

Dear Parents and carers,

What a unique set of circumstances we find ourselves in! We are certainly living through unprecedented times in which the guidebook is being developed as we go. Whether you are at home or at school, let's work together to do the best we can with the challenging circumstances that life is currently presenting us with. I have been reminded numerous times over the course of this week that being flexible in constantly changing circumstances, thinking 'outside' the box, being resilient and working as a team is what special educators and their families do best.

## Dates to Remember

### Last Day of Term 1

Thursday 9<sup>th</sup> April

### First Day of Term 2

Staff-Monday April 27<sup>th</sup>

Students-Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup>

## Wellbeing

Could I encourage all of you at this time to give yourself permission to focus on your own well-being as well as the well-being of your children and families. Last week our staff looked at some suggestions from Beyond Blue on how to support ourselves and others to remain present, centred and grounded. Some of these suggestions included: trying to maintain perspective, finding a healthy balance in relation to media coverage, staying connected with friends and family via telephone or social media, engaging in healthy activities that you enjoy and find relaxing, keeping regular sleep routines, eating healthy foods and maintaining a practical and calm approach.

## P.B.E.L. NEWS

At Clarke Road School, **Being Safe** has been a big focus over the past few weeks, especially where spreading germs is involved. The students across the school have been practicing a new way of saying Hi, Hello and Celebrating. Instead of the typical Hi-5, we have started to say Hi with elbow taps. It has been fantastic to see the students and staff using this!! Please practice at home!



### **Attendance at school**

In line with the advice from the NSW Government, parents and carers are strongly encouraged to keep their children at home if possible. Clarke Road School, will remain open for parents or carers who are not able to supervise their children at home. In response to our lower numbers, we have moved to combining classes, and teachers and SLSO's are now on a rotating roster to work flexibly from home. This will mean that your child will have a number of different teachers and SLSOs supporting them if they are here.

### **Term 2**

A decision about whether schools will return to normal operations after the holidays will be taken in line with the latest advice from the NSW Government and we will keep you informed about this as soon as this information becomes available. The 27<sup>th</sup> of April will be a Staff Development Day and is a pupil free day. If schools remain open for parents who are unable to care for their children at home, then the first day back at school will be Tuesday the 28<sup>th</sup> April.

### **Learning from home**

At present, Clarke Road School has provided online learning materials for students who are learning from home. In Term 2, resource materials will be both a combination of online learning and written materials that will be distributed to students. Each class will have its own materials that will be closely aligned to the learning tasks students would receive if they were at school. We appreciate that 'teaching' your child is not easy, particularly where you are looking after multiple children. It would be our hope that the materials we give you would be engaging and achievable for your child. We will be in regular contact with you to determine what is going to work best for your child. More information regarding this will be sent by email next week. Thank you for your patience and support as we continue to make plans to support you and your child with learning from home.

### **Staying Connected as a Community**

It is important that at this time we continue to stay connected as a community. Could I encourage you to call another parent this week to see how they are going, or to simply have a laugh or cry with them. We will continue to regularly touch base with you, but encourage you to call or email us if you require support.

I wanted to end with a quote that I heard on the radio this week which is pertinent for all families who are at home with their children:



***"If I can leave you with one thing, it's this: at the end of all this, your children's mental health will be more important than their academic skills. And how they felt during this time will stay with them long after the memory of what they did during those weeks is long gone. So keep that in mind, every single day."***

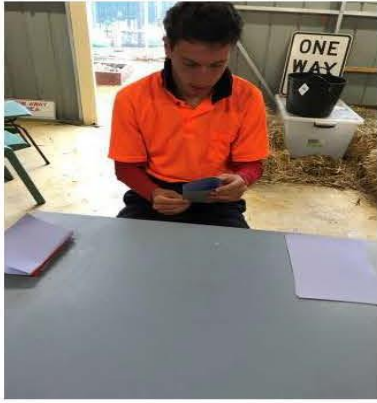
Stay safe and take care,

**Rebecca**

## Colo Newsletter Article

Colo class has been enjoying a number of activities this term.

Matthew making cards in Work Skills.



