

Wellbeing Newsletter



Dear BPS Community,

Welcome to 2018 at Bridgewater Primary School and our first Wellbeing Newsletter!

Did you know...?

We have a **Parent Connect Committee** who organise informal morning teas and social gatherings to welcome in new and existing families. Some of these gathering will be arranged for a weekend to hopefully enable parents who work outside the home to attend.

If you would like more information, please ask and we can put you in touch with the group.

Let me start by introducing myself. I am Tanja and I am the Student Wellbeing Coordinator at Bridgewater Primary School. Many of you may also know me from the 'front office' during 2017, what you may not know is that I am currently completing a Masters in Social Work, in which I have a personal interest in working with children to support resilience and wellbeing.

This year we will be sharing and communicating our wellbeing news through the Wellbeing Newsletter. This Newsletter will be issued each term and will include links to articles and resources that parents and caregivers may find useful. Our aim is that the Wellbeing Newsletter will develop into a collaborative project between the school and our parent community. This communication will also assist Families in their understanding of how we work with children at school.

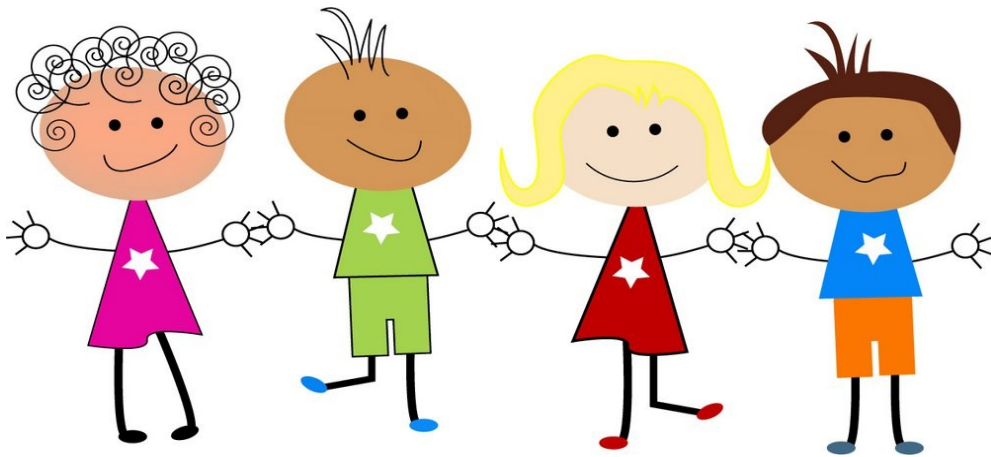
In this edition we have included information on 'Positive Education', the 'Power of the Mind' and 'Empowering our Kids', as well as information on how parents can connect with the school community.

2018 is shaping up to be an exciting year for our school community and we look forward to sharing our journey with you.

What is Wellbeing?

Wellbeing can be defined as a complex combination of a person's physical, mental, emotional and social health. Community is at the heart of student wellbeing at Bridgewater Primary School, it is the fabric of our school culture, and it is built on the firm belief that everyone belongs and that everyone has something valuable to contribute.

At Bridgewater Primary School we work hard to ensure that our children, families and staff feel connected to the BPS community.



Positive Education is one of the approaches that we have adopted at Bridgewater Primary School to help us achieve a strong community that values belonging and connection.

Positive Education refers to the way that some schools and other education settings have been able to apply the research and practice from positive psychology to their own contexts. In particular, some schools have sought to embed simple, research based practices into their classrooms, staff rooms and playgrounds. The purpose is to build positive emotions, engagement, relationships, meaning, accomplishment and health (PERMAH), in order to boost wellbeing.

At Bridgewater Primary School, we have done just that and you can see it in practice everyday, if you listen carefully to the dialogue in the school. Instead of simply telling children what to do and what not to do, you will hear staff asking students to reflect on their choices, reminding them to make positive choices and enabling them to take control and responsibility for their behaviour choices. You will also hear staff supporting children to choose how they want to feel about their interactions, issues and challenges, and how a positive approach usually results in a better outcome.

PERMAH is the organising framework for the Positive Education Practices that have been designed for schools.

In 2011, Martin Seligman offered the PERMA framework. Many others have since added the H for Health. Each letter in the PERMAH framework refers to a pillar that leads to greater wellbeing. Therefore, the six pillars for the Positive Education Practices are:

- ◆ Positive emotion (P);
- ◆ Engagement (E);
- ◆ Relationships (R);
- ◆ Meaning (M);
- ◆ Accomplishment (A); and,
- ◆ Health (H).



For more details on each of these PERMAH pillars follow the link below - Introduction to PERMAH.

<http://www.unleashingpersonalpotential.com.au/pos-ed-explained>

CHARACTER STRENGTHS

This year at Bridgey we are working with upper primary students to identify their Character Strengths. Character Strengths are the positive parts of your personality that impact how you think, feel and behave and are the keys to you being your best self, and the things you might want to work on.

Character Strengths are **not** about things that you are good at - although knowing your strengths may help you recognise the things that you are likely to be good at.

