Dear Parents/Carers

ACT Schools Public Art Celebration for the 25th Anniversary of the Convention on the Rights of the Child: Right Here, Right Now


To celebrate, the ACT Children & Young People Commissioner (CYPC) is creating an art project with all ACT School students to recognise the contribution of children and young people as active participants in our community. The project will involve the creation of a large scale temporary installation in Civic Square using students self portraits and including messages from students about the importance of listening to children and young people.

Our students are participating in this project under the leadership of Claire Kerswell and Sara Kaltenbrunner. Your child will be able to tell you all about their contribution.

Reports

End of year reports and A-E reports (Yrs 1-6) will be sent home Thursday 4 December. If you do not wish your child to receive an A-E grade (Years 1-6) as part of their end of year report please contact the front office on 6205 8033. In years 1 – 10, the grades are defined as follows:

A - Your child has demonstrated outstanding achievement of the knowledge, skills and understandings expected
B - Your child has demonstrated high achievement of the knowledge, skills and understandings expected
C - Your child has demonstrated sound achievement of the knowledge, skills and understandings expected
D - Your child has demonstrated limited achievement of the knowledge, skills and understandings expected
E - Your child has demonstrated very limited achievement of the knowledge, skills and understandings expected.

If you would like an interview with your child’s teacher they will be held in the week beginning Monday 8 December. A note will come home in the coming weeks to indicate your preferences of interview times.

What constitutes a good report?

An article by ACER “Grading your child’s report” identifies six features of highly informative school reports;

1. Is your child’s report easy to understand?
2. Does the report show what your child is now able to do?
3. Does the report show what is expected of students in this year level?
4. Does the report show your child’s progress?
5. Does the report tell you about more than school subjects?
6. Does the report suggest how you can help?

Science Moderation

Last Wednesday the teachers travelled to different schools in the network to discuss the teaching of Science and assessment. Preschool, Kinder, year 5 and 6 went to Garran Primary. Years 3 and 4 hosted teachers at Mawson Primary and years 1 and 2 went to Arawang Primary school. It was very interesting to discuss the different ways the Australian Curriculum is delivered. Many great ideas were shared and contacts made.

Disco

Last Thursday all students participated in the School Disco. A great time was had by all with Mr. Happy leading the groove. The P&C are to be thanked for cooking sausages and running the canteen. Mr Evans and the SRC are to be thanked for the organisation of this whole school event. Don’t forget the Annual School Concert will be held Friday of Week 6 in the school hall. Thank you to Ms. Aherne and Ms. Kerswell for their organisation of this event.

Assembly

The talented Year 1L students hosted the school assembly last week. They performed the play “Don’t let 1L drive the bus” and sang songs and danced. It was very entertaining and the audience thoroughly enjoyed their items. Thank you Ms. Liu for your efforts and organization in preparing the students for assembly. The certificates for ICAS were handed out. Congratulations to those students who participated in the testing.

Gifted and Talented Programs

Our Mathematics and Science programs for students in years 3-6 have started this term. The students meet with Ms Woolias and Ms Fellows once a week for 45 minutes. Thank you to all the families that returned the parent survey forms about their child. Unfortunately a page was missing from the survey so we will send those home to families shortly to complete.

Warm regards

Amanda Andrews
Principal
Congratulations to all the students who participated in the University of NSW Competitions.

The following students have done very well in selected subjects:

**Computer Skills**
- Participation: Cody G., Lily W.,
- Merit: Vince P., Sabrina P., Ryan T.
- Credit: Adrian G.,
- Distinction: Alexander Mc.

**English**
- Participation: Cody G., Vince P., Lily W., Sabrina P.
- Merit: Aleena M.
- Credit: Adrian G., Ryan T.

**Spelling**
- Participation: Aleena M., Cody G., Lily W.,
- Merit: Adrian G., Patricia S.
- Credit: Vince P., Sabrina P., Ryan T.

**Writing**
- Participation: Adrian G., Cody G., Vince P.
- Merit: Lily W., Sabrina P., Ryan T.
- Credit: Patricia S.

**Science**
- Participation: Adrian G., Cody G., Lily W., Patricia S.
- Credit: Vince P., Sabrina P.
- Distinction: Ryan T.
- High Distinction: Alexander Mc.

