

The Shuttle

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Time flies faster than a weaver's shuttle.



FROM THE HEADMISTRESS

Our hearts go out to the communities of
St Andrew's Cathedral School and St Lucy's

Mrs Megan Krimmer
Headmistress

I am sure that you are all aware of the recent unimaginable tragedies that have occurred within two of our neighbouring school communities, St Andrews' Cathedral School and St Lucy's. We have strong connections with members of these communities; in particular, our Junior School partners closely with St Lucy's, especially through their Year 3 program, and our senior girls volunteer there. Our staff and parents are also very closely connected with this wonderful school.

I know that you will keep the families who have suffered such a devastating loss and every member of these very special school communities in your thoughts and prayers as we as a school help support the families, students and staff through their grief at this extremely sad time.

Global conflict

We are all aware of the tragic and distressing conflicts that our currently impacting parts of our world.

We also are very aware that members of the Abbotsleigh community have family members and friends who are impacted by the horrendous situation in Israel and Gaza (and beyond), the continuing situation in the Ukraine and Russia, as well as conflicts in other parts of the world. Our thoughts and prayers are with those communities and people who are affected by such shocking trauma.*

Should your daughters or you need support in the face of these dreadful tragedies, please do not hesitate to reach out to our Counselling and/or Chaplaincy teams.

*Please continue to monitor your daughter's use of technology and social media as we are continuing to receive reports that shocking images are making their way through to child focused media, including YouTube.

Abbotsleigh Seizes the Moment to focus on wellbeing and mental health

The wellbeing of our girls is so important and our new prefect body, together with Mrs Cannon, our Director of Wellbeing, acknowledged both R U OK? Day and Mental Health Month this week.

The theme for R U OK? Day this year is 'Here to hear', where the emphasis is on supporting others by listening; **really** listening to them. Our Head Prefect, Lily Thornthwaite gave an excellent presentation in Senior School assembly where she sensitively

explained how the girls can support each other and make a difference to the life of another person.

The Prefects then hosted a wellbeing lunchtime event with many activities so that our girls could focus on hope, joy and all the things to be grateful for in this amazing world.

I commend to you the following articles by Mrs Cannon, Lily Thornthwaite and Sarah Sherlock, which provide important information and resources to help us connect and to support the wellbeing of our girls.



ABBOTSLEIGH

Visit the **Parent Portal** to edit your profile, view the calendar and view parent notices.

Wellbeing Matters: Mental Health Month and R U OK? Day

As we journey through the busy pace of the final term of 2023, it is helpful to reflect on our wellbeing and mental health. This year, Abbotsleigh will be recognising Mental Health Month and R U OK? Day throughout November. This is a perfect time for parents and educators to focus on how our girls can care for their own wellbeing and also support their friends.

This year the theme for Mental Health Month is 'We all have a role to play.' Mental Health Month not only gives us the opportunity to think about our mental health and wellbeing, but it also provides a time to focus on activities that can have a positive impact on our daily lives and the lives of others. It also encourages us to seek help if needed, which is so important.

[Click here](#) for more information about Mental Health Month.

During the month of November, Abbotsleigh's Mental Health Month, we also recognise and support R U OK? Day – a National Day of Action to encourage conversations with friends and family who may be struggling. Our girls are very good at looking out for each other and this day helps remind the girls to check in with their friends; to ask if they are okay, to listen not judge, encourage action if this is needed and then to check in again.



Remember: A conversation can make such a difference.

This year's message is 'Here to hear'. A conversation can change a life. R U OK? Day reminds us that you don't need to be an expert to reach out – just a good friend and a great listener. You can use these four steps to start a conversation that could change a life: **ALEC**

1. **Ask R U OK?**
2. **Listen**
3. **Encourage action**
4. **Check in**

Please visit the [R U OK? website](#) for more information and resources.

Please remind your daughters that if they are worried about the mental health or safety of a friend or their own mental health and safety, to speak to an adult who can assist them and, if necessary, seek further support for them.

This week, our Year 12 Prefects presented on R U OK? Day in the Wellbeing assembly. Our Head Prefect, Lily Thornthwaite, spoke about the importance of asking "R U OK?" and of seeking help if needed. There was a great emphasis on proactive ways to improve mental health and wellbeing.

The girls have also been given information about how to start the R U OK? conversation and who they can talk to both at school and out of school if they are concerned for their wellbeing or for the wellbeing of a friend.

The Prefects led a great lunchtime event for the Senior School around mental health month. The girls enjoyed a variety of fun activities to help focus on enhancing mental health and wellbeing.



We have also reminded the girls about helpful online support where they can access information about looking after their mental health as well as excellent online places to seek help.



