negotiating and enjoying adolescence with your teens
The guidance of our young people is a responsibility that we undertake together; home and school supporting each other. We share a profound hope that our children will be healthy, happy and successful, able to achieve their best at school, confident in forming friendships and capable of negotiating the inevitable challenges of life.

Pastoral care has been a high priority at Strathcona since the School was founded in 1924. Over time, the structures, resources, emphases and terminology may have changed, but the commitment to the best possible care and guidance has remained constant.

The pastoral care programs throughout the School are well researched and coordinated. They are designed to support the health and wellbeing of students, to guide them in developing self-knowledge, self-esteem and resilience and to encourage them to participate, become part of teams and take on leadership roles. Ultimately, pastoral care is about valuing and respecting each student, nurturing her confidence and giving her a strong sense of belonging.

The extensive pastoral team at Strathcona is led by the Dean of Students and includes the Chaplains, the School Psychologist, Heads of Campuses, Year Coordinators, Form Tutors in the Senior School and Class Teachers in the Junior School, all supported by the Principal and Deputy Principal.

Communication with and resourcing of parents is important to us, hence the provision of special lectures and the annual Parent Seminar Series. From these, we now draw together key information from the contributors in this Strathcona Parent Booklet, Negotiating and Enjoying Adolescence with your Teens. I sincerely thank our contributors and also our School Psychologist, Kerri Rhodes, who has overseen the compilation of this important information. We hope that this will find a significant place amongst your valued parenting resources.

Helen Hughes
Principal
There is nothing like having a teenager in the house to highlight the notion that ‘change occurs every moment of every day’. The teen years are a period of intense growth and development, physically, morally and intellectually. Sometimes you may wonder if the person who went up the stairs is the same one that has come back down! That might sound a little scary at first, but remember you are already a skilled observer of development and growth; think of the changes you have seen in your child from infancy to five years and then again from six to twelve years. Now you and your child are preparing for another leap into the future.

While every teenager is an individual and while there may be variance in the time in which they enter a phase of development, there is no ‘immunity pin’ - every teen and her family will experience the developmental transitions associated with adolescence. So, yes, it can be a time of confusion, challenge and conflict, but also an opportunity to watch a wonderful young person emerge as an independent being. Despite all the negative publicity, teenagers are wonderful, often idealistic and energetic, fierce in their sense of social justice and desperate for your love and approval – whatever else they may appear to say and do!

You are an important person in their life and will continue to be so. Your opinion counts but may seem to take second place to their friends for a time. They may experiment with their looks and interests, change friendship groups and appear to distance themselves from you – for a while. This is all part of discovering who they are. One of the primary goals of the teenage years is to individuate, that is, to separate from their parents in order to form a new identity and establish new adult relationships. In their quest for independence, teenagers still need guidelines and clear expectations – ‘love with limits’.

So,

• Educate yourself about their world. Attend as many seminars as possible – those on offer at school and in venues attended by your teens.
• Talk to your teenager about everything, especially alcohol, sexuality and substance use. Let them know, these conversations are held not to embarrass them but because they are loved.
• Talk to other parents with honesty. This can ensure you have consistency in expectations about behaviour, etc.
• Choose your battles – fight every one and you lose the war!
• Have realistic expectations and practise what you preach.
• Value difference. Your teenager is not you, or living your dreams.
• Respect their privacy. Give them space.
• Keep informed about what they see and read. Try to understand their interests, without criticising.
• Increase their independence gradually. This will mean occasionally letting them fall over without rescuing them.
• Embrace the changes. A parent’s job is to
love, nurture and guide the growth of an independent person. Remember that this will inevitably mean your child will at times make choices that are different from yours.

• As we embark on the role of guide and supporter of our children through their journey into adolescence, remember the journey itself is important and filled with wonderful opportunities for your child and family to learn new things together. Embracing independence will present challenges for everyone in the family and will require persistence to move through the challenges. For teenagers, reaping the rewards of their own behaviour and actions is important but so is experiencing the consequences or repercussions, and then learning to move forward. This brochure has been designed to highlight the changes, common issues and risks that present in the teen years. If you are concerned at any time about how your child is coping with adolescence or in any of the areas discussed here, the pastoral care team will assist. They can provide you with direct help, resources or refer you to any appropriate outside professional.

