

Dear parents, carers, family members and community,

As this is the final newsletter for 2020, I would like to take this opportunity to wish all our families a **Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!** What an extraordinary year it has been! I would like to extend my deepest appreciation for the continued support provided by our families and community members throughout the challenges of 2020. We made it!

This is my final newsletter as principal of Clarke Road School. It has been a privilege to lead such a wonderful school over the last 9 years. I hold dear so many inspiring and wonderful memories. There is no doubt I will miss the amazing CRS Team, our parents and especially our wonderful students. My goodness we have covered some ground together!

Thank you to the team who coordinated two covid safe Presentation Days last week, to celebrate all that your children have achieved this year. It was a wonderful celebration. A BIG congratulations to all of our students for their hard work in 2020. Could I take this opportunity to thank the tireless efforts of our staff for ensuring your children were known, valued and cared for in their educational programs in 2020. I would also like to thank the amazing executive team, our office staff, our general assistant, our drivers and escorts, and our cleaners for the amazing job you have done in 2020.

Wishing you all a safe, enjoyable break and look forward to seeing you in 2021.

Diane Robertson

Dates to Remember

Last day for Students

Wed 16th December

Staff Development days

Wed 27th January

Thurs 28th January

Students Return

Fri 29th January 2021

P.B.E.L. NEWS

2020 has been another great year for CRS students learning about PBEL at school and at home! Holidays are good opportunities for practicing PBEL rules further at home and in the community! Students can **Be a Friend** at home or in the community by sharing and talking nicely with each other. CRS students have been practising how to **Be Safe** by greeting other people with elbow taps and it will be wonderful if they can keep doing this. Support your child to **Be Caring** by packing away their belongings, throwing rubbish in the bin and wiping the table. CRS students had been learning at home earlier this year and they can continue to **Be a Learner** at home by listening and following instructions from parents and carers.



Dear Parents, carers and community members,

Well this will be my last end of year speech at Clarke Road School. It has been a privilege to lead such a dynamic, responsive and wonderful school for 8 years. I leave this school with a heavy heart but a clear knowledge that it is in great hands and that together with an amazing team, I have contributed to a wonderful school community for the time I have been principal. I have always given my best in my attempt to impact positively in the lives of the beautiful students in my care. It has been an amazing journey full of heartfelt moments, challenges and struggles, but always with students at the centre of all that I have attempted to put in place.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to Rebecca Saunders for her wonderful leadership in my absence. Rebecca leads with courage, bravery, insight and a clear commitment to the value of the NSW DoE. Rebecca has taken on the challenges and lead with grace, poise and passion. I am indebted to her skill and knowledge and thank her enormously for the continued drive to make our school an amazing place for students to learn and to be taught.

Thank you also to the wonderful executive team who put in so many additional hours and energy to ensure our school is meeting the needs of our teachers and students. For the many after school meeting that they have attended to put in place new plans, new goals and to remain solution focused with the many issues and challenges that confront educators in the current climate.

2020 will remain one of the most challenging years for our educators across NSW and to say that our teachers and SLSO's have done an amazing job is an understatement. The resilience, dedication, passion and tireless work is nothing short of incredible. Our teachers are simply amazing! One of the great legacies I leave, hopefully, is the commitment to teamwork and sharing. Teachers who share evidence based practice, who open their rooms to colleagues to share their teaching and support skills, who lead with courage in a field that is complex and challenging is something I will hold dear to my heart. Thank you to our teachers and SLSOs for your unwavering commitment to students and the values we hold high! The skill of leadership to drive school improvement is second only to the skills and knowledge of the teachers and SLSOs that stand in front of your children each day. Great student outcomes are the direct result of great teachers and great leadership.

I extend my heartfelt thanks to Leanne and Mary in the front office. You are the face of our school and your ability to stay professional, responsive and connected to our broader community is simply amazing.

As an innovative, connected and responsive team we have impacted education for students with disabilities not only in our school but across NSW. As a team we have been acknowledged as excelling in the areas of innovation, new curriculum, brain informed teaching and learning, regulation approaches for complex learners, environmental design that supported teaching and learning and of course commitment to our students health and wellbeing. Thank you for the countless hours of consultation, professional learning, shared practice and active research that you have engaged in. Our many awards pay tribute to your capabilities. Never let the focus shift from what students need to engage meaningfully in their learning at whatever stage of learning they are at. Remember you as professionals lead teaching and learning and you do that so well because you know your students. Students are at the centre of all practice and never let that change regardless of the political climate or the multitude of changes that keep coming our way. Mark Scott, our Secretary of the DoE says time and time again, there are two people who work for the Department, those that run and teach in schools and those that support the work of those that work in schools. **STUDENTS AT THE CENTRE.**

I have loved my time in education over my 29 year career and have dedicated my time to challenging the system to deliver improved outcomes for students with disabilities, to improve resourcing to our schools, to ensure professional learning is cutting edge for our complex learners and to ensure disability education is front and centre of equity and best practice.

