OF CREATIVITY

Keep general compliments such as "that's great" to a minimum. Use compliments like "I like the way you mixed those two colours; I like the way that line..." Your child will know you are REALLY looking at their creation and paying attention. If your child is frustrated with their art, that is because they care about the outcome. Let them know you understand, suggest they walk away and come back with fresh eyes.

If your child starts doubting their abilities and claims "I can't draw" they may be comparing themselves to older/more experienced artists, or their artwork to a photograph. Enforce that art is subjective, not everyone likes Baked Beans, and there really is no 'better', there is just 'different'.

The avenue of self-expression and relaxation for many can become stressful for others – that white unmarked canvas or page can be debilitating. Re-enforce imagination and confidence by playing the above imagination games. There is no pressure to create a masterpiece when it's already scribble, a cloud, a shadow in the sand. Imaginative play assists with calming the fear of failure.

Imitating other artists or illustrators is another great way to encourage your child, and it gives them a way to learn techniques while erasing the fear of the white canvas.

FOUNDATIONAL TOOLS

While you nurture, there are things to ensure your child illustrator/artist learns whilst they



develop their own style and expresses themselves. Composition, colour theory, and perspective are important skills to develop as they enrich personal style. To help your child learn these skills, borrow age-appropriate books on the subject, read together or visit tutorials on YouTube. I teach art classes; try to find one that teaches skills in a fun way without stifling the child's current skill set and creativity. Always have paper and pencils handy. As they develop, give them a small allowance and let them loose in a dollar store art aisle. They learn to respect the materials by using their own.

Follow your child's lead, pursue what they are keen on, you certainly don't want their arts practice to become art 'work'.

Jacque is an author, illustrator, professional artist and library aide at St Rita's School, South Johnstone. Her newest picture book Shadow is available at www.jacquesartandbooks.com, www.licualawinqwriters.com, can be ordered through any good bookstore including Larsens Newsagency & Book Shop in Innisfail and Cairns Books in Cairns Central or enquire at St Rita's School, South Johnstone.



"As your kids grow they may forget what you said, but won't forget how you made them feel."

| KEVIN HEALTH



GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR SCHOOL'S STOP, DROP & GO ZONE

NICK HARDY

Getting our children to and from school safely can often be a challenge. Traffic congestion, combined with unsafe and inconsiderate driving behaviour, can leave drivers frustrated and result in an unsettled start to the school day for our children.

Schools are always working to improve traffic and pedestrian safety by providing new or upgraded infrastructure such as stop drop go zones.

As parents, we can consider a range of options to improve traffic and pedestrian safety such as:

- Delaying our pickup time by 10 to 15 minutes in the afternoon to avoid the peak traffic period;
- Parking away from the school to allow children to walk to and from school. Even better is to walk with your child. The opportunity for social interaction with other students and parents can be a great way to start or finish the school day;
- Car pooling with another school family can help to reduce traffic congestion around the school;
- Encourage children to use a public or school bus service where available;
- Walk or cycle to and from school when safe; and if your school has a Travel Smart Program consider being involved. These programs can include walking or bike buses, where supervised walking or cycling to and from school is undertaken as a group.

Traffic and pedestrian safety around our schools is everybody's responsibility. As parents, the options we choose to get our children to and from school, are an important part of this responsibility.

Nick is a town planner at Victor Feros Town Planning Consultants. As a parent at Our Lady Help of Christians School, St Monica's College and St Augustine's College, he has been involved in projects at several schools to improve road safety.

ESSENTIAL ITEMS TO HAVE IN YOUR FIRST AID KIT

DAVID KEMP

So, you are looking to buy or revive your first aid kit for home or the car? The question is, what should you get and why? Remember, the kit is to provide basic first aid only. For more serious or life-threatening situations, you should always contact 000.

