
Below: Ryan Young, Daniel West, Lachie Sitters and Tommy Coyle had a successful day at the recent Summer Sports, read more in the sports section.
News from the Principal....

College Council

On behalf of our College community I would like to thank the following parents, staff, students and community representatives for their willingness to contribute their time and energy towards our continuous improvement agenda by being members of College Council for 2014.

College Council members for 2014 include:

  Parent Members – Mica Rosenberg (President), Jenni Rathjen, Judy West, Natalie Coton, Tracey Bons, Donelle Robinson (Treasurer)
  DEECD Members – Frankie O’Toole (Minute Secretary), Steve Daws, Dean Jamieson, Brad Moyle (Executive Officer)
  Community Member – Cass Alexander (Vice President)
  Student Member – Caitlin Brown

Our College Council is here to support the College in its improvement efforts and to ensure that we strive to meet and exceed the expectations of our local communities. If ever you have an item or issue you wish College Council to consider in regards to our operations or improvement agenda please do not hesitate in speaking with a College Council member. A reminder that College Council looks after the big picture issues and that individual student issues should be referred to the relevant teaching staff.

School Friendly Business Launch

It gave me great pleasure to welcome guests from local businesses, local schools, Campaspe Shire and the Campaspe Cohuna LLEN to the College last week for the official launch of the Rushworth P-12 College School Friendly Business initiative.

From a College and educational perspective the launch of our School Friendly Business initiative is a great opportunity to formalise and recognise the partnerships that we have always built and relied upon to support our students. A healthy and mutually beneficial partnership between the College, business owners and the LLEN is good for the College but more importantly it is good for our students, good for businesses and good for the future of our communities.

The College is extremely proud of the curriculum grounding we give our students but that vital ingredient of aspiration, inspiration and experience for our students can only come about by our students gaining valuable experiences in business and industry. The benefits to our students of workplace learning, school based apprenticeships, traineeships and work experience are too numerous to mention but we do know that there is an equally long list of the benefits that the host employers of our students see.

On behalf of the College I wish to thank the twelve local businesses that have officially partnered with us, whether you are new to the partnership or a seasoned supporter of our College, our students and our town, we look forward to working with you over the years ahead to support your business endeavours, our community and our students.
PBIS Training

Over the last week the College have been working with international PBIS Trainers Daniel Gulchak and Ruth Reynoso of KOI Education as we commenced our training and preparation for the launch of school-wide Positive Behaviour Interventions and Supports in 2015. Over a four day visit our guests/coaches worked with staff, interviewed students and staff, trained our PBIS Team and conducted a training day with all staff. This has been an extremely positive experience for staff and has enabled us to map out a plan to further enhance and improve the culture and climate at the College for the benefit of students and staff.

Thank you to the 69 parents who completed and returned their parent survey, the 25 staff who completed a staff survey and the 109 students who completed the student survey. All this data now forms our baseline and gives us a real sense of where we are at as a college in regards to supporting students. Over the coming month I will share the specifics of this data with you, your feedback is greatly appreciated and included a lot of very positive testimonials about the College, as well as some very valid points about school improvement that we need to consider and act upon.

All staff completed a feedback form as part of their full day training and I would like to share the following two comments with you that reflect the extremely positive feedback received from staff:

“Reinforces my view that 80% of the children do the right thing and this needs to be acknowledged.”

“Reinforcement of positive behaviours and demonstrating the expectation does work effectively. There is plenty of evidence to back this up.”

Parent Teacher Interviews, Student Reports and Student Learning Journals

There is no doubt that Term 1 is quickly disappearing as we now come to the end of Week 8. This means that student reports, primary student learning journals and parent teacher interviews are all in the process of happening and parents and students have the opportunity to gain insightful feedback about the terms work. Student Reports will be sent home to all parents of students in Years 7-12 in the coming days. Student Learning Journals for our P-6 students will be presented at Parent Teacher Interviews and all parents have the opportunity to meet with teachers and discuss their child’s progress and development.

