

LOCKDOWN NEWSLETTER

TERM FOUR ONLINE LEARNING

Welcome back everyone. It's Term 4, 2021 and Sydney has finally reached the end of lockdown.

It's been over three and a half months of isolation, online learning and many weeks of change, anxiety and uncertainty. While life and learning seemed quite challenging at times, we have all worked hard for this moment. FREEDOM!

We can hear the cheers of mums and dads everywhere as they prepare to pack up the laptops and reclaim their dining room table to send their children back to school. The pandemic has had a huge impact on all our lives and the changes will continue as we navigate our way through our 'new normal' with masks, social distancing, sanitizer and vaccinations.

On Monday 18th October, the doors to AGHS will swing wide open to welcome Year 12 staff and students before the rest of the school follows a week later on 25 October. There will be changes and challenges ahead, but the staff, friendships, learning experiences and support will be awaiting your return.

October is 'Mental Health Month' so make sure you flick to page 9 for great wellbeing tips. Thanks to Valerie Bailey for the amazing artwork of her interpretation of the HSC English module of study, 'Human Experience'.



ALL EYES ON ME

Alayna Ajaj Year 8

A room, a large room, a room that I will reluctantly confide in for the time being. A stage, a wooden stage, a tall podium, a microphone sitting on a standing tripod. It all fits perfectly. Light, theatre lights, strong beams exposing the dust as I squint. The metal bridge of my glasses collides with the bridge on my nose. It's cold. Well, colder than usual. To my left, pink shiny walls. On second thought, they could be fuschia. They're probably fuschia. To my right, a neon sign. 'EMERGENCY EXIT'. I scoff. If only we all had the same perspective of emergency. Two curtains drape over the front of the stage, they're red. They're velvet and soft to the touch.

I close my eyes. I am back home. I find comfort here. The chipped paint on the skirting boards entices me. I trace the patterns of the cracks in the doorway. I stop. I see mum. I see the wrinkles lift on her supple skin, they force a smile. She engulfs my petite frame in a hug. 'Just remember, your father is watching', she whispers. A warm pool forms on my shoulder. Is she crying? Her face acts as confirmation.

I open my eyes. I am back. I remember the reason I am here. The Jansport backpack I brought accompanies me. It is my protector. Beyond its sloppy exterior lies a packet of tissues, hand sanitizer, a Burt's Bees 100% natural lip balm. I place it in my palms, in order to attempt taking the lid off. It's stuck. My palms are sweaty. Great. The tube slips through my index finger and thumb. As the plastic hits the floor, I cover my ears. A gasp escapes my body. It still manages to startle me.

Muffled audio bounces off the walls beyond the curtains. Footsteps creep around. The scent of burning cigarettes finds its way to me. It's not time to get caught up in the repercussions of passive smoking. Slurs are thrown around like a ball. Chairs screech. They're here. It's time

I slouch over to the podium. I wipe my hands on the length of my paisley printed dress. Mindlessly, I brush my fingers through my hair.

Suddenly, the room goes silent. The cocoons in my stomach flourish into butterflies. I crack my knuckles as my body rocks back and forth. The curtains open. The blurred faces of the audience meet with my single pair of eyes. They are all staring at me. I feel alone again. It's all coming back. I open my mouth. My tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth. This is it. This is for you, dad. Streams of words project from my body, into the black microphone and to everybody else. There's no backing out now. I have no time to study their expressions but I assume the worst. I continue to spit out verses of my knock out poetry, anger laced in my tone. I am on my last sentence. The fire alarm goes off.



Year 7 Food and Agriculture students have been whipping up at home during remote learning.



Pride and Prejudice and COVID-19 Ayesha Obeid Yr 10

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a mask. However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighbourhood, or the current availability of masks in the marketplace, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that a mask must be worn by him before he could be considered as the rightful property of someone or other of their daughters.

"My dear Mr. Bennet," said his lady to him one day "Have you heard the news?" Mr. Bennet replied that he had not. "Do you not want to know what has been happening?" cried his wife impatiently.