For the general home kit, you may want to include items such as:

- Adhesive strips (assorted sizes) for minor wound dressing
- Non-allergenic adhesive tape for securing dressings and strapping
- Eye pads for emergency eye cover
- Wound/combine dressings to control bleeding and for covering wounds
- Non-adhesive dressings for wound dressing
- Hospital crepe or conforming bandage to hold dressings in place
- Triangular bandages for slings or bandaging
- Safety pins to secure bandages to slings
- Scissors for cutting dressings or clothing
- Gauze squares for cleaning wounds
- Forceps/tweezers for removing foreign bodies
- Disposable latex or vinyl gloves for infection control
- Antiseptic solution for cleaning wounds and skin
- Sterile saline solution or sterile water for emergency eye wash or for cleaning wounds
- Emergency medication if required (may include EpiPen's, Asthma inhaler etc.)

While this is not an exhaustive list, it should cover most minor mishaps that may happen around the home. Keeping a kit like this in a dedicated first aid bag will also be useful, as the various pouches and compartments make it easier to find items and the bag can be taken in the car with you. This being said, if you sustain an injury from a traffic or road incident, then you should always seek medical advice.

David is the Cairns Catholic Education Services Work Health and Safety Manager

Families Who Play Together

CAITLIN FRANCIS

I recently revisited one of my childhood loves – dance.

I took part in a ballet class for adults, held at the dance school my four-year-old daughter attends. It's safe to say my strength, agility and coordination is nowhere near what it once was, but I had a great time and found myself smiling from ear to ear as I clumsily tried to remember the routine.

What really stuck in my mind was the look of delight and awe on my daughter's face when she saw me drag a duffle bag out of storage and pull on a pair of old ballet shoes before the class. And when I whipped out some dusty tap shoes and clunked around, WELL - I'd never been 'cooler' in her eyes. We've been dancing together at home ever since, and it's definitely been a fun way to bond.

It got me thinking about how us parents can draw on nostalgic childhood activities to further interact with our kids. There's a whole bunch of activities parents can do with their children that everyone will enjoy.

CYCLING

Whipping around on a bike, with no real plans but to RIDE, has to be one of the purest forms of childhood fun. You can find bikes for almost every age and size (training wheels for the win!) and Far North Queensland offers heaps of stunning cycling tracks, suitable for every ability. Make sure everyone has a helmet and think about practising at home or at the playground before you're ready to hit the street.

MARTIAL ARTS

Taekwondo, judo, karate – there's a range of martial arts options available and most places offer classes for all ages. Many places also host classes that allow parents and children to train together at the same time. These sports are particularly focused on coordination, discipline and self-control, and often teach skills that can transfer across many areas of life and learning.

BASKETBALL

Most parks and playgrounds are equipped with a basketball hoop these days – all you need is a ball and you've got yourself hours of fun (and a little healthy competition!). Do you remember spending hours trying to shoot a ball through a hoop as a kid? It's a great way to teach kids persistence while having a great time.

ROLLERBLADING/SKATING

There are a few iterations of the 'grown up' version of rollerblading or roller skating – roller in-line hockey and roller derby, which have attracted thousands of amateur leagues worldwide. You don't necessarily have to join a team to get the most out of this nimble pastime. Track down a couple of pairs of skates (Gumtree and Facebook Marketplace can be a great spot for affordable secondhand options), some protective gear (especially a helmet!) and get rolling.

WATER SPORTS

If there's one thing synonymous with recreation and family fun in Queensland, it's water sports. Fishing, swimming, paddle boarding, skiing – the list goes on. Check the weather forecast, pack a picnic and some insect repellent and find a nice spot to while away an afternoon. Basic fishing gear is fairly easy to come by, or just dip your ankles in to cool off. We have a huge range of beautiful (and safe) creeks, lakes, dams and water holes in Far North Queensland, but make sure you check with the relevant authorities before getting in anywhere you're not sure about.

TRAMPOLINING

It seems near impossible to have a bad time on a trampoline. There are so many fun games you can play with your children on a trampoline – tag or Ring Around the Rosie, or just see who can jump the highest! Another, more relaxing idea is for everyone in the family to lie on the trampoline and look into the clouds or stars and point out all the different shapes in the sky. It is a great way to get out of your own head and unwind, while also enjoying some down time with your children.

Hopefully these ideas will bring back some of your own fun, childhood memories and inspire you to take a break for some extra fun and fresh air with your family.