Further information on Character Strengths can be found at <http://www.viacharacter.org>

You can also take the free questionnaire to find out your own character strengths.



Ways to solve a problem at school

Positive response

Trying to solve the problem

Taking responsibility for your part

Staying calm: calm words, calm actions and low volume

Showing respect

Showing concern for others' wellbeing

Getting help from an adult if you have tried to solve the problem and it hasn't worked

Accept genuine apologies

Negative response

Continuing or escalating the problem

Not taking responsibility, blaming others.

Losing your cool, overreacting and being aggressive: invading personal space, swearing, yelling, violence

Showing disrespect: sarcasm, sass, attitude, talking back

Not caring for others' wellbeing: making it personal, insults, put downs, ganging up

Allowing the problem to escalate (get bigger)

Holding a grudge

*If, as a society today, we promote a **blame/victim** approach to life, our adults of the future will continue to portray this same approach to their life and teach it to future generations.*

Whereas.....

*If we promote a community of people who **take responsibility** for their own behaviours and ways of managing their own challenges in life, our adults of the future will continue to portray this approach to their life.*

Tan Curtis

Empowering our Children



Student wellbeing at BPS is centred around empowering our kids to have confidence in their ability to manage life's bumps and to come out stronger.

Over the last fifty years, we have bigger houses, more clothes, more access to music, books and entertainment, higher levels of education and our purchasing power in most developed countries has tripled. However, this has not resulted in a greater quality of life or better wellbeing. By some estimates, depression rates have actually increased about ten times in the same period of time, particularly in young adolescents.

Thankfully there are some **simple** things we can do to help our children cope with busy lives, friendships, school, big feelings and just feeling overwhelmed and overloaded. We teach them how to manage feelings by providing them with age appropriate strategies and tools, we then let them have a go. We don't interfere in the process, even if they get angry and frustrated, then we ask them to reflect on their choices and the outcomes that resulted from those choices.

When we feel capable and empowered, we feel confident in our ability to look after ourselves and to solve problems. The more we practice at making decisions and solving problems, the more capable and empowered we feel. This creates a positive feedback loop.

Children become empowered when they are allowed to make decisions and take responsibility for those decisions.

Everything we do is a choice.

Even indecision is a choice

~ Susan Gingras Fitzell



We want our children to have these little victories often. We start small because we want success and these small successes provide enormous benefit to their self-esteem. Most of us have experienced the exhilaration of overcoming a fear, or mastering something we didn't think we could, and how invincible we feel afterwards.

For further information and useful resources please take a look at 'What's the Buzz?' by Mark LeMessurier and Madhavi Nawana Parker and 'The Resilience and Wellbeing Toolbox' by Madhavi Nawana Parker. <https://wellbeingforkids.com.au/>

Friendships & Conflict

by georgina@wellbeingforkids.com.au | Jan 17, 2018 | [Blog](#) |

During primary school children go through many stages of making friends and along the way will experience conflict at some stage. It is very normal for children to experience conflict from time to time as this is a way of children discovering what works with friends and what doesn't – put simply children are developing their social and emotional skills. Some children may get confused when they have a disagreement or conflict with another person and may call this bullying. There is a great difference between conflict and bullying and here is a simple way to differentiate between them:

- Misunderstanding – usually problems around communication.
- Disagreement – do not agree on something and both want their own way.
- Conflict – people usually want to solve the problem. Can be over a period of time if not sorted properly.
- Bullying – threatening, repetitive, targeted, deliberating wanting to harm, abusive, no attempt to resolve issue.

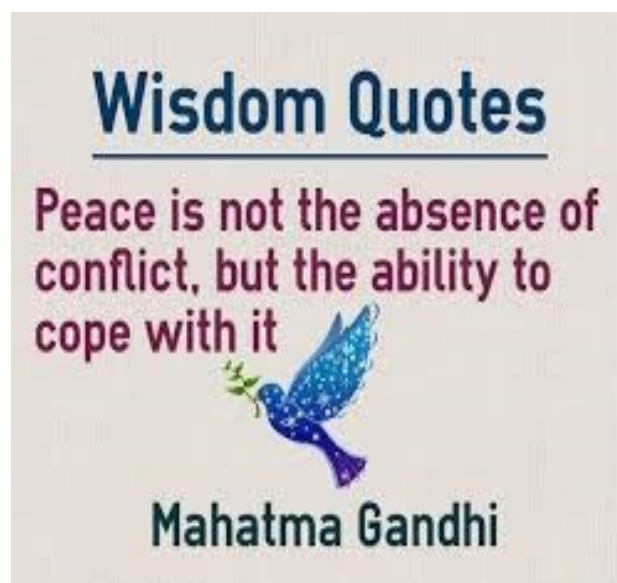
If your child does experience conflict, this is a wonderful teaching moment to guide them and help them learn about how to get along with others. Sometimes children can resolve conflict themselves, particularly as they grow into the upper years of primary, but when they are young they may need guidance, and most importantly emotional support.