Dr Celeste Merrigan
MPsych., DPsych., CCLIN
Clinical Child, Adolescent & Family Psychologist
Studying can become more stressful for students as they progress through secondary school and try to manage their studies, peer relationships, their own hopes and the real and perceived expectations of family and school. Research into the study habits, stress levels and moods of students, especially in VCE years, has confirmed that the commitment many students make to homework leaves less time for family, friends and hobbies, which results in stress. This can have a direct and indirect impact on students’ psychological wellbeing, and girls can be more affected than boys with regard to stress and mood disturbance.

We can reduce the risk to students’ psychological health by a proactive approach to normalising the emotional experience and contributing to the development of skills in order to enhance coping, resilience and overall wellbeing. It’s important to adopt a balanced approach to activities such as study, sleep, nutrition, exercise, relationships and recreation.

**Coping with stress can be assisted by:**
- Helping your daughter to identify specific stressors.
- Considering whether negative thinking is adding to stress.
- Regular exercise.
- Ensuring good nutrition and sufficient hydration.
- Aiming to get sufficient quantity and quality of sleep.
- Taking time out for her friends, family and recreation.
- Learning calming techniques to help with relaxation.
- Avoiding smoking, alcohol and caffeine.
- Setting realistic and achievable goals.
- Planning and timetabling study to assist with organisation.

**Some healthy sleep strategies include:**
- Going to bed at the same time each night.
- Getting up from bed at the same time each day.
- Undertaking regular exercise.
- Exposure to 20 minutes of early morning sun daily.
- Using bed only for sleep (not study, reading, TV, social media).
- Ensuring your room is dark and quiet and your bed and room are of a comfortable temperature to maximise your ability to fall asleep quickly.
- Avoid stimulating activities right before bed.
- Avoid going to bed too hungry or full.
- Avoid caffeine in the evening.
- Avoid napping during the day or staying in bed if you are not asleep.

**Kerri Rhodes**
School Psychologist
Despite the myriad of influences that your daughter may be exposed to, it is never too late to guide her in the right direction with regard to food, eating and how to maintain a good relationship with her body. Raising a daughter to feel confident in the body she naturally has (rather than a potentially unrealistic one she would prefer to have) is much more likely to keep her healthy both physically and emotionally in the long-term.

Dieting (restricting foods or food groups, particularly with the specific aim of weight loss or to change the shape of the body) is something that many teenage girls are tempted to try, particularly in preparation for important social occasions. Research clearly indicates that dieting can lead down a slippery slope towards having longer-term issues with eating and weight and is, in fact, one of the major precursors of both obesity and eating disorders.

I would strongly encourage you, as a parent, to lead with a good example and discourage any family members from dieting. Warning signs that your daughter may want to diet or may be dissatisfied with her body include commenting negatively about her body, or parts of her body, talking about certain foods being 'bad', a change in mood after getting dressed or looking in the mirror, comparing her body to those of others, counting calories, reading food labels, evaluating herself negatively (eg. ‘I wish I had legs like Sarah’) or becoming more controlling about food or meals at home, for example, wanting to make her own ‘healthy’ dinner rather than eat the family dinner.

Some topics you may like to discuss with your daughter are: how and why diets don’t work (and are likely to lead to weight gain); images she may see in the media (air brushing, how few women actually look like models); having a healthy body (not about size or shape but eating a variety of foods and doing regular exercise); her value as a person aside from her appearance; how to respond if her friends are engaging in unhealthy behaviours.

In summary:

- Provide a variety of healthy foods at home, including those we may regard as 'sometimes' foods. Aim not to talk about food being ‘good’ or ‘bad’, ‘right’ or ‘wrong’.
- Talk to your daughter about issues around food, eating and the way she feels about her body. Listen, and seek help if need be.
- Aim not to engage in dieting behaviours or to weigh yourself in front of your daughter.
- Discourage dieting and other associated behaviours such as weighing yourself, calorie counting or label reading. These can become obsessive and unhealthy practices.
- Engage your daughter in discussions about the value of women aside from appearance.
- Aim not to criticise or make negative comments about your own or your daughter’s appearance.

