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*From the Principal's Desk...*

**IN TOUCH 07/2017**

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### **BPPS Scouts**

The Frank Cooper Sands Award is an annual accolade awarded to sectional Scouts units based on the unit's excellence. The award assessment centres on Unit administration, Unit participation, Training and Development, International participation, Unit finances and Unit Initiatives. Our BPPS Scouts have contributed actively towards several projects such as raising funds during the Job Week, collaborating with Red Cross CCA in a food donation drive for the Society to the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) society, to name a few. In recognition of their excellent performance, we are proud and pleased to announce that the BPPS Scouts unit was awarded the Frank Cooper Sands Gold Award. This is their second consecutive award in two years. Well done, Scouts!

### **Personal responsibility and safety**

To encourage a greater sense of responsibility for their personal belongings, we would like to remind students never to leave their valuables unattended. Students might be carried away with play during recess and leave their wallets unattended while they play. Students are also advised not to bring expensive items to school.

In our continuous effort to ensure the safety and well-being for all our pupils, we seek to remind our students the importance of not running anywhere outside of their designated play areas. Students are expected to always walk around the school from point to point. We raised awareness and empathy on the importance of safety by sharing with students how such actions might result in injuries.

We also seek your to help reinforce the importance of crossing the roads safely to your children. Jaywalking may cause serious injury and even death. Our children are especially vulnerable because they are smaller in physique and drivers may not be able to see them clearly. A few students have been spotted crossing the Cashew Road dangerously to get to Gate C or A. They were not using the designated road crossing. These students were accompanied by adults. Therefore we seek the understanding of all parents to educate our students and also the domestic helpers on crossing the roads safely by using only the designated road crossings.

### **Theme of the Week for Term 3**

Theme of the Week was introduced to instil the school values of Respect, Responsibility, Resilience, Integrity, Compassion and Gratitude in our students. Since building character is the work of both parents and school, do spend some time with your child to address the themes and values.

Here is the Theme of the Week for Term 3:

<b>WEEK</b>	<b>VALUE</b>	<b>THEME</b>
1	Integrity	Honour one's words and actions
2	Compassion	Understand. Don't Judge.



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3	Gratitude	Thank you for helping me!
4	Respect	Stop vandalism!
5	Responsibility	We are a family!
6	Resilience	Never Say Never
7	Compassion	Listen to Your Friends in Need
8	Integrity	Uphold Your Promise
9	Resilience	Tough times don't last; Tough people do
10	Gratitude	Never take things for granted!

**Educational Career Guidance (ECG) Day**

The school organised an ECG Day for P1 to P5 students on 23 May 2017. A total of 25 parents participated in the event and shared with the students on their occupations. Through the sharing, the students learnt a lot more about the different occupations and their educational pathway. The values of resilience, responsibility and integrity were also embedded in the sharing. Both students and teachers benefited from the parents' sharing.

We would like to thank all the parents who participated in this event and for making it a successful one!

**Racial Harmony Day**

Racial Harmony Day is an annual event held on 21 July to commemorate the communal riots of 1964 and teach students the importance of maintaining racial and religious harmony in Singapore's multicultural and multi-ethnic society.

This year's theme for Racial Harmony Day is 'Harmony Begins With Me'. The P4 students went through an Orange Ribbon Cohort Experience during CCE lessons where they will learn how to respond when they hear unkind remarks. The students also came up with a commitment tagline for Racial Harmony and wrote it on a banner that will be displayed in school.

On top of that, the P4 students were be given an orange ribbon, which is a symbol of Racial Harmony, for them to wear during Racial Harmony Week in Week 4. They are also encouraged to share with family members on what one could do if they hear unkind remarks.

Do take this time to support your child in spreading the message of standing up for harmony.

**Mathematics Competitions**

BPPS Mathematics Department has organised several Mathematics competitions in the first semester of the year. Till now, participants have taken part in the Raffles Institution's Primary Mathematics World Contest (RIPMWC) 2017, River Valley High School Mathematics Challenge (RVMC), National Mathematical Olympiad of Singapore (NMOS), SUNBURST Make-A-Thon 2017 and Mathematics Project Competition 2017. Amongst these, the SUNBURST Make-A-Thon 2017 and Mathematics Project Competition 2017 are something new for the participants.



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### **SUNBURST Make-A-Thon 2017**

The School of Science and Technology, Singapore (SST) and the Singapore Technologies Endowment Programme (STEP) organised the Sunburst Make-A-Thon 2017 from 31 May to 2 June 2017 at SST.