Mr. Bennet turned over a page in his newspaper

"You appear very eager to tell me and I cannot exactly not hear you." This was an invitation enough.

"Why, my dear, you must know that a single man with a huge amount of money has just entered the neighbourhood". "I hope he is practising social distancing rules" replied Mr. Bennet. Mrs. Bennet chose not to hear this. "His name is Bingley and is said to be very rich and handsome, although you can only see his eyes, on account of his having to wear a mask, but my dear, what a fine thing for our girls!"

"How so?" queried Mr. Bennet "How does this affect them?"

Mrs. Bennet let out a shriek "Oh, Mr. Bennet, don't be so tiresome! You must know I am thinking of marrying one of them!" "Is that his design in settling here? To marry one of our daughters?"

"Oh, stop talking such nonsense! He may meet one of them and fall in love with her." Mr. Bennet lowered his newspaper and stared at his wife "And how can he do that, when I refuse to call on him? How do I know that he hasn't got the virus?" Mrs. Bennet stamped her foot "Not call on him! Of course, you must call on him. Wear your mask and keep yourself one point five metres away, and DON'T shake his hand and you should be fine." She turned sharply to her daughter Kitty "Do stop coughing so Kitty! People will think you got Covid!" "I'm sorry, my dear" said Mr. Bennet, not sounding sorry at all "I am not willing to take the risk. I am statistically more likely to die from Covid than a young healthy male. It seems a hopeless business. I would much rather stay home and be safe".

Mr. Bennet did not visit Mr. Bingley, keeping very faithfully to the rules of restrictions. But other members in the household were not so cautious. After doing some extensive reconnaissance, Mrs Bennet dragged her daughters Jane and Elizabeth off one day for a walk to the village and they just happened to bump into a gentleman standing outside the Barber Shop. "I'm so sorry", cried the gentleman, grabbing the parcels Jane had dropped. "These are yours." Jane accepted them with a blush. Mrs Bennet spread her lips into a wide smile, though no one saw it under her mask. "Mr. Bingley, is it not? We thank you, sir!". "Not at all," cried the young man, still staring into Jane's blue eyes "It's my fault, standing here, waiting for my friend".

Just then another figure appeared in the doorway- tall, dark and arrogant in his good looks. His mask was made from silk cloth, with bright diamonds studded into it. Mrs. Bennet's eyes fairly popped out of her head, staring but Elizabeth did not look so impressed. The man with the diamond studded mask nodded to Mr Bingley, but acknowledged no one else, and with his nose in the air, walked briskly away. "Darcy!" called Mr. Bingley, but to no avail. The arrogant gentlemen did not slow down.

"Excuse me, ladies" Mr Bingley bowed and chased after his friend, though he would rather have stayed to be introduced to the girl with the lovely blue eyes...

Thus, as Mr Bennet refused to risk his health by going to visit, he did not pay a call on Mr Bingley, who was haunted by a pair of blue eyes and despite Darcy's assertion that all the ladies in the village were barely tolerable. Mr Bennet remained very fit and healthy for a long time, though none of his daughters were married and Mrs. Bennet's nerves eventually gave out.

TEACHER FEATURE

Name: Miss Edge

Favourite subject: Dance

What movie or TV show do you watch when you just want to zone out and feel better?

Oh, so so many! Gossip Girl, Vampire Diaries, The Good Witch, Dance Moms and so many more.

If you could only listen to one singer or band for the rest of your life, who would you choose? Celine Dion – I've seen her live twice and she is phenomenal.

What would be your perfect day? Wandering around Italy, eating pasta & Gelato and exploring all the sites.

What are your top three biggest pet peeves?

I am not going to say my number 1 because you will all do it!! I get so frustrated waiting for people to reverse park, they are wasting my time and it doesn't make them a superior. Dancers not pointing their toes!

What do you never leave home without? My phone, keys and paw paw cream.

