



## ***The Midnight Gang Teacher Resource***

**CDP Producers**

A Teacher Resource Kit for children 6-12 years

*The Midnight Gang* Teacher Resource Kit accompanies CDP Kids joyful and inspirational performance of *The Midnight Gang*. *The Midnight Gang* is a world premiere stage adaptation of the 2016 children's novel by popular UK author David Walliams. In this world premiere Australian adaptation, Twelve year old Tom unexpectedly finds himself lonely and lost in St Crook's Hospital and at the mercy of evil Matron. Tom feels like he'll never leave, but his fellow young patients have other ideas...

Produced by **CDP Theatre Producers**

Playwright: Maryam Master

Director: Susanna Dowling

Designer: Isla Shaw

Lighting Designer: Matthew Marshall

Sound Designer: James Brown

Cast (in alphabetical order): Alex Beauman, Lucy Heffernan, Kyle Kaczmarczyk, Emma Kew, Nicholas Starte

### ***CDP Theatre Producers***

CDP, the team that brought you the Australian productions of *The Gruffalo*, *The Gruffalo's Child*, *Room on the Broom*, *The Incredible Book Eating Boy*, *the Treehouse series*, *Snugglepup and Cuddlepup*, *Horrible Harriet*, *Mr Stink* and *Billionaire Boy* is an award winning independent theatre production house specialising in boutique theatre of the highest quality. CDP has an unsurpassed track record for presenting high quality works that tour widely throughout Australia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Mainland China, the Middle East, Europe and the USA.

### ***Content Advice / Sensitive Themes***

*The Midnight Gang* book and production examine the experiences of children living with illness, in particular Sally who lives with a life threatening illness. She is often in isolation, is undergoing intensive treatment, has lived in hospital for a long period, and has lost her hair. These themes may impact on students, families, teachers and other audience members when reading or viewing *The Midnight Gang*.

## Introducing *The Midnight Gang*

*The Midnight Gang* was first published in 2016 and is David Walliam's tenth novel for children. It is illustrated by Tony Ross. This touching and often hilarious story explores themes of friendship, love, hope and dreams, the power of imagination, ingenuity and working together to overcome adversity.

The book has been adapted for the stage by the playwright Maryam Masters. *The Midnight Gang* production presents the touching and hilarious story that follows in this synopsis

Tom is rushed to hospital from his boarding school with a bump on his head from a cricket ball. Tom is admitted to the children's ward by a friendly porter with a gruesome appearance and a very new overkeen doctor. Tom tells the doctor and Porter that his parents don't care about him at all, and have packed him off to boarding school. He meets fellow patients Amber, Sally and George and is interrogated by the villainous matron who hates children. As night falls and the children are sent to bed Tom discovers that Amber and George have other plans. They have drugged Matron and set off out of the ward. After promising Sally, so unwell that she lives in an isolation cube, to share what happens he chases after the children as they head off on their adventure. He stumbles upon them, and they eventually agree to let him be a trial member of the Midnight Gang, a secret group that has been running for 50 years with the goal of making the children in the hospital happy by making their dreams come true. They swear him to secrecy and then set off to make Amber's dream of visiting the North Pole come true. Assisted by Porter and a lot of ingenuity and imagination the Midnight Gang have created a fantastical North Pole Adventure in the hospital freezer. Upon their return Tom refuses to share their night's adventure with Sally, claiming that he didn't make any promises to her at all. In the morning Matron awakes and airs her suspicions that the children are up to no good. Tom, due to go home, feigns a terrible fever and tricks Matron into letting him stay. The children move onto planning the next adventure. George wants to fly. The next evening is spent collected balloons from all over the hospital. Just as George is about to realise his dream his balloons are taken by an old lady named Nelly who celebrates a birthday everyday of the week. The tiny lady is lifted into the air, and despite all the efforts of the Midnight Gang, flies out of the window into the night. They desperately chase her in the hospital ambulance and eventually she falls to safety on top of Tom. There is no chance of keeping this adventure a secret. Sir Quentin the hospital boss is summoned to the ward, and tells Porter that he is dismissed. The children are devastated but, led by Tom, decide to make one last dream come true. To add to their troubles, Tom's headmaster is on his way to take Tom back to school. Tom races to hide in the hospital, and jumps down the laundry chute, stumbling on Porter's home in the hospital laundry. He learns that Porter was the original founder of the Midnight Gang, and convinces him to help make Sally's dream come true before he leaves. They present Sally with her dream of a Big Beautiful Life, creating life's big moments from becoming a teenager through to professional success, saving the world and having a family. Unbeknownst to them, Sir Quentin witnesses the end of the performance, and is moved to promote Porter to a new role of Doctor of Fun and send Matron to clean the toilets. As the story closes, Tom's parents arrive. They have been desperately trying to find him, but couldn't get any news from the hospital or school. Sally has rung them and made Tom's dream come true. Tom leaves the hospital happy to be reunited with his parents.

## Meet the Author

David Walliams was born on August 20, 1971 in Surrey, England as David Edward Williams. He is an acclaimed actor and writer, known for the incredibly successful *Little Britain* (2003), *Britain's Got Talent* (2007) and *Stardust* (2007). He published his first novel for children, *The Boy in the Dress*, in 2008. His popularity as a children's author has grown astronomically. His sixteen children's novels and seven children's picture books have achieved critical acclaim, and he is regularly compared to legendary author Roald Dahl. His 2013 publication *Demon Dentist* went immediately to number one in the bookseller charts. *Mr Stink*, *Gangsta Granny*, *the Boy in the Dress* and *Billionaire Boy* have been adapted for television.

Walliams has also achieved success as a dramatic actor for both television and live theatre. He is well known for his charity work. In 2011 he swam the length of the River Thames, raising more than £2 million for charity.



## *Bringing The Midnight Gang to the stage - The Workshop Process.*

CDP have commissioned the world premiere stage adaptation of *The Midnight Gang*. The process of bringing a children's novel to stage is a complex and extended creative process.

