SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL LEARNING— In Term 2 all grades across the school are continuing with The BOUNCE BACK! Wellbeing and Resilience program which teaches children the skills and attitudes to help them become more resilient. It uses literature as a starting point for discussions and follow-up activities. These ten coping statements are a core part of the program.

BOUNCE BACK! stands for:

B ad times don’t last. Things always get better. Stay optimistic.
O ther people can help if you talk to them. Get a reality check.
U nhelpful thinking makes you feel more upset. Think again.
N obody is perfect—not you and not others.
C oncentrate on the positives (no matter how small) and use laughter.
E verybody experiences sadness, failure, rejection and setbacks sometimes, not just you. They are a normal part of life. Try not to personalise them.
B lame fairly. How much of what happened was due to you, to others and to bad luck or circumstances?
A ccept what can’t be changed (but try to change what you can change first).
C atastrophising exaggerates your worries. Don’t believe the worst possible picture.
K eep things in perspective. It’s only part of your life.

The units we are focusing on are Courage, Looking on the Bright Side and Emotions. You can help your child get the best out of their involvement with Bounce Back! if you reinforce the key messages they are learning.

COURAGE

Fear is a normal human response to situations that might harm us. Fear motivates us to check out whether or not the situation really is as dangerous as it seems and then, if it is, to take action to protect ourselves. Everyone feels scared at times. However we don’t necessarily fear the same things as other people. Some people feel scared about riding on a roller coaster but others really enjoy it. But the same people who don’t fear going on a roller coaster might feel very nervous when they have to give a speech. Courage means facing fear and not being overwhelmed by it. We need courage if we experience misfortune. We also need courage to face some of the ‘everyday’ challenges in our lives such as learning a new skill or sorting out friendship issues.

Key points to communicate to your child about being brave

Everyone feels scared sometimes.

Some people pretend they never feel scared but everyone does. Different things scare different people. One person might feel nervous about learning to dive but not about acting on stage. For someone else it might be the opposite.

We all need to use a lot of ‘everyday courage’ in our lives.

Everyday courage is shown when you try to do something that is ordinary that still makes you feel a bit nervous such as giving a talk to the class, trying out for a part in a play, sleeping over at a friend’s house or going to camp.

Weigh up the advantages and disadvantages of trying to be a hero.
A hero is someone who puts himself/herself at risk to protect the safety and wellbeing of another. It is very rare for someone your age to be in a situation where heroism is required. If you are, think carefully before you act as you might not have enough skill to do it and you could get badly hurt or make things worse. Consider calling 000 or ask an adult to help. You can be a hero in smaller ways (e.g. by standing up for someone who is being mistreated at school).

**There’s a big difference between courage and being foolhardy.**

Being foolhardy means being stupid and doing a risky and scary thing (e.g. jumping from a tree branch into a river) just to show off or because people are daring you to do it. If you do something really dangerous, the best you will get are bragging rights and the worst you might get is serious injury or death.

**What can you do to help your child to be brave?**

- Talk about when you have felt scared and what you did to overcome your fears and be brave. Give examples of times in your life of when you tackled your fears and ‘had a go’ at something that was difficult. Stress how pleased you felt afterwards.
- Discuss the gains that being brave can bring (e.g. self-respect, confidence, skills).
- Look for examples of courage, heroism and foolhardiness in the media and discuss them with your child to help them to understand the differences between courage, heroism and foolhardiness.
- Encourage your child to have the courage to do what they believe is ‘the right thing’ even if others don’t agree with them.
- Remind your child about the things that took courage for them to do when they were little but now seem easy to them. Explain that things that take courage for them to do now will seem easier and less scary as they get older.
- Stress that throughout life there will always be new challenges that will require courage. Facing our fears is one of the ways we become stronger.

**Looking on the Bright Side**

If you think optimistically it means that you expect things to mostly turn out well and you focus on the positives rather than the negatives in a situation. It also means that you understand that setbacks and difficult times happen to everyone but that things get better after a while.

Teaching your child to be optimistic will help them to be better equipped to ‘bounce back’ when they face difficulties, frustrations and problems. It means that when they are faced with a problem they will be more likely to look for solutions rather than giving up and not trying.

**Key messages to communicate to your child about being optimistic**

**Look on the bright side.**

This means being positive and expecting that things will work out well or get better. When you look on the bright side you believe that good things CAN happen and you don’t give up easily.

**It’s good to be a positive tracker.**

A positive tracker looks for and points out the good things in themselves, in others, and in what happens in their life. They are more fun to be with and others like them more and want to be their friend.

**Look for the small good bits in the bad things that happen.**
Sometimes things happen that you don’t like. But you can usually find something good in the situation if you try. Sometimes the good thing is that it could have been worse. Sometimes the good thing is the lesson you learned from it. Sometimes a small good thing happened anyway even if the rest was bad.

