Families are the first and most enduring influence on a child’s development and play an important role in a child’s learning. Developing strong skills in reading, writing and maths is critical to ensure your child’s success in early learning and beyond.

201 Literacy and Maths Tips to Help your Child is a comprehensive booklet published by the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development that provides practical activities for you to do with your child at home.

For more information, go to www.education.vic.gov.au and search 201 Literacy and Maths Tips to Help your Child.

The booklet is one of many resources available to parents on the Department’s website, with other useful topics including:

- preparing for and transition to primary school
- parent participation at school

This week our Grade 5 to Year 12 Students completed the Attitudes to School Survey. It is a timely reminder for us that for our students to learn at their optimum they need to feel connected and a belonging to their school. Each week Mr Morrison reminds all students about the Wellbeing anonymous box that is in the library but I would also like to invite all students to have a voice within our school. If you have any ideas about how to build relationships and connections within our school please let Mrs Blaby (SRC Coordinator) or me know and we will try to accommodate your ideas. You tell us what you want!

Looking ahead this week we have our Primary School travelling to Koorlong for the annual interschool cross country on Friday. We wish them the best of luck and have no doubts they will return home with the trophy (again!)

Tomorrow Mitchell Roads is trying out for the Division trials at Nichols Point Primary School. We wish him the best of luck!

It is only 2 weeks until all the year 3, 5, 7 & 9’s complete the NAPLAN tests. If you have any queries about these tests please contact Mr Russell (NAPLAN Coordinator) as soon as possible and discuss your concerns.

Just a reminder to all parents if you would like to see any of your child’s teachers please either ring and make an appointment or email the teacher at any time. Don’t wait for a report to come home – teachers are available at all times throughout the term.

DON’T FORGET SCHOOL CROSS COUNTRY IS ON THE 11TH MAY 2012 (NEXT FRIDAY). I UNDERSTAND THIS IS A VERY BUSY TIME FOR MAJORITY OF OUR FAMILIES BUT WE ENCOURAGE ALL COMMUNITY MEMBERS TO COME ALONG AND GET INVOLVED IN THE 2ND CARNIVAL OF THE YEAR. WE WILL BE SENDING HOME SALAD ROLL ORDER FORMS IF ANY COMMUNITY MEMBERS WOULD LIKE TO ORDER PLEASE CONTACT NARELLE AT THE SCHOOL.
Students Connect With Online Conferences!

Werrimull Primary School students are on the lookout for schools to join in their interactive student conferences after a successful introduction during the first week of term 2. Many schools are currently exploring the use of Skype to connect to a wider audience. Here at Werrimull we are lucky enough to have the best of both worlds; Skype and Video conferencing!

Although we are currently making arrangements to conference with Sunraysia/Mallee schools the conferences will eventually allow the students to connect with other classes in Australia and around the world and share their knowledge on a range of different topics.

At the beginning of term 2 we explored the use of video conferencing with the Grade 4-6 English class. Students were able to share their progress with the Network Literacy Improvement Officer (NLIO) while she was in Swan Hill at the Regional Office.

Our next ‘conferencing’ session is scheduled for Tuesday May 8th; students will connect with Cardross Primary School to discuss a current issue. The Ultranet will be used as a platform for students to reflect on the process. The conference will give the students the chance to present their point of view on a current issue, as well as the chance to ask each other questions and compare the similarities and differences between their schools.

Online conferencing is a good way for students to work together, rather than individually. Group working is becoming an important element of many higher education courses, partly because it is also increasingly the way the workplace is organised. Employers look for evidence of group working skills. It has a sound educational basis too - educationalists believe that group working tends to promote deeper understanding of a subject and better critical thinking.

Ultranet Update

Online learning environments are becoming part of best practice learning and teaching worldwide. They are already used in a range of individual school settings across Australia and the world. Schools, including Werrimull P-12 School, are beginning to use the Ultranet to connect to other Victorian government schools. This means that knowledge can be shared across schools and each student’s learning history stays with them as they move from school to school. Having one system also means that parents with more than one child can log in and find learning information about each of their children in one place, even if they attend different government schools. We will progressively update details about your child and gradually start using the Ultranet for online learning activities.

If you are interested in attending an online training session to learn the Ultranet basics you can express an interest by contacting the school office.

Jamie Russell
Hello again folks. I write this from home today as I am on carer’s duty looking after a sick child. Sometimes I find it a little difficult thinking of topics to write about, but this week it was easy. Not only was the subject brought up in my classroom, but it was then splashed all over the front page of the Sunraysia Daily; Mental Health and Social Media.