The creative process for *The Midnight Gang* has been as follows

- In 2016 the CDP team read and fell in love with David Walliams' "The Midnight Gang" and discussed adapting it for the stage with playwright Maryam Master.
- CDP obtained the rights to adapt the book for the stage from David Walliams's agent.
- A director, Susanna Dowling was appointed. She worked with the producers at CDP to appoint the other creatives including set and costume designers, composer, lyric writers, sound designer and a lighting designer.
- The playwright wrote a first draft of the script, and sent it to David Walliams who offered feedback.
- The director and producer worked with the playwright to make changes, and a new draft was written.
- The creative team and a cast of five actors came together for a week of creative development, where the team explored the story and characters, and experimented with different ideas about how the play could be brought to life on stage.
- The team showed their work to industry colleagues, who offered their feedback and suggestions.
- The playwright wrote a final draft in consultation with the director and producer.
- The designers created final plans for the show.
- Sets and costumes were built and made, and a soundtrack and lighting plans created.
- The show rehearsed for 3 weeks in preparation for the opening at the Joan Sutherland Performing Arts Centre in Penrith.

# Live Performance -The Ultimate Teaching and Learning Opportunity

Attending a live performance is a rich and engaging learning opportunity. Prepare children through explicit teaching to make the most of their theatre experience.

- Talk about and practice being an audience member. Audience members sit and listen quietly for most of the time. They join in the action when invited, and clap and cheer to show their appreciation. They allow fellow audience members to watch the show without interruptions.
- Talk about and roleplay theatre conventions. What is a theatre? What are actors? What are characters? What are costumes? What is a stage? What are props? What is a set? What is a script? Is theatre 'real'? How can movement tell a story? How words, movement, and sound effects tell a story?
- *The Midnight Gang* is performed by a team of five actors. A strong character acting, stage effects, a beautifully-designed set, and stage effects help to bring the story to life. Discuss and explore storytelling. Use simple costume items to help build a character. Consider how to use costuming, props and effects to make the impossible possible.
- Familiarise children with the work of David Walliams in the lead up to the performance. There are many suggestions for how to use the novel *The Midnight Gang* as a learning resource in the following pages.

## Links to Curriculum

A wide range of learning activities from all curriculum areas are described in this resource. Links to the Australian Curriculum v8.2, Victorian Curriculum and NSW Board of Studies Syllabi for activities in these learning areas appear at the end of each section.

See *The Australian Curriculum Online* for further details [www.australiancurriculum.edu.au](http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au).

See Victorian Curriculum for further details [www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/foundation10/f10index.aspx](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/foundation10/f10index.aspx)

See NSW Board of Studies Syllabi at [www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/k-6/](http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/k-6/)

## Suggested Age Guidelines

*The Midnight Gang* is suitable for children ages 6-12 years. A suggested age range appears next to each of the teaching ideas, for example

- Examine different illustrations of each of the characters. Record and share what you learn about the characters from each of the illustrations. 7-12 years

# Teaching and Learning Activities - Learning About and Through the Arts.

Attending a live performance can be a stimulus for a huge range of rich learning experiences. Not only can you plan for learning **about** the arts, but for whole of curriculum learning **through** the arts.

## Literacy and the Arts

*The Midnight Gang* can be the impetus for a range of literacy and arts experiences, before, during and following the performance. Use this list below as a jumping off point for planning learning around the text and the performance in your setting.

**Explore the characters in depth.** Walliams creates wonderful caricatures of archetypal characters that draw the reader into the story of *The Midnight Gang*. Walliams' use of dialogue, interactions between characters, Tom's thoughts and Tony Ross' engaging illustrations introduce us to a quirky and captivating group of individuals. The actors bring these storytelling archetypes to life – the lonely and very curious boy shipped away to boarding school by seemingly indifferent parents, the golden hearted but terribly deformed porter who brings joy to all the patients, the desperately ill child locked away in isolation, the terrifyingly cruel matron bullying her charges with terrible rules and nasty threats, the hilarious duo of the wheelchair bound bossy girl with great ambitions and her delightfully helpful blind friend acting as her legs and arms, the unbelievably anxious and incompetent new doctor desperately trying to make it through his first day on the job, the delightfully dotty hospital trolley lady, and the aristocratic, slightly aloof but essentially kind hospital boss who eventually lets love lead the way.

Explore and extend your understanding of this wonderful host of colourful characters

- Examine different illustrations of each of the characters. Record and share what you learn about the characters from each of the illustrations. *7-12 years*
- Tom, George, Amber, Sally and Porter have each come from very different backgrounds and situations to band together to form the Midnight Gang. Explore each of the characters and what skills and strengths they bring to their mission of making children's dreams come true. Make a Venn diagram showing shared and individual strengths and skills as they are revealed throughout the story. *8-12 years*
- Take digital photos of children representing each character and key scenes of the story. *7-12 years*
- Make a favourite character in a drawing, painting, cartoon or sculpture out of things you find in the recycling, rubbish or at a second hand shop. *6-10 years*
- Choose a smell, shape, sound and colour to represent each character. *6-10 years*
- Make a mind map or character profile of key characters that you can add to after seeing the production. *8-12 years*

**Write an innovation on the text by the changing the setting.** The story is set in an iconic British institution, the public hospital, with references to another iconic British institution, the boarding school. How would the story change if you chose a new setting?

- What if the children all met at a school holiday camp? Who would the key characters be in this setting? What if the story was set in a boarding school? Who would be the villain and the saviour in this tale?

What challenges would be faced by the children in this setting? What about a refugee camp? Or a travelling circus? 7-12 years

David Walliams is an incredibly successful comedian, TV actor, comic writer, dramatic actor and children's author. He is a charismatic personality who successfully markets his talents to a wide range of audiences. **Examine the scope and examples of David Walliam's work**, and consider the types of activities that a popular creative artist may engage in during their career.