Parent Teacher Interviews are scheduled for Thursday 27th March and a separate notice has already been sent home with information on how to book a time to meet with teachers. I strongly encourage all parents to make the most of this opportunity to come in and hear about the great achievements of your children and to gain an understanding about how you can further support your son or daughter with their learning.

Kind regards, Brad Moyle, Principal

Personal Goods bought to school

Parents, students and staff are reminded that private property brought to school by students, teachers, parents or visitors is not insured. The Department of Education and Early Childhood Development and the school are not responsible for any damage or loss sustained to private property brought to school.

College Values : RESPECT, Resilience, Excellence, Support, Persistence, Encouragement, Community, Trust.
Students in the Prep – Six area have been busy working on a number of different topics throughout Literacy, Numeracy and Inquiry. Students in Grade 3-6 have completed On Demand Testing during class.

On Thursday 3rd April 2014, students in Grades Prep – Six will be heading off to Sovereign Hill on an excursion. From all accounts, many students are looking forward to finding some gold!

Just a reminder for all students in Grades Prep – Six, Individual Reading Logs need to be used to record your nightly reading in. This is to ensure that you are reading on a regular basis and being rewarded when reaching milestones in your reading (25, 50, 75 nights reading).

With Term 1 ending in only a few weeks, students need to continue to maintain their attendance at school. This is to ensure that each student is maximising their learning potential by attending school each day and learning new skills.

Year 7

Year 7 students have started NAPLAN Testing Preparation and have settled into their secondary classes. It is important to establish a homework routine at home with your student so they can ensure that they are keeping up with expectations in each of their classes. Students should be recording their homework in their planners as both a reminder of their tasks and to keep parents informed of their homework.

Year 8

Last week we told you about the 5 rules that the Year 8 students have developed in order to improve their learning. These are:
- complete set work
- do what I'm told when I am asked
- listen to the teacher and others
- do not disturb others around me
- no put downs

Over the next two weeks we will be focusing on ensuring each of the students are fully aware of these rules and using them in all their classes.

In Humanities the Year 8’s will be working on projects that involve them researching some aspect of Medieval History. Some of the students will be making models so might be chasing some items to help e.g. boxes, containers etc.

Pictures of completed projects will appear in future editions of Perspective.

Got any cardboard boxes, plastic food containers or bits ‘n’ bobs we could utilise to make projects for our Medieval project? PLEASE send them along to the College ASAP.
Years Prep - 2

**Literacy:**
- This week includes learning about different types of punctuation and how they are used in reading and writing. We have focused on the use of full stops, commas, question marks and exclamation points.
- We have also looked at the spacing between words when we are writing and the left to right return sweep when we are reading and writing.
- Next week we will include developing our understanding of the different ways language of body language can be used to communicate with others.
- We will be looking closely at way the language we use changes depending on where we are, at home, at school or in a shop.

For the next few weeks the Prep students will be revising the letters we have already learnt, a, l, m, n, p, s, and t to consolidate our learning and understanding of these letters.

**Numeracy:**
- This week our numeracy focus has been, for preps: creating and recording patterns that students created using objects found around the classroom. For grade one students, we have looked at skip counting and number patterns, with numbers up to 100. Grade two students learning to solve problems using number sentences, and solving word problems using addition and subtraction.
- Next week’s focus will include, for Prep students will include collecting data using yes/no questions. Grade one students will be looking at probability and describing the chance of something happening using everyday language. Grade Two students will be creating different ways to display data using lists, tables, and picture graphs and interpreting them.

**Year 3/4**

**Numeracy focus:** over the next two weeks grade 3/4 will be exploring ways of recording data and how to represent the results as well as identifying and writing rules for number patterns.

**Literacy focus:** students will be working on identifying the point of view in a text and suggesting alternative points of view for given texts.

**Year 7**

**MATHS:**
For the next two weeks students will be studying geometry. We are working our way through the properties of triangles and quadrilaterals, whilst coming to terms with how angles are measured.