If you could only eat one thing for the rest of your life, what would it be?

Ice cream – it is my biggest weakness!

If you were down to your last \$10.00, what would you buy: A new book as you can never have too many.

If you could meet one famous person, who would it be and what would you say to them?

Sophia Bush. I don't know anything specific I would say to her, but I would love to just sit and have a chat.

What's your biggest fear? Birds... honestly! I think it's their wings.

What's your absolute dream job? Dancer on Broadway or choreographer for films, musicals, or international ballet companies.



What's the worst thing about lockdown?

Not being able to see one of my friends before she moved overseas.

What three words would your friends use to describe you?

Bubbly. Loud. Honest.

Who do you look up to the most, and what qualities do you love about that person?

My Nan. She is strong, independent, fierce, loyal, and so loving.

If you had three wishes, what would they be?

Train and create a famous dancer.

Travel the world

Save all dogs from harm/ being put down.



Every week students will be nominated by the DP's to be awarded the **ONLINE LEARNING GOLD STAR AWARDS** for excellent engagement in online learning. So, keep working hard for your chance to be nominated. Congratulations to this week's winners who will receive a Principal's Gold Award and Dojo Points

Year 7

- Samavia Nuzhat
- Ecrin Caglayan
- Amara Alameddine
- Hala Awaad
- Sarah Al Tmimi
- Malak Issa

Year 9

- Fatima Imran
- Anaheetha Zahra Musa
- Rahimeen Durrani
- Mariam Kamara
- Maria Hidari

Year 8

- Ganga Kumar
- Dorothy Zhang
- Leda Guan
- Omaina Noor
- Fatima Banu
- Ulla Al Ibadi

Year 10

- Sadaf Yari
- Mahdia Hussaini
- Aysha Obeid
- Zainab Kashif
- Rehan Abdisamad Hirsi
- Tasnim Sarah

**** Year 11 and 12 Assessment / Exam Week**



LOCKDOWN STAFF & STUDENT PHOTO COMPETITION

LOCKDOWN PHOTO WINNERS!



EDITOR'S CHOICE

Ms Pasternatsky's dog Maxim loves online learning

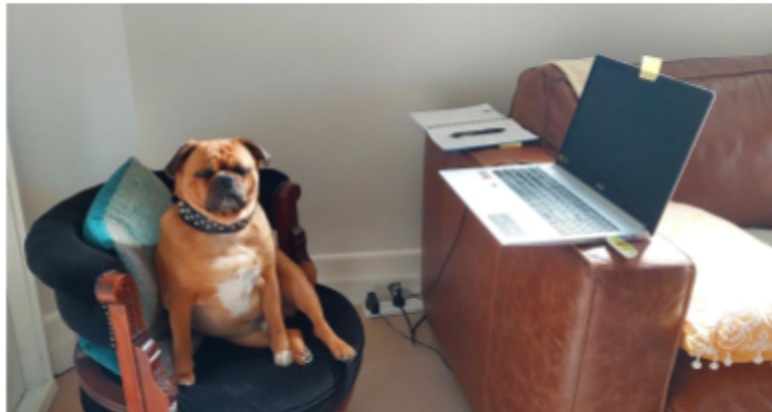
Congratulations to our winning photos as judged by our readers...with an animal theme of winners.