- Discuss the types of activities that artists undertake to create new works – research, sketches, photographs, journals, travelling, doodle books. Collect ideas in individual scrapbooks over a four week period. Take time each day to collect ideas for a creative project. 9-12 years
- Explore the World of David Walliams website at <https://www.worldofdavidwalliams.com/> to learn more about his other books and projects. 6-12 years.
- Compare *The Midnight Gang* with Walliams' other novels for children. Consider the similarities and differences in his works, common themes, writing styles, issues and the types of characters that populate his books. 8-12 years.
- Watch David Walliams being interviewed and answering some questions from one of his biggest young fans on Superfan at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z\\_b--qTcuME](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z_b--qTcuME). Think of your own questions to ask David Walliams about his books and his writing. Send them to David in an email to his website. 7-10 years
- Walliams' work both as an actor and writer is marketed very effectively. He has achieved popular appeal with all ages across the world. He and his team make excellent use of the internet, social media, movies and TV to promote his works. How does this compare to the marketing tools that were available to Walliams' hero author Road Dahl when he published *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* in 1964? What are the types of technologies and tools that allow creative artists to share their work with a broad audience today? How has this changed the role of the author/illustrator? 8-12 years

**Learn a love of literature** using *The Midnight Gang* as a starting point.

- *The Midnight Gang* explores the power of the imagination, hopes and dreams. Read other books such as *The Power of Henry's Imagination (the Secret)* by Skye Byrne, *Imaginitis* by Nick Bland, *Peter Pan* by J.M.Barrie, or *The Magical Life of Mr Renny* by Leo Timmers. 6-12 years.
- Enjoy books by other iconic UK children's authors such as the Harry Potter series by J.K Rowling, picture books, novels, cartoons, poems and joke books by Allan Ahlberg, the wonderful works of Roald Dahl, and the Narnia series by C.S.Lewis. Do books by these UK authors have any similarities, common themes or typical characters or settings? 6-12 years
- David Walliams is regularly compared to the wonderful author Road Dahl. Compare and contrast the books of Roald Dahl and Walliams. 8-12 years.

**Have fun with contrasts** to develop your own engaging characters who have believable and humorous interactions.

- The characters in *The Midnight Gang* are strongly contrasting, bringing through their character to the reader and viewer through very funny exchanges. The cruel imposing matron is a stark contrast to the anxious easily swayed doctor. Bossy Amber who cannot walk is a wonderful contrast to gentle Robin (in the book), and George (in the production), who cannot see. Choose a character from *The Midnight Gang* and collect a list of



their most outstanding features. Create a new character that is the opposite or strongly contrasting. Present them in character to the class. Work with a partner to create a dialogue between the old and new character.

9-12 years

- Make a radio play or reading of short sections of the book on a tablet device, laptop or phone. Use different character voices to demonstrate the contrasts between the characters, the bullying Matron, gentle Porter, bossy Amber, curious Tom, upbeat Tootsie. 7-12 years

*The Midnight Gang* is illustrated by British author/Illustrator Tony Ross. **Create new visual artworks** informed and inspired by the artworks of Tony Ross.

- The illustrations in *The Midnight Gang* are black and white line drawings. These deceptively simple drawings communicate an enormous amount of information about the story. Choose a drawing from the story and brainstorm all the information contained in the drawing. Choose a scene from the story. Tell the story with your own black and white line drawing. 7-12 years
- Tony Ross is a prolific illustrator who has illustrated a huge range of children's books. Enjoy and explore books such as the *Horrid Henry* series, the *Amber Brown* series and the *Dr Xargle* series. Choose a favourite drawing from one of the books. Draw your own version of the picture. Draw the next picture in the series. 6-12 years.
- There is a lot of skill involved in drawing effective line drawings. Watch the YouTube video "How to Draw Horrid Henry with Tony Ross" and "How to Draw Monsters with Tony Ross" Try out his suggestions and tricks for making convincing characters with lines. 8-12 years
- Tony's use of line and shadows to create hilarious facial expressions is central to the storytelling powers of his pictures. Choose three pictures of a central character such as Matron. Describe how the lines and shadows in their face reveal their emotions in the scene. Draw your own faces using lines and shadows to show their feelings. 6-12 years.

Hoping and dreaming of a Big Beautiful Life is a central theme in *The Midnight Gang*. Tom dreams of a family that cares for him, Amber dreams of becoming an explorer, Sally hopes to see life's milestones, George dreams of flying. Porter is committed to using the power of imagination to help make those dreams come true. **What dreams and hopes do you have for the future? How can you use the power of imagination to make those dreams come true? How do you imagine your life, and the milestones in your big beautiful life?**

- Create a timeline of the Big Beautiful Life that you are hoping for. Draw, write, dance, make sculptures, sing, make a photo montage or perform the key milestones in your imagined life. 8-12 years
- Choose one of your most amazing dreams. Imagine how you can make it come true in the same way the *Midnight Gang* made dreams come true. Use your imagination and write or draw a plan for making your dream come true right now. 6-12 years.

David Walliams stands out as an author because he is a great storyteller. Fantastical tales take you on a journey of imagination. Raconteurs are people who excel at relating stories in an interesting and engaging way. **Experiment with telling a simple story in different ways to make it more interesting.** Compete for the role of "Class Raconteur" and share your storytelling skills with other groups of students across the school. 6-12 years

**Involve the children in Reader's Theatre** by selecting a narrator and characters to read the story. Each character reads the spoken section of the text, with the rest read by the narrator, for example

*Porter: Slow down young sir*

*Narrator: said the man*

*Porter: It's only me, the porter*

*Tom: So it's you behind all this?*

*Porter: Yes! It took me weeks to sculpt that arctic wasteland from the ice in the freezer room. Thankfully it hadn't been defrosted for years so there was plenty of 'snow' to play with.*

*The Midnight Gang* is a narrative that tells the story of how a group of friends work together to achieve their dreams using their imagination. **Explore how narratives are structured.**

- Draw or unjumble a story map of *The Midnight Gang*. Structure your story map by identifying key moments in Tom's journey of finding a way to help both his friends and himself to realise their dreams. 6-10 years.
- Identify the setting, the complications and the resolution in the story. 7-12 years
- Write, draw or perform your own narrative. 6-12 years

**Experiment with using sound and visual effects and music to tell a story.** *The Midnight Gang* uses sound and visual effects, and musical underscoring, to share the story of Tom and the Midnight Gang.