**ENGLISH:**
- Year 7 students have been finishing off their Set novel studies by watching the film ‘The Water Horse’ and making comparisons with the original novels in the form of Venn diagrams.
- Students have been very busy revising their punctuation and grammar skills in preparation for next term’s NAPLAN assessment.
- On Demand testing is being concluded and students are ensuring that they are reading for meaning with comprehension activities based on short texts.
**Year 5/6**

**Literacy:**
- Over the next two weeks, we will be continuing to investigate different reading comprehension strategies. Students will participate in whole class reading activities where they will discuss their ideas with their peers within the classroom.
- On Demand Testing is being completed and students are working on developing their comprehension skills by reading and answering a variety of questions.
- Students will be investigating how ideas and points of view in texts are conveyed through the use of vocabulary, including idiomatic expressions, objective and subjective language and how it can change when used within different contexts.
- Students will be continuing to revise the structure of different texts and the experimenting with the types of language associated with different text genres.
- A reminder that Literacy and Spelling Homework is **DUE** every Tuesday (along with Maths Homework).

**Numeracy:**
- Our focus for the next 2 weeks in Maths will be investigating and interpreting money and financial maths through making changes to bank statements (adding and subtracting money) and creating simple financial plans (budgets).
- Students will be focussing on understanding the maths questions (what it is asking) and deciding on a working out process before completing the answer. This will assist those students completing NAPLAN this year (Grade 5) to understand the more complex problem solving questions presented in the test.
- Students are reminded that Maths homework (included in the Weekly Homework is **DUE** every Tuesday – if you are having issues with your homework, please come and see me before the due date).

**Year 8**

**Literacy:**
- For the next 2 weeks the students will be completing their text response assignments and will be discussing these and their texts during structured class discussions.
- Students will then be beginning work on their writing folios, where they will learn to write in a variety of styles for different audiences using a self-editing process and formal publication.

**Numeracy:**
- This week we have been trying to ensure everyone sits an On Demand test. We’ve had a few technical difficulties so some students may not have the most accurate results but we hope to improve on this when we repeat the tests next term.
- We have started the Geometric Reasoning unit. Students have made glossaries of the different types of angles (acute, right, obtuse, straight, reflex, revolution, complementary, supplementary and vertically opposite) and have been using this knowledge to find the missing angles in a number of scenarios. This unit does not include the use of protractors but the rules of angles to find the missing information.
- Next we will look at the angles made by a transversal (corresponding, alternate and co-interior angles), followed by different types of triangles and their angle sum.
- Please remember that students should have a Maths Mate homework sheet that is due each Monday. This week they were given this late (Wednesday) but it is still due on Monday.
LEGAL MATTERS

LAW TALKS, WANGARATTA

VCE Students in Legal Studies had the opportunity to attend the Victorian Law Foundations, Law Talks in Wangaratta on Tuesday 18th March. Attending this day was Kaylee Andrews, Travis Bastin and Jack Valent from Year 12 and Jazmyne Weatherhead from Year 11.

This was a fantastic opportunity to listen to prominent people in the legal profession including the Hon. Martin Pakula MP and the Hon. Phil. D Cummins. The students watch a role play of the Parliamentary debate on the Dangerous Dog Legislation.

The Rushworth students were keen to show off their knowledge and were quick to raise their hands to answer questions in all sessions. Well done.

When we visited the Wangaratta Magistrates Court and our students readily accepted the role of Judge, Judge’s Associate and Prosecutor for mini mock trial. Excellent work.

Left: Jack Valent and Kaylee Andrews were more than happy to role play for a mini mock trial, whilst below left Jazmyne Weatherhead accepted the role of prosecutor.

The Legal Studies class gave the trip ‘the thumbs up’ as a great experience.
Our Year 12 students came dressed as their favourite Superheroes on Monday 17th March. A nice way to start the week.

School photo packages will be sent home very soon. If a family packet is required please ask at the General Office.

School photos will be taken on Thursday 24th April so please return orders to the General Office before then.
School Friendly Business Launch.