Caitlin is a Digital Media Officer at Cairns Catholic Education Services



"Never dismiss a child's stories when they tell you about magical fairies, gnomes and other beings they have seen in the forest. Who knows what magic our adult eyes can no longer perceive."

NICOLETTE SOWDER



BALANCING THE INSTAGRAM HIGHLIGHT REEL

CAITLIN FRANCIS

A quick scroll through Instagram, awash with filters and fillers, leaves little question why some of our girls are battling self-esteem issues.

Studies have shown that social media use can lead to comparison and negative effects on mental wellbeing. Quite simply, it is easy to forget that what we see online is a highlight reel.

The reality is that our teens are not going to turn their backs on social media any time soon. However, we can try to counterbalance some of the superficial gloss with voices from people who share more of their REAL lives.

Here's a handful of interesting and inspirational figures worth checking out and recommending to your teenager:

Celeste Barber (@celestebarber) - An actor and comedian whose laugh-out-loud parodies have led to international acclaim.

Turia Pitt (@turiapitt) - Caught in a grassfire while competing in an ultra-marathon in 2011, Turia suffered full thickness burns to 65 percent of her body and spent two years in recovery. Since then, she has written three best-selling books, coached over 40,000 people in her digital courses, walked the Kokoda Trek and had two sons – to name just a few things.

Jamila Rizvi (@jamilarizvi) - An author, presenter, political commentator and gender equality advocate, Jamila is also the Chief Creative Officer for the Nine Network's Future Women platform.

Malala Yousafzai (@malala) - Malala made international headlines in 2012 when she was shot by the Taliban on her way home from school. In 2014, she was named a Nobel Peace Prize winner. She co-founded the Malala Fund, an international, non-profit organisation that advocates for girls' education.

Caitlin is a Digital Media Officer at Cairns Catholic Education Services

ADVICE FROM A SCHOOL DUX

ALEX WILLIAMS

Tackling Year 12 and all its expectations can feel a bit daunting, but it doesn't have to be this way. Here's some simple tips I picked up that may make things feel a little easier.

Avoid doing too much homework by working in class. If you are at school for six hours every day, learning and asking questions, you don't actually need to spend hours revising when you get home if you've done great work while at school.

Assignments are not due in six weeks. Six weeks means the final draft will be due in four weeks, which means to have ample time to proof it you need it done a week before that which is the three week mark. The first three weeks is getting the assignment prepared. If you want good marks on assignments and don't want to rely on luck, you need to hand in completed drafts to your teacher at the four week mark for feedback. Start your assignments early, work on them in the time you are given, treat the draft like a final and then improve on the feedback and you will do great.

For those in Grade 11:

Firstly, do subjects you enjoy. There is no point in doing something you dislike unless you need to. Secondly, Year 11 does matter. Sure, take some liberties and see what works and what doesn't, but your results do matter.

For the lower year levels:

Make the most of your time before Year 11 and 12. Try all the hobbies, sports and clubs that are out there, then whittle these down to the ones you really like.

Finally - Find friends as amazing as mine. There will be ups and downs, friendships lost and found, so ditch your toxic friends and spend time with the friends who want the best for you.

Alex was dux of St Andrew's Catholic College, Redlynch in 2020



Risk Taking

And Why We Need to Teach Our Kids

DAISY TURNBULL

It sounds counterintuitive to say that the longer you let kids be kids, the better they will 'adult', but it is true. Research suggests that the more kids are allowed to play in mud, create games, and develop their own solutions to problems, the more they will thrive later in life.

Measured, limited and monitored risk-taking for children is one pathway to them becoming resilient, confident adults. We want our kids to develop the skills to pick themselves up when they fall, to know when to ask for help and who to ask, but also to be confident that they can solve a lot of their problems themselves. Here's eight practical suggestions to take measured risks with your children:

SUCK AT SOMETHING

Me, I suck at handball. Sometimes when students play it at school they ask me to join in, and honestly, it is embarrassing. Yes yes, I know I should have a growth mindset, but honestly, isn't it okay to just suck at a few things?