**Bad times don’t last. Things get better.**

When a bad thing happens in your life, it isn’t forever. Bad times and bad feelings always go away again although sometimes it might take a bit of time for this to happen. Things will get better faster if you talk to your parents about what’s worrying you.

**It’s important to stay hopeful when you have unhappy times.**

You will get over unhappy times in your life more easily if you stay hopeful that good things will happen again and things will get better. If you stay hopeful then you don’t give up.

**Be thankful and grateful.**

Being thankful for the nice things people do for you and the good things that happen in your life can help you to feel happier. Letting people know that you are thankful or grateful for how they have supported and cared about you also makes them feel happy too.

**Good memories of things help you to bounce back.**

When you are feeling sad because you have lost someone or something you love, it helps to remember some of the good times you shared with them to help you feel a bit better.

**When one unhappy thing happens in your life it doesn’t spoil everything else.**

When one thing in your life goes wrong or you feel unhappy or worried, try to remember all the things that are still good in your life. It’s just one thing that is going wrong for a while, not everything.

**Three Good Things in Your Day**

At the dinner table, ask your child, ‘What were three good things that happened for you today?’ With younger children you can do this just before they go to sleep. If they can’t think of anything ask them some prompting questions (e.g. Did you have any laughs? Did you enjoy being with anyone? What did you do well?).

**The Positive Tracking Game**

Challenge everyone in the family to identify the three best things about your family, your home, your holiday, your suburb, about being their age, about this time of the year etc.

**Showing gratitude**

Encourage your child to say thank you to someone who has done something nice for them (e.g. by sending a note or card, text, email or by ringing them).

**Good memories**

Help your child to make a photo album, slide show or little book of their favourite photos and to look at the photos to help them remember the good times when they need ‘brightening up’.
**Modelling**
Let your child see and hear you using positive tracking, showing gratitude, saying ‘things will get better soon’ and expecting that good outcomes are possible.

**EMOTIONS**
We all experience a range of emotions every day. Our feelings are necessary for us to survive and co-exist harmoniously with others. Without pleasant feelings (e.g. feeling pleased, proud, excited, loving) we would not learn what makes us happy and what we want to strive for.

Experiencing a lot of pleasant feelings can help children become more resilient and bounce back more quickly from a difficulty or setback.

But unpleasant feelings are also important too. Without unpleasant feelings as warnings (e.g. fear, worry and anger) we would be less able to protect ourselves from possible danger or to stand up for ourselves. Some unpleasant feelings (e.g. embarrassment, disappointment and sadness) also motivate us to think deeply about some of the difficult and challenging situations we sometimes have to cope with (e.g. failing, loss and rejection). This type of reflection helps us to learn from our experiences and become more able to make good decisions and problem solve.

Our unpleasant emotions can sometimes ‘hijack us’ and we react to them by behaving in ways that alienate others or work against us. Learning how to express their emotions in a positive and assertive way helps children to feel more in control when things are difficult for them.

**Key messages to communicate to your child about their feelings**

**Talking to someone else can help.**
When you are feeling sad or disappointed it can be helpful to talk to someone you trust about how you are feeling. They can help you to check whether or not you are seeing things clearly and help you to solve problems.

**Don’t let yourself be ‘hijacked’ by your feelings.**
‘Hijacked’ means that your feelings have taken you over and you are no longer in charge. If your feelings are taking over, you need to go to a quiet place or do something that will help you calm down (e.g. throw a basketball through a hoop, play music or play with a pet). If you don’t calm down, you can’t think of the best way to deal with how you are feeling. Your anger should never be expressed in a way that hurts others, property or yourself.

**Correctly naming your feeling can help you to manage it better.**
Being able to name your feeling helps you to feel more in control. For example if you know that you are feeling angry, then you also realise that you need to calm yourself down and speak up for yourself in a calm but strong way. If you can correctly name what you are feeling as ‘disappointment’ rather than ‘anger’, then you realise that it is not helpful to feel so upset and it’s easier to calm down.

**You need to ask ‘Did they really mean it?’**
Sometimes we get upset and angry over something that a person has done, but it was just an accident or they were a bit thoughtless and they did not mean to hurt us or hurt our feelings. Before responding in an angry way, you need to think about whether their actions were deliberate and intended to harm you or just an accident or mistake.

**Unhelpful thinking makes you feel worse.**
Unpleasant feelings can get worse because of the unhelpful things you say to yourself about them. No person and no event makes you feel a certain way. Sometimes it is understandable that you feel angry or sad because of what’s happened but that event or person hasn’t made you have that feeling. One of the best ways to be in control of your feelings is to use more helpful thinking and ‘self-talk’.