CCLLEN (Campaspe Cohuna Local Learning Employment Network) officially launched its School Friendly Business initiative in Rushworth on Thursday March 13th. Councillor Adrian Weston, representing the Shire of Campaspe Waranga Ward, spoke of the importance of the School Friendly Business Initiative in Rushworth and Surrounding towns.

Avenues of communication between schools and the business community will be enhanced for the benefit of all.

The School Friendly Business Initiative has been officially launched in Echuca Moama, Kyabram, Cohuna, Rochester and Rushworth. Parents, schools and businesses now have an official line of communication.

Cate Fraser, Principal at St Mary’s Primary school spoke to those assembled about the old African proverb – “It takes a village to raise a child”, and how the school friendly business initiative can link with schools in many different ways.

Brad Moyle, Principal at the P-12 College then spoke about what the initiative may mean to staff and students at the college.

“From a College and educational perspective the launch of our School Friendly Business initiative is a great opportunity to formalise and recognise the partnerships that we have always built and relied upon to support our students.

A healthy and mutually beneficial partnership between the College, business owners and the LLEN is good for the college but more importantly it is good for our students, good for businesses and good for the future of our communities.

The College is extremely proud of the curriculum grounding we give our students but that vital ingredient of aspiration, inspiration and experience for our students can only come about by our students gaining valuable experiences in business and industry.”

Thanks must go to those local district businesses who have pledged their support of the initiative:

J & P Auto Repairs        Lake Waranga Caravan Park        Motofinish Café        Perry’s Butchery
Rushworth Bakery          Rushworth Hardware              Rushworth IGA             Wagner Bros
Rushworth Pharmacy        The Cottage Ice-cream Shoppe       Waranga News             Rushworth Motel

If your name isn’t on this list and you would like to be involved in this program – remember it is FREE to join!! – contact the CCLLEN on 54826055.

Above: Alison Dunstan, Workplace Learning Coordinator, Cr Adrian Weston and international visitor to the College, Daniel Gulchak, PBIS Mentor.
Left: Cate Fraser, St Mary’s, Brian Wilkinson, CCLLEN, Brad Moyle, Rushworth P-12 and Anne Trickey, EO, CCLLEN with St. Mary’s student leaders.
Student Awards / Worthy of Praise

Prep - 2: Kaedyn Emmet: for his first full week of school at Rushworth P-12 College.
Jack Clarke: for his helpful approach to learning and being a great role model.

Year 3/4: Zac Price for his persistence with his literacy work last week.

Year 5/6: Cody Vanderdonk – for persisting with his work during Maths. Keep up the great work!
Baylee Bons – For working consistently throughout all subjects. Well Done!
Julie Habegger – For creating a descriptive and detailed narrative using the correct elements of a narrative. Well Done

Year 7: Aleisha Valance: for having a great start to her schooling at Rushworth P-12 College
Brandon Gaertner-Sullivan: for trying hard to improve his behaviour and his attitude towards his school work
Tysen Cottrell: for having a positive attitude towards his teachers, peers and school work

Year 8: Jessica Mimmo: for her excellent participation in the Year 8 beauty lesson
Leah Vanderdonk: for her excellent participation in the Year 8 beauty lesson
Matthew Lange-Richards: for the team work skills demonstrated during Year 8 weightlifting lesson
John Ratokalau: for the team work skills demonstrated during the Year 8 weightlifting lesson.

Year 9-12: Tom Brown: for his involvement in the PBIS program.
Alex Gelsi: for respecting the college grounds.
Chloe Fisher: for being a mature leader and a positive role model.
Caine McCarten: for coming to school last Friday and helping Carolyn in the Canteen when it was a student free day.
Courtney Davidson & Shantelle Ward: for assisting younger students in the College.