- Tell a short story using shadowplay with people, puppets or other objects. 7-12 years
- Choose musical excerpts that could be used to express emotions and events at key points of the story. Find music that represents Tom's horror of finding himself in hospital, his first meeting with Matron, the joy of the North Pole adventure, the high drama of chasing the old lady Nelly as she floats into the night, Sally's joy at experiencing her Big Beautiful Life through her friend's eyes, Tom being reunited with his parents. 6-12 years
- Make a radio play and experiment with recording sounds on a tablet device, laptop or phone. Push a pillowcase full of sand down a slide for Tom's ride down the laundry chute. Use a slide whistle as Nelly rises up into the air carried by a huge bunch of balloons. 7-12 years

**Explore the use of shadowplay and silhouettes used in the production.**

- Explore the ancient art of shadow puppetry. Research Indonesian Wayang puppetry, Chinese shadow puppetry or Indian shadow puppetry. 6-12 years
- Make your own shadow puppets to tell a traditional tale from a culture in your local community. 7-12 years
- Read and view some books and artworks that make use of silhouettes to tell a story, such as *The Fairy Tales*, *The Thousand Nights and One Night* and *Christmas* by illustrator Jan Pienkowski or works by former slave and visual artist Moses Williams. 6-12 years
- Make your own silhouette picture inspired by a moment in *The Midnight Gang*. 8-12 years

## Australian Curriculum Content Codes

<u>English</u>	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Literature – Creating literature	ACELT1586 ACELT1832	ACELT1593 ACELT1833	ACELT1791 ACELT1601	ACELT1607 ACELT1794	ACELT1612 ACELT1798	ACELT1618 ACELT1800
Literature - Responding to literature	ACELT1582	ACELT1589	ACELT1596	ACELT1603 ACELT1604	ACELT1609	ACELT1614
Literature - Examining Literature	ACELT1584 ACELT1585	ACELT1591 ACELT1592	ACELT1600	ACELT1606	ACELT1611	ACELT1616 ACELT1617
Literature – Literature and context	ACELT1581	ACELT1587	ACELT1594	ACELT1602	ACELT1608	ACELT1613
Literacy - Interpreting, analysing, evaluating.	ACELY1660	ACELY1669 ACELY1670	ACELY1679 ACELY1680	ACELY1691 ACELY1692	ACELY1701 ACELY1703	ACELY1801
Literacy – Interacting with others	ACELY1656	ACELY1666 ACELY1667	ACELY1676 ACELY1677	ACELY1689	ACELY1700	ACELY1710
Literacy – Texts in Context	ACELY1655	ACELY1665			ACELY1698	ACELY1708
Literacy – Creating Texts	ACELY1661	ACELY1671	ACELY1682	ACELY1694	ACELY1704	ACELY1714
Language - Text structure and organisation.		ACELA1463.				ACELA1518
Language – Language for Interaction	ACELA1787					
Language – Expressing and Developing Ideas	ACELA1453	ACELA1469				
Language – Language variation and change	ACELA1443	ACELA1460	ACELA1475	ACELA1487	ACELA1500	ACELA1515
<u>The Arts</u>						
Drama	ACADRM027		ACADRM031		ACADRM035	
Visual Arts	ACAVAM107		ACAVAM111		ACAVAM115	
Music	ACAMUM081		ACAMUM085		ACAMUM089	
Dance	ACADAM001		ACADAM005		ACADAM009	

## Victorian Curriculum Content Codes

<u>English -</u>	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Reading and Viewing, Language – Texts structure and organisation						VCELA339
Reading and Viewing, Language – Expressing and Developing Ideas.	VCELA180			VCELA279		
Reading and Viewing, Literature - Responding to Literature			VCELT251		VCELT314	VCELT341 VCELT342
Reading and Viewing, Literature - Literature and Context				VCELT282	VCELT313	

Reading and Viewing, Literature - Examining Literature		VCELT219	VCELT254	VCELT285	VCELT316	VCELT343 VCELT344
Reading and Viewing, Literacy – Texts in Context	VCELY185	VCELY220				
Reading and Viewing, Literacy, Interpreting, analysing, evaluating	VCELY186	VCELY222	VCELY257	VCELY288	VCELY319	VCELY345 VCELY347
Writing, Language- Text structure and organisation	VCELY189					
Writing, Language – Expressing and Developing Ideas				VCELA293	VCELA325	
Writing, Literature – Creating literature	VCELT192 VCELT193	VCELT228 VCELT229	VCELT264 VCELT265	VCELT297 VCELT298	VCELT327 VCELT328	VCELT355 VCELT356
Writing, Literacy – Creating texts	VCELY194	VCELY230	VCELY267	VCELY299	VCELY329	VCELY358
Speaking and Listening, Language – Language Variation and Change	VCELA198			VCELA303	VCELA333	VCELA362
Speaking and Listening, Language – Language for Interaction	VCELA201	VCELA235			VCELA334	
Speaking and Listening, Language –Expressing and Developing Ideas	VCELA202					
Speaking and Listening, Literature – Responding to literature	VCELT207	VCELT242		VCELT306	VCELT336	
Speaking and Listening, Literature - Examining Literature	VCELT208 VCELT209	VCELT243				
Speaking and Listening, Literature - Literature and Context	VCELT205	VCELT240				VCELT365
Speaking and Listening, Literacy – Interacting with others	VCELY210 VCELY211	VCELY245	VCELY276	VCELY308	VCELY337 VCELY338	VCELY366 VCELY367
<b><u>The Arts</u></b>						
Drama	VCADRD021		VCADRD025		VCADRP029	
Music	VCAMUM022		VCAMUM026		VCAMUM030	

Dance	VCADAD022	VCADAD026	VCADAD030
Visual Arts	VCAVAV022	VCAVAV026	VCAVAV030

## NSW Board of Studies Syllabus

<u>English</u>	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
English - Objective A	EN1-1A, EN1-2A, EN1-4A	EN2-1A, EN2-2A, EN2-4A	EN3-1A EN3-2A, EN3-4A
English – Objective B	EN1-6B	EN2-6B EN2-8B	EN3-5B EN3-6B
English – Objective C	EN1-10C	EN2-10C	EN3-7C
English – Objective D	EN1-11D	EN2-11D	EN3-8D
<u>Creative Arts</u>			
Visual Arts	VAS1.1 VAS1.4	VAS2.1 VAS2.4	VAS3.1 VAS3.2
Music	MUS1.1 MUS1.2	MUS2.1 MUS2.2	MUS3.1 MUS3.2
Drama	DRAS1.2 DRAS1.2	DRAS2.2 DRAS2.2	DRAS3.2 DRAS3.1
Dance	DAS 1.1 DAS1.2	DAS2.1 DAS2.2	DAS3.2 DAS3.4

## Social and Emotional Learning Through the Arts.

*The Midnight Gang* explores the power of imagination and creativity. It examines the important place of friendship and love. It celebrates the personal traits of ingenuity, curiosity, kindness, and generosity. It explores the importance of hopes and dreams, and the role of risk-taking in reaching your goals. It speaks of the importance of not judging someone by their appearance. The story examines how people can work together to overcome adversity. Tom and Sally's experiences speak of how important it is to have a sense of belonging.

