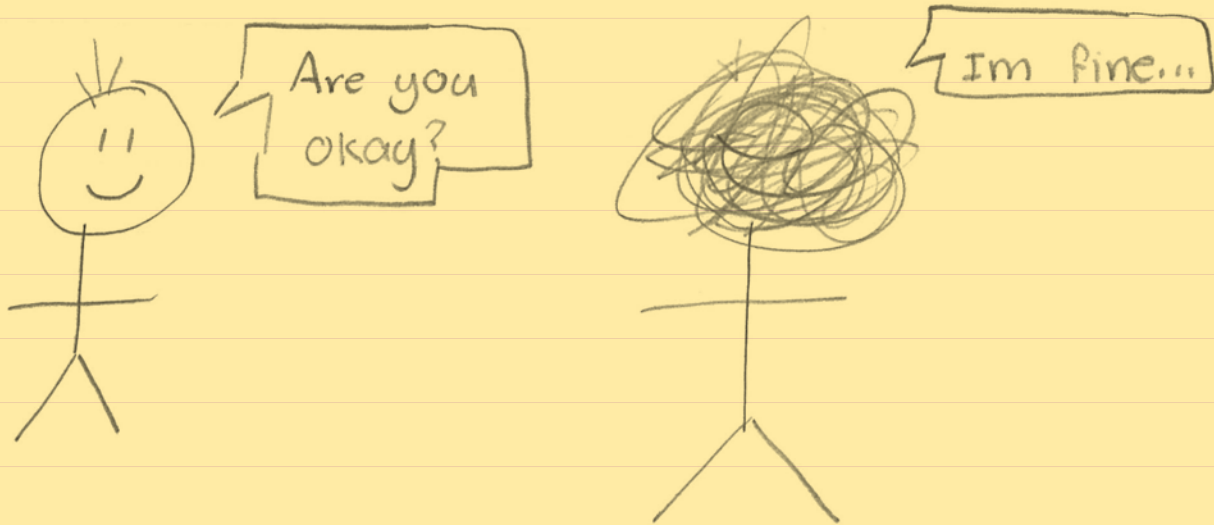


# Missing Voices

Mental health challenges as described by primary school children



**This booklet draws on responses from students aged 8–12 years who participated in my annual Student Voice Postcards initiative via their school.**

Answers and drawings are unedited and are in response to open-ended questions about their lives. This booklet is representative of the hundreds of responses that reflect the mental health concerns, worries and challenges of children.

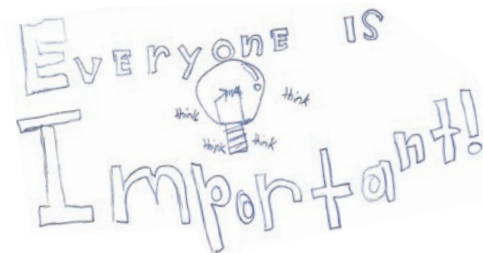
Since commencing this initiative in 2019, I have received almost 50,000 postcards from South Australian students aged 8–12 years, across Government, Catholic, and Independent primary schools.

These postcards have enabled me to better understand what children are doing, what matters to them, and what concerns they have.

The postcards are just one way to ensure South Australia is meeting its obligations under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, specifically in relation to providing children with opportunities to express their views on all matters affecting them (Article 12).

For further information on what worries children see the Snapshot *What Worries SA Children Most...* report available at [ccyp.com.au/guides-and-fact-sheets/](http://ccyp.com.au/guides-and-fact-sheets/)

For further information on the Student Voice Postcards initiative visit [commissionerspostcards.com.au](http://commissionerspostcards.com.au)



# What worries kids?



my school work.

I find it hard to keep up and  
get work done on time.

I feel a lot of pressure

I worry I'm not good  
enough.

- 11 year old girl

being unconfident and my appearance  
because being a tween girl is hard.

It's a time where you feel like  
you don't love yourself. – 12 year old girl

Getting bad Anxiety

– 10 year old boy

what people think about me  
not being enough.

Trying to be me without  
being judged

- 10 year old girl

My depression, my health, my  
mental health, my social anxiety, my ~~friendship~~, my  
mental breakdowns and panic attacks

- 11 year old non-binary

Im all ways sold

- 12 year old boy

Being lonely and having no friends.

- 10 year old boy

Being lonely and afraid of so many things.

I not good enough

- 11 year old girl



things I shouldn't be worrying about  
because I overthink and just  
treating and self-talking to myself badly.