The fact is, in order to develop competencies in students, we need to expose them to activities they may not be competent at. Encourage your child to try activities that they may not be brilliant at and to persevere with those activities.

WEAR UGG BOOTS WITH SWIMMERS

My son had this thing for a while where he liked to wear grey pants and a grey top, or blue pants and a blue top. I have a friend who is a fashion editor, and one day I was telling him how I thought it was really daggy. My friend told me it is called tonal dressing, and it's actually really cool. Who knew? My kid is a fashion icon.

Choices give children power and autonomy, and help them develop a stronger sense of self. As always, create boundaries around their choices – 'you need a pair of warm pants, you need a jumper, you can choose up to two T-shirts, it can only cost a certain amount'. But let them have some say in the decisions.

KNOW THAT IT'S OK TO HAVE THE KID WITHOUT THE THING

Schoolyards are filled with kids bragging about the stuff they have, and it can lead to your kid thinking that their life is SO UNFAIR and why don't they have the latest superblaster, etc. It is very easy to think that spending the ten dollars on the toy or getting your kid to earn enough pocket money to buy it is the best way to go, but what if it isn't? Ultimately, life is full of differences, and it can be incredibly unfair. I'm not saying raise your child without any toys, just that you don't have to give in to every trend. Your kid gets other things, or does other stuff, or eats other food. Your kid is loved. Your kid does not need the latest thing, and maybe not having that thing will give them a bit more empathy for the kids who don't have the next thing that sweeps through the playground.

SHRINK A FEW SOCKS

I once dated a guy who had never done laundry. He was



a fully grown adult. This risk is to ensure you never have that child. Laundry starts together, sitting on the floor sorting clothes. You can talk about why hanging clothes to dry is better for the environment. And then you can chat about anything and everything as you fold. Doing laundry is part of being a member of a family. Okay, yes, by leaving it to the kids, you do risk your whites becoming pink, or a few rogue garments taking some punishment (maybe make this one a calculated risk and set any cashmere aside for the time being), but the gains your child will make in terms of independence and responsibility will far outweigh any sacrificed socks and jocks.

DISAGREE WITH THEM

As parents, we see our children develop from just crying when something doesn't go their way, to saying no, to getting angry, to storming off, to starting to argue, calling names, and refusing to interact. We need to take the risk of teaching them how to argue, and role-model disagreements in a positive way. Words like 'because I said so' shut down their ability to respond. Saying 'no ifs or buts, just do it' doesn't give them the opportunity to think about what might happen if the situation was different. Now, sometimes it is a 'no ifs or buts' situation and you do just have to 'do as I say because I'm in charge'. But there are other times when there is more time, when there is more space, when you might want to explain to your child WHY you said so, and ask them HOW it could be different. Learning to disagree and confront problems also helps children learn to develop their own boundaries, and to respect others.

PREP THEM TO GO SOLO

The thought of your child going out into the big wide world alone may seem terrifying, but one day, it will happen. Does your child know your actual name (not 'Mum' or 'Dad')? What about your mobile number? Who would they call if they couldn't contact you? Do they know their address? Is there a local school,

shop or landmark from which they could direct someone to your house? Do they know what to do in case of emergency? Do they know how to call 000? And the big question: can they identify when they feel unsafe? Talk to your child about what it is to feel safe. Stranger danger is still very much a thing, but what if your child was faced with a choice between not talking to any strangers, or asking a stranger to help them call their parents if they are lost? Talk to your child about people in the local area they can trust.

KEEP SOMETHING ALIVE

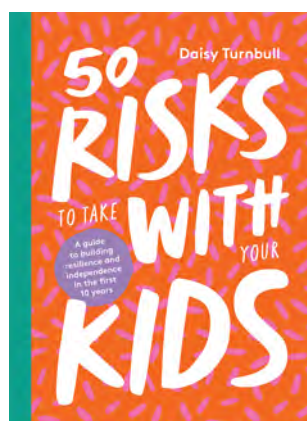
There is something to be said for keeping a pet alive. It teaches kids about responsibility, companionship (sure, maybe not with a hermit crab), and empathy. Depending on the kind of pet that suits your family, pets can bring risks as well, from health issues (the pet's) to sanity issues (yours, from the mess). Of course, with life comes death, and having a pet will at some point mean your family will mourn and talk about death. Studies have shown that pets give children a greater sense of self-esteem and security during stressful times.

