

*Russell Lea*  
PUBLIC SCHOOL



## Newsletter

Term 1, Week 10 Friday 3 April 2020

## Important Dates

Please refer to our website  
calendar for a full list of 2020  
school dates

March 23 – April 3

Parent/Teacher Interviews

April 9

Last Day of Term 1

April 28

First Day of Term 2

### Narrow The Focus, Learn Better

One of the challenges inexperienced teachers face in their first year of teaching is the balance between covering large amounts of curriculum content and understanding how each individual student is progressing with that content. Teachers soon learn there is no point rushing ahead with new content if the current content is not understood. As experience is gained teachers learn to maintain a narrow focus in each lesson so they are in a good position to understand student progress before they decide to move onto the next step in a learning sequence. Over time they add the smaller learning achievements together and get students to apply them together to achieve significant syllabus outcomes.

If you are working with your child over the coming weeks and you get stuck with a particular task or concept considering narrowing the focus. This means understanding what the learning intention is and breaking it down into smaller chunks as described by the success criteria. Adults actually find it very hard to think of those smaller steps. We tend to just focus on what child cannot do and throw our attention at pushing them to complete the set task. This approach will not usually result in learning and will damage the child's confidence in that syllabus area. Instead break the task down and consider what the smallest step forward would be and what learning it represents. Focus just on this until the child is able to progress. For example imagine the learning task is to add two one digit numbers together without any physical supports such as counters. If the child is struggling we work back to their level of competence and then focus on the next step. Can they count to twenty? Can they tell us what the next number is after a given number? Can they count forward by two from a given number? Once they can accomplish these narrower goals they are more able to achieve the larger one. Moving on too early would simply frustrate and completing set work without having developed the skill would be pointless.

When learning with your child always ask yourself: What they are learning? What do they know now? What is the next (small) step? Task completion is always less important than knowing they have actually improved their skills and knowledge.

Dan Sprange  
Principal

## COVID-19 Update

Last week we saw significant changes to the structure of educational delivery at RLPS. During this time students, parents and teachers demonstrated commendable flexibility, community spirit and commitment to education. Although RLPS continues to have above average attendance rates the majority of students have now moved to a home learning model. All students have access to the same learning activities with students at school working to complete the same tasks as students at home. Activities are organised in stages so all classes in each stage are engaging with the same content. Each Friday learning content for the coming week is released via the online platform used within each stage.

Our focus for the next two weeks will be on monitoring how students are engaging with home learning and interacting with them to take into account the variable nature of learning and different student experiences over time. Teachers are focused on providing feedback and adjustment to learning where possible. They may make contact with you to discuss how your child is progressing and to see if you need any assistance with home learning arrangements. A google form has been set up to gain feedback about your home learning experiences. Please provide us with information about your experiences so we can make adjustments where possible. Link: <https://forms.gle/KRj7Kc7djesQ3oZZA>

Teleconferencing is increasingly being used by teachers to check in with students and provide direction and feedback on learning. This is a new application of this technology for most schools and we are all learning how to use it effectively and appropriately. To ensure we can continue to use teleconferencing we request each family follow these basic expectations:

- Ensure students and family members are dressed and ready to video link with others at the appropriate time. This means no pyjamas or half-dressed students or family members are to be in view of the camera.
- Try to keep non-participating family members such as older brothers or sisters away from the conference. Although doing this is not always possible it does minimise distractions and help students maintain focus during the limited face to face time available.
- Allow students to do the talking. While other family members may know what to say it is most important that students are responsible for all discussion input.

We are aware a number of families are under increased pressure as they experience significant economic, social and health challenges. Home learning can add to this pressure and I wish to reiterate that completing the timetable of activities and keeping your child at home every day is less important than making sure your child feels safe, loved and hopeful about the world they live in. Being a teacher and a parent is not possible for all parents due to work commitments and other family demands. It is okay to only attend to the learning that is achievable for your family. I am available to discuss any matters which arise for you, small or large and encourage you to use the contacts on the following page if you need help.

We are a strong community and the current circumstances continue to bring out our best. We have had families rallying to provide resources to those in need, lovely messages of support and even a parent offering to manufacture hand sanitiser for us. The learning challenges have also brought out the best in our students. For example Stage 2 students have recently created a range of learning videos for their peers. In these videos students are learning to communicate clearly with others to teach them something new. Isolation has bred creativity and a desire to connect with others as each of these videos are innovative, highly entertaining and demonstrate excellent communication.

### **If you need help please consider calling the school or the numbers below**

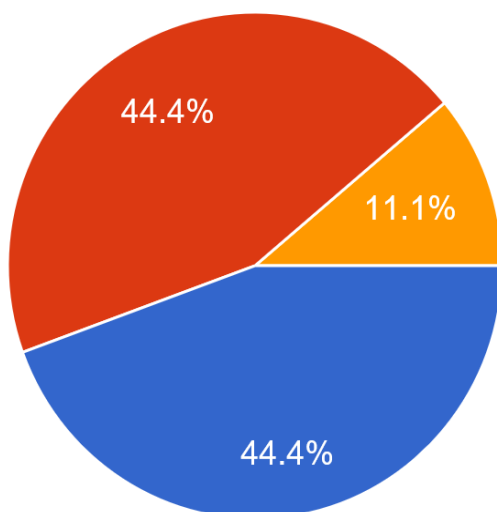
- 1800 Respect: 1800 737 732 - 24hr counselling support for victims of sexual assault & domestic violence
- Domestic Violence Helpline: 1800 656 463 - 24hr counselling support and accommodation for victims escaping violence
- Mens Line Australia: 1300 789 978 - 24hr counselling support for men experiencing emotional, health, relationship issues.
- Parent Line NSW: 1300 1300 52 - 24 hr parenting support for families with children aged 0-18yrs
- Tresillian NSW: 1300 272 736 - 24hr parenting support for families with children aged 0-5yrs
- Mental Health Access Line: 1800 011 511 - 24hr crisis support for families experiencing mental health challenges
- Your room – Alcohol & other drug support: 1800 250 015 - 24hour counselling support around alcohol & substance use
- Lifeline: 13 11 14 - 24hour crisis support for suicide prevention
- Kids Helpline: 1800 551 800 - 24hour support for children 5-25yrs and their carers/parents
- My Forever Family – Carer support: 1300 782 975 - Support for carers; Mon-Fri - between 9am-5pm
- Link2Home: 1800 152 152
- Child Protection Helpline: 132 111