– 11 year old girl

Not feeling okay to talk to my  
mum/dad because im worried  
they will not understand  
and take it out on me.

- 12 year old girl

Not finishing something of school and  
getting in trouble, teachers make it  
seem like a big deal  
to make you do it  
but it's just more stress

- 11 year old boy

being a failure, Schoolwork,  
not being enough and the  
sad things in the world.

- 10 year old girl

Overloaded School work in high school and  
Scared that i don't have a high iq

- 12 year old boy

Being bullied about my weight  
or my ~~height~~ height

- 12 year old girl

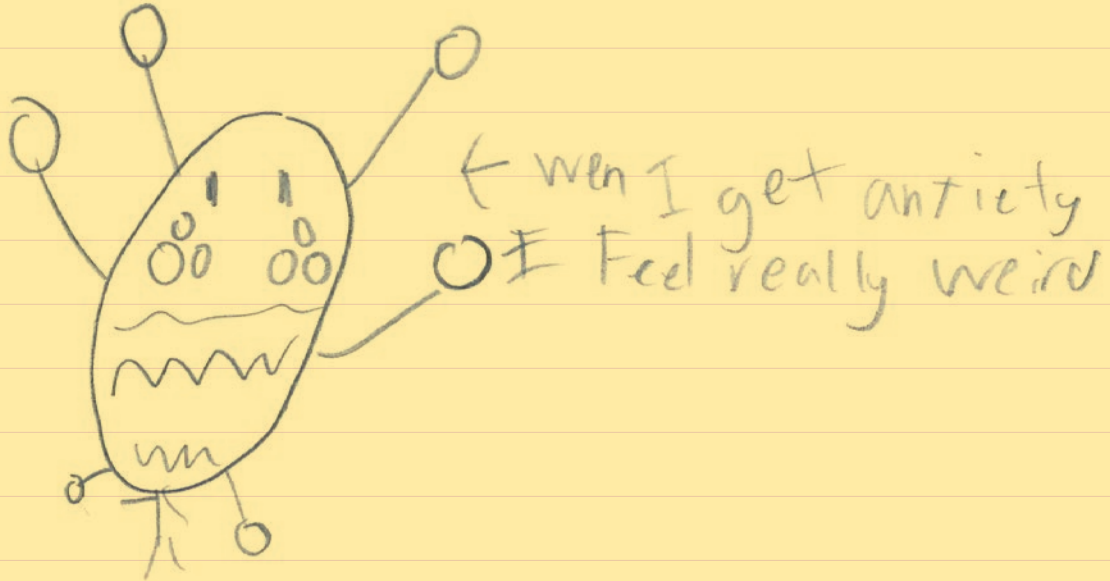
If I don't do well in school, =  
I'll end up homeless and die and  
my whole life would have no meaning

- 12 year old boy

I worry about Failing in life,  
getting stressed because I have  
responsibility's taking part in  
new thing and meeting new people

- 11 year old girl

# What kids want grownups to know



that I have anxiety and social anxiety  
so I am shy a lot of times.

- 12 year old girl

I get sad really easily.

- 10 year old boy



that sometimes when,  
specifically a girl,  
says "i'm fine", it typically  
means they're not. :-)

- 12 year old girl

Children hide the state  
of their mental health

So please Be aware.

Instead of yelling

teach US notharmus

- 11 year old boy

you should talk to kids  
about their mental health

- 11 year old girl

I have social anxiety and sometimes I can't  
do stuff in case I have an anxiety attack

- 10 year old girl

work n life gets  
annoying, lonely and hard.

- 10 year old girl

There is more to solving an issue than saying  
"Don't worry about it."

- 11 year old girl

that I have depression, that I  
struggle to pay attention  
that I have panic attacks  
and social anxiety

- 11 year old non-binary

I get sick when I worry

- 9 year old boy

That I have bad and sad thoughts  
most of the time and I feel bad.

- 10 year old boy

That when I say im okay im usually not  
I just dont want to talk to them.

- 12 year old girl

that I and kids overthink a lot  
and people has been insecure from  
people bullying or bodyshaming them.