Clarke Road is a special place. It is a place that will remain very dear to my heart. It has not always been an easy journey, but I have taken my lessons and built on them and always tried to ensure I am responsive to the needs of our students and our community. For a student with a complex learning needs the engagement of families is just so pivotal. For students who have strong family support and families who engage in the conversations needed will always ensure their child has the best possible outcomes.

Together we are strong! Thank you to the many parents who have supported our P&C and who have participated in the professional learning available, who have offered time to run great programs, who have given us positive feedback and who continue to support their children in life's journey. I have valued you and I will miss you.

Thank you for the privilege of leading Clarke Road School for the time that I have. My time has come and I am ready to move on to the next journey. I will have time to spend with my beautiful grandchildren Franklin and Lulu and time to support my partner Matthew as he continues his pivotal roles in education.

Continue to support each other, continue to share great practice, and continue to uphold all that is right in the education of our complex learners. Onward and upward Clarke Road School.

And now for the Principal's Award for 2020-

Taylor started school at Clarke Road School in 2010 and he immediately struck at the hearts of the staff at Clarke Road School. He was cute beyond words! My first meeting with Taylor was at the end of year assembly before I started at Clarke Road School. He was doing a little drama of the Teddy bears picnic. He was just so absolutely engaged in the performance and I think he quietly enjoyed the on stage moment surrounded by his good buddies.

Taylor is a sociable student with a wicked sense of humour. He enjoys spending time with his peers and likes to have a joke with them. He is often seen having a laugh with them as they sit in the playground taking in the world. Taylor has made many friends here at Clarke Road School and is a wonderful role model to all students. Many students look up to Taylor and seek his attention and friendship.

Taylor has developed into a wonderful young man. He is flexible, sociable and enjoys the routines of the classroom. He is a groover and loves to dance and sing. At times he cannot be interrupted until he has performed the last dying movement of a dance or song. Taylor loves to learn and has done well in his academic skills, but his strengths have been the significant growth in social skills and life skills. He has a possible career as a chef as he has mastered many aspects of canteen and cooking. He can read and loves nothing better than to show off his skills to others. I just love listening to Taylor give his morning news in Gibba. He cracked me up so much as he unpacks life with his brothers and his parents. Katie and Dave, there are no secrets! Taylor has always given his best at school. He works hard at school and loves some take up time to get himself motivated. He loves to hear words of encouragement and will give his best when supported through positive relationships.

Taylor is quiet, compassionate and caring. He looks after other students. Taylor is supported by a wonderful family network who continue to support Taylor to be his very best. His family is very important to Taylor. The connection between home and school has allowed Taylor to flourish through close communication and support between home and school.

The highlights of Taylor's growth in 2020 are-

- Communicating emotions appropriately.
- Transitioning between activities.
- Following routines to improve his independence.
- Improved responsiveness to group engagement.
- Has shown great initiative in taking on his role as a barrister in the Clarke Road cafe. He loves putting up the "open for business" sign.
- He has accepted the challenges of responding to new experiences.

Taylor is a worthy recipient of the 2020 Principals award.

Farewell to Di

“Every child deserves a champion: an adult who will never give up on them, who understands the power of connection and insists they become the best they can be.” Rita Pearson

I begin with this quote because it captures so completely, Diane Robertson, our Principal at Clarke Road School, someone who has worked tirelessly to champion the cause of students with complex needs, not just at Clarke Road School, but around New South Wales and Australia.

In 2011, when Diane took over the role of Principal at Clarke Road School, she had three weeks to pack up the school and move to our temporary home across the street. And in true Di fashion, she rolled up her sleeves and began the work, a work that involved not only the rebuilding of a physical school, but also the building of a new culture that embodied her own vision of a place where every child could become the best they could be. Clarke Road School quickly became and remains a school known for best practice in innovative curriculum and collaborative practices. Whilst we recognise that the building of the culture of a school is a collaborative enterprise to which all members of the community contribute, today I would like to acknowledge Di's pivotal role as the catalyst for building our culture, through her dynamic, values-driven leadership style.