These organisations include [Kids Helpline](#) (phone: 1 800 55 1800), [Headspace](#), [Reachout](#) and [Beyond Blue youth](#).

We know that parents need to be equipped with information about wellbeing and mental health, the signs that there may be a problem, how to talk to your daughter about her wellbeing and how and where to seek support.

I encourage all parents to check in with their daughters to see how they are managing and feeling. This may be as simple as using the quick 1-5 check-in scale, 1 being 'not great' and 5 being 'fabulous'. Parents can start the conversation from there if they are concerned about their child's wellbeing and can seek support if needed. Sometimes talking can be difficult, so this article on [How to have a great conversation](#) may help parents to get started.

Dr Michael Carr-Gregg has also posted special reports on SchoolTV regarding wellbeing checklists. Please review the [Primary School wellbeing checklist](#) and the [Secondary School wellbeing checklist](#).

Should you ever be concerned about the immediate safety and mental health of your daughter, please contact medical support, as you would with a physical emergency.

Other useful resources:

- [NSW Mental Health Line](#) (phone: 1800 011 511) is a single number, state-wide, 24-hour mental health telephone access service. Anyone with a mental health issue can use the Mental Health Line to speak with a mental health professional and be directed to the right care for them.
- [Parentline](#) (phone: 1300 1300 52) is a free telephone counselling and support service for parents and carers with children aged 0-18 who live in NSW.
- [Lifeline](#) (phone 13 11 14) is a 24-hour telephone counselling service. The website has online information and referral services.
- [ReachOut – parents](#) provides information, tools and resources to help parents and carers support the 12-18-year-olds in their family environment.
- [Black Dog Institute](#) provides mental health resources and support tools.
- [eSafety Commissioner – parents](#) provides excellent information on social media issues.

Parents are always welcome to contact me or wellbeing staff if you have any concerns regarding your daughter's wellbeing.

Mrs Liz Cannon
Director of Wellbeing

cannonl@abbotsleigh.nsw.edu.au
Phone: 9473 7836



R U OK? Mental Health Month

Lily Thornthwaite,
Head Prefect 2023-24

R U OK? Day is a day dedicated to reminding people about the power one conversation can hold. A conversation which can be started by simply asking the question "Are you okay?" At Abbotsleigh we are celebrating R U OK? Day and Mental Health Month this week, and dedicating the month of November to making a conscious effort towards destigmatising mental health and fostering a spirit of empathy at Abbotsleigh.

The purpose of R U OK? Day is to call us to have compassion towards the people around us and start a conversation that might change a life. It isn't for us to jokingly ask our friends if they are okay, **but to genuinely show them love and compassion** by spending time with them, no matter how big or small their problem might be. R U OK? Day shouldn't just be one day of the year, but is something that we should be thinking about daily. If we ever see someone who might need hope or a connection in their lives, we should be the ones to step out in love and say something, listen to what they have to say and help them in any way that we can.

Not every conversation will be directly life changing, but whether it is something big or something small or even nothing at all, simply asking people if they are okay can form a connection, something that we all as human beings crave.

So, if you are worried about a friend, please check on them, ask them if they are okay, listen and don't judge, and encourage them to get help if they need it. Check in again and go with them to get help. If they don't want to talk or get help and you are worried, please talk to an adult that you trust about your concerns. Sometimes it means suggesting that they talk to someone – a parent, aunt, GP or a teacher, Tutor, Year Coordinator, Chaplain, Counsellor, boarding staff, or Mrs Cannon, who can help find the right person.

Mental Health Month is a period dedicated to encouraging all of us to consider the role of mental health and wellbeing, regardless of our experiences with or without mental illness. This time gives us an opportunity to understand the importance of good mental health in our everyday lives and encourages help-seeking behaviours when needed.

Remember, one kind word can change someone's day, but a conversation can change their life.

R U OK? Day celebrations

Sarah Sherlock,
Vice Head Prefect – Houses 2023-24

Wednesday 1 November, saw the Year 12s host an R U OK?-themed activity session for the whole school. Girls across all year groups skipped rope, blew bubbles, drew with chalk, made craft, laughed and sang together as they celebrated R U OK? Day. While enjoying the celebration, the girls were encouraged remember the importance of the R U OK? message and to

check in with each other, as well as value and build genuine friendships that will be there to support them when they need it.

The R U OK? Day celebrations motivated the girls to see the fun and joy in the everyday moments of school and life as well as reminding us that that our friends are people we can reach out to and people who can reach out to us when they need.

