Earlier this year I spent a few nights watching a Netflix production, “13 Reasons Why” (I will not admit to binge TV, but maybe I obsessed for a number of extended sessions)! It came after some Year 11 students were talking about it and a staff member encouraged me to really take the program seriously. For those of you who haven’t heard about this program, it is a dramatisation of a girl who “walks the viewing audience through the lead-up to her own suicide”. It’s confronting and not recommended viewing for younger students (even more fragile senior students), but it’s clearly set in an adolescent context and deals with social media pressures, misconceptions, judgements and then the personal feelings of this teenager being ostracised and depressed, and making a decision to end her life.

As a parent and teacher, the impact of this show was enormous. It heightened my desire to be sure that I’m connected to my kids, aware of the things that may be impacting them on a very deep level and not just taking the “I’m fine” response as a final answer. We’re often oblivious to how intensely kids feel things from their peers and even from us. Of course with my teacher hat on, I’m less inclined to pass off comments or trivial interactions just in case. Because in the end, we should only need one reason to check in with our kids, let alone our high school students, about their wellbeing and their feelings about how their life is going – not thirteen! Early signs of depression or withdrawal are significant. Nothing should be taken lightly, I believe.

For some more information, the website https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources/school-safety-and-crisis/preventing-youth-suicide/13-reasons-why-netflix-series-considerations-for-educators points out a couple of really great things:

- Suicide threats - which can be verbal or written, and they are often found in online postings;
- Giving away prized possessions;
- Preoccupation with death in conversation, writing, drawing, and social media;
- Changes in behaviour, appearance/hygiene, thoughts, and/or feelings. This can include someone who is typically sad who suddenly becomes extremely happy;
- Emotional distress. Students who feel suicidal are not likely to seek help directly; however, we can recognise the warning signs and take immediate action to keep our kids safe.

When a child gives signs that they may be considering suicide, take the following actions (see more online):

- Remain calm, be nonjudgmental, and listen;
- Strive to understand the intolerable emotional pain that has resulted in suicidal thoughts;
- Focus on your concern for their wellbeing and avoid being accusatory;
- Reassure the child that there is help and they will not feel like this forever; and
- Get help.

Once a child is considered at risk, we should work to build these factors in and around them (more online):

- Family support and cohesion, including good communication;
- Peer support and close social networks;
- School and community connectedness;
- Cultural/religious beliefs that discourage suicide and promote healthy living; and
- Adaptive coping and problem-solving skills, including conflict resolution;

This is one of those things that we shouldn’t ignore, think happens to someone else or this would never be my kids. We have a responsibility to be in this together.
**GENERAL**

**Newcastle Permanent Mathematics Competition - Wednesday, August 23**
All students in Years 5 and 6 will participate in this competition next Wednesday, August 23. There are over 15,000 students who enter this competition. Students will not be able to complete a makeup paper if they are absent.

**ICAS Science Competition Medalists**
On Monday we were very proud to present 14 Credit, 9 Distinction and 3 High Distinction medals to students in Years 3-6 who participated in the ICAS Science Competition. Special congratulations to Caitlyn C, Kalan C and Jacob D for achieving High Distinctions.

**SPORT**

**Term 3 Sport Uniform**
- **Kindy** - wear sports uniform Mondays and Tuesdays
- **Year 1** - 1W wear sports uniform on Mondays and Tuesdays
- 1S & 1H wear sports uniform on Tuesdays
- **Year 2** - wear sports uniform Tuesdays
- **Years 3-6** - wear sports uniform Tuesdays and Fridays for Term 3.

**HRIS Athletics**
Last week, 76 Avondale School students from Years 2-6 were excited to compete at the HRIS Athletics Carnival. Many of our students achieved personal best results. The attending staff members were proud of the way in which our students demonstrated good sportsmanship on the day. It was great to witness some of our high jumpers encouraging competitor jumpers over the bar and congratulating opponents when they won. Avondale School came first in the 8 Years and 11 Years Boys banners. We also took out two individual Age Champion Banners: Samantha C (10 Years) and Antwon M (11 Years). Tegan C set a new record in 11 Years Shot Put of 9.84m. Matthew G set a new record in 12 Years Javelin of 21.03m.

Please note that the only aged event at CIS Athletics for 8 and 9 year old students is the 100m sprint. All other events become Junior events which is up to 10 years of age. There is no Javelin event at the CIS.

**DIVISION 1 School Results:**
1. 1569 pts Hunter Valley Grammar School
2. 1532 pts Avondale School
3. 1502 pts Lakes Anglican Grammar School
4. 1479 pts St Columba Anglican School
5. 1411 pts Calrossy Anglican School
6. 1294 pts Scone Grammar School
7. 1272 pts Central Coast Adventist School
8. 1148 pts Bishop Tyrrell College

**NAPLAN Online**
The National Assessment Program, Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) is an annual national assessment for students in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9. Planning has begun to move NAPLAN from pen and paper assessment to an online assessment.
Avondale School students in Years 3 and 5 will participate in the NAPLAN Online School Readiness Test from September 11-15. This is a practice run for our school to assess our technology and it allows our school to:
- become familiar with the NAPLAN Online Test format and processes
- provide students in Years 3 and 5 with the opportunity to experience the online test question types and format by completing a practice NAPLAN online test.

The readiness test is not an assessment of student ability. Further information can be accessed on class Landscape pages.

