



This week's stories from the media

- Masks in schools
- Covid still affecting Aussie students
- Union concerned by lack of detail in Labor's school policy
- Smartphone addiction surging in young kids
- I just go to school with no food
- Federal election

Covid Still Affecting Students

Covid is still impacting Australian kids, with over a third of parents feeling their child's academic performance and mental wellbeing has suffered according to a new report.

The Real Education Report 2022, contains the thoughts of over 5000 parents, revealed some alarming trends.

62% of parents felt remote learning has not been effective for their children, with a further 61% saying they have fallen behind as a result.

Over three-quarters of parents were keen to see their kids back in the classroom, after being worried about their kids missing social interactions at school (90%), losing their confidence (55%) and feeling more anxious or stressed (54%).

"The hangover of lockdown learning remains and is evident in gaps in academic progress, missed opportunity to navigate social development stages and the ongoing adaptation to new friendships, routines and rules."

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Masks In Schools

Latest Covid wave appears to have peaked, Grant Stevens says, as masks in schools come under discussion.

The "horse has bolted" to protect children from Covid-19 with masks, experts say, as the state's coronavirus chief raised new hopes South Australia is through the peak of the latest Omicron wave.

The Emergency Management Council on Tuesday heard the latest health advice and fluctuating case data before discussing scrapping emergency laws and planning for new waves.

While authorities also had a "brief discussion" about easing school mask rules, it will be top of the council's agenda next week before a decision is made for term 2.

Experts said there was mounting evidence that masks in schools are pointless.

UniSA epidemiologist Professor Adrian Esterman, said the "horse has bolted" for masks helping students given the high number of infections in children and teenagers.

"I just think, looking on balance what's happening, I just wonder if it is doing any good now," he said.

Almost 50,000 children younger than nine have contracted Covid in the pandemic – almost 20,000 of them in the past month.

Nearly 62,500 sick pre-teens or teenagers, aged 10-19 had the virus.

SA Health said nearly a quarter of the state's 29,079 infectious patients are younger than 18 after more than 2000 recovered since Friday.

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“...Experts said there was mounting evidence that masks in schools are pointless....”

Union ‘Concerned’: Lack Of Detail In Labor’s Funding Policy

The teacher’s union has criticised Labor’s education policy for a “concerning” lack of detail about when public schools will get extra funding.

Teacher’s union president, Correna Haythorpe, welcomed the policy to put public schools on a “pathway” to full funding but said the lack of a timeline “is of concern to us”.

Before the 2019 election Labor promised \$14bn over 10 years for public education, but the policy was dropped after it was identified in Labor’s election review as one of the expensive items that required the opposition to propose more revenue raising measures.

Last week, the shadow education minister, Tanya Plibersek, said Labor had not recommitted to that spending because the current school funding agreements run to the end of 2023 and need to be renegotiated with the states.

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Smartphone Addiction Surging In Young Kids

An alarming study has prompted experts to warn parents to take action now or risk their kids developing a “smartphone addiction” and severe sleep issues.

More than a quarter of children aged eight to 11 and the vast majority of older kids are on their phones after 10pm.

The alarming findings from a study of 250,000 Aussie kids aged eight to 18 have prompted researchers to warn of a growing risk of “smartphone addiction” and severe sleep issues, calling on parents to set stronger boundaries.

The study found 28% of eight to 11-year-olds, 57 per cent of children aged 12 to 14 and 80% of those 15 and over send messages or receive calls between 10pm and 6am at least once a week.

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I Just Go To School With No Food

One in six children in Australia live in poverty. They have poorer educational outcomes than more advantaged children.

Recent research shows students who live in poverty also experience more social exclusion at school.

Teachers make great efforts to support the education of disadvantaged students. Despite these efforts, children living in poverty have lower school completion rates and lower scores on NAPLAN.

And our study shows the effects of poverty still permeate school classrooms and playgrounds.

[Full Story](#)

Earth Day - Friday April 22



Federal Election

With the election underway, some believe education has been left on the backburner.

The coalition committed \$228.5 million to “improve the education outcomes of school students”, with an emphasis on regional and rural areas as well as Indigenous programs.

It also pledged \$19.4 million for new childcare services in disadvantaged regional areas.

Labor allocated \$440 million to education with the aim of putting “every school on a path to its full and fair level of funding”.

It will put the emphasis on student and teacher wellbeing and infrastructure, with new grants for building upgrades and better classroom ventilation in response to the ongoing Covid-19 crisis.

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