In my VCE Health and Human Development class yesterday there was a major discussion around the dramatic increase in the last few years of self harm, stress disorders and mental illness, particularly in adolescent and young adult females. And then the questions started flying back and forth. Why? What, if anything, has changed over the last decade or more? Is it more stressful being a teenager/young adult now as opposed to years ago? If so, why? Are young people less prepared for the stresses at this stage in life than they had previously been?

And you know what? We didn’t have the answers; but we had a terrifically deep discussion?

One thing that we did identify that had changed was of course the advent of the digital age and social media. Now don’t get me wrong I’m not here harping on about the evil of Facebook or Twitter and I’m not blaming them for all of the problems in the world, but what we did agree on was that the need to stay connected constantly to social media meant that young people could never “get away” from these social pressures, as opposed to perhaps my generation where when you closed the bedroom door you were alone.

I then carried this theme into the staffroom where there was a front page article and a double page spread inside about social media, young people’s well being, mental health and self harm and again another conversation ensued. And it was here that a colleague added another aspect that I had not thought of.

In my class I had said that many people of my generation and perhaps others simply didn’t understand this need to be constantly connected. I wasn’t saying it was bad. I was just saying that I didn’t understand it and then I said that we tend to over simplify the answer because why don’t you just “turn it off!” to which the class answered “Oh no!” That was something that would or could not be considered. When the discussion transferred to the staffroom, many staff said the whole reason they like to get away camping or fishing and so on was to get away from things and to “be alone”. It was then that a colleague said, “That’s the problem. Kids these days don’t know how to be alone.”

Now this is a skill I had never thought of building. The ability to be alone. Are we building a generation that is so dependant on instant gratification; “just Google the answer!”, and so reliant upon peer validation that our children are at risk of losing the concept of self as it pertains to them without the need to put self into context with the group?

If it wasn’t such a serious issue it would remind me of the “Life of Brian” scene where Brian yells out to the crowd,

“You don’t need to follow anyone. You are all individuals.”

To which the crowd yells;

“Yes! Yes! We are all individuals!”

I don’t pretend to have the answers and I am certainly not enough of a Luddite to want to smash the machines, but what we must accept is that even though we may not understand it, the world has changed. And the skills that young people need to thrive and survive are different now than when we were their age. But what we do have is a wealth of knowledge and experience. And I think that if we use that to provide support and guidance we can achieve wonders.

I believe that by helping build positive self image, allowing and even actively promoting the importance of self and developing the ability to be “alone” we will all help equip our young people for the stresses of today and successes of tomorrow.

Students are also reminded that the anonymous “Wellbeing Box” is set up in the library and that students can contact me through that should they require it. I can also be contacted on my email at morrison.kelly.j@edumail.vic.gov.au.

Helpful Hint:
Please do not hesitate to contact me at the school if you would like any assistance or more information on this.

Be Well

Kelly Morrison
Wellbeing Coordinator
**Dates to Remember**

**May**
- Tasty Thursday: 3rd May
- Koorlong Prim School X country: 4th May
- Cross Country: 11th May
- NAPLAN: 15th – 17th May
- ILP Meetings: 21st May
- Culture Trip: 22nd May
- SSSA Cross Country: 23rd May
- 4-6 Cluster Sport: 25th May

**June**
- Pupil free Day: 8th June
- Public Holiday: 11th June
- Keys Please: 13th June
- Student Lead Conferences: 15th June
- 9-12 Exams: 18th June
- School Council: 20th June
- Students return from Alpine School: 23rd June
- Flying Start: 25th – 28th June
- Xmas in June: 29th June

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**Happy Birthday**
- Reece Impey: 1st May
- Monica Rowe: 1st May
- Will Shorrock: 5th May

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**School Lunch orders are available this Wednesday from the Hotel**

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**Mothers Day**
- Stall next Thursday 10th May

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**Mothers Day**
- 13th May
Millewa Pre-School

What's Happening

This Term we are looking at Families and Home, if you have a chance to visit the Pre-School you will notice that everything has been moved around to provide the children with a proper home area for imaginative play.

Last Thursday the four year olds visited Werrimull P-12 School as part of our Partnership Program and enjoyed participating in different teamwork games with Mr Bamford and the P-3s.

Just a reminder to parents after the holidays that unless you have sent along something such as a block/packet of cheese, packet of biscuits or dried fruit you need to send along something healthy to share for snack everyday that your child is at kindergarten. Our shared snack is very important to encourage children to try different foods and to give them sustained energy to make it through the day.

As the weather gets colder please make sure that you send along a jacket or jumper to kindergarten as even when it is cold we still spend time outside.

I hope everyone has a wonderful week.

Miss Caroline Smith

Dates to Remember

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<td>1st May</td>
<td>Committee Meeting, 7pm</td>
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<td>Library Day</td>
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<td>28th June</td>
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