Diane came to Clarke Road, with extensive experience as an educator and leader and we have been the beneficiary of her passion and vision. Through her commitment to ensure that students with complex learning needs receive high-quality education, she was instrumental in driving two important initiatives, *In the Zone* and *The Communication Passport* now known as *Passport for Learning*. Both these frameworks of practices are now being used to support complex learners around Australia.

Throughout her education career and in her time as Principal at Clarke Road, Diane has contributed significantly to the wider special education community through her significant roles within the Primary Principals Association, the Special Education Principals and Leaders Association of NSW and the Department of Education. Diane's advocacy and leadership gained deserved recognition in 2018 through the awarding to her of the Australian Principal of the Year Award; an award through which she was recognised as the most outstanding Principal across all schools in Australia, independent, Catholic or public, primary or high school.

Over her years of service, Diane has also received a number of other awards, including a Social Justice and Equity Award in 2016 and more recently, the Paul Harris Fellow Award, for her exemplary work in the community for students with disabilities.

However, I also wanted to acknowledge today the legacy that Diane leaves behind at Clarke Road School, a legacy of high standards for students and staff, a collaborative culture of staff who are passionate about making a difference for students with complex needs and a belief that school should be fun and engaging. Her active encouragement, mentoring and coaching of leaders within the school and her commitment to engaging with and equipping our school community have also meant that the school is strongly placed to continue the work that she has begun in the years ahead.

Today, on behalf of all of us, I would like to thank Diane for being a champion for our students, for being the person to never give up on them, for understanding the power of connection and for insisting that they (and we) be the best they can be.

Please join with me in acknowledging the amazing contribution that Diane has made to Clarke Road School.

Rebecca Saunders

Creating a Voice (CaV) Project

In this week's newsletter we are looking at the last question from the social domain in the Passport for Learning - Can the student manage their emotions and can they self-regulate? Before students are able to self-regulate they learn to co-regulate with a familiar communication partner (e.g. parents and teachers). Students also need to develop a range of social skills such as engaging with an adult problem solving, taking turns, playing/interacting with others and following a schedule.

A blue student is not yet aware of others in their environment and relies on a familiar communication partner to interpret their signals and assign meaning to them. A familiar adult will identify a problem, label the problem and assign intention such as "I can see you're sad, because the sun is in your eyes. I'm going to move you into the shade." To assist a blue student in their regulation create a personal dictionary which identifies familiar patterns of behaviour e.g. how they greet familiar people. Give students opportunities to engage/respond to familiar adults. Blue students should also be given opportunities to request 'more' of an activity and to request/reject items in order to increase their expressive communication skills.

A purple student is becoming aware of others in their environment and is engaging in the here and now e.g. a familiar person in front of them. They are learning to be more intentional with actions and sounds. A purple student is able to calm more quickly than a blue student as they are able to anticipate a problem being solved through increased understanding of objects and routines e.g. A purple student is crying because they are thirsty, when they see their water bottle coming towards them they may stop crying because they anticipate their need being met. To develop a purple student's ability to co-regulate, incorporate relaxing routines paired with real objects e.g. wrist band for walking, bubble wand for blowing bubbles, pillow/blanket for rest.

A red student uses simple behaviours (crying, laughing, smiling) in response to basic emotions (happy, sad, angry, afraid). A red student can learn about emotions through songs, chants and simple stories. Assist a student to learn about emotions by explicitly teaching the concepts of happy/sad in context. A familiar adult should label these emotions e.g. "Karen is happy" as well as label problems when they occur e.g. "I can see you're sad, you want morning tea". It is helpful to build up a bank of regulatory activities which support your student to be calm. Pair these with real objects e.g. cushion with resting in a relax area.

A brown student uses simple behaviours to show basic emotions (happy, sad, angry, afraid) and are starting to be influenced by others' emotions (e.g. being sad if someone else is sad). They may move away from an area/people when upset, are looking to seek approval from familiar adults and defiant behaviour is emerging. A brown student is fully supported by an adult to regulate however they are able to understand and use first/then and choice boards to assist in their regulation. To support these skills, continue to model the concepts of happy/sad and build their bank of relaxation activities/tools. It is important to provide opportunities for your student to ask for help (e.g. 'help' card or signing 'help').

An orange student is starting to identify simple emotions like happy/sad in self, but still mostly uses behaviours to display their emotions. Continue to label and model emotions and the concept of happy/sad e.g. "Are you sad because we can't go swimming?" Support students to answer yes/no in response to your questions. An orange student can be supported to read happy/sad personalised books which include the concept of "because".

