



### This week's stories from the media

- If 10 kids have covid the whole class can go home
- Phonics fuels big hopes for SA's NAPLAN results
- Children's savings accounts have tricks and traps
- Childcare gap holding back regional growth
- Parents should have more information
- Earth Hour 2022
- Dangerous TikTok trends

#### Phonics Big NAPLAN Hope

A focus on phonics teaching is being hailed as a driver of year 3 literacy improvements – but next year schools can expect even stronger gains, the state's outgoing Education Minister says.

John Gardner said phonics tests in year 1 – and an increased emphasis on teaching the skill in primary schools – was helping drive up students' NAPLAN results in their first year of sitting the test.

But he said next year, when the first students to receive the Year 1 screening hit year 5, the state could expect even bigger improvements.

Phonics, which the Education Department says is “the relationship between letters and sounds” involves “decoding words”, or breaking them down into smaller elements.

The test helps teachers identify which children may need extra help to develop their reading skills.

[Read](#)

#### If 10 Kids Have Covid The Whole Class Can Go Home

**The Education Department says if there are five cases of the coronavirus in a classroom, every student would be required to get a PCR test.**

If an additional 5 tested positive, the whole class would be sent home for several days.

Education Department chief executive, Rick Persse said he would prioritise the safety of staff or students and would not rule out closing a whole school where needed.

The department's latest data showed on Tuesday, 482 staff members were absent due to Covid-19 infections or isolation requirements, and 258 school services officers.

About 3.4% of students were absent due to Covid-19.

Chief public health officer Professor Nicola Spurrier said as Covid continued to surge in schools, the importance for students to be vaccinated has never been higher.

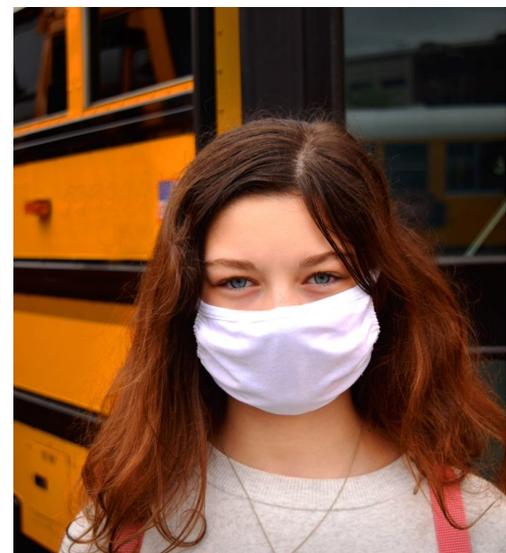
She said about 57% of students have received at least one dose, and called for “a huge area of improvement”.

Students need two doses to be fully vaccinated, and do not need boosters at this stage, Prof Spurrier said.

Mr Persse told ABC radio there was “the possibility of having student free days towards the end of the term”.

However, he said the department must balance children's learning needs with safety and staff's ability to deliver educational programs.

[More](#)



**“...About 3.4% of students were absent due to Covid-19...”**

### Children's Savings Accounts Have Tricks And Traps

Parents are being urged to check their children's bank accounts as low rates and tricky conditions could be costing them cash.

Children's savings accounts are a good way to teach them about money, but traps and tricks can be buried in the fine print.

RateCity.com.au says there are more than 50 banks with tailored savings accounts for children, and has tested the sector to find that high interest rates don't always deliver the best long-term returns.

This is because of barriers including caps on overall balances, penalties for withdrawing money, minimum monthly deposit rules and different age limits – some as young as 12.

“A lot of kids' savers offer bonus interest, but only if you meet the bank's strict terms and conditions, and one of the most common is no withdrawals,” RateCity research director Sally Tindall says.

[More](#)

### Childcare Gap Holding Back Regional Growth

Some kids are out on the farm working with their parents because there's a lack of childcare – and locals say it's holding back growth.

A serious shortfall of childcare and after-school-care services must be fixed to help parents get back to work and businesses plug gaps in their workforce, regional groups say.

They are also worried the shortage is hampering children's ability to socialise and meet their development potential – and stopping towns from attracting new residents.

Among the towns fighting for funding for childcare and after-school-hours centres are Parndana, Kingston SE and Crystal Brook.

[More](#)

*If you want your children to be intelligent, read them fairy tales....*

*Albert Einstein*

### Parents Should Have More Information

NSW's private school sectors want the government to publish more information about HSC results, saying the present system leaves parents in the dark.

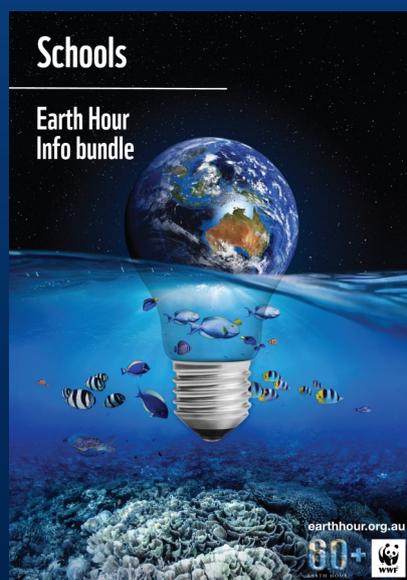
Minister, Sarah Mitchell, said she would ask education authorities to look at different approaches, “with a view to increasing visibility on school performance balanced with careful consideration about student privacy and fair reporting”.

Currently, authorities only release the names and schools of students who achieve in the top band of their subject; most are in selective or high-fee schools.

Laws only allow media outlets to identify the top 10% of schools.

[Full Story](#)

### Earth Hour Schools Day March 25



### Dangerous TikTok Trends

TikTok trends: Experts warn of dangerous trends you don't want your kids to do.

This week, an Adelaide mother told how her son ended up in hospital with a concussion after attempting the “thumb blowing” challenge, reportedly popular with school kids in which they film themselves hyperventilating and passing out.

Kids – and adults – have dared each other to pour salt in their hands and hold ice until it burns, cover their faces in hot wax, yank their hair quickly to make a “popping” sound from their scalp and drink an excessive amount of antihistamine, Benadryl.

Others involve fire and alcohol or other flammable liquid.

[Read more](#)