CANTEEN SPECIAL
From the 24th March for 2 weeks
Cold Creamy Pasta
Small tub $3.50 Large tub $6.00
50c extra with Chicken or Ham
DON’T FORGET TO ORDER!!!
PHOTOGRAPHY COMPETITION

**THEME:** Our Voice. Our Impact.
This competition is open to all young people aged 12 - 25
Entry forms and conditions of entry are available on the Library website. Entries close on April 1st.
Winners will be announced at a final celebration during National Youth Week at Campaspe Regional Library, Echuca
**Friday 11th April at 1.00pm.**

Wednesday 9th April
**ECHUCA & KYABRAM LIBRARIES 5.30 - 7.00pm**
**PIZZA & ONLINE GAMES.**
Age 10 plus.
Come along and bring your friends.
BYO device if you have one.

Thursday 10th April
**KYABRAM LIBRARY 10.00 - 11.30am**
**ECHUCA LIBRARY 12.30 - 2.00pm**
**ROCHESTER LIBRARY 3.00 - 4.30pm**
**MANGA CLASSES**
12–25 years
*Manga is the Japanese word for comics and print cartoons.*
Join the artists from OzTAKU for a creative workshop.

Campaspe Regional Library
phone (03) 5462 1997 libraries@campaspe.vic.gov.au

Please book for all sessions
Bookings available online
Library Learnings

Leading up to ANZAC Day, which takes place on Friday 25th of April, the College Library now has some lovely new resources available for students to take home and share with their families. This is a great opportunity to share in their reading and to discuss the importance and appreciation of what ANZAC Day means within the family!

I Was Only Nineteen
Words by: John Schumann
Illustrator: Craig Smith
The Iconic song about Vietnam War that helped change a nation.
Blurb: Townsville lined the footpath as we marched down the quay. This clipping from the paper shows us young and strong and clean. And there's me in my slouch hat, with my SLR and greens. God help me, I was only nineteen.

John Schumann's unforgettable lyrics about the Vietnam War are etched in our memories and into our history books. Now they've been warmly brought to life by one of Australia's best-loved illustrators.

Gallipoli
Author: Kerry Greenwood Illustrator: Annie White
Blurb: Dawn approaches on April 25th April 1915 and ANZACs Bluey and Dusty sail towards Gallipoli. As their ship gets closer the two friends hear the noise of battle, and worry if they are brave enough for what lies ahead of them.
Award-winning Kerry Greenwood tells the story of a remarkable friendship, and the battleground that shaped the nation.

The Afghanistan Pup
Author/Illustrator: Mark Wilson

Until next time...
Happy Reading!

ANZAC DAY
Friday 25th April, 2014
In primary school, some students miss on average 3 weeks of school per year. That's half a year of school by the end of year 6.

Going to school every day is the single most important part of your child's education. Students learn new things at school every day – missing school puts them behind.

Why it's important
We all want our students to get a great education, and the building blocks for a great education begin with students coming to school each and every day. If students miss school regularly, they miss out on learning the fundamental skills that will set them up for success in the later years of school. There is no safe number of days for missing school – each day a student misses puts them behind, and can affect their educational outcomes.

Each missed day is associated with progressively lower achievement in numeracy, writing and reading.

Getting in early
Attendance patterns are established early – a child regularly missing days in kindergarten or in the early years of school will often continue to miss classes in the later years, and receive lower test scores than their classmates. It’s vital that students go to school every day – even in the early years of primary school.

What we can do
The main reasons for absence are:

Sickness – There are always times when students need to miss school, such as when they’re ill. It’s vital that they’re only away on the days they are genuinely sick, and setting good sleep patterns, eating well and exercising regularly can make a big difference.

It’s vital that holidays are planned during school holidays where possible, and not during the term if it can be avoided.

“Day off” – Think twice before letting your child have a “day off” as they could fall behind their classmates – every day counts.

Truancy – This is when students choose not to go to school without their parent’s permission. There can be many reasons for truancy. The best way to address this is for schools and parents to work together.

If for any reason your child must miss school, there are things you can do with your school to ensure they don’t fall behind:

• Develop an absence learning plan with your teacher and ensure your child completes the plan.

Remember, every day counts. If your child must miss school, speak with your classroom teacher as early as possible.