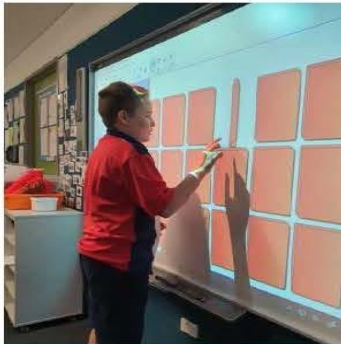
Colo class bushwalking with their friends from Gibba class.



Maddy making cards in Work Skills.



Ben enjoying matching skills.



James enjoying an art lesson.



Omi doing the recycling.



Take care everyone! Verney, Tony and Manoj



## Creating a Voice (CaV) Project

In this newsletter article, we are continuing to develop a student's expressive language using the Passport for Learning (also known as the Communication Passport). The expressive language skill that we are focussing on this week is how a student /young person can give a yes/no response. In assisting your child to develop these skills we need to identify the best place to start. Here are some ideas to assist your child.

The Blue student displays Awareness. In working towards a clear yes/no response, we ask simple "do you want...?" questions, with items in view. Does the student request (I want) or reject (I don't want it)? The Blue student is working toward responding to this question. It is best to practise this with items that you know your child likes or does not like. For example, when preparing to give your child a favourite toy, show it to them and say "do you want ....."? Pause and allow them to respond. Carefully observe your child for a reaction and assign meaning. Respond to any body movement, vocalisation or facial expression, by saying, for example, "Yes, you want the ...." And allow them to have it. Regularly ask 'do you want' questions to assist this student to reject and request often.

The Purple student displays Anticipation. This student will respond some of the time to these "do you want....?" questions with at least 6 familiar items, activities or interactions. To assist, give the student the opportunity to use body movement, facial expressions and/or vocalisations to reject or request. It is best to practise with items that you know your child likes or does not like. For example, show them a food that they do not like, move the food toward them and say "Do you want....?" Look for their response. For instance, if your child pushes the food or purses their lips tightly you could say, "No, you don't want ....," and put the food away. Recording your child's way of saying yes and no in their personalised dictionary will help all of their communication partners respond consistently and assist them to develop more intentional communication.

The Red student is Intentional. This student will respond to reject/request questions most of the time using non-verbal communication, such as eye gaze, smiling, gesturing, turning away, walking away and pushing an item away. They are working towards answering with a yes or no. This student will search for an item that has disappeared (object permanence). To assist this student, ask questions such as "Do you want an iPad?" with the item in view. The student may lift his hand to show that he wants it. Acknowledge this and model their answer, "Yes, you want iPad," then allow them to have a turn. Recording a red student's way of answering yes and no in a personalised dictionary continues to be a valuable strategy.

The Brown student Imitates and understands First and Then. These students can indicate or say yes or no for simple "do you want...?" questions. For example, if you say "Do you want a drink?" the student may say "No," or "No drink." When asked "Do you want more?" the student may say, "No more." To encourage longer utterances, it is beneficial to model a two-word utterance when a brown student uses the words yes or no only to respond.

The Orange student can Categorise. As a result, this student can answer simple questions based on facts such as, "Is it a dog?" The student may say "no cat" or "yes dog." They can also answer personal yes/ no questions, such as "Can you open it?" The student may say "I can" or "I can't." An orange student is working towards conventional ways to express themselves. They may say "no do this" instead of "I can't do this." Assist them to learn conventional language by modelling the right words. For example, "I can" or "I can't."

The Yellow student can Problem Solve. This allows them to answer yes/no to more complex questions and more categories of questions. For example: possession: "Is this your hat ...?"; preferences, "Do you like the cake?"; labelling, "Is this a dog?" (while showing the student a picture of a dog or a cat); function, "Can your pencil talk?"; time, "Are you going out today?" Give a yellow student opportunity to answer a variety of types of yes/ no questions across the day, modelling correct grammar for their answer if necessary.

Green student displays Simple Critical Thinking. The student can answer yes/no to more complex questions and more categories of questions. For example: to test knowledge, "Is the sky blue?"; comparison, "Is the dog bigger than the puppy?"; relative time, "Did that happen first?"; perspectives, "Do you think your Mum will be happy with you?"; and wants and needs, "Do you need the blue pencil to colour your drawing?" Give green students the opportunity to answer a variety of types of complex yes/ no questions across the day.

Awareness

Anticipation

Intentional

Imitation  
First – Then

Categorising

Problem Solving

Critical Thinking