

TASSO NEWS

...FROM THE DESK...

The 2021 school year appears to be flying by for students, families and school staff. Unlike those in other states of Australia, we have managed to start Term 3 with the majority of families making sure that children and young people are ready to catch buses, walk, cycle, or be driven to attend schools where students can be in classrooms with their teachers.

TASSO representatives have continued to be the voice of families in Tasmanian public education, something the organisation has continually done for 74 years and intends to keep doing for many more. Like all not-for-profit community-based organisations, TASSO relies on the voluntary hours given by Board members who come from throughout Tasmania and the information and contacts we have with people such as you, school associations and school communities. To continue being an effective peak body and genuinely represent school communities and the people who make up those communities, we rely on you to keep sharing your knowledge, experiences and skills with us. We appreciate the time you take to respond to our surveys, attendance at our online Question and Answer sessions and Regional Forums, your emails and or phone calls and putting other people you know in touch with us.

Some of the groups and individuals TASSO representatives have met with recently include:

- Minister for Education and Training Sarah Courtney, twice.
- Department of Education (DoE) Secretary Tim Bullard.
- Department of Education Review into reporting to families steering committee.
- Tasmanian Principals Association President Sally Milbourne.
- DoE Principal Wellbeing Leader
- DoE Community Liaison Managers
- DoE Director of Student Support

- Members of other not for profit Community organisations
- Individual School Associations
- Attend an Aboriginal Cultural Awareness information session
- Volunteering Tasmania meetings
- Interstate peak bodies representing families in public education
- DoE Inclusion Advisory Committee
- DoE Family Engagement Project Officer
- TasCOSS Community meetings

TASSO believes that an education should be provided to all, which allows for the development of their abilities. This provision should ensure that all achieve their maximum potential irrespective of capacity to pay, class, disability, gender, culture, level of ability, or where they live. The school system should provide a learning environment that encourages students to build on their culture, experience and skills and a safe education setting that is nurturing, and welcoming.

The crux of this belief and for it to be achievable is that an effective education system is a partnership of students, families, teachers, and all other Education Department staff, and as such, can best meet the needs of all its participants.

All of the above would not be possible without the active participation of families both with the schools their children attend, with TASSO and with others in their community. If you want to learn more about what we have been up to in the past year attend our Annual General Meeting on August 16th, consider becoming a Board member or volunteer your skills or services so that we better achieve.

TASSO Wants You!

Our AGM is fast approaching
Get your nomination in!



Nominations close 09/08



Midnight

- Do you have a keen interest in public education?
- Do you want to have a greater say in how we advocate for Tasmanian State Schools and Colleges?
- Would you like to provide guidance to school associations?
- Are you willing to volunteer with TASSO to assist in enhancing public education?

If you answer yes to these questions, then you should seriously consider becoming a TASSO Regional Delegate.

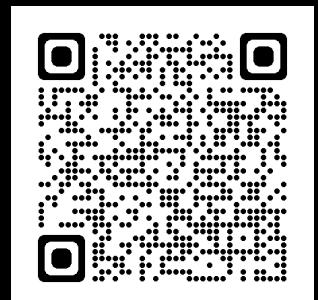
Put forward a nomination and help put our kids first!



Follow this QR code to
access
the nomination form

or..

[Click here](#)



Support for families and friends

It's unfortunate but often true - it's not always easy to find mental health support when you need it.

What's also unfortunate are the people left behind. Those supporting others, the families and friends.

Mental Health Families and Friends Tasmania is an advocacy organisation that focuses on reducing the stigma plaguing people who live with mental ill-health and or AOD misuse.

The focus for Mental Health Families and Friends Tasmania, in particular, is around reducing the stigma affecting the family members and the friends who provide unpaid social, financial, emotional, and practical support to those living with mental ill-health and or AOD misuse.

We provide state-wide face-to-face peer support sessions, called Safe Spaces. Our sessions are held in:

- Face-to-face in Hobart every month of an evening time
- Every 8 weeks face-to-face in the North and the North-west during the day
- Online once a month

You can call us on [03 6228 7448](tel:0362287448)

You can email us at admin@mhfamiliesfriendstas.org.au

You can visit us at Ground Floor, 2 Terry Street Glenorchy

You can check out our website at <https://mhfamiliesfriendstas.org.au/>



Your trusted voice in mental health



The Harding Miller Scholarships have offered life-changing opportunities to girls since 2016, with over 600 scholarship recipients being supported from every State and Territory in Australia.

