

EDITORIAL

Read the nation's school newsletters and it's clear that principals were, not surprisingly, stunned by the news of the fatal stabbing of 12-year-old Elliott Fletcher, allegedly by a 13-year-old fellow student, at St Patrick's College in Brisbane's bayside suburb of Shorncliffe. In letters to the St Patrick's school community prior to the 12-year old's funeral Mass at the school in February, St Patrick's College Principal Dr Michael Carroll wrote that he was 'conscious of the extreme stress the events of this week have placed upon our entire community,' describing them as 'circumstances that none of us would ever have wanted to imagine.' In a letter issued on the day of the incident, Dr Carroll also wrote, 'While I am unable to inform you of the details of the incident, I can confirm that it did involve another student from the college, and that other student is now assisting police with their inquiries.' As the nation's school newsletters suggest, it's likely that many, many principals across Australia took a very deep breath, and probably several minutes for some quiet thinking. There are many things to think about: the death of one of your students; the effect on your school community of such a thing, especially when it happens on campus; and, of course, 'that other student' and all that follows from that. Principals and their leadership teams have no doubt been revisiting their policies and programs on student wellbeing, life skills, bullying and cyberbullying, conflict resolution, buddy systems and other programs to build positive relationships. Many will be examining statistics that appear to show an increasing number of children and teenagers now carry knives or bladed weapons. Then, of course, there are all the what-ifs that we would all think about, and the grief. **T**

FAST FACTS

- Number of internet users in 2009: 1.6 billion.
- Number of players registered to play the massively multiplayer online game, *World of Warcraft*: 11.5 million.
- Population growth of mobile phone users from 1990 to 2007: 11.1 million to 3.2 billion.
- Population growth of internet users from 1990 to 2007: 2.6 million to 1.2 billion.
- Percentage of students aged five to 14 who were computer users in 2006: 92 per cent – 90 per cent at school; 89 per cent at home; 37 per cent at a friend's place; and 12 per cent at a public library.
- Percentage of students aged 14 to 16 who were daily internet users in 2008: 77 per cent.
- Percentage of students aged 14 to 16 who owned a mobile phone in 2006: 96 per cent.
- Predicted number of computers in Australian schools by 2012: one million.


Source: Moyle, K. (2010). *Building Innovation: Learning with technologies*. Australian Education Review 56. Melbourne: ACER.

QUICK QUIZ

1. Why might grammar tragiics complain about our March story, 'Ping: The Web 2.0 future of education?'?
2. Can you resolve conflicts after one difficult conversation?
3. What is the Teacher Earth Science Education Program?
4. Is award-winning teacher Len Altman seeking sponsorship support for the program?
5. What is cloud computing?
6. Townsville's Hermit Park State Primary School and Melbourne's Silverton PS and Dallas PS are three of how many Microsoft Innovative Pathfinder or Mentor Schools worldwide?
7. Are schools legally bound to involve the police if there's a drug-related incident?
8. Is the 'Two easy rules to a ripped body' internet ad a scam?
9. Would Jon Stark be sweating if he were in his class in Haimen in Jiangu province, China, right now?
10. Is the *Bible* appropriate reading material for Year 3?

Answers: 1. It should refer to the cello, since it's an abbreviation of 'violoncello'; 2. according to education consultant Debra Ferguson, no, but she does say it's worth the effort; 3. a professional development network of the Australian Science Teachers Association; 4. visit www.research.org.au to help; 5. internet-based, or 'cloud'-based, rather than local personal computer applications; 6. 42; 7. Commonwealth policy guidelines encourage a case-by-case assessment, so schools have 'considerable discretion'; 8. um, yes, apparently; 9. no, it's a cool 10 degrees; 10. it is at Madison Park Elementary School in New Jersey in the United States.

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