This event allows a large number of students to meet to engage in collaborative computer programming or/and in the making of possible prototypes to solve an issue or challenge. We sent two Primary 6 teams.

Team	Name of students	Class
A	Dayna Gan Sim Ru	6F
	Cheong Yu Yan	6F
	Kesler Kok Weng Fong	6G
	Joshua Joseph John	6G
	Arka Arun	6F
B	Tan Jun An	6G
	Ethan Chua Bing Heng	6F
	Aron Cui Hao Xuan	6F
	Song Jia Rong	6F
	Moo Sheng Yan	6F

Through this event, these students learnt how to showcase their innovative spirit and entrepreneurial mind-sets to transform ideas into feasible tangible products.

### **Mathematics Project Competition 2017**

The *Primary Mathematics Project Competition* is an out-of-class competition jointly organised by the Gifted Education Branch and the NUS High School of Mathematics and Science. This competition encourages students to carry out innovative and creative work in mathematics, and provides opportunities for students to apply the mathematics they have learnt. At Primary 4 level, our team of two students, Eunice Ang Geh Kar (Class 4A) and Caleb Tan Yee Heng (Class 4A) have represented our school to submit a poster, "Mathematics is Around Us". At Primary 5 level, our team of three students, Nicole Tan Jingwen (Class 5F), Elliott Tan Xin Yang (Class 5G) and Gerrard Ng Chen Jun (Class 5C) have designed a 'Fun with Math Stairs and Ladders' game for this year's theme "Mathematics is Fun". Their projects have been submitted on 30 June 2017 and we are now awaiting for their results.

### **Primary 3 learning journey (LJ) to jacob ballas children's garden**

The Primary 3 students were exposed to the topic on plants in Term 2. To provide experiential learning beyond the classroom, a LJ to Jacob Ballas Children's Garden was arranged for all Primary 3 classes in weeks 1 and 2 of Term 3. This LJ is also part of the P3 Project Work where the theme is 'Plants'.

During the LJ, the students embarked on a specially-designed interdisciplinary trail where the students discovered the different types of plants and their features. The learning was captured in the LJ booklet designed by BPPS teachers.

A video of the LJ will be posted on the school website upon the completion of the LJ of all the Primary 3 classes.



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### **Primary 4 sharing on subject-based banding (SBB)**

The school will be conducting a sharing on the Primary 4 Subject-Based Banding. Kindly refer to the details below:

Date : Friday 28 July 2017  
Time : 5.30 p.m. to 7.00 p.m.  
Venue : Hall

A letter has been issued to you to indicate your attendance at the above sharing.

### **Sharing**

#### **Suicide Games and Online Media: what should parents do?**

*Taken from Schoolbag.sg, Ministry of Education.*



You may have heard of the [Blue Whale game](#) and [Thirteen Reasons Why \(13RW\)](#), or them trending on your social media feed. Such content has been circulating and may negatively influence our children to view suicide as a viable way to deal with their problems, or even romanticise or glamourise the act of suicide.

Thirteen Reasons Why (13RW) is a fictional story released on Netflix surrounding the traumatic events recounted by a high school student who chose to end her life by suicide. The sinister but unverified Blue Whale game allegedly incites teenage players to carry out tasks involving self-harm in a 50-day period and culminates in a final task to commit suicide in order to win the game.

While it is difficult to verify if suicide deaths are caused by online games, such games with dark themes related to self-harm or suicide are still of concern.

Viral content about self-harm or suicide is worrying and raises important questions about media influence and the power of social media. As parents, we play a very critical protective role that can minimise the negative effects of such exposure.

1. Teach our children media literacy to discern between fake and real events
2. Help our children discern and avoid online gaming or social communities that could present risks of suicide contagion
3. Take stock of the media influences that our children are exposed to
4. Engage in conversation with our children to find out what they have been watching or playing online



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5. Encourage our children to post sensitively on social media so that they do not contribute to rumours or reports that sensationalise suicide

As we talk to our children, we need not be hyper-vigilant or transfer our anxiety to them, but instead communicate our concern for their well-being and a commitment to support them through any struggles they may be facing. Together, we can help them build their resilience to overcome challenges without resorting to suicide or maladaptive behaviour.

Here are some pointers on how to talk about issues related to anxiety, distress and suicide.

#### **1. First, know the warning signs**

When our children are going through distress, they send out warning signs through their behaviour. But are we catching the signals for help being sent out? Look out for these signs and read more about [distress signs and behaviour](#).