- 11 year old girl

There is lots of stress and  
I play games to relieve it but  
but it's still here. I hope it  
to make my self feel better

but it's still  
here

- 11 year old boy

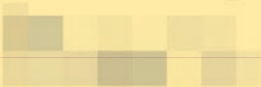


I want grown ups to know I'm  
scared of the future of what might  
happen and telling the truth. - 12 year old boy

that i get bulied  
and that i hate my life  
and basicly everyone  
in it

- 10 year old girl

That not all kids are perfect and need  
to not push them over the top  
of what they can do. – 11 year old girl

Im not all ADHD and am  
Still  – 10 year old boy

that all kids aren't the same and  
need help in different areas.

take it easy on kids! - 11 year old girl

that sometimes kids/~~children~~ have  
really bad ~~anity~~<sup>anxiety</sup> ~~anxiety~~ and need  
more help then just hugs  
and kisses

- 11 year old girl

that I haven't had the best life and  
I have O.C.D and I ~~don't~~ hate  
germs because of it - 11 year old boy

that as much as they think they ~~are~~  
understand us, chances are they don't.

- 12 year old girl

I have very bad anxiety  
and anger ~~issues~~ issues. ~~sp~~

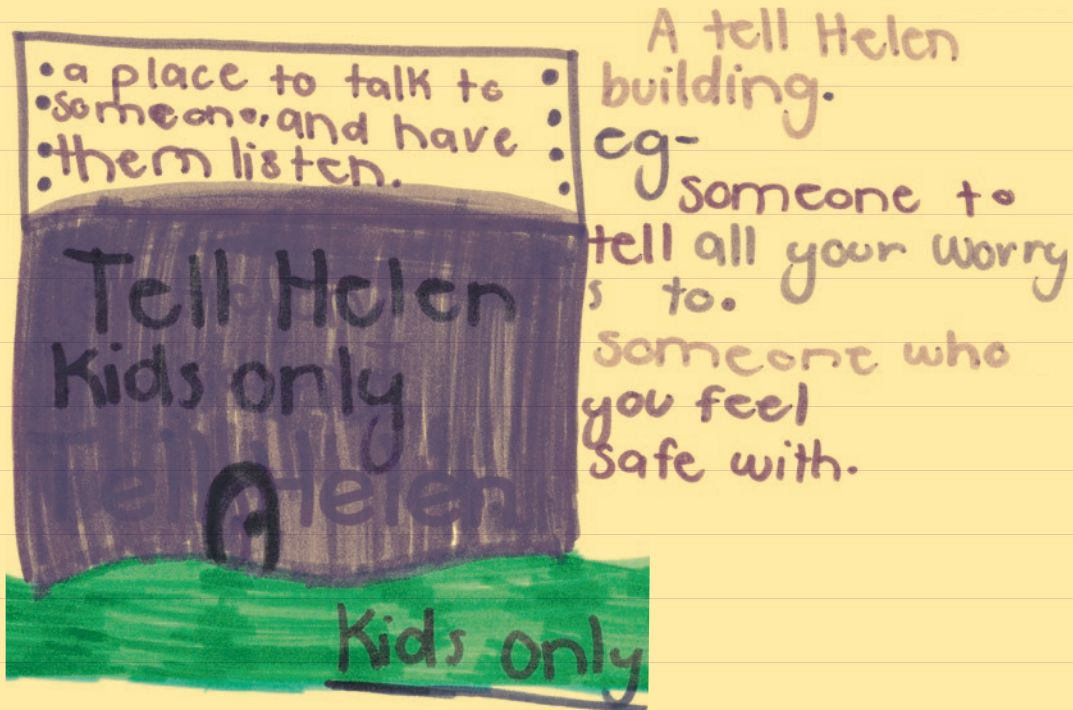
- 12 year old girl

that im not ok and I'm  
strugiling to go on but im  
pushing thraw for my  
family and futcher

- 12 year old girl



# What could make things better?



people left me alone, and I  
didn't have to be the best.

- 10 year old girl

there was no pollution,  
no homelessness or self harm  
surrounding us.

- 12 year old girl

If people were nice to me would  
I not get bullied from being skinny.

If they knew what I  
going through.

- 12 year old boy

the internet would stop making  
people that are a bit overweight  
feel insecure and have to  
be skinny to be beautiful

- 11 year old girl

Someone was always there  
for you and you felt safe  
most of the time.

- 11 year old girl

we got more free time for mental health

- 11 year old boy

If grown ups could  
listen to what kids  
actually had to say.

- 11 year old girl



← fake a smile



← Not allowed to  
scream it all  
out



Help fix  
Mental help

Draw a picture for Helen here when you're done.

Kids matter!  
We can be trusted!



DONT PUSH  
KIDS TO  
GROW UP  
TOO FAST.  
KIDS ARE  
KIDS

children have  
feelings too!