## Home Learning

Home learning is new to us all yet it appears our community is very good at it. Although it does present lots of challenges, strong communication and problem solving are making it work. Our teachers have done well to embrace the available technology and have collaborated strongly to ensure those who are less technologically focused are upskilled and capable of implementing an online curriculum. Our students appear to be most at ease with the transition, adapting to online platforms without hesitation. It is clear however that everyone in our community is missing the daily interaction with friends. Our Zoom teleconferences are filled with smiling faces keen to see their peers. Many students have expressed their desire to come to school and spend time with school mates.

As explained in previous correspondence we have been very keen to share the message that there are serious wellbeing considerations that come with no longer being at school. Managing home learning and removing the stimulation of daily interactions with others can bring uncomfortable emotions. As a school we encourage each family to find the balance that suits them best. Not all of the timetabled activities need to be completed or attempted. Each family has different demands and will find the balance that is best for them. If you have having specific difficulties or successes please consider sharing your thoughts in our survey: <https://forms.gle/KRj7Kc7diesQ3oZZA>

The initial results from this survey are provided below. If your needs and thoughts are missing please add your response so we can understand what is working and what we can do to improve. Although there have been no timeframes for home learning provided the current lockdown restrictions have been mandated for 90 days. It is assumed home learning will follow this arrangement.



- I am comfortable with how my child is learning
- I think my child is learning okay but they could be doing better
- I am worried my child is not learning very well
- I am struggling and my child is not able to attempt most of the home learning



**Where are  
we going Pooh?**



**Home Piglet. We're  
going home, because that's  
the best thing to do right now.**

*Ch. 5.*

## Home Learning Highlights

Our students are making excellent use of their home learning time. Many tasks are completed and posted within videos. These videos demonstrate impressive learning and creativity. We have listed some highlights below and will consider gaining permission for sharing them amongst our school community.



Mitch explains how to do various basketball moves.



Cohen explains how to write a narrative.



Emily teaches us about neutron stars



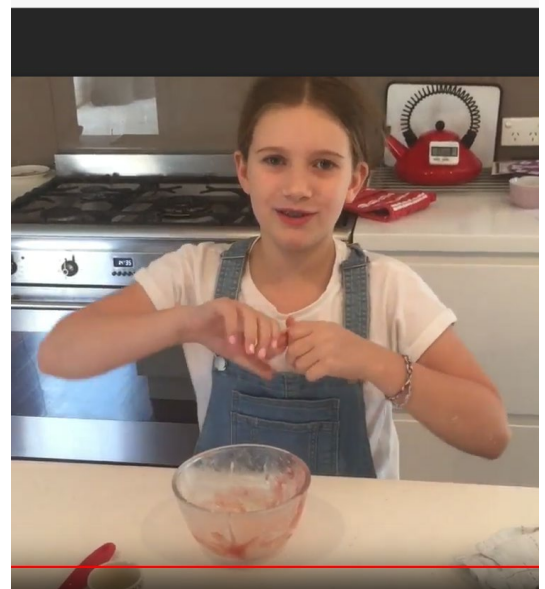
Willow helps us design a marble run.



Art lesson with Grace



Lemon volcano with Professor Issac



Emily shows you how to make slime.



# An important message about our response to COVID-19

The health and safety of our staff and students is of the utmost importance to our school.

We have implemented a range of measures to help keep our school healthy and reduce the spread of infection and illness. Some simple measures we ask that you adopt include:



## Before entering our school

If you have been unwell, with symptoms such as a high temperature, cough, sore throat, and/or shortness of breath, please don't visit our school. Please contact our office to speak to one of our staff.

Ph: .....



## Increase hygiene practices

We request that all staff, students and visitors follow increased personal hygiene practices through regular and thorough hand washing and coughing or sneezing into your elbow or tissue, and disposing of tissues.



## Maintaining a healthy distance

For the health and wellbeing of our staff and students, please stand at least **1.5 metres** apart while waiting in our office. Our visitors are encouraged to wait outside for their turn to speak with our office staff. We are also applying social distancing requirements across all areas of the school as is reasonable and practical.



## Support for our staff

We appreciate your patience and support while we work together to minimise the impact of COVID 19 in our community.

We know this is a difficult time and we are doing all we can to support our staff and students.

Search Inside the Department for up-to-date information and resources.

## Wanted: Students With Spare Time, Imagination and Lego Skills

The City of Canada Bay is running an online Lego competition for children and their families to get creative and make the most of the extra time indoors. The school with the highest number of entries will receive a 1 hour Bricks 4 Kidz incursion for up to 15 students.

This year the theme is 'build your own city'. We're inviting children to show us what city they'd like to live in – the limit is their imagination. Prizes will be awarded in 3 age categories and judging will be based on the following criteria:

- Building skill, based on age of entry
- Creativity, originality, presentation
- Description of entry (up to 100 words)

Online entry form: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/buildyourowncity>

The competition closes on Monday 13 April so please share with students and families so they can get building asap! For more information please [click here](#).