1. Displaying out-of character behaviour
2. Injuries that are unexplained
3. Sudden changes in appearance, interests or habits
4. Temperamental changes
5. Rebellious/ aggressive behaviour
6. Extended absence/ deliberate social withdrawal
7. Struggling to pay attention/ increased lethargy
8. Sending/ posting moody or morbid messages (including expressions of death)

#### **2. Talk about your child's thoughts and feelings**

Start with some questions to show concern for your child's well-being, such as, "I noticed that you.... Is there anything you would like to share?" or "Is there something troubling you?"

Take your child's comments seriously. Refrain from minimising what they are feeling or telling them that they should not feel negative about something. That could pose a barrier for them to open up further. Instead, be open and empathetic by showing that you are trying to understand what they are thinking and feeling. Don't judge them or their thoughts. Listen, and be caring and kind.

#### **3. Discuss what your child has seen or heard**

If your child shares that he/she has watched a movie or played a game that has themes of self-harm or suicide, discuss his/her thoughts and feelings. Share that while people may identify with the characters in a movie or story, there are many healthy ways to cope with the issues faced and acting on suicidal thoughts is not one of them. Most people who have distressful experiences will reach out to someone, talk to others, and seek help. They can also find other positive ways of coping such as exercising, finding ways to de-stress and doing breathing exercises.

[If your child has watched 13RW in particular, check out these points](#) you could use as you talk with your child.



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**4. Don't be afraid to ask your child a direct question about suicide**

Contrary to what we may think, asking them such questions does not put the idea in their head but invites them to share what they are feeling without stigma or shame. Direct questions could include, "Are you having thoughts about killing yourself?" or "Do you wish you could end your life?"

If you suspect your child is in danger, get help immediately from SOS 1800 221 4444 or speak to your child's School Counsellor. Ensure your child's physical safety and explain that you cannot keep the secret but need to break confidentiality to get the help that they need. Remind them that the thoughts of suicide are just thoughts and that they need not act on them. The impulse to do so may pass after a while.

**5. Use the S.P.A.C.E tips**

The [S.P.A.C.E tips](#) can guide your conversation and foster resilience in the longer term.

**Giving Our Children S.P.A.C.E. to Build RESILIENCE**

- S Support**
  - Be willing to listen
  - Provide positive feedback and support
- P Problem Solve**
  - Reflect on problems, issues and setbacks together
  - Guide them to develop alternate plans
- A Affirm**
  - Be specific with praise
  - Acknowledge strengths and efforts
- C Cheer**
  - Spur them on for renewed efforts
  - Celebrate all successes, even small ones
  - Share inspirational stories of resilience
- E Empower**
  - Provide them with opportunities to take risks and experience challenges
  - Allow them to voice their ideas and make decisions
  - Let them take responsibility for their plans and actions

**Building S.P.A.C.E. into our Conversations**

More of this...	Less of this...
<b>S</b> upport (acknowledge) "Tell me more..." "Your thoughts matter"	not discount "There is no reason for you to feel this way"
<b>P</b> roblem solve (with) "What have you done before that worked?" "Let's think of what we can learn from this..."	not for "This is how you should do it." "I told you before, why didn't you listen to me?"
<b>A</b> ffirm (specific) "Good effort! How did you do it?" "I see you are good at..."	not general "Good job!" "You are so smart!"
<b>C</b> heer (inspire hope) "Thanks for... it really made a big difference."	not fear "If you don't... you won't get..."
<b>E</b> mpower (build up) "We can try your suggestion." "How would you like me to support you?"	not take over "It'll be faster if you do it my way." "Let me do it for you."

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**6. Encourage a healthy lifestyle and a wide range of coping strategies**

Encourage your child to develop a sleeping routine to help them get a good night's sleep. For example, waking up and getting to bed at the same time, avoiding caffeine during lunchtime and shutting down electronics before bedtime.

Physical activities can help relieve stress and provide a good distraction from worries. Find a physical activity to carry out together with your child if your child is struggling to get active, or play sports with friends. Eating well can also help with sleep and general health and wellbeing. A well-balanced diet helps the body and brain to function well.

Other coping strategies include talking with people they trust, keeping a journal, drawing and expressing themselves through art, practising relaxation and deep breathing. It is helpful to build up a toolbox of a variety of coping strategies.

**7. Encourage your child to be a positive influence**

You can also encourage your child to be a voice of hope and positive influence for his/her peers. Your child can play his/her part to look out for warning signs if a peer is distressed or at risk of suicide. Encourage your child to refer the friend immediately to a trusted adult for help.

Thank you

Bucktha Seelan  
Principal

Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence –  
*Helen Keller*