It is one of the most supportive scholarships available to metropolitan, rural, and regional girls, offering \$20,000 worth of tools and resources.

Do you know a girl in an Australian Public school who might benefit from this? The 2022 Harding Miller Scholarship Applications are open from 15th July until 15th September

Watch this video to learn more about the Harding Miller Scholarship Application Process for 2022.

Please also share with your family and friends.

Click [here](#) to watch the video on the application process.



Talking Covid with Kids

Stay calm yourself

- Children are very attuned to us, so we must be aware of what we transmit to them both verbally and non-verbally.

Chances are, your kids will be already aware of the virus from the media, friends or all those tabs you've left open on your browser.

- Ask open-ended questions in order to get a sense of what they already know and what they may be ruminating about,"
- Instead of hearing facts about infection rates, they might just be interested in why they now have to sing Happy Birthday when they wash their hands, instead of at actual birthday parties, which they won't be going to for a little while.



"For most kids, the impact has been acutely felt with the cancellation of birthday parties," says Bethany Macdonald, a public programs producer for libraries and mother of two boys.

"My oldest son's birthday is in May, and we've given him a heads up that the situation might not have cleared by then so his party could be postponed."

Bethany says she doesn't sugar-coat things, explaining big words to her four- and six-year-old when they have come up in conversation.

"We haven't talked about the pandemic, but we have covered the lockdown and panic-buying, and having an asthmatic child. We do have a benchmark for discussing respiratory issues and their effects."

Reassuring them may consist of correcting misinformation

For example, if they are worried about dying, Dr Ban suggests you can counter with factual information: "It is highly unlikely that are you going to die. There are no cases of children having died."

"I've been very open with my children about coronavirus. I have to be, as they wonder why I've been working so much!" says Sarah McNab, paediatrician and director of General Medicine at The Royal Children's Hospital.

"I am honest and tell them that coronavirus is not a bad virus for kids. I tell them that we want to make sure everyone else is OK, so we have to try to stop the virus from spreading."



INFORMATION SHOULD BE AGE APPROPRIATE

VERY YOUNG KIDS AND TODDLERS

It may be enough to have simple reminders to wash their hands with calming songs to sing together. Toddlers may be aware of parents home more, empty shelves at supermarkets and separation from grandparents and friends. So give simple factual explanations such as what 'little germs' are, and why getting them on our faces can make us sick.

Social distancing could be explained by saying "there are some illnesses about and so we can't visit your grandparents; we can FaceTime them until everyone is healthy again". (Teaching grandparents how to use FaceTime is a separate topic altogether.)

FOR CHILDREN AGED 4-6 YEARS

Kids at this age are curious and may ask questions about why people are wearing masks or "why does Uncle John have a room full of hand sanitiser?"

More knowledge can be given in a simplified way, like "Viruses are so tiny you need a microscope to see them", or "They are transmitted via droplets of water when people cough", or "Uncle John is not a good role model".

SCHOOL-AGE CHILDREN

It's likely these kids are already aware of the coronavirus from the media and school closures. As explained above, it's important to approach with child-led conversations with reassuring answers to help children process the information in a way that doesn't cause too much anxiety.

FOR CHILDREN ON THE SPECTRUM

Information should be concrete and factual. In some cases, they can be presented as 'social stories' where concepts such as physical distancing can be communicated in a literal way, which may improve their understanding of the new ambiguous social situations.

HOW TO STOP THEM TOUCHING FACES

Is telling kids not to touch their faces a futile exercise?

"Make it a game," Jordan Bell tells me. The psychologist, children's author and mother of a seven-year-old recommends drawing up a counting chart.

"If anyone sees anyone in the house touch their face, they get a dot on the chart. The person with the least face touches in a day gets to pick the music for a family dance party that night."

HOW TO TEACH SOCIAL DISTANCING

Dr Bell says it's almost impossible to explain social distancing to younger kids. Instead, we should remind them "we're not high-fiving, hugging or getting too close to people outside the family".

She suggests you work with children to make up a safe alternative: "A silly wink, or a toe tap, or jazz hands."

HOW TO GET THEM TO COUGH/SNEEZE INTO THEIR ELBOW

Struggling to get younger kids to cough or sneeze in their elbow? Make an Elbow Monster!

- Grab a pen and draw a googly-eyed face in the crease of your kid's elbow.
- Tell them that it's their pet Elbow Monster and it only eats sneezes and coughs.

