

Dear Families,

February has come and gone, and I've completed my first month in the new role as the *Mental Health and Wellbeing Coordinator*. I am loving my new job and have done many miles around the school. I have been spending time in classrooms and have even had the fortune to take a couple of lessons on *building confidence* and another about *making and keeping friends*. I'm also learning about the finer details of what my job actually entails.

### Mental Health and Wellbeing Coordinator Role

By the time the third parent came to me and asked how I was managing my role at the three different schools, I thought that it was finally time to clear something up. I am working at Ocean Grove Primary School full-time. OGPS is the only school I work at. Surfside have Kellie as their full-time MHWC and Barwon Heads have Lisa who works there full-time. Because Wallington is a smaller school, Melissa is employed there on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. We are working together in a 'Community of Practise' to help to collaborate to build professional knowledge and skills.

Part of my role is also to build whole-school capability with Mental Health and Wellbeing, and also Social and Emotional Learning. Following some training online (and hopefully in-person as well in the future) I will be working with teachers to help build professional knowledge and to improve practise in this area. This will also include helping to further enhance *Student Voice and Agency* through our work with *The Quaglia Institute*.

I will also be helping some families whose students may need extra care in their journey through primary school. It may be simply checking in on some of them, building relationships and being around for them if needed. Other students may require further assistance so I will offer the opportunity for help from the Department of Education's *Student Support Services (SSS)*.

Finally, my role involves a research component. The pilot program is run by the Melbourne Graduate School of Education (MGSE) run by Melbourne University, and also the Murdoch Children's Research Institute (MCRI). The pilot is called Mental Health in Primary Schools (MHIPS). One very important thing I did find out during my last online learning session is that my title of Mental Health and Wellbeing Coordinator is shortened to M-HAWC.

So, here are some of the acronyms that I'm trying to get my head around:

MHWC

M-HAWC

MGSE

MCRI

MHiPS

SSS

OGPS (fortunately I know this one!).

So, if you see me looking (more) dazed and confused, you may know one of the reasons why.

Thanks for all your continued support,  
Andy McNeilly  
Mental Health and Wellbeing Coordinator