Openly communicating with your child’s school about all absences is a good way to prevent attendance issues being escalated to a School Attendance Officer. A School Attendance Officer is a Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Regional Director who has authority to follow up attendance issues. Attendance issues that are escalated can lead to an Infringement Notice.

If you’re having attendance issues with your child, please let your classroom teacher know so we can work together to get your child to school every day.

For more information and resources to help address attendance issues, visit: www.education.vic.gov.au/school/parents/behaviour/Pages/studentattendance.aspx

Department of Education and Early Childhood Development
**Maths Matters**

*Information in this week’s newsletter is summarized from an article on the following website:*


This article on ‘Why maths is so important to your teenager?’ can be read in relation to all students.

**Why maths is so important to your teenager? What can we do with an understanding in maths?**

Thanks to maths, we are able to create formulae that allow us to calculate, count, and measure. Maths gives us the tools we need to figure things out.

Without maths:
- Engineers wouldn’t be able to figure out where support beams should be put
- Doctors wouldn’t be able to figure out what dosages of drugs to give their patients.
- Scientists wouldn’t be able to analyze their results
- Builders wouldn’t be able to figure out the angle a new roof should be built at.

If your teen is considering going to University or onto an apprenticeship once they finish secondary school, then they should seriously consider the role maths might play in their future. Anyone who pursues further education will find maths useful. For example, if you are undergoing any kind of research, then having at least some understanding of statistics becomes crucial.

**So what can you do as a parent?**

- You can relay all of this to your teen.
- Hopefully you can help your teen realize that maths is very likely to be something they need to have a solid grasp of once they leave school.
- Even if they don’t like maths – even if they continue to loathe it – your teen is going to be much more likely to put in some effort if they understand why maths is so important and how it will benefit them in the future.

**P.S. The winner of the February Maths Competition for P-6 was Jackson Stewart and for Year 7/8 Will Brown. Congratulations!**

For more ideas keep an eye out for the ‘Maths Matters’ section in each fortnightly newsletter.

*Margaret Turner. Numeracy Support, Rushworth P-12.*
SUMMER SPORTS EVENTS:
This year we sent two teams for our Intermediate Summer Sport Days, a Year 9 boys Tennis team and a Year 9 girls Volleyball team. Both teams represented the College proudly and competed extremely well.

The Year 9 boys Tennis team competed on Thursday 6th of March at the Shepparton Lawn Tennis courts and came away Division 2 winners on the day.

Our Year 9 girls Volleyball team also played strongly winning five of their six matches, drawing with McGuire College and luckily were announced winners on count back. The girls will progress to the Hume region competition to be held in Wodonga on Tuesday 6th May. The girls have already begun training hard for this event, good luck girls!

Another big congratulations also to our newly formed Year 8 Girls Volleyball team who have been training twice a week in preparation for their Summer Sports day, they are already showing a huge amount of promise and we are expecting big things from them.

Below: Ryan Young and Tommy Coyle in action at the Shepparton Lawn courts.
Right: The Year 9 Volleyball team -
Back row: Taylor Cornford, Shanae Baldwin, Jess Hamilton, Janelle Doolan, Monique Silva
Front row: Zoe McIntosh and Madi Kromek

Amanda Cray
Sports Coordinator

Keep an eye out in the next few Newsletters to see what is going to be happening in April...
National Youth Week Photography Competition.

This activity is a partnership between the Shire of Campaspe, Campaspe Regional Library and the Echuca Moama Photography Club.

The photography competition is based on this year’s National Youth Week theme ‘Our Voice. Our Impact.’ and will be based on young people’s interpretation of what this means to them.

The competition is open to all young people in the Shire of Campaspe aged 12-25 and closes on Tuesday 1 April.

Prizes for the winning entries (judged by the Echuca Moama Photography Club) include;

- 1st prize overall = Camera
- 12-15 years = $150 voucher
- 16-20 years = $150 voucher
- 21-25 years = $150

Uniform for sale

College Spray Jacket, fleecy lined, size Medium.
Brand new condition.
$50.00 (paid $89)
Please call: Jo Phelan 0439 736 559

Rushworth Football Netball Club

Expressions of Interest required for 2014 Debutante Ball

Prospective debutantes need to register their interest with Janene Lunney by April 3rd.
0422 414 740

The Ball is expected to be held in early July 2014.