TAKE CHARGE OF THE KITCHEN

What recipes do you want your kid to be able to make by the time they are teenagers? I recommend introducing them to a new recipe every few months so they can build up their repertoire. Sure, your meals might be a bit hit and miss for a while, but the payoff will be worth it. Work with them on writing the shopping list, explaining concepts like budgets and food waste. Have them read the recipe and start by cooking it with them, helping them with safe knife skills and food preparation, then eventually work yourself out of the process. May I suggest a glass of wine while they do it?

This is an edited extract from *50 Risks to Take With Your Kids* by Daisy Turnbull published by Hardie Grant Books \$24.99 and is available where all good books are sold.

Daisy is a mother of two, a teacher and director of wellbeing at St Catherine's School in Sydney.



"I believe that education is all about being excited about something. Seeing passion and enthusiasm helps push an educational message."

| STEVE IRWIN



BEING PART OF THE 'GUINEA PIG' COHORT

GRACE SMYTHE

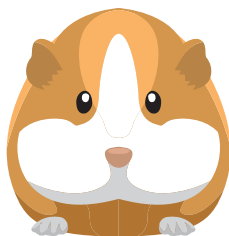
My classmates and I got used to being affectionately referred to as 'guinea pigs' throughout our schooling life.

We were the first group to start secondary school in Year 7 and the first seniors to get an ATAR instead of an OP.

I was a bit afraid of the unknown when I realised we would be receiving an ATAR instead. My three older siblings had all got an OP and it felt as though I had just wrapped my head around that. I don't think I fully understood the change, at first.

And then COVID-19 happened. The added pressure of not being at school with the teachers was a bit more challenging, but they were really easy to get in touch with and always available to help. They did a great job getting the technology rolled out quickly so we could continue learning at home.

"I feel like our grade really built resilience over this time and we've all got that shared experience."



In the end, it was actually a pretty good year. It was good being ranked individually with ATAR, rather than on a scale.

If I could pass on any advice to future students, I would say: Work hard on your assignments. If you achieve good results, you will feel less stressed for the end of year exams. Do as many drafts as you can and seek a range of opinions on them. Don't leave it until the last minute!

Grace is a Human Resources Administrator at Cairns Catholic Education Services. She attended St Andrew's Catholic College in Redlynch and plans to study nursing in 2022.

TIME TO TRY SOMETHING NEW

JESSE ZELL AND ANTON WILLIAMS

Cricket season over? Didn't make the footy team? Perhaps it's time to try something new!

Students at our school have thoroughly enjoyed the recent introduction of two less conventional sports – boxing and underwater hockey.

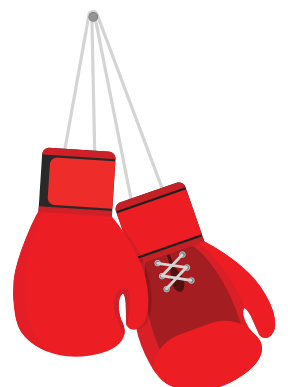
Boxing classes are a staple fitness offering in almost every gym across the country and seem to resist the fad status that often leads to the disappearance of other activities. There was a time when boxing was commonplace in schools, but it was phased out as knowledge grew about the risk of repeated head knocks. However, with less injuries than football and when appropriately modified, boxing can be a safe and very fun extracurricular activity, with an added focus on technique, respect and self-control. It has an allure rarely matched by other sports.

Recently voted as one of the world's top 10 extreme sports, underwater hockey is a unique non-contact sport that has started to make a splash in schools across Australia. And with more than 30 countries playing internationally, it is no longer the unknown hobby. Combining the thrill of the underwater world with an intense anaerobic workout, underwater hockey is great for improving fitness, water safety and snorkelling confidence.

