

## From Jo, the School Counsellor...

I have been fortunate to have been supporting St Paul's school community for almost four years. This year I am once again here on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday each week. I work with children across a range of issues from symptoms of anxiety, dealing with parental separation and grief and loss just to name a few.

If you think school counselling is something your child might benefit in, you can let your child's teacher know, talk to one of the school leadership team or come and have a chat with me. I am also happy to provide you with some resources and strategies for you to support your child even if they do not see me.

This summer has been full of challenges for many Australians. If your child is distressed over the impact of the fires or drought *and* is showing other symptoms such as not sleeping well, not being able to concentrate, greater than usual worry or an out of character quieter mood, please drop in and let me know so we can determine what support is needed. There is some useful information about disaster recovery at KidsHelpline:

<https://kidshelpline.com.au/teens/issues/coping-natural-disasters>

## Some tips for asking how your child's day was

### Does your child shrug or grunt when you ask what they did at school?

Sometimes all it takes is changing the time when you ask the question. Children have spent the whole day having to be 'switched on', sometimes waiting until dinner to ask about their day can elicit more information. Alternatively, with younger children, blow some bubbles and ask them to tell you something about their day as they pop a bubble. You might like to also try some of the following conversation starters instead (but not all at once!). Perhaps everyone in the family can answer some of them:



1. What made you laugh today?
2. What did you do that was friendly or kind?
3. What did you try hard at today?
4. What was something that made you think hard today?
5. What was something tricky that you figured out how to do better?
6. What was something helpful you did for someone?
7. What was a problem you had to solve today?
8. What was something you were grateful for today?
9. How did you bounce back from something that went wrong today?
10. What was something you enjoyed in the classroom? Out of the classroom?

**Listen to anything your child wants to tell you because if they don't feel you're listening to the small stuff now, they won't tell you the big stuff later.**

If your child has had a bad day, first acknowledge their **feelings**; let them say what went wrong; before giving advice, ask what they need (they might just want to vent rather than get advice) and remind yourself someone else probably has a different version of the event; help your child also find some positives from their day.

## Some useful resources for navigating the challenges of parenting:

<http://www.parentline.org.au> ph:1300 1300 52. This organisation assists parents and carers with parenting advice, resources and support via phone or online.

<http://raisingchildren.net.au> Lots of parent-friendly videos and fact sheets covering information about each age group from pregnancy to teens, parenting and children with special needs.

<https://kidshelpline.com.au/parents> The parent section has lots of information to support children from 5 – 18+ years.