### Examine each of these themes.

- Tom is a curious boy who asks lots of questions. Are you a curious person? What does it mean to be curious? How do you show your curiosity? What have you learnt from being curious? Is there any risk in being curious? How do different people show curiosity?
- Sally dreams of having a Big Beautiful Life. What are your dreams? Why are dreams important? What steps can you take to achieve your dreams? How can you help others to achieve their dreams?
- Porter is extremely generous in his efforts to help everyone in the hospital. Are you a generous person? What are some ways of being generous? Has anyone ever been generous to you?
- The Midnight Gang use ingenuity to use what they have to create amazing adventures and bring joy to people. Do you know anyone ingenious? How have you used ingenuity to solve a problem? How can ingenuity help solve broader community issues?
- The Midnight Gang harness the power of the imagination to bring dreams into marvellous reality. How can your imagination help you in your everyday life? When have you used your imagination to help yourself or others? How can imagination help you learn? Have you ever worked with others to use your imaginative power to achieve something?
- Porter has an unusual appearance which has caused him to be shunned by many people in society. The Midnight Gang and other hospital regulars have learnt to see past his appearance to understand what a kind and generous person he is. Have you ever judged someone by their appearance? Has anyone ever judged

you by your appearance? What can you do to help yourself and others see past people's appearance to their essential selves?

*The Midnight Gang* also examines some common childhood emotions and emotional experiences. Sally is sad in hospital, and worries she is missing out on a Big Beautiful Life. Tom is sad that he never sees or hears from his parents. The children are scared of Matron. Porter was lonely without his family until he built himself a life at the hospital. **This story is a great starting point for discussions and activities that will help children to manage these feelings.**

- Have you ever felt lonely or sad?
- How did your body feel when you were lonely? What did you do when you were sad?
- What can you do if you feel sad or lonely, or if someone else is sad? Who are some people who could help you?
- What can you do if you feel scared?
- What could you do to feel better?

These discussions and activities may support progress towards the Personal and Social Capability learning area in the Victorian Curriculum, Australian Curriculum and NSW Board of Studies Syllabi.

## Teaching and Learning Activities Across the Curriculum

There are countless ways to incorporate *The Midnight Gang* into all areas of the curriculum. Following is a list of jumping off points. The rest is up to your imagination.

### Mathematics

- The Hospital is 44 stories high. How many metres tall would it be? What are some other structures or natural phenomenon that are a similar height to the hospital? *8-10 years*
- Make a map of the Hospital. Include the children's ward, the refrigerator and freezer room, the laundry chute and room, the gift shop. *7-10 years*
- Create a timeline that represents the events in *The Midnight Gang* including events that occur simultaneously. *7-10 years*
- Adventures happen in the middle of the night in the story. Make a picture of 24 hours in the life of the children's ward, including simultaneous events like Matron going to sleep and the children setting out on adventures. *7-11 years*
- Create a timeline of your own Big Beautiful Life over 80 years just like Sally. *8-12 years*
- Nellie is lifted up and carried away by helium balloons. There is a diagram on pages 274-75 showing how many balloons you would need to lift up different size animals. If it takes 47 balloons to lift a 5kg cat, how many balloons would it take to lift you? Your dad? A house? *9-12 years*

Mathematics	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Measurement and Geometry - Using units of measurement.	ACMMG021	ACMMG039 ACMMG041	ACMMG062	ACMMG084		ACMMG137 ACMMG139

Measurement and Geometry – Location and Transformation	ACMMG023	ACMMG044	ACMMG065	ACMMG090		
Number and Algebra – Number and Place Value		ACMNA030			ACMNA100	ACMNA123
Number and Algebra – Patterns and Algebra		ACMNA036				

### Victorian Curriculum – Mathematics

Mathematics	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Measurement and Geometry - Using units of measurement.	VCMMG095 VCMMG097	VCMMG115 VCMMG117 VCMMG119	VCMMG140 VCMMG143	VCMMG166 VCMMG168		VCMMG227
Measurement and Geometry – Location and Transformation	VCMMG099	VCMMG122	VCMMG143	VCMMG172		
Number and Algebra – Number and Place Value	VCMNA089	VCMNA107	VCMNA135		VCMNA183 VCMNA184	VCMNA209
Number and Algebra – Patterns and Algebra		VCMNA113		VCMNA162 VCMNA164		

### NSW Board of Studies Syllabus – Mathematics

Mathematics	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Number and Algebra	MA1-5NA MA1-6NA	MA3-2WM MA3-5NA MA2-2WM MA2-6NA	MA3-2WM MA3-5NA MA3-6NA
Measurement and Geometry	MA1-9MG MA1-13MG MA1-16MG	MA2-9MG MA2-13MG MA2-17MG	MA3-9MG MA3-13MG MA3-17MG
Problem Solving	MA1-2WM	MA2-2WM	MA3-2WM

## Science

- Tom tricks the doctor into believing he has a terribly high temperature. What classroom and household objects can you use to raise the temperature of a thermometer above a healthy human temperature of 36 degrees Celsius? *7-12 years*
- Experiment with making sculptures with ice. How can you keep the ice cold? What happens when you touch the ice? How long does the ice sculpture take to melt? Measure your ice sculptures and the air temperature at regular intervals and graph how the ice melts. *7-12 years*
- The production makes wonderful use of the effects of light and dark, and shadow play to tell the story. Explore the science of shadows. All you need is a light source and an object to explore how shadows change, how they are impacted by the distance and angle from the light source, and are changed by proximity to other objects, *6-10 years*
- The Midnight Gang put Matron to sleep and then keep themselves awake to have their adventures. Every living thing needs to sleep. The sleep needs and habits of different creatures vary widely. Research, compare and contrast different living creatures' sleep needs. Make a sleep diary for yourself for a week. *6-12 years*