It was a fantastic, loud, colourful and fun event with everybody involved having a great time while highlighting an important message. Massive thanks to all the staff and Year 12s who helped out and made this lunchtime celebration possible!

Community

Giving Day 2023

Mrs Jo Ingwell
Fundraising Manager

After the success of our previous Giving Days, we are thrilled to announce that our Abbotsleigh Giving Day for this year is just around the corner, on Thursday 9 November.



As we witnessed last year, the Abbotsleigh Giving Day is a momentous occasion, uniting our entire community in a collective effort to contribute whatever they can.

This year, our focus is on raising funds for the provision of means-tested scholarships, including the Indigenous and Kathleen McCredie scholarships, empowering girls and giving them access to an educational experience at Abbotsleigh, that without funding would not be possible.

What makes Giving Day 2023 even more special is the incredible commitment of our matching donors. Every donation you make on this day will be generously tripled

by our matching donors, amplifying the impact of your contribution for the benefit of our girls.

We want you to know that the impact of your donation reaches far beyond the moment of giving. It ripples through our school community, shaping the educational journeys of our Abbotsleigh girls for generations to come.

Your donation, no matter the amount, is appreciated, and it will undoubtedly make a difference.

Thank you for your support and generosity.

[Donate now](#)

Uniform Shop holiday trading

Mrs Lorraine Boothby
Uniform Shop Manager

Please note that the last day of trading for 2023 is Wednesday 6 December (9.30 am-4 pm)

Holiday opening times for 2024

- Monday 8 to Thursday 25 January (weekdays only) 9.30 am-4 pm
- Closed 26 January 2024 (Public holiday)
- Monday 29 to Wednesday 31 January from 9.30 am-5 pm
- Normal trading hours resume Thursday 1 February

Please call the Uniform Shop to make an appointment.



Anglicare Toys 'n' Tucker appeal

Mrs Alison Soper and Mrs Charlotte Galea
Junior School Chaplains

Anglicare is once again preparing to 'share the joy' of Christmas with people in need.

Senior School families have been asked to consider making a financial donation, so please [click here](#) if you would like to do so.

Junior School families have been asked to contribute toys and food to provide gift hampers to thousands of families in Sydney and surrounding regions who would otherwise go without this year.

Contributions for the Junior School appeal can be left under the Christmas tree in Junior School Reception area.

Please note that food items need to be non-perishable products.

Suggested items include:

- **Food**, such as: Christmas cake; Christmas pudding; tinned ham (450 g); tinned salmon (415 g); tea (100 pack); coffee (100 g); milo (small tin); biscuits; dried pasta (500 g); pasta sauce; long-life milk, custard or cream; tinned fruit and vegetables (425 g) and jam (500 g).
- **Gifts** for children and teenagers, such as: new toys; picture books; outdoor games; sporting equipment; gift cards and toiletry packs.

Sadly, chocolate cannot be included as it is likely to melt.

Please leave all items unwrapped as donations are used to pack Christmas hampers especially suited for the families who will receive them.

We thank you for your support again this year.



Junior School

Service for St Jude's

Ms Sally Ruston
Head of Junior School

Our connection with School of St Jude's in Tanzania is wonderfully long and deep. For more than a decade now, we have supported the work of the founding Principal and Australian – Gemma Sisia, as she has realised a truly remarkable vision of fighting poverty in Africa through education. We were delighted to have Gemma Sisia come and speak to our girls and parents earlier this year to hear first hand of the remarkable goals achieved for the poorest of Tanzanian children.

Gemma is a remarkable visionary and an extraordinarily hard-working individual who opened a school for children in 2002. Students numbered only three in the first class. Inspiringly today, through the empowerment of local Tanzanians, Gemma has created free learning environments for 1,800 of the poorest students of Tanzania. There are now three campuses, including a secondary girls' boarding school with 350 local staff progressively breaking the cycle of intergenerational poverty one student at a time.

Here at Abbotsleigh, we have found a range of ways of fundraising for St Jude's that have resonated with our girls and parents. From 'spellathons' and 'factathons' to recent wellbeing-focused initiatives, as we have emerged from pandemic isolation, we have continued to raise funds so that more children in Tanzania can receive an empowering education as our girls do here on a daily basis.

This year we are taking a service approach to our fundraising. We are asking our girls to perform acts of service at home and in the local neighbourhood to raise money so that we can in turn enable St Jude's to continue to give service to the

local Tanzanian community. Through the Student Representative Council we have asked the girls to identify acts of service that they feel are achievable and would bring joy and value to the family and community. The girls have been remarkably innovative in their identification of ways in which they can help out and serve. From simple tasks such as emptying the dishwasher, feeding or walking the family pet and preparing their own lunch to sending a card or ringing a grandparent or reading a book to a younger sibling, the girls' ideas are practical and doable.