The best way to give emotional support is to use 'reflective listening'. When we practice this type of listening, we listen to the content of what your child is saying and listen for the emotion and then we reflect back what they are saying e.g. "it sounds as though that really frustrated you when you did not get to play your game". We can then try to help them problem solve the situation by giving them lots of opportunities to brainstorm a solution without stepping in too early to solve it for them.

Conflict teaches kids:

- How to give and take
- How to come to an agreement
- How to compromise
- How to solve problems
- To build empathy
- To understand others and their needs
- How to get along in a group
- How to develop successful, loving and healthy relationships as adults.

<https://wellbeingforkids.com.au/test/>



Coming up in Term 2

Yoga - Did you know that Jenna, our fabulous Studio 7 Reception teacher, is a qualified children's yoga instructor? Learn about the benefits of yoga for children in our Term 2 magazine.

Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish on its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing it is stupid.
Einstein

More on **Positive Education** and **Character Strengths**. Learn about how our senior students have identified their character strengths and how this supports their wellbeing and learning. Do you know your character strengths?

Learn about Sadako and the work our Sadako Committee has undertaken to inspire children in changing the world for the better.

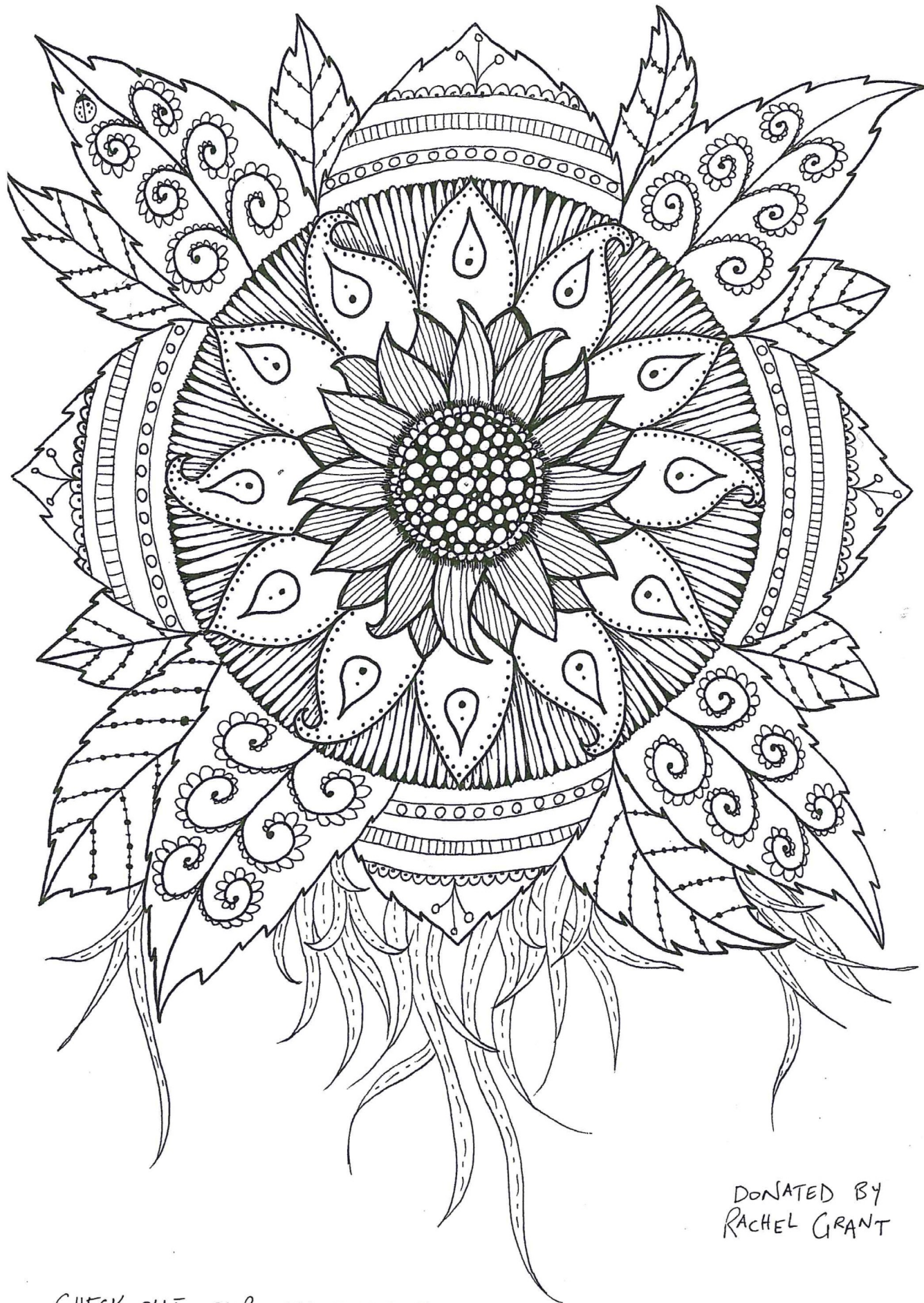
Find out about conversations that help your child solve problems productively and responsibly.

VIA Classification of Character Strengths



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