Played with a 1.2kg puck, short sticks, padded glove, and snorkelling equipment, underwater hockey involves two teams of six players competing for the win. Games are short, but intense, and there are plenty of clubs located over Australia if students are interested in taking it further.

Both of these sports programs are gaining momentum as students seek more adventurous options.

Jesse and Anton are teachers at Saint Augustine's College, Cairns





St Monica's College Year 10 Aspire to Teach students have been visiting Mother of Good Counsel School in North Cairns each week to support the primary school's reading program. Here, they talk about what they have enjoyed along the way and why a future in teaching inspires them.

Emma Bancroft

"I've always been interested in teaching. The idea of being in a kid's journey to the rest of their life has always intrigued me and looked like fun. I love the program, it's so insightful, you get to see the progression of the kids and how much they change."

Mei Iwamura

"Aspire to Teach really gave us an opportunity to look at it from a teacher's point of view. Teaching the younger kids and being in that environment that we haven't been in for long time, it was really eye-opening and inspiring."

Kate Hodgson

"It's really rewarding to teach the younger students something and to see them learning from you. It's a really cool experience."

Alexis Bettini

"It was great learning how to read to the younger kids. When they are stuck on a word or sentence, and then they get it, you can see the enjoyment in their faces and the achievement."

Anais Taylor

"Aspire to Teach has been a fun opportunity to explore teaching and see what I wanted to do. The program is so much fun. I love having conversations with the little kids – they have definitely outsmarted me before."

Makenzie Sheldon

"When you get the students to open up and talk to you and they get into it, it's the most rewarding thing. Seeing them struggle with a word and then finally get it after you convince them to keep going, they get this light in their faces. It's an amazing thing to see. They are all so intelligent and you get to watch them develop. It's really rewarding, and it would be nice to get to do it every day."

Yuna Owens

"While I've been doing Aspire to Teach, I've learned a lot of valuable skills that could be used across a lot of different fields. It's nice when you go back to the school and the kids remember you. Seeing them develop their learning and improving, it feels like you have really made a difference."

Teachers Of The Future

LEANNE WEBSTER

“What will teaching be like in ten years’ time?”

I recently posed this question to a group of Year 10 students in the Aspire to Teach program at St Andrew’s Catholic College in Redlynch. Their initial comments jokingly turned to robot teachers and the like, but as we unpacked what that may look like they refined their ideas and some of them were truly profound.



The group said they believed there would be a rapid increase in technology use; more devices, virtual notebooks and online texts. They believe students will have more choice around their learning and it will be “super-personalised” according to needs and interests.

Plausible: Schools are starting to use programs that provide differentiated, individualised teaching for each student, and have prioritised investment in technology across the board. These new resources are being supported by programs to develop digital learning and enhance teachers’ skills to further improve student wellbeing and outcomes.

I suggested to the Year 10 group that, in 10 years’ time, students may be learning from home rather than going to school. They disagreed, arguing this would only suit students who were self-motivated and highly interested in the subjects they were studying. Rather than learning from home, they suggested that students may study subjects in a blended learning format with teachers from other schools taking classes virtually.

Plausible: Capacity already exists for specialist teachers to facilitate subjects through blended learning.



Picture: Jacqueline Lester

This idea is currently being considered for rural or remote schools who have difficulty recruiting teachers in specialist areas, so they can provide greater subject choice. Teachers are also having more training in this area.

The students believe increasing social media use is having the unintended negative impact of decreasing real-life connections. They think teachers of the future will need to teach social skills, to enable students to have the confidence to interact with their peers and the community.

Plausible: The need for teaching explicit social-emotional learning in schools is growing and the Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority has proposed an enhanced focus on relationships in the kindergarten to Year 10 Health and Physical Education learning area.

It is a great time to consider a career in teaching. Despite the perception that teachers will be replaced by online resources, teachers will always be needed to provide the encouragement, motivation, care and support that our young people need to thrive in our digitally-connected world.