Science	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Science Understanding – Biological Sciences	ACSSU211		ACSSU044	ACSSU073	ACSSU043	ACSSU094
Science Understanding – Chemical Sciences	ACSSU018		ACSSU046			
Science Understanding – Physical Sciences	ACSSU020		ACSSU049		ACSSU080j	
Science Inquiry Skills – Planning and Conducting	ACSIS025	ACSIS038	ACSIS054	ACSIS065	ACSIS086	ACSIS103
Science Inquiry Skills – Questioning and Predicting	ACSIS024	ACSIS037	ACSIS053	ACSIS064	ACSIS231	ACSIS232

### Victorian Curriculum - Science

Science	Foundation - Year 2	Year 3-4	Year 5-6
Science Understanding – Biological Sciences	VCSSU042	VCSSU058	VCSSU074 VCSSU075
Science Understanding – Chemical Sciences	VCSSU045	VCSSU059	VCSSU077
Science Understanding – Physical Sciences	VCSSU049		VCSSU080
Science Inquiry Skills – Questioning and Predicting	VCSIS050	VCSIS063	VCSIS082
Science Inquiry Skills – Planning and Conducting	VCSIS051	VCSIS066	VCSIS083

### NSW Board of Studies Syllabus - Science

Science	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Science Knowledge and Understanding	ST1-4LW ST1-6LW	ST2-4LW ST2-6LW ST2-8PW	ST3-4LW ST3-6LW ST3-8PW
Science Skills	ST1-4WS	ST2-4WS	ST3-4WS

## Humanities and Social Sciences

- Porter was rejected by his mother, and society because of his physical differences. How does our community include or exclude people with physical disabilities? How are people with physical disabilities treated in other cultures? Has the way people with physical disabilities changed over time? *9-12 years*
- Porter lives in the hospital laundry. Sally lives in the hospital. Tom lives at boarding school. These characters do not have a home as we understand a home to be in mainstream Australian culture. What is a home? What different types of homes do families have in your neighbourhood? In Australia? In other countries? Does a home have to have four walls? How have homes changed over time? *7-11 years*
- The members of the Midnight Gang are mostly children who are very unwell. What happens to people who are very unwell in our community? What services do we have to help them? Are there enough services? Does everyone have equal access? What happens to people in other countries when they are unwell? *9-12 years*
- The Midnight Gang create all sorts of dreams using the limited resources they have at the hospital. Recycling and reusing help to create less waste in our environment. Compare recycling and reusing to the demand for new products in your community. How can you change you and your family's habits to recycle and reuse more? How can you encourage others in your community? What are some examples and opportunities in your community? *8-12 years*



## Australian Curriculum

Humanities and Social Sciences	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
Inquiry and Skills - Questioning	ACHASSI018	ACHASSI034	ACHASSI052	ACHASSI073	ACHASSI094	ACHASSI122
Knowledge and Skills - History	ACHASSK030		ACHASSK063			ACHASSK135 ACHASSK137
Knowledge and Skills - Geography			ACHASSK069	ACHASSK088 ACHASSK090		ACHASSK139
Knowledge and Skills – Civics and Citizenship					ACHASSK117	ACHASSK147
Knowledge and Skills – Economics and Business					ACHASSK120	

## Victorian Curriculum - *Humanities and Social Sciences*

Humanities and Social Sciences	Foundation – Level 2	Level 3-4	Level 5-6
Geography - Geographical Concepts and Skills	VCGGC057	VCGGC073	VCGGC085 VCGGC087
Geography - Geographical Knowledge		VCGGK083 VCGGK084	VCGGK085 VCGGK087 VCGGK093 VCGGK096
History - Historical Concepts and Skills	VCHHC055 VCHHC056	VCHHC068	VCHHC084
History – Historical Knowledge	VCHHK059 VCHHK061	VCHHK074	VCHHK094 VCHHK096
Civics and Citizenship		VCCCG003	VCCCG009

## NSW Board of Studies – HSIE

Humanities and Social Sciences	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Geography	GE1-1 GE1-2	GE2-1 GE2-2 GE2-3	GE3-1 GE3-2 GE3 -3
History	HT1-1 HT1-2	HT1-2 HT2-2	HT3-1 HT3-2 HT3-3

# Health, Wellbeing and Physical Education

- Discuss the role of emotions in the story. *6-12 years*
- Graph or draw a pictorial representation of the emotional changes throughout the story of key characters like Tom, Sally and Porter. *7-10 years*
- Mime the emotions, play them on an instrument, move like Tom or Porter when they experience these feelings. *6-10 years*
- Tootsie the breakfast lady provides a very limited breakfast choice with a lot of enthusiasm. What could Tootsie have on her trolley so all the patients in the hospital could have a healthy nutritious breakfast? *6-9 years*
- Matron loves to eat lollies and chocolate. Are these healthy food choices? What could Matron replace these foods with for a healthier diet? *6-10 years*
- Choreograph a dance for Matron and the children to perform in the ward or for Porter, Nellie and the gang to perform while collecting balloons. Perform it for your friends. *6-12 years*
- The Midnight Gang is all about a group of friends working together to help each other. How do you make friends? What makes a good friend? How can you work with your friends to help them achieve their hopes and dreams? *6-12 years*

Health and Physical Education	Year 1 and Year 2	Year 3 and Year 4	Year 5 and Year 6
Personal, Social and Community Health – Communicating and interacting for health and wellbeing	ACPPS019 ACPPS020	ACPPS037	ACPPS055
Personal, Social and Community Health – Being Healthy, Safe and Active	ACPPS015 ACPPS017 ACPPS018	ACPPS033 ACPPS035 ACPPS036	ACPPS051 ACPPS054
Personal, Social and Community Health – Contributing to Healthy and Active Communities	ACPPS022	ACPPS040 ACPPS042	ACPPS060
Movement and Physical Activity / Moving our body.	ACPMP025	ACPMP043	ACPMP061