**KINDY ARE 100 DAYS SMARTER AFTER BEING AT SCHOOL FOR 100 DAYS**

**Knights And Rookies Chess Competition Monday, August 21 - MPC**
The Knights and Rookies Chess Teams will be playing the second half of their competition (rounds 6-10) on Monday, August 21 in the MPC building. Parents are encouraged to give plenty of practice at home in preparation for this event.

**Equestrian Event Update**
We have now received the results from the Equestrian event held at Morisset Show Ground in which 35 schools competed with 150 competitors. Congratulations Avondale School Team for achieving the following result:
1st Lakes Anglican Grammar School
2nd St Peter’s Catholic College
3rd Central Coast Grammar School
4th MacKillop Catholic College
5th Avondale School

**Bus Travel – Opal Cards Required**
Students travelling by bus to and from school MUST have an active School Student OPAL Card which is to be ‘tapped’ on the bus for each and every journey made. New applications, replacement passes or inactive cards can be ordered at transportnsw.info/school-students. Opal cards will be posted to your home address.

**Years 3 & 5 Student NAPLAN Results**
NAPLAN results were sent home with students this week, please check your child’s bag.

**Kindergarten Tuition Fee**
Kindy tuition fee is due next Wednesday, August 23.
Science Students Engage in STEM Activities

28 of our Year 9 and 10 students spent Thursday, August 3 at Newcastle University competing against students from local schools as part of the annual Science and Engineering Challenge. Bionic hands, bridges, turbines, optimising a network and devising codes to send and receive messages were just some of the challenges that faced these scientists and engineers of tomorrow.

Working in groups of three or four, students were challenged to design and construct physical solutions to scenarios that included a scale table and chair (think IKEA) that could handle a ‘dog’ jumping on it while minimising construction costs and product weight to maximise profit or a catapult built from lengths of dowel, string and rubber bands that launched a tennis ball with points for accuracy and range.

It was a day filled with many memorable moments, and a few forgettable ones, but the smiles on students’ faces when their persistence and creativity came together was marvellous to see. While our team didn’t come out on top for the day they did win a number of individual rounds, including a perfect score by Abigail B, Vanessa C, Ashley M and Hannah V with their ‘bionic hand’ constructed from straws, string, plasticine and a piece of PVC pipe.

HRIS Basketball

Wednesday, August 16 saw our juniors playing over three hours of basketball at the HRIS Basketball Tournament in Broadmeadow. The parents and family cheer squad supporting Avondale School was the largest and the loudest. Our Junior Girls were undefeated in their pool and ended up third overall out of the ten teams entered, only having lost one game. Issie F, the team captain, showed great leadership on the court and Abi U played an incredible defense with some quick steals. Eleora T was deadly under the basket.

Our Juniors Boys played against some tough competition and only lost two games, resulting in a fifth placing overall out of thirteen teams. Joshua V took some great shots and Layne B put his body on the line with solid defense. Ethan M was the king of fast breaks.

We’re incredibly proud of both teams for their sportsmanship on and off the court and the skill they displayed. Well done! A huge thank you to the teams for their commitment to training and to Miss Fraser and Mr Spiros for being our teams’ coaches.
Book Week – August 21-25
Book Week is NEXT WEEK! There will be so many fun activities to look forward to and lots of book prizes too!

Harrison Craig Author Visit – K-9
Harrison Craig, singer, inspirational speaker and author, will be visiting Avondale School this coming Monday, August 21 to speak about his new picture book Harrison’s Song. Harrison first made his mark on Australia in 2013, taking out the second series of the TV show The Voice. From a young age Harrison found that singing was a remedy to his stutter and it became a means to escape bullying at school. We are really looking forward to his story!

K-12 ‘Where Will Reading Take You?’ Competition
This competition has 20 book locations on signposts along with the books that these locations are from. It is your job to decide which books belong with each of the various locations and to fill in the competition entry form. There will be a book prize for the most correct entry drawn from each Primary Year Level and other awesome prizes for Years 7-12!

K-6 Book Character Parade
Our fabulous Book Character Parade will be held in the MPC this coming Thursday, August 24 at 9.00 am. Do you have your parade costume and book ready? Please remember to choose costumes that reflect the values of the school and especially avoid supernatural and violent book characters, and for obvious reasons, don’t bring along LIVE animals as part of your costume! Please let the library know ASAP if you would like the library staff to find a particular book to go with your costume. We can’t help you find a book on the morning of the parade! Our esteemed judges will be choosing ten students with creative costumes from each Year Level, without ranking them, to receive awards and book prizes. It will be great fun so parents and grandparents, you won’t want to miss it!

K-6 Storytellers at Lunchtime
At lunchtimes on Tuesday through to Thursday there will be super storytellers in the library Story Centre from 12.40 pm (middle bell) to enthral the students. Our storytellers this year are: Dr David McClintock, Dr Adelle Faull and Miss Karlie Fraser. It’s going to be fun!

Years 7-12 Quizzical
If you’d love to be involved in Quizzical from 1.00 pm next Friday, August 25, come to the library and sign up. There are only 2 tables left so you’ll need to hurry! There’ll be snacks and drinks, and lots of prizes so it’ll be a great way to spend your lunchtime!

Premier’s Reading Challenge
Please note that all completed reading record sheets are due to the library by next Friday, August 25.