**Mathematics**
- Participation: Casper P., Adrian G., Cody G., Lily W., Patricia S.
- Merit: Aleena M.
- Credit: Alexander Mc, Vince P., Sabrina P., Ryan T.

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**Movember**
The SRC will be holding a non-uniform day on **Friday 14 November** to raise money for Movember. Children can also design their own Mo to wear on the day. The Movember Foundation is the leading global organisation committed to changing the face of men’s health. The Movember community has raised $580 million to date and funded over 800 programs in 21 countries. This work is saving and improving the lives of men affected by prostate cancer, testicular cancer and mental health problems. The Movember Foundation challenges men to grow moustaches during Movember (formerly known as November), to spark conversation and raise vital funds for its men’s health programs. To date, 4 million moustaches have been grown worldwide, but we won’t stop growing as long as serious men’s health issues exist.

If you would like to donate online here is the link [http://mobro.co/791500](http://mobro.co/791500)
You are invited to attend Mawson Primary School’s end of year concert:

“A Musical Trip Around the Globe”

When: Friday 21st November 2014 at 12:00p
Where: Mawson School Hall

All classes will be performing an item, PLUS performances from the 3/4 and 5/6 Choirs and the Recorder band.

More information regarding your child’s performance to follow.

We hope to see you there!
Last Wednesday 5 November, our Year 3 and 4 MIP students were invited to the 2014 Mandarin presentation contest and awards ceremony at Hedley Beare Centre for Teaching and Learning in Stirling to perform two items. Five Mawson Mandarin Speech Competition winners and their parents were also invited, along with the winners from another primary school, four high schools, five colleges, one K-13 school and the Australian National University.

This competition and award ceremony was sponsored by The Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Australia. Ms Diane Joseph, Director-General, Education and Training Directorate, addressed the winners. Each school present was able to perform an item to show their language skills. Mawson Primary School students were the special performers. The feedback included how “cute” the Mawson kids were in their costumes during the performance. Mawson students’ behaviour was a highlight as well. We are very proud of our students.

Everyone enjoyed the refreshments after the ceremony, especially the dessert canapes and fruits. The winners each received an Award Certificate and a $30 gift voucher. All the MIP students were given souvenirs before boarding the bus back to Mawson Primary School. It was very rewarding day.

Cissy Lu & Constance Chen
Mandarin MIP Teachers
FUNDRAISER

The P&C are again holding the Crazy Camel Calendar fundraiser. This is where you can have your child’s artwork printed on a calendar, diary, iPhone5 cover or on greeting cards. The artwork will be displayed outside the classrooms order forms have been sent with your child.
HOW KIDS EXPERIENCE STRESS

Childhood stress has increased in the past few decades, with around 40 per cent of kids reporting that they worry too much. Jasmina Rowe, Clinical Practice Supervisor at Kids Helpline, looks at the most common stressors faced by today's children, and support strategies for schools and families.

What is stress in the context of childhood?
Stress is considered to be an unavoidable part of life. A certain amount of stress is normal and necessary for survival as it helps children develop the skills they need to cope with new situations and build resilience. Childhood stress can present with a large number of physical and emotional signs and symptoms, and usually occurs when the child is experiencing a situation that requires changing and adapting. Children can experience stress early in their lives, even before they are born, and can cope in different ways. Generally, we can see three types of stress responses in children:

- **Positive stress response** - is considered as a normal part of healthy development, for example, going to school camp or starting at a new school. When experienced in a supportive environment, it can provide important opportunities to learn and practise healthy responses to life changes.

- **Tolerable stress response** - activates the body's alert systems to a greater degree as a result of more severe, longer-lasting stressors, for example, parental divorce, illness or injury, or bullying at school.

- **Toxic stress response** - can occur when a child experiences strong and/or prolonged multiple stressful events without adequate adult support, for example, physical or emotional abuse, chronic neglect, parental mental illness, or exposure to violence. It can disrupt early brain development and lead to many health problems. The good news is that the damaging effects of toxic stress can be prevented or reversed if the child is placed in a supportive environment with caring adults as early in life as possible. Children experiencing tolerable (and especially toxic) stress may require the support from a mental health specialist who can provide ongoing therapeutic support and counselling. Telephone and online counselling services like Kids Helpline can also be helpful for children (and parents).