Fiona Sutherland
Accredited Practising Dietitian
Online social networking (via tools like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, etc) is a daily part of many people’s routines. It is important for parents and teachers to guide, educate and promote the positive aspects of modern communications technologies, be aware of the pitfalls and help young people to make wise decisions that promote a positive relationship with the local and global community. This is the essence of a positive cyberculture.

There are a number of well-established cyberculture guidelines that should be followed and reinforced:

• Where possible, we should encourage young people to avoid publishing online accurate personal information such as names, addresses, phone numbers, school name and image. Keep all online communication respectful. Think before you post!
• Strict guidelines should be placed on how much time young people spend socialising and gaming online.
• Where possible, computer devices should be used in family rooms such as the lounge room, a shared study or the kitchen.
• Encourage discussion between parents and young people about online activities. Openly and regularly discuss cyberbullying as a potential risk and how it can be managed.
• Keep passwords confidential.
• Be careful when allowing apps to identify your location.

• Be strict about age restrictions on sites, games and other applications.
• Set your browsers to the safest privacy settings.
• Ensure you have an active and updated firewall to deter potential hackers, as well as virus protection.

The Wellbeing site on Strathcona’s Blackboard Learning Management System provides further information on how to establish and maintain a safe and effective cyberculture.

Terri Oprean
Dean of Students
safe partying tips

Arrangements:
• Determine the safest means of distributing invitations.
• With social media, keep in mind that your privacy settings mean nothing. Invitations can be screen shot, cut and pasted easily.
• Add the following to your invitation: “Party is registered with the Police. Security present. Invitation only.” This tells the potential gate-crasher you are prepared!
• Register your party with the Police at least two weeks prior.
• YOUR HOUSE, YOUR RULES. If you are not comfortable with what’s happening, do something!
• A duty of care exists for everyone who attends, while they are there and while leaving. You are open to civil action if anyone is hurt.
• Adults supplying alcohol to minors in private homes, without parental permission, is illegal. The fine is $7,000.

Alcohol:
• Not drinking is a great option! Discuss comebacks for your daughter to use, if required, to avoid peer pressure.
• Alcohol can cause damage to the developing brain. Research recommends delaying the commencement of drinking until at least the age of 18 years.
• A standard drink is 30ml spirits, 100ml wine, 285ml heavy beer. It takes, on average, one hour to process one standard drink, longer if you are female.
• Pre-mix drinks can contain much more than one standard drink. Check the label.
• Eat before drinking. Drink at least one glass of water per standard drink. Know what your limits are. When you feel the effects, slow down or stop.
• The effects of alcohol will continue to escalate after you stop drinking for about an hour.

Parents tell children:
• If someone you know loses consciousness, call 000 immediately.
• Know the recovery position.
• Ambulance officers are not required to report underage drinking to the Police – don’t be afraid to call them.
• If your daughter has ambulance cover, encourage her to call if she needs to.
• Put the word ICE (In Case of Emergency) and the number of someone you can call in an emergency into your daughter’s phone.
• Let your daughter know you are happy to collect her at any time of night, under any circumstances. Encourage your daughter to call YOU.

Sonya Karras
Director, Australian Teenage Expo, Professional Drug & Alcohol speaker
The following sites may also be helpful:

**Tim Kitchen**
timkitchen.net/cyberculture

**Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy**
dbcde.gov.au/easyguide

**Cyber Smart**
cybersmart.gov.au

**Think U Know Aus**
thinkuknow.org.au

**Think U Know UK**
thinkuknow.co.uk

**Whole New World**
wholenewworld.com.au

**Youth Beyondblue**
youthbeyondblue.com

**Beyondblue**
beyondblue.org.au

**Headspace**
headspace.org.au

**Eating Disorders Victoria**
eatingdisorders.org.au

**The Butterfly Foundation**
thebutterflyfoundation.org.au

**Better Health Channel**

**Nutrition Australia**

**Child and Youth Health**
www.cyh.com
Main Campus: Senior/Middle School & ELC,  
34 Scott Street, Canterbury

Year 9 Campus: Tay Creggan,  
30 Yarra Street, Hawthorn

Junior Campus: Mellor House – Prep to Yr 6,  
173 Prospect Hill Road, Canterbury

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