## Victorian Curriculum. Health and Physical Education

Health and Physical Education	Year 1 and Year 2	Year 3 and 4	Year 5 and 6
Personal, Social and Community Health – Being Healthy, Safe and Active	VCHPEP071 VCHPEP073 VCHPEP074	VCHPEP088 VCHPEP090 VCHPEP091	VCHPEP105 VCHPEP108
Personal, Social and Community Health – Communicating and interacting for health and wellbeing	VCHPEP075 VCHPEP077	VCHPEP092	VCHPEP109
Personal, Social and Community Health – Contributing to healthy and active communities	VCHPEP078	VCHPEP095	VCHPEP114
Movement and Physical Activity - Moving the body.	VCHPEM080	VCHPEM097	VCHPEP115

Personal Development, Health and Physical Education	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Skills - Moving	MOS1.4	MOS2.4	MOS3.4
Skills - Dance	DAS1.7	DAS2.7	DAS3.7
Knowledge and Understanding – Interpersonal Relationships	IRS1.11	IRS2.11	IRS3.11
Knowledge and Understanding – Growth and Development	GDS1.9		
Knowledge and Understanding – Personal Health Choices	PHS1.12	PHS2.12	

## Information and Communications Technology

- Make an iMovie of your own Big Beautiful Life! 8-12 years
- Take digital photos of children's characterisations and freeze frames. Use them to make a Powerpoint or other multimedia presentation. 8-12 years
- Record a soundtrack for the story. 7-12 years
- Create a talking book. 7-12 years
- Create digital pictures using a drawing program. 6-10 years
- Access *the World of David Walliams* official website on the Internet. 6-12 years
- Email your creations to CDP Theatre Producers. 6-12 years

## Design and Technology

- Choose an incredible dream like George flying or Amber visiting the North Pole. Plan and make a design to achieve the amazing dream using things you find around the school. Choose one dream design for the class to create. 7-12 years
- In the book, Tootsie makes very strange and tiny breakfast meals for the patients at the hospital. Design a tiny and strange breakfast for the children in the ward and cook it using edible ingredients. 7-12 years
- In the book, Tom dresses up as a doctor using prosthetic legs to make himself taller. Design a disguise that makes a child into an adult and fools everyone! 7-12 years
- Porter and the children accidentally send Nellie on a wonderful adventure using helium balloons. What else could you transport using balloons? Create your own balloon design for transporting someone or something. 7-12 years
- Porter has created a home in the basement of the hospital using things he has found or that have been thrown out. Design and create your own tiny home using things you find at school and home. 6-12 years

### Australian Curriculum

Technologies	Foundation – Year 2	Year 3 and Year 4	Year 5 and Year 6
Design and Technologies	ACTDEP006	ACTDEP015	ACTDEP025
Processes and Production Skills	ACTDEP007	ACTDEP016	ACTDEP026
Digital Technologies Processes and Production Skills	ACTDIP003	ACTDIP009	ACTDIP016

### Victorian Curriculum Technologies

Technologies	Foundation – Year 2	Year 3-4	Year 5-6
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Design and Technologies – Creating Designed Solutions - Generating	VCDSCD019	VCDSCD029	VCDSCD039
Design and Technologies – Creating Designed Solutions - Producing	VCDSCD020	VCDSCD030	VCDSCD040
Digital Technologies – Data and Information	VCDTDI016	VCDTDI022	VCDTDI029

## NSW Board Of Studies Syllabus Science and Technology

Science and Technology	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
Design and Production	ST1-2DP-T	ST2-2DP-T	ST3-2DP-T

# Differentiating The Midnight Gang Activities for Students with Special Needs.

Students with special needs can be fully involved in enjoying and learning with the *The Midnight Gang* performance and education activities. All learners enjoy being challenged and thrive on high expectations. Take an open approach to different modes of participation, and create a teaching environment where all contributions are valued. Students with special needs have a right to access high quality arts and education experiences, and to learn along with their peers. Given the right supports these students will rise to the challenge.

*The Midnight Gang* is a humorous story with universal themes that engages all ages and abilities. All of the activities listed above can be adapted to provide many entry points for students with a wide range of extra needs – physical, sensory, socio-emotional, intellectual disabilities, communication, behavioural and medical needs, and students with profound and multiple disabilities. A list of examples and ideas is below.

## Physical Disabilities

Students with physical disabilities may have difficulty expressing their ideas through drawing, moving, making, writing or sometimes even speaking.

- \* Record responses or ideas as an audio or video file, using an iPad or similar technology. *Make a video recording your ideas and thoughts about one of the characters so classmates can add it to a group mind map.*
- \* Share responses and ideas as a spoken presentation. Be a storyteller. *Describe the characters using fantastic character voices and turns of phrase.*
- \* Use talk to text technology such as Dragon Speak Naturally to record responses. *Create an innovation on the text and tell your tale to the Dragon Speak Naturally program to create a text version.*
- \* Work with a partner or small group to collaborate to complete tasks. *Work with a team to create your radio play version of The Midnight Gang. Assign roles such as Narrator, Actors, Audio Engineer, Vocal Sounds Artist, Sound Effects Artist, Critic, Marketing Guru and Producer.*
- \* Use the students' existing Assistive Technologies such as augmentative communication apps and eye-gaze technology to collect and share responses. *Create your new balloon mobile using the existing vocabulary banks and images in the Proloquo2Go communication app.*
- \* Work with physical strengths to promote participation in movement activities. *Choreograph the Midnight Gang's balloon stealing dance with a group. Incorporate unusual or amazing physical actions for different characters that are shared by all group members.*

## Vision and Hearing Loss

Students with mild to moderate vision loss may have difficulty seeing the line drawings of Tony Ross. They may also have trouble reading large amounts of small print text.

- \* Provide a significantly enlarged copy of drawings and text. *Make A3 copies of key illustrations depicting the dream scenes at the North Pole, George's balloon adventure and Sally's Big Beautiful Life.*
- \* Use a black border made out of A4 paper or smaller to focus in on particular sections of enlarged drawings, and to reduce visual distractions. *Use a black frame to focus on the facial expressions of key characters in enlarged copies of the illustrations.*
- \* Present images on a contrasting background to increase visibility. *Cut out an enlarged copy of Tom, Porter, and Sally and stick them on a piece of brightly coloured cardboard.*

- \* Provide an audio recording or talking book version of important sections of the text. *Make an audio recording of a short section of each chapter starring students using their best character voices.*

Students with hearing loss often have difficulty hearing and following spoken instructions and class discussions.