How prevalent is stress in early childhood/primary school?
It seems that everyday life stressors have increased in the last few decades and, certainly, we at Kids Helpline talk to a large number of children and young adults who report feeling significantly stressed and worried. A 2011 survey of 10,000 students across the country (commissioned by the Australian Scholarships Group) found that 40 per cent of students worry too much, and one-in-five have experienced an episode of depression.

What are common stressors for kids these days? Are they very different to 10 or 20 years ago?

Today's children face many pressures from external and internal sources, for example:

- **Stress in schools** - There is a lot of pressure on students today to perform at school, and there seem to be even more pressure within the peer group. The increase in the amount of homework students receive, fear of failure, worrying about fitting in, self-identity, and bullying are some of the more common reasons for stress in schools.

- **Stress in the family** - There are many issues within a family unit that can cause stress in children, for example, parental separation, remarriage (blended family), financial problems, poverty, parental stress, coping with parents who have a mental illness and, commonly, unreasonably high family expectations being placed on children.

- **Media stress and environmental dangers** - Some children can become worried about things they hear and see on the news or by a generalised fear of strangers, burglars and street violence. Many of the above-mentioned concerns, such as school stress, have been around for a long time. The main difference now, compared to 10 or 20 years ago, is that today's children have increased access to media. Television, internet and cell phones have contributed to the break-down of barriers that protect children from crime, violence and catastrophic events in media coverage. This exposure may contribute to, and have a significant impact on, increasing children's stress levels and their fears around safety. Cyber-bullying is another big stressor, which can be very aggressive and pervasive and often causes serious emotional distress and harm to children.

Are there times in a child's life where they may be more likely to experience stress?
Many internal and external factors can influence a child's susceptibility to stress. Children are more likely to experience stress in the following situations:

- Multiple stressful situations (particularly those that the young person cannot easily control).
- Transitions (life changes).
- Stress accompanying a serious illness or injury.
- Isolation or loneliness.
- Abuse (past or current).
- Parental stress (especially in mothers).

What behaviours might you see in stressed-out kids?
Youth of all ages, but especially younger children, may find it difficult to recognise and verbalise when they are experiencing stress. For children, stress can manifest itself through changes in behaviour. Some of those behavioural symptoms may include:

- irritability or moodiness
- withdrawing from activities that used to give them pleasure
- clinging; being unwilling to let parents out of sight
- crying
- aggressive behaviour
- regression to earlier behaviours (ie thumb-sucking or bed-wetting)
- school refusal
- unwillingness to participate in family or school activities.
How do you know when stress levels for children are getting too much or are developing into something more concerning (like an anxiety disorder)? When the strain and pressure becomes too much to handle, a child can develop a range of physical, emotional or behavioural symptoms, and can even be at risk of developing an anxiety disorder or other mental health issue. Some of the following symptoms, particularly if ongoing and severe, may indicate that child could be developing an anxiety disorder:

- Persistent and excessive worry (to the point it is impacting negatively on their day-to-day functioning).
- Ongoing physical symptoms (eg stomach pain, vomiting or headaches).
- Significant sleep disturbances.
- Extreme fearfulness.
- Significant changes in eating habits (poor appetite, overeating or binging).
- Inability to control emotions (eg uncontrollable crying or aggression).
- Withdrawal from friends and family.
- Extreme behaviours or comments (ie self-harm or suicidal ideation).

**How can primary schools help student cope with stress?**

Schools can be really active in supporting students to deal with stress, for example, they can:

- help students learn more about their emotions by incorporating emotional learning into the curriculum at all levels of school
- teach students how to recognise their personal signs and symptoms of stress and develop positive ways to cope with stress (eg through healthy eating or exercise)
- create supportive, positive and safe classroom environments
- communicate more frequently with student's parents and caregivers (eg information-sharing at parent/teacher evenings)
- ensure that students get the individual support they need with learning and achieving their academic goals
- allow time for students during school hours to receive adequate exercise and have play/relaxation time
- implement anti-bullying practices and policies
- encourage students to be creative and express themselves (eg through art, sport and music)
- provide counselling and actively promote the importance of children speaking up and accessing support when stressed or worried
- develop and implement mentoring support programs in school (eg Peer Skills).