Leanne is a Consultant at Cairns Catholic Education Services



Catholic Schools and Colleges in the Cairns Region

Go to the **inside front cover** for a list of schools and their contact details

or visit: www.cns.catholic.edu.au/our-schools

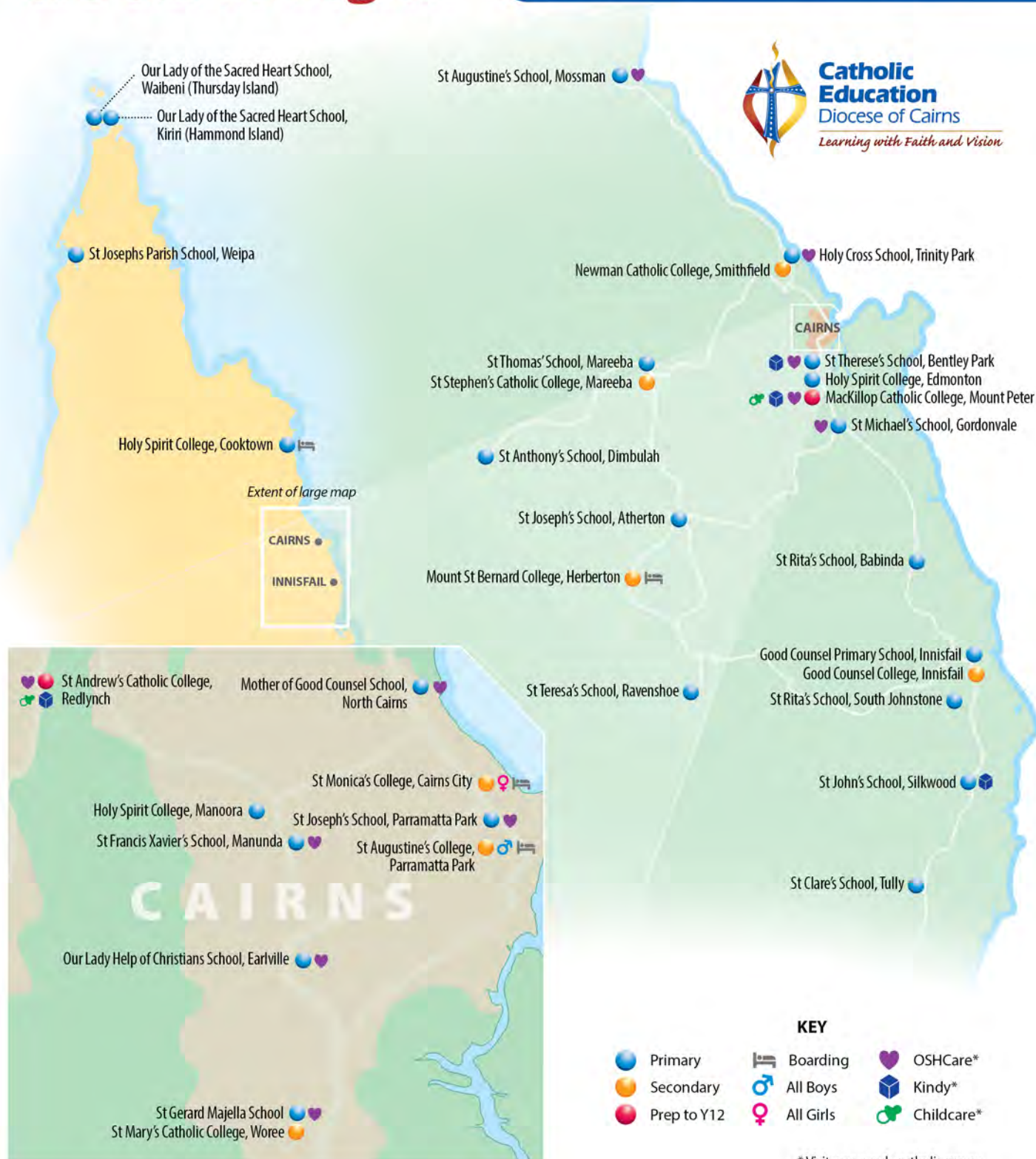
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Email: communications@cns.catholic.edu.au



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| CHARLES R. SWINDOLL



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