- \* Provide clear step by step written instructions and examples for student activities. *Create your own balloon design for transporting someone or something by providing a visual template for each stage of the design process, with written labels, pictorial illustrations and suggestions included.*
- \* Conduct silent class discussions where all contributions and questions are shared through writing, mime or drawing, much like Pictionary or Charades. *Create a detailed mind map describing a character as a class using no talking. Contributions could include drawings, mimes or written descriptions of the character's features.*
- \* Aid understanding through the use of signed English or Auslan. *Use the Auslan sign dictionary and discussion with students to assign a characteristic gesture to each of the characters. A comprehensive video sign dictionary can be found on the online Auslan sign bank.*

### **Socio-emotional and behavioural needs.**

Students with additional emotional and behavioural needs often find it difficult to complete challenging, complex or lengthy desktop tasks.

- \* Encourage students to work collaboratively to complete extensive written or drawn activities. *Work in duos to collect and create characteristic sayings and phrases for one character. Combine lists with other duos working on the same character to create a comprehensive list to share with the rest of the class.*
- \* Provide alternative forms of sharing and presenting ideas that include movement elements. *Work in groups to research, choose, rehearse and present information about the issue of health care as a news report, advertorial, YouTube style clip or short documentary for the rest of the class.*
- \* Create a safe learning environment where all students are treated with respect, and reserve the right to pass. *Enable a positive and supportive class discussion about overcoming adversity and achieving dreams by allowing students to contribute their personal experiences anonymously into a class postbox.*

### **Intellectual Disabilities**

Students with intellectual disabilities often have difficulty with comprehending and responding to complex written, spoken and visual texts.

- \* Break the text down into very short sections and examine in depth to aid comprehension. There are endless opportunities for exploration with such a rich narrative text. *Carefully examine Chapter 44 when Tom finds Porter living in the basement and hears the story of his life. Use visual images to aid understanding of the events in the past that have led to the existence and wonderful history of the Midnight Gang. Use pictures of each of the characters' faces to establish how their feelings are changing throughout the action. Use thinking bubbles to show people's thoughts, which might be different from their words. Visually map out Tom and Porter's emotions in this chapter. Role play the scene as a mime.*
- \* Use physical and visual supports. *Literally build Amber in her wheelchair. Dress a life size figure drawn on a large piece of paper. Provide recycled materials, large googly eyes, coloured fabrics, wool, string, coloured beads, cellophane and shiny paper.*
- \* Make use of strong structures, time and repetition to aid learning and comprehension. *Choose key points in the text to present a simplified storymap. Present the storymap over a number of days. Collect and display new ideas and understandings about the text and put them on display on the storymap as understanding grows so you can revisit the ideas as often as you need.*

\* Offer many alternative ways of responding; speaking, talk to text, drawing, photography, drama, videos, collage, air dried clay, lego or plasticine models, song, musical improvisation. *Make a Lego representation of the characters. Move the figures around and take photos to represent key points in the storyline.*

### **Profound and multiple disabilities.**

Students with profound and multiple disabilities require a range of supports and adaptations to participate in these activities.

\* Draw out the sensory elements of the text and pictures to engage learners with profound and multiple disabilities. *Create and share collections of cold and hot objects for students to share. Put your hands in a bowl of iced water, and on a hot water bottle. Sample the chocolates, the cornflake, and the cold tea mentioned in the story. Experience the effects of light and the dark. Choose and share a fabric or other textured object or material associated with each character, a shiny bump for Tom, some bandages for Amber, a warm blanket for Sally, a chocolate wrapper for George.*

\* Provide opportunities to make choices and indicate preferences. *Work with a partner to design your perfect balloon mobile. Use eye gaze, sign or vocal sounds to choose between real objects or images. How many balloons does the balloon mobile need? What size? What shapes will make up the design? What colour will it be? How will you attach the 'someone' or 'something' being carried away?*

\* Use real life experiences in the environment and community for learning. *Visit an industrial freezer room and laundry, the children's ward, a pharmacy, a boarding school or school camp dorm, a hospital kitchen. Go to the party store and see and feel the helium balloons. Go in the ambulance, or out on a cricket pitch.*

# Resources

The Australian Curriculum Online

[www.australiancurriculum.edu.au](http://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au)

Victorian Curriculum

[www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/foundation10/f10index.aspx](http://www.vcaa.vic.edu.au/Pages/foundation10/f10index.aspx)

NSW Board of Studies Syllabi

[www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/k-6/](http://www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/k-6/)

The World of David Walliams has comprehensive information, activities for students and teachers and videos and podcasts.

<https://www.worldofdavidwalliams.com>

Visit the Auslan Signbank for a video dictionary of Australian sign language.

[www.auslan.org.au](http://www.auslan.org.au)

A short biography and fun facts about David Walliams can be found on the imdb website.

<http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0909144/bio>

The Harper Collins website has a biography of David Walliams

<http://www.harpercollins.co.uk/cr-101054/david-walliams>.

Primary Facts has a short feature article on David Walliams.

<http://primaryfacts.com/2440/david-walliams-facts-and-information/>

The TES website has a collection of both free and low cost ideas for exploring The Midnight Gang.

<https://www.tes.com/teaching-resource/david-walliam-s-the-midnight-gang-hang-out-with-the-midnight-gang-11721286>

Watch David Walliams interviewed by his 12 year old SuperFan [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z\\_b--gTcuME](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z_b--gTcuME)

Watch the YouTube video “How to Draw Horrid Henry with Tony Ross” and “How to Draw Monsters with Tony Ross”



# Acknowledgements

This resource was created and assembled from a variety of sources:

*The World of David Walliams* website.

*The Midnight Gang* by David Walliams

*Harper Collins* website

*Primary Facts* website

*imdB* website

*The Midnight Gang* by David Walliams, published by HarperCollins Publishers Ltd. Illustrations © Tony Ross 2016 /

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