

## FROM THE PRINCIPAL

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Dear members of the Lisieux community,

*“Teachers who have created positive teacher-student relationships...are more likely to have the above average effects on student achievement.”*

John Hattie

A recently published paper titled, *“Two studies point to the power of teacher-student relationships to boost learning”* affirmed that our approach to learning at Lisieux is based on sound research. In essence, the paper confirmed the **importance of teacher-student relationships as fundamental to learning.**

It provided data demonstrating that the move over the past decade to have teachers specialise in different subjects, for example Literacy or Maths, had no real benefit and in fact, resulted in lower academic growth scores. Significantly, the benefits of specialisation were outweighed by the fact that teachers had fewer interactions with students. The outcomes of these studies reinforced that “you can’t get to the content if the relationship and social-emotional wellbeing is not attended to first.” We could not agree more: what I certainly know from my 30+ years in education is that **relationships, a sense of belonging and inclusion are the glue that build a positive learning community and enable students to flourish.**

Children are more than the sum of their parts and while some are naturally gifted in one area, for example numeracy, they may face challenges in another area of the curriculum. In the same vein, when a teacher sees evidence and understands a particular student’s strengths (for example, creativity, perseverance or teamwork) in one setting, they can more easily encourage that strength to be put into practice in an alternative setting. Let’s say the teacher has seen evidence of the strength of creativity during narrative writing, he / she may then be able to encourage the same student to consider novel and productive ways to conceptualise Mathematics concepts because he / she knows this is a character strength of that individual.

For these reasons, we favour a more ‘traditional’ classroom structure at Lisieux, but the reasons for this are far from traditional: we want to see our students thrive in all areas, to develop their full potential. For this to happen, it requires deep understanding of each individual – not in a segmented way, but as a whole person. It requires classroom teachers to provide continuous emotional support, as well as academic support. In a saying adapted from Theodore Roosevelt, *“Students don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”*

God’s blessings for the week ahead,

Susan Ryan  
Principal  
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## SCHOOL CALENDAR

### June

- |                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| 4 <sup>th</sup>  | Lisieux Advisory Council Meeting                        |
| 7 <sup>th</sup>  | Parents & Friends Committee Meeting<br>All Welcome      |
| 11 <sup>th</sup> | Queen’s Birthday Holiday                                |
| 12 <sup>th</sup> | Staff Professional Learning Day -<br><b>No Students</b> |



## PRAYER

Dear Lord,

Thank you for the unique gifts of every member of our learning community.

Fill each student with fresh enthusiasm and a heart that is excited to grow.

As our students face each day

May confidence be their foundation,

May grace be their guide

And may hope be their compass towards a bright future.

Bless their educators with wisdom, understanding and a heart to serve.

Amen.



## GEELONG MUMS

### DONATIONS WANTED:

After hearing the amazing support Geelong Mums provide at the Mother's Day High Tea last week, we would love to support them with donations.

They are in current need of nappies (crawler, toddler, junior), wipes and kids toiletries (toothpaste, toothbrushes, soap, shampoo, bath wash etc).

We will be collecting these much needed resources until the 8th June at Lisieux Reception.

If you have any questions these can be directed to Tarryn Attard or Skye Carty. Hopefully we can make a positive impact in supporting the Geelong Mums team.

## CATCH UP

This Friday will be the parent's monthly cuppa at El Nidos, straight after drop off in the morning.

Friday June 1



## Why Gratitude Is the Best Gift We Can Give Our Children



Gratitude is about noticing and actively appreciating the good things in your life. It's a mash-up of attention and savoring—with an extra kick of action.

### A Two-fer and a Three-fer

Just noticing a good thing (“oh, there’s steak for dinner”) isn’t gratitude. Noticing and savoring (“oh, there’s steak for dinner and it smells great!”) is the next level—the “two-fer” aspect of gratitude. But the extra kick—the three-fer—comes when you add action to the equation: You [actively appreciate](#) that good thing by expressing your appreciation. In this case, it’s by saying to whomever’s cooking that steak, “Wow, thank you for making that steak. It smells great!”

Think for a moment about what really happened here. You’ve turned your attention toward a [positive focus](#) and provided yourself with the cascade of neurochemistry that good feelings bring. But by expressing gratitude, you’ve created an environment where someone else can notice that good moment, savor it, and experience that same flood of positive sensation, too. Three-fer exchanges like these give both parties a huge shot of positive feelings. It’s this social aspect of gratitude that makes it so powerful.