1st : Israa Mohammad Y7

2nd: Ms Schwiebert

3rd: Ms Nguyen

Editor's choice: Ms Pasternatsky



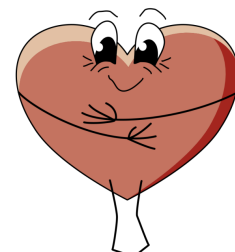
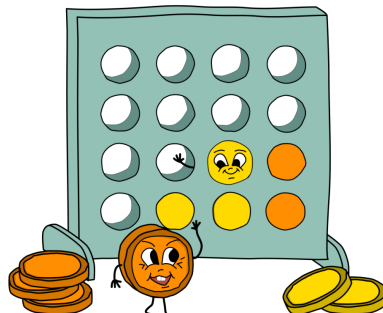
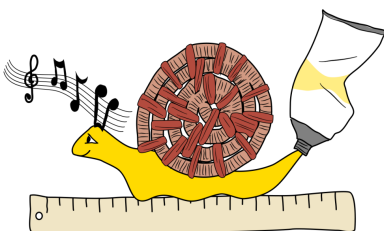
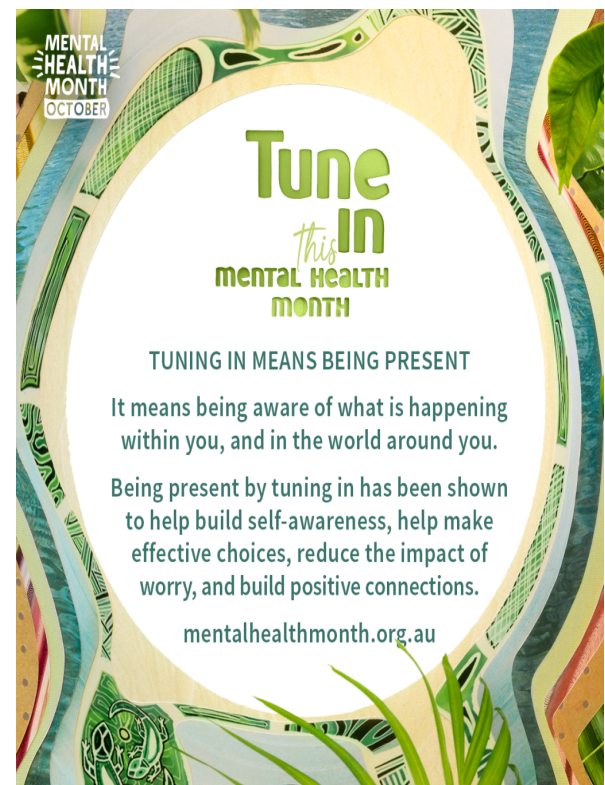
Lots of prizes will be awaiting the return of staff and students at Auburn Girls High School. The Book Bento awards will be posted in next week's issue. Thanks goes to all the staff and students who have sent in photos for features and competitions. Thanks to all those who voted. These photos have kept us all entertained and informed as to what everyone was up to during lockdown. Looks like our pets loved having us home!!

WELLBEING CORNER

October is Mental Health Month and you are encouraged to take extra care of your mental health and wellbeing. This year the theme is 'Tune In' as we make an effort to listen and be aware of our thoughts and emotions. Support yourself and others by talking about lockdown, the changes, your thoughts, feelings and challenges. Accept that it's ok to have fears, anxieties and you may be uncomfortable or distressed about all these changes.

Perhaps you were happy about being at home during the pandemic in your pyjamas and and with your phone 24/7 and the thought of going out into the world is making you sad.

Look at the ideas and read through the information and know that you are not alone. We are all feeling apprehensive and a little weird about reconnecting with the world, but there are people we can talk to. Remember we need to 'tune in' to our feelings and that it's ok to 'not be ok'. Just talk about it and get some help or advice from others. Reachout.com has some great tips on page 11. Check it out!



Being a Mental Health Ally means shifting your behaviour and the world to be safer and more supportive for people experiencing difficulties with their mental health.

We asked people with lived experiences of mental ill-health what people can do to be an effective mental health ally.

Check out some of their tips below

How can I be a mental health ally?

SUPPORT

Listen to people's stories and asking them how they're doing. Validate people's experiences and learn more about mental health and stigma.

DEMONSTRATE

Speak up when you notice stigma and boost the stories of people with lived experience. Be a safe person by avoiding harmful language and communicating with compassion.

BUILD COMMUNITIES

Engage people with lived experience and make sure your community is inclusive. Think about the ways people can interact and how they can be as accessible as possible.

WHAT IS STIGMA?