**How can parents help their kids cope with stress?**

It is important for parents to teach kids to recognise and express their emotions, and to use healthy ways to cope with the stress they experience. Parents can:

- regularly spend calm and relaxing time with their children
- listen to their children and encourage them to talk about their feelings and worries
- provide a safe and nurturing family environment
- encourage physical activity and healthy eating habits
- use positive encouragement and rewards instead of punitive measures
- avoid being critical and negative towards their children
- show active interest in their children's activities and hobbies and participate when possible
- demonstrate active interest in their children's school progress and support them with their learning and homework
- monitor their children's access to media and ensure they are aware of safe online practices
- support their children if they are exposed to bullying
- manage their own stress and be a positive role model
- avoid over-scheduling children and allow them free time to play, read, listen to music or just 'veg-out'
- help build children's sense of self-worth by recognising their achievements and avoid placing unrealistic expectations on them
- seek professional help if signs of stress do not decrease.
ACT Early Intervention Open Day

SAVE THE DATE
1.00PM - 6.00PM MONDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2014

Hedley Beare Centre for Teaching and Learning, Fremantle Drive, STIRLING

The introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme in the ACT will enable Canberrans with a developmental delay or disability to exercise greater choice and control over the services they receive. To foster greater choice and control, early intervention services will transition from ACT Education and Training Directorate to community providers from the beginning of 2015. Meet the community organisations that have been contracted by the National Disability Insurance Agency to provide early intervention services in the ACT in 2015. Find out about the programs and services on offer. Learn more about how your family and child will be supported to transition to their new setting

This Open Day is for parents and carers of children requiring early intervention services in 2015.
If you would like more information about this event please email kristen.laurent@act.gov.au or phone 6205 2693

Secondary Bursary Scheme

The ACT Government provides financial assistance to support families with education expenses through the Secondary Bursary Scheme for students in years 7-10 and the Student Support Fund programs.
The scheme provides assistance to low-income earners in the ACT with dependent full-time students in years 7-10.

Information about the Scheme
Custodial parents or guardians who are financially responsible for the student(s) may apply for this benefit. This means the student(s) must be living with the applicant and be financially dependent upon the applicant, or in special government care that is paid for by the applicant.
Students must be studying full-time in the ACT, attend a Public, non-government school or the CIT, or be approved for home schooling.
Students must be in years 7-10 or, if home schooled, be of an age where they would be enrolled in years 7-10.
The bursary is available only to ACT residents. If a post office box is given as a postal address and is the address on your Health Care Card or Centrelink Card, proof of residency in the form of a copy of a current driver's licence, telephone account or other account from a government body should be attached to the application.
Applicants prove low-income status by providing a photocopy of a current Centrelink Card or Health Care Card with means tested payment codes. Applicants having Health Care Cards endorsed 'FO' are not eligible for this scheme. If the card expires before the processing period then an updated copy must be sent as soon as the new card is received to ensure receipt of the next payment.
Applications received before 3 July 2015 (end of Term 2) will be eligible for a full year’s payment. Applications received after 3 July 2015 and before 30 October 2015 will be eligible for a half yearly payment of $375.

Christian Education In Schools (CEIS) occurs because parents request it for their children under ACT legislation. Sessions are coordinated by the CEIS project, using approved resources and volunteers. If you would like to add your child to the existing attendance list print off the section below and return it to the school or go to www.ceis.org.au/yes

PLEASE RETURN THIS SECTION TO THE SCHOOL TO ADD YOUR CHILD TO THE EXISTING LIST

YES, I request that my child/ren listed below participate in the CEIS sessions offered at school.

Child: ___________________________________ Parent name: _______________________________

Child: ___________________________________ Parent signature: _____________________________

Child: ___________________________________ Date: ______________________________