We can bring kids and parents into the lab, sit them in front of a computer, and do attentional training with them every day for a month. They’d dutifully press the little red button every time they saw the number combination that they’re supposed to focus on. And they’d get better and better at building their attentional muscle.

But it’s no fun. Much more fun is to start practicing gratitude. Not only are we improving attention skills and boosting our positive emotions, but also we’re spreading that improvement to others.

Gratitude can take the form of words—“thank you” being the most obvious and always effective—but you can be more elaborate in [commenting on the particular strength a person is showing](#), be it cooking skills, thoughtfulness, creativity, or any of the 118 strengths listed [here](#). Strength-Based Parenting itself is a way of raising your child in a manner that shows appreciation and gratitude for who she is and helps her appreciate the strengths in others, too.

Or your appreciation can take the form of an action: appreciating that a restaurant server has to clear hundreds of plates a day and as a family stacking up the plates on the restaurant table to help her clear them, bringing a coworker a cup of coffee because you notice he’s having a super-busy day, saying hi to the new kid at school who’s looking a bit forlorn, writing a thank-you note to an advisor for writing a college recommendation letter. These are little actions of gratitude that say, “I see and appreciate you.”

Practicing gratitude as you go about your daily life models appreciation in action for your child. Praising your child is a beautiful way to show him exactly how wonderful it feels to receive expressions of gratitude. Gratitude is other-directed: We notice something, it stirs us, and we feel compelled to communicate that sensation to another—whether to a person, a spiritual entity, or the universe. When we feel appreciation without communicating it, we might call that awe or wonder. In a paper I wrote last year with one of my PhD students, we called it gratefulness, as distinct from the social quality of gratitude.



We all want to feel noticed and appreciated. When we're truly experiencing gratitude, I feel that we are expressing our higher selves. It costs so little, but it means so much to so many.

### Gratitude Is Good for You

Learning how to direct my attention toward gratitude played an important part in my own [healing journey from anxiety](#) and depression by helping me reframe events, find and appreciate the lessons, and discover benefits I might not otherwise have discovered.

There's a bucket load of research showing the importance of gratitude for our psychological health. It's linked to a host of positive indicators such as self-discipline, emotional warmth, altruism, positive mood, self-esteem, and life satisfaction. People who practice gratitude report feeling less bitterness and depression over time (I dare you to try to feel bitter and grateful in exactly the same moment).

Alex Wood, PhD, of the University of Stirling has found that people who feel grateful just prior to sleep fall into slumber more quickly, stay asleep longer, and report better sleep quality. For my family and me, that study was life-changing.

I used to go to bed with so many things on my mind that I'd repeatedly turn on the light to write items on a to-do list that I kept next to the bed, afraid I'd forget them by the next day. Going to sleep took hours. That was the "pre-gratitude Lea."

But after reading about Dr. Wood's work, I started doing a simple exercise to change what researchers call "pre-sleep cognition"—that is, what we think about just before we fall asleep. Instead of thinking about all the things I was worried about, I swapped in a pre-sleep cognition of gratitude by thinking of the many things I'm grateful for: the hug Emily gave me that day ...the joke Nick told that made the whole family laugh ...a good conversation with Matt ...the roof over my head. Instead of "I haven't done enough," the mental message is, "Things are OK. Life's pretty good."

Aiming and sustaining my attention on things I'm grateful for calms my body and mind. Often I fall asleep in the middle of making my mental gratitude list! It feels lovely. But underneath it all, I'm changing my brain, building a new attentional pattern of noticing the good things. The more I train my brain to see the good, the easier it becomes to see my kids' strengths and my own.

For years, I've done this exercise with Nick and Emily at bedtime, inviting them to tell me some things that made them feel thankful during the day. I want them to be able cultivate this strength of gratitude because it makes them better as people, and it makes them feel better about themselves.

Gratitude also builds our relationships. Psychologists classify gratitude as a pro-social emotion: it has positive effects on you and others. It's deeply programmed into us because there was a primal evolutionary reason for it. Fear makes us flee the predator. Anger makes us fight back. Curiosity makes us search out a new food source. Love makes us bond, mate, and procreate to perpetuate the species. Why did gratitude get built into our emotional highway?