Today we launched this fundraising initiative in assembly with the girls and seek your support in helping your daughter determine which tasks of those suggested she can practically manage and how much you, or other family members, are able to sponsor her per task. The girls are encouraged to give service by completing tasks over the next three weeks until Sunday 26 November. In the penultimate week of term, we ask the girls to bring in their donations until Friday 1 December. On Monday 4 December we will hold our traditional House Pool Party for the house which raises the most funds. I will take delight in announcing the total funds raised at Speech Day this year.

Giving service is an essential habit to develop if we are to feel connected to family, school and community. It is when we are able to see the good that we can do for others, that we recognise our power to create a better world for all, one small step at a time.

Student medical details update

Mrs Danielle Sellars
JS Administration Assistant

The annual update of your daughter's medical information is now due. Instructions on how to update these details via the Parent Portal have been sent to all families. Please complete this update by **Friday 17 November**.

This will ensure that we can provide appropriate care for your daughter.

Should you be unsure of your login details or have any difficulty in accessing the Parent Portal, please contact our IT Help Desk on 9473 7750, Ext 1.

Infants Swimming Carnival

Mr Paul Guirrerri
Head of JS Sport and PDHPE

Information was sent out today regarding the Infants Swimming Carnival which is to be held at the Abbotsleigh Aquatic Centre next Friday 10 November.

The girls have been busily preparing during our intensive swimming week and also in PE lessons. All girls in K-2 took part in our swimming trials at our Aquatic Centre on Thursday and are looking forward to a fun and competitive day of swimming next week!



NSWPSSA Athletics

Mr Paul Guirrerri
Head of JS Sport and PDHPE

Congratulations to Olivia Johnson (Year 6), who recently competed at the NSWPSSA State Athletics Championships at Homebush. Olivia had an excellent competition, throwing a PB of 32+m and narrowly missed a spot on the podium, finishing in 4th place.

We congratulate Olivia for another outstanding athletics season and we look forward to her achieving more success in 2024!



Year 3 excursion to Muogamarra Nature Reserve

Mrs Meg Lim
Year 3 Classroom Teacher

Last week, Wednesday 25 October, Year 3 went to Muogamarra Nature Reserve. It was a glorious day, spent bushwalking and observing beautiful views of the Hakwesbury River. The students were provided with a wonderful opportunity to observe the unique characteristics of the nature reserve including landforms and the flora and fauna, including a red-tailed black cockatoo. Students engaged in activities to learn more about Aboriginal Australians, their connection to Country and their culture.

The excursion connected to the Year 3 Geography unit about our continent and sustainability. They learnt how the Guringai people lived sustainably on the land and considered their own impact on the environment.

It was a beautiful day spent outdoors, connecting with the environment on our doorstep.

*Centuries gone past
Rock engravings are still here
This land is Country.*

Haiku by Mia Looi



SSA Nationals tennis star

Mr Paul Guirrerri
Head of JS Sport and PDHPE

Last week, our resident Junior School Tennis superstar, Stephanie Huang (Year 6), took part in the School Sport Australia Nationals Tennis Competition in Brisbane.

Stephanie was our state's number 1 seed in this event and she had an outstanding competition playing against the best Primary School girls in Australia.

Stephanie won five out of her seven singles matches, including an epic on centre court at Pat Rafter Arena, and helped her

NSW teammates achieve fabulous success at the competition, finishing in 2nd place overall with the silver medal.

Stephanie has been a credit to our school, both on and off the court, and is to be commended for her outstanding success. We look forward to seeing Stephanie achieve even greater success in the years ahead!



Boarding

Halloween celebrations in boarding

By Sophia Darney and Nanetta Washaya
Vice Head and Head Boarder Prefects

All vampires, ghosts, mummies and monsters from Read, McCredie and Lower Wheeldon enjoyed a Halloween celebration last Monday. After a week of working hard through their assessments, all the boarders were excited to celebrate the ghostly event.

We gathered in the spirit of Halloween in the frightening Dining Hall to indulge in a spooky dinner filled with eye-ball spaghetti, eerie nachos and yummy scary treats for dessert.

Afterwards, we played a variety of games on the oval, in a night filled with treats and tricks, consisting of apple bobbing, mummy wrap competitions, bone scavenger hunts and many more fun activities. Congratulations to the Year 8s coming out champions for the night, as well as best dressed going to Sophie Cooper and Mia Perrin.

All up we had a great night celebrating the spooky season and many thanks were given to the kitchen staff who created our vision of a disturbing dinner into a creepy reality.