** Ideally you would have a partner chosen by the time your register.

Remember we are a Sunsmart school.
HATS need to be worn at all times when outside in Term 1.

College Values: RESPECT, Resilience, Excellence, Support, Persistence, Encouragement, Community, Trust.
An honest person will likely admit that at some time in their childhood, they were given this rule. In fact, many parents will admit they continue to pass this rule onto their own children. Yet, in the same breath, we might encourage our children to talk to the supermarket cashier, the sales person or the long lost relative. All of these people fit the definition of a stranger, but for some unknown reason it is okay for the child to talk to them. At best, this rule sends mixed messages to our kids.

There is a strong shift away from the old rule of “never talk to strangers” to “never go anywhere with anyone without asking permission first”. A child who has been taught to never talk to strangers may feel they have nowhere to go if they find themselves lost in a shopping centre or other public place.

As parents we need to emphasise who is a “stranger”. Your definition and your child’s may be quite different. Engage with your children to help them understand that a stranger is simply someone whom they do not know. We do not know if someone is good or bad just by looking at them. Rather, we need to teach our children about “strangeness”.

Five ways to enforce the new rule:

1. Never go anywhere with anyone without asking permission first
   This is the new fundamental rule to keeping kids safe. This rule must NEVER be broken. Regardless of if it is a school, public or family function, work with your children to ensure they always ask an adult for permission before going off with ANYONE.

Classic “what if” scenarios are worth their weight in gold. “You are at school and walking back to class after snack when a man comes up to you and says he is looking for his son’s class. He asks you to go with him to show him where it is. Do you go?”

Use tempting scenarios that are relevant to your child, such as puppies or toys, and discuss safe options and strategies in each case.
2. Your personal alarm
Children have an innate sensitive personal alarm, which we can teach them to use. This is their natural defence system. Work with them to identify and recognise the physical and environmental signals that cause their alarm to sound. Knowing that a rush of adrenalin will cause physiological changes in our bodies and activate our personal alarm is a good start. A child’s personal alarm will present the same physical and emotional cues that an adult’s will.

3. Trust your instincts
Have you ever gotten “the creeps”? Maybe it’s the idea of snakes, mice or heights that does it for your child. Encourage them to draw on how it feels when they get the creeps. Instincts are those feelings you get when something or someone makes you feel uncomfortable. Instincts are the physiological changes that happen to our body when our personal alarm goes off. Physiological changes include noticing that you feel scared or nervous, your tummy feels upset and your heart is racing. And you know what? Our personal alarm is right 100% of the time.

4. Personal space vs. safety zone
Most kids understand the concept of personal space. How many times have we heard, “Stop invading my personal space!” Most people feel comfortable within an arm’s length of others. However, do your kids recognise their safety zone? Teach your child to be aware of their surroundings. If a “strange” person is too close, suggest they back away and maintain their safety zone. A safety zone is much bigger than your personal space – at least three giant steps bigger.

5. Safe places, safe people
There are times when a child must ask for help quickly and instinctively. We already know that not all strangers are bad, that most strangers will help a child who is lost or upset. It is situations that are safe, not places. Talk with your child and reinforce that he or she must ALWAYS use his or her skills with ALL people, including those presumed safe. Encourage your child to tell an adult they trust when someone or something has frightened them.

As parents we need to empower our children with self-confidence and trust in their ability to sense when something is just not right. It doesn’t matter if they can articulate it; they just have to feel it.

Catherine Gerhardt, Kidproof Melbourne

Kidproof provides proactive and preventative child and family education programs. We work with schools, community groups and other child centric organisations. We provide peace of mind for parents and create safer communities for everyone.

- www.kidproofsafety.com.au
- melbourne@kidproofsafety.com
- 1 300 577 663