Evolutionary psychologists suggest that gratitude created a bond between individuals who weren't in the same family/genetic circle, building a stronger community by fostering cooperative behavior. Suppose you and I are hanging out on the savannah and you offer me some tasty food you've gathered. You didn't have to do that, since I'm not related to you. If I get a warm glow of gratitude and am compelled to share that with you, whether through words or actions—known as reciprocity, or returning the favor in some way—this exchange fosters positive feelings in both of us, making us likely to share resources again. The more we do that, the stronger and more effective our community becomes.

Perhaps that's why every major discipline that has studied society and humanity has mentioned the importance of gratitude. Every major religion preaches its importance, whether toward God or one another. Sociologists say we cannot function as a society without the cooperative behavior cemented by gratitude. Roman philosopher Cicero called it "the parent" of all the virtues.

### **Exercise: Gateways to Gratitude**

We can train ourselves and our children to be more grateful, and the process is as enjoyable as the results. It's simply training the brain to detect patterns—something our brains are very good at—aiming and sustaining attention on good things. It's strength-based training, too, because gratitude is a character strength. And, as I've said, showing appreciation for our child's strengths models gratitude. Here are a few ways to practice gratitude with your child:

#### **1. What Went Well (WWW)**

As I mentioned earlier, every night, when Nick and Emily are tucked into bed, just before they go to sleep, I invite them to tell me three things that made them feel thankful that day. This is referred to as the "What Went Well" (WWW) technique. It's a popular exercise in many families.

#### **2. Thankful Thursdays**

Each Thursday at our house we make time to talk about things we feel thankful for, from big items like completing assignments, winning awards, and getting support from others to everyday events like eating a meal together, having a laugh in the car, and enjoying good weather. If you're short on ideas for what to say on Thankful Thursday, the website [1000 Awesome Things](#) is really helpful for reminding you of all the small things that put a smile on your face—like finding the chocolate with the particular filling you wanted in the chocolate box. I love looking at this site for a quick emotional pick-me-up.

#### **3. Gratitude Jar/Graffiti Board**

Set out an empty jar and ask your family to put in notes about the things they feel grateful for. Once the jar is full, you can thank your family by taking them to a café for a treat and tipping out all the notes to re-read and re-live the good times. This is a great exercise in reminiscent savoring. Or try a gratitude graffiti board: a whiteboard you can place in your kitchen or family room for all family members to write or draw the things they feel grateful for. You can also do this using a corkboard and sticky notes.

#### **4. Gratitude Stickies and Letters**

Speaking of sticky notes, in my house I use them as "gratitude surprises." When I feel thankful for something that Matt, Nick, or Emily have done or simply thankful for who they are, I leave a note for them on their pillow (the stickies don't really stick to the pillows, but I bend them a bit so they'll stay—and my family has learned to be on the lookout for them). In a lovely example of the value of role modeling, Emily recently left a gratitude sticky note on my pillow thanking me for helping her bake cookies, complete with a drawing of a cookie.

A longer form of the sticky note is the gratitude letter. You can encourage your children to write a thank-you letter to someone who has made a difference in her life. It might be a relative, friend, mentor, teacher, or someone else she knows. Ask her to really think about the unique thing that person did for her and to write about that specifically. Encourage your child to personally deliver the letter and read it to the other person (or read it on the phone or over Skype if the person lives far away).

Numerous studies have confirmed the power of the gratitude letter for increasing life satisfaction and positive feelings, including with teens and younger kids. Martin Seligman did the first such study; then Jeffrey Froh, PhD, repeated it with teenagers.

For kids writing a thank-you letter, it's fine to keep it simple, specific, and heartfelt. It might start with saying thank you for whatever it was. Then with how the child felt when receiving the good thing from that person. Then something specific about why that thing was so wonderful. And ending with thank you again, with the child's signature.

### 5. Gratitude Journal

Think of a gratitude journal as an extended version of a gratitude letter, but written for your eyes only, to put your attention on the things you are grateful for in your life. Don't worry, it's not about writing copious entries or taking lots of time—in fact, just the opposite—a few words or sentences will do. And if words aren't your first choice for expression, get creative by drawing what you're grateful for.