Stigma means the negative ideas we have about mental illness, and how they're expressed. Stigma can lead to shame, prejudice, and discrimination.

What is stigma?

YOUR ACTIONS CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Speaking up when you notice mental health stigma helps others learn, and also helps create safer places for people with lived experience.

THE LANGUAGE YOU USE MATTERS

Using words like "crazy" to negatively describe people can contribute to mental health stigma, and make it feel unsafe to reach out for help.

Myth busting!

MYTH BUSTING

There are plenty of myths out there about mental health and people who experience distress. Busting these myths can help break down mental health stigma

MYTH: People with a mental illness are dangerous

FACT: People with a mental illness are far more likely to be victims of violent crimes than perpetrators they are to commit them. Additionally, people in need of urgent help may be victims of police violence or coercive treatment.

MYTH: You're either "normal" or "mentally ill"

FACT: Mental health is a spectrum, and we all go through periods in our life where we feel distressed, worried, or disconnected. We can all benefit from good, accessible support for our mental health.

FIND OUT MORE

To learn more about being a mental health ally and for more information about Mental Health Month check out our website using the QR code below:



LEAVING LOCKDOWN & RETURNING TO SCHOOL

There have been lots of changes due to the current coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, which can be stressful or scary to deal with. It might feel like as soon as you get used to one thing (e.g. studying at home), things change again. If you're feeling uneasy about returning to school, here are some things you can do to make coping a bit easier.

1. Think things through and ask, 'What's the worst that can happen?'

We're often scared of change because we're afraid of the unknown. And a good way to deal with the unknown is to think things through carefully. Imagine all of the different possible outcomes, and then decide what would be your best- and worst-case scenarios. Write them down, if it helps. Another great strategy is to think about the last time you were faced with a big change and got through it okay. Remember how scary it was starting high school or learning online? Sometimes it's not as bad as it seems at first and may just take a little time to get used to.

2. Ask yourself how much you can control?

When a big change occurs, it's important to figure out how much control over the situation you really have. Understanding your role and how much you can change can help you put things in perspective. For example, if you've just moved out of home, there are many small things you can do to make the process easier. Make a to-do list and check each item off when you complete it.

3. Accept and reframe

If the unwanted change is beyond your control, try taking a reflective approach. Accepting that there are things beyond your control, and choosing to be comfortable with that fact, is likely to bring greater peace of mind than waging an unwinnable war. View change as an opportunity to learn and grow, rather than as a setback, even if you have to fake it til you make it!

4. Celebrate the positives

Even though it can be a tough ask, focusing on the positives can really help you manage change. While the positive aspects of a situation might not be obvious to begin with, it's worth seeking them out – no matter how small they might be. For example, if you've moved recently, you might be away from your friends, but it's also a great way to learn how to be more independent. Try to make the best of the situation. You can still call and write to those friends, and plan to visit them!

5. Take action

If the unwanted change is within your control, take an active approach to dealing with it. Try some problem-solving techniques, or set some goals to proactively address any challenges. Focusing on the problem at hand, developing a plan of action, and asking for advice are useful active strategies.

6. Manage your stress

Improving your ability to handle stress will go a long way to helping you deal with change. Try practising mindfulness or meditation, or engaging in other relaxation techniques. See more tips on how to deal with stress [here](#).

7. Seek support

It's perfectly normal to feel overwhelmed if the change you're facing is really big, or there's too much change happening all at once. This is when it might be best to seek support. Consider asking friends or family for help or emotional support. Even a phone/video call or chatting online can help you feel connected to your loved ones. Telephone and online support is a great way to access help for free. Some of these include:

- **Lifeline** (13 11 14) has 24/7 phone and online support.
- **Kids Helpline** (1800 55 1800) has 24/7 phone and online support for young people aged 5 to 25.
- **Eheadspace** has free online and phone support for young people aged 12 to 25.
- Online forums, like the [ReachOut Forums](#), are a great way to anonymously connect with others.