COVID FATIGUE & YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

Special Report

SPECIAL REPORT: COVID FATIGUE & YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH

As the nation remains to be on alert and in various stages of lockdown, restrictions continue to be mandated. And we, as a society, persevere to do the best we can to navigate this post-COVID era. Whilst some of us quietly take comfort from the availability of vaccines, it does introduce new uncertainties for families and young people alike. We continue to remain in a state of suspended animation, wondering when “normal” will return.

The physical impact of the pandemic has mostly spared our young people, however, researchers are now reporting that children and adolescents are paying a heavy emotional and developmental price, being affected by a range of psychological disorders. According to Kids Helpline, emergency interventions to protect young people have skyrocketed over the last 12 months.

Being a young person today is hard, but so too is being the parent of one. A recent international survey reported that parents are struggling to keep their child’s mental health afloat.



Young people are feeling like they don’t have much control over their lives. Their developmental processes have been interfered with and their trajectory has been interrupted. Unfortunately, the emotional blowback of the pandemic cannot be vaccinated away.

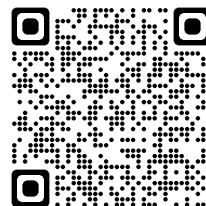
Young people can’t choose what happens to them, but they can choose how to respond. Encouraging them to use programs such as Moodgym, will help them change their thinking.

If your young person wishes to talk to someone outside of the family unit, encourage them to call Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800 - anytime, for any reason. Alternatively, they can chat online at kidshelpline.com.au

Kids Helpline has also created some resources specifically relating to this topic for young people who may be struggling during the lockdown. Click [here](#) to find out more.

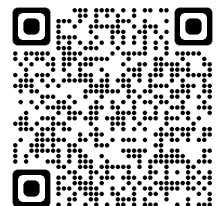
TASSO ONLINE Q+A

WED
7-8PM



11/8 Register Here

THU
12.30-1.30PM



12/8 REGISTER HERE

TASSO AGM

GET INVOLVED

AUGUST 16, 2021

7:30-8:30 PM

15 ROWITTA RD, LINDISFARNE

ALSO ONLINE



Follow the QR Code to Register Your Interest

PARENTS

be informed

Most college students aren't 100% set on what they want to study and where they'd like to take them.

All a parent wants is to see their child reach their potential. The best thing you can do is inform yourself of the details that could get overlooked by your stressed-out teens.

Help them succeed. Get yourself familiar with courses, their requirements and what qualification a combination of courses will yield, and where they can take your young adult.

[Parents - TASC](#)

or scan





Twice Exceptionality: Australian Research Update

with

Dr Catherine Wormald

Recognition of, and research into Twice Exceptionality (2e) is a growing area of interest. This presentation will provide an update on research that has been undertaken in Australia on Twice Exceptional students. Much of the research undertaken in Australia has taken a case study approach and sought to understand the Twice Exceptional student's point of view. Before 2e students can have their educational needs met teachers need to have an understanding and knowledge of how to identify and provide appropriate educational programs for these students in order for them to achieve their potential. What do teachers know about these students? Are they being identified? How many of these students are there in Australian classrooms? These questions and others will be addressed through discussion of Australian 2e research from the teacher's perspective.

About Dr Wormald:

Dr Catherine Wormald is first and foremost a parent of three gifted children. She has taught and coordinated subjects in gifted and special needs education at the undergraduate and post graduate level. She began her career as a secondary mathematics teacher and taught across all education systems. Catherine worked for a number of years for the Selective Schools Unit and has worked for the NSW and ACT Departments of Education, and Sydney Catholic Schools consulting and providing advice, reviewing policy and providing professional learning for teachers.

She is a past president of state and national gifted associations. She regularly presents at international, national, and state conferences, and has had a number of papers and book chapters published. Catherine's research focus is on students who are twice exceptional, students with special needs, gifted education and underachievement.

7:30pm, Monday 23rd August 2021

Online Delivery

Those registered will be emailed a link and instructions a few days before the event.

All welcome

Current TAG financial members - Free

Non-members - \$10

Book your place at <https://www.trybooking.com/BSUDU>

Proudly sponsored by



[Or click here](#)

August 2021

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4 Newsletter	5	6	7
8	9	10	11 Q+A Online	12 Q+A Online	13	14
15	16 AGM	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

September 2021

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1 Newsletter	2	3	4
5	6	7	8 Q+A Online	9 Q+A Online	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

■ School Day
 ■ Weekend
 ■ School Holidays