### 6. Gratitude Walk

Go for a walk around your neighborhood with your kids and together point out the things you feel grateful for in the area where you live. The park where you picnic, jog, or play that is also home to songbirds, gardens, and beautiful trees; the stop for the bus that takes the family to work or school each day; the bakery that sells tasty cakes; the market with the friendly grocer; the lovely flowers in a neighbor's garden; your local school or church—all can trigger feelings of gratitude and thankfulness. Try this with your older children as a fifteen-minute study break to get the attention-sharpening benefits of moderate aerobic exercise and to train their brain for gratitude. I also do this with Nick and Emily when we travel so we can remember the great places we've visited on our vacations.

### 7. Acts of Gratitude

We've talked about how gratitude can be actions as well as words of thanks. Talk with your children about actions they can take to show appreciation for others. Here's a story from one parent: Jess gets energized by acts of kindness, and it is something that we value as a family. I want the kids to know that doing kindness for others gives them a big boost in their own well-being. Jess decided she wanted to use her strengths of kindness and creativity more often.

We went to the flower shop and bought flowers. Jess wrapped her flowers individually and creatively and put them in a basket. Her brothers kept the flowers in one bunch. At first they left the flowers on neighbors' doorsteps, knocked, and ran away. But the impact wasn't there. We then went around the neighborhood and knocked on doors, giving residents flowers and saying, "These are to brighten up your day." The kids got such an amazing lift from peoples' comments and reactions.

When we got home, I wanted them to write down the comments so they could savor them a little longer and really let them sink in. One of the best was, "My mother has died and I was sitting in my chair feeling so depressed—and you brought me these flowers to make me happy." Someone else said, "Just for nothing? For no money?!" Someone else said, "Thank you. Now I will go and do something kind for someone else!"

That night Jess told her friend (our neighbors) about the project. They got excited and wanted to do it. So the girls made cupcakes and delivered them to people in the neighborhood.

The kids still talk about this and the impact it had, and they want to do it again. I encourage everyday acts of kindness. Most weekends they walk to the bakery and I ask them to go in past Des, who's ninety-six years old. They ask him how he is and what cake he feels like today. Then they buy it for him and bring it to him. He tells them the same stories every time about his wife and the war, but they know it lifts his day.

*As a University researcher, Lea Waters, PhD, turns her science into strength-based strategies to help organizations, educators and parents around the world build resilience in their employees and children, helping them to thrive. Lea's keynotes and talks offer her audience a unique blend of science and practice. To find out more about working with Lea or to book Lea for your next event, please visit [ADLSpeakers.com](http://ADLSpeakers.com). To buy Lea's book, visit [StrengthSwitch.com](http://StrengthSwitch.com).*



*we make kids smile*

## GREAT FUN

- ★ Outdoor games and sports
- ★ Arts & Crafts
- ★ Playing with friends
- ★ Great Educators
- ★ Food and Cooking
- ★ Indoor Activities



### Keeping imagination alive in Primary School kids

Kids spend most of the day in classrooms learning concepts and practising skills. But if you wander past the school at lunchtime, you'll see them gallivanting through the playground kicking a ball or setting up a "shop" in the sandpit.

Kids inherently want to roam and explore using their imagination, and we are keen to strengthen this practice at OSHC.

We make it a priority to "lighten up" as much possible, giving the kids a chance to tell us what activities they'd like to see in OSHC for the next week or month, rather than our team always setting the schedule. We think this approach not only enables kids to think freely and imaginatively but it also sparks their curiosity to learn more.

Some of the other ways we encourage imagination in OSHC include:

- Avoiding screens and encouraging interaction between the kids
- Going outside to the playground to let the kids lead games
- Building spaces, like imaginary forts or cafes using the equipment in the OSHC space
- Offering a box of LEGO, without any building instructions so the kids can create whatever they fancy
- Putting out art and craft activities and supervise as the kids create whatever they like!

If you would like to see some of the activities that kids participate in at OSHC, please call into the OSHC space after school and speak to your Program Coordinator.

#### Program details

We're here to make Outside School Hours Care the best experience possible for your child.

To find out more about our program, view fees and to register visit [www.campastralia.com.au](http://www.campastralia.com.au)

We look forward to seeing you and your family soon.

From the Team at Camp Australia.