A yellow student can label simple emotions in self and shows interest in others' feelings (e.g. recognises happiness in others). With some prompting and support, a yellow student is starting to regulate their own emotions. This student can use photographs and Picture Communication Symbols to express their emotions. Assist a yellow student by identifying emotions in a situation or person e.g. Joe is sad because his mum just left. Continue building regulatory strategies for your student e.g. breathing exercises, squeeze balls and provide opportunities for students to recognise a problem and ask for help.

A green student can express an emotion in relation to a situation or person e.g. 'I feel happy because I went swimming'. This student is starting to self-regulate their emotions without assistance (i.e. control their emotions/impulses in social contexts) however, may still sometimes require help to resolve arguments. Assist a green student by providing opportunities to learn new skills and appropriate behaviours for situations by using social stories. Encourage students to understand the consequences of behaviour by predicting outcomes in social situations e.g. When you make a mess, people get upset and you may be asked to pack up.

Awareness

Anticipation

Intentional

Imitation
First – Then

Categorising

Problem Solving

Critical Thinking



Buru 2020

Hello again everyone. Following on from our newsletter article in Semester One, you can see that we're still trying to keep very busy in Buru Class!

On a second note, I thought I'd take this opportunity to say goodbye to everyone in the Clarke Road School Community. I've been given a transfer up to a school on the sunny Central Coast, and the move will mean that I get to see a lot more of my family. I started at Clarke Road in 2018 and the time sure has flown! In the three short years here I've taught in every class except one. I've had so many positive conversations with parents and siblings, carers, and therapists over this time and it's been wonderful to see the students flourish. It's with bittersweet feelings that I say goodbye, I've learnt so much since starting here, and I feel like I've still got so much more to give back, but I know that this is the best thing for me and my young family.

It's been a blast Clarke Road!

Toby Lord.





Congratulations to all our students on a fantastic 2020!

Farewell to our Year 12 Graduates - Aiden, Matthew and Madison.





2020 School formal



Last Thursday evening we farewelled Matthew, Madison and Aiden at the school formal. It was special to have a chance to celebrate them and we wish them all the best with their post school adventures.



Santa's visit to Clarke Road



On Tuesday, Santa came to Clarke Road. We had to put in some COVID safe measures but it was wonderful to have him visit and spread some Christmas cheer. One of our students asked Santa where he had parked his reindeers.



Thank you Hornsby Westfield for the lovely gifts for our students and for facilitating Santa's visit – we appreciate having you as part of our community.





INVITATION



WORLD FESTIVAL OF MAGIC

PROUDLY HOSTED BY THE
Lions Club of Bondi



Streamed exclusively on Vimeo

COMPLIMENTARY ADMISSION

Starting Date of stream	Finishing Date of stream
Friday 18 th December	Sunday 20 th December

To watch the stream show please follow these simple instructions:

- Open the link at <https://vimeo.com/showcase/msbond20>

- The page will say: "This showcase is private" Please enter the password **MAGIC2020** and click: **Submit**

- You will now see the stream show page with two videos

- Please watch the Introduction video from our club first and then enjoy the show!

Please note that admission to this event has been generously sponsored by Sydney's business community to give your family 60 minutes of entertainment which is guaranteed to amuse and astound people of all generations in a Covid-safe manner. Proceeds of this event funds vital community programmes and equipment.

For more information, we prefer emails to: mnash@ozemail.com.au or contact us on 9158 3849.

Thank you for supporting our project and we hope you thoroughly enjoy the show

More information at www.wfom.com.au



Health
Northern Sydney
Local Health District

My Health Information Folder

Seeking your feedback

Northern Sydney Local Health District is seeking support from family carers of children with an intellectual disability to trial the resource: *My Health Information Folder*.

The folder has been developed in collaboration with Northern Sydney Local Health District's Carer Support Service and is designed to keep important health care information accessible, when presenting for health care appointments or hospitalisation.

Participants in this trial are asked to complete a pre- and a post-survey to help us review and continuously improve this resource and our services. Responses will not be linked to personal information.

Sign up for your folder



Register to receive a folder and participate in this trial via our online survey via the QR Code or this link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/MyHealthInformationFolder>

Registrations will remain open until all folders are distributed. Folders will be delivered to schools for collection by family carers as they complete the online survey.

There will be no requirement to return the folder once used.

More information

This folder is developed through the Intellectual Disability Mental Health Drug and Alcohol (ID MHDA): Team and Training Program. This folder and other ID MHDA program resources aim to build our capacity to care for people with an intellectual disability who present to our health, and mental health services.

For more information please contact:

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