

Three PINs and you're... well, there will be a consequence!



Martin
MECS Principal

This week's editorial deals with a change that is occurring within our PIN note system. Through this year we have been steadily getting a little tougher and more consistent with this system of behaviour management.

About PINs

PINs stand for Parent Involvement Notice and they come in three colours: blue for a caution, yellow for a short detention and red for a long detention. They are mainly used in the Middle School, but at times are used in the other two sections. In the Senior School detention letters are sent home by mail.

PINs help us to:

- involve parents in the issue at an early date
- underline for the student that the teacher's judgment is serious, and
- keep a record of the student's conduct.

In a school where parent partnership is a big deal, PINs are a good mechanism to keep parents informed when something is up. A problem with these PINs though, is that parents feel that specific communication is too frequently at the negative end of the spectrum.

How they work

Deciding - When teachers are dealing with an issue that requires a consequence (more than a verbal warning) or where they sense they are not getting the student's appropriate attention or they want to inform parents, a PIN will be given. The level of PIN (caution, short detention, long detention) is decided based on the measure of the indiscretion.

Issuing - The teacher fills out the paperwork and the student is sent to the office where it is recorded in the PIN book and if it's a detention, also in the detention book.

Getting it signed - The student is responsible to get the PIN signed by a parent and return it to the office the next morning before attending classes.

Follow Up - Checking up that PINs have been returned occurs most mornings. This ensures that the PIN has been noted by parents and the student has taken the warning seriously.

Getting Tougher

This year Deputy Principal Allan Long and myself have been assisting our teachers by following up on PINS. I don't like this job and I don't like the image that comes with the Principal being seen primarily in a disciplinary light. However if the system is going to function well, this work must occur.

We have previously announced to Middle School students that starting this term a three PIN system would begin. What this means is that students who receive 3 PINs within the term (or multiple PINs over a long period) will move onto another level of being 'followed up'. Initially it will be with the Section Coordinator and then possibly a 'Round Table' conference, which is a meeting of key teachers, the parents and student.

We have brought this system in because we want the PIN notices to be taken more seriously than they are by some students. The

point of having PINs is to gain a change in the behaviour of the students. Where this is not working, more needs to be done.

Whilst we are making some changes to PINs we are also reviewing the infringements that lead to teachers issuing them. One such change is that there will be less Caution Notes relating to MS diaries not being signed. Teachers will handle this more internally through the diary itself, using the diary as a communication to parents. Only repeated infringements will receive PIN attention.

Christian Discipline

Many editorials that I write are on pleasant topics; less so this one. However, it is important to point out that Christian discipline is not about control for its own sake. We don't want robotic compliance but rather an understanding of boundaries and principles for behaviour that lead to healthy individuals and communities.

Christian discipline will be directed towards turning a student's heart towards the will of God so that love for God and others, can shape their behaviour. That change is the work of the Holy Spirit and our prayer appeals for the Spirit's help, because all our hearts are prone towards our self and not to God's.

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Change of Date for the Primary Athletics

Due to the weather forecast on Friday being unfavorable, we have changed the Primary Tribal Athletics Day to Monday 19 October. A note should have come home yesterday regarding this and the need for parent helpers on the day. If you are able to help please complete the form and return it to the office tomorrow. Thankyou.

School Notes

Welcome back to Term 4

After a wonderful break it was good to re-connect with the normal patterns of school life again. I hope you had an enjoyable break and feel all geared up for the last term.

Over the break, Ange became Mrs; a number of teachers spent time overseas (in particular Jo, Rachel and Julian, who spent time at Cambodian and Thai schools/orphanages); Cliff returned from long service leave (and a visit to Colin & Merran in Darwin); Year 12s had a 3 day study camp; countless hours were spent relaxing; and Geelong won the flag and another poster now adorns my office wall (its subtly tucked behind the door - I'm not abusing school wall space).

The final run home - Year 12s

Our 49 Year 12s are in their last two weeks of secondary schooling and their heads are down and... next Thursday will be their last day (affectionately called 'muck up day') and we will celebrate the closing of a big chapter in their lives. Parents are very welcome to join in the last assembly starting at 11am. Please pray that our Year 12s can handle the pressure, that they'll have resilience, clearness and strength and that they'll give a good account of themselves.

A prayer time for our students will be held on Thursday 29 Oct at 7:30am in the morning in the Senior School. Come along and join us.

Year 11 Formal

It was delightful to join our Year 11s at their formal last Thursday. In preparation all students prepare a short speech that they deliver and learn a formal dance that they undertake with a fellow Year 11 student. Dress and presentation also gets refined attention. Well done Year 11s for doing such a fine job.

Teacher Appointments

Applications and interviewing for the 6 positions previously mentioned in the newsletter are occurring at the present time. It shouldn't be too long before we can announce who has filled these vacancies.

Allan

This past weekend our very own Deputy Principal has been competing in the World Masters Games in Sydney. Allan took away a gold medal in the Melbourne steeplechase 4 years ago and this time around took silver in the steeplechase and 4th in the cross country. Congratulations Allan!

Ovals and Gym's

Not much appears to have occurred over the break. The primary oval needs to wait for a lengthy dry spell before the big machinery can compact the earth. The contract for the Gymnasium has been signed with Jonathan of K&K Builders, and retaining walls will commence soon.

The improvement grant funding from the Federal Government which must be spent this year (called School Pride), which we have half spent on the primary oval, will be fully spent on finishing off the near side of the main oval. This area, from the understorey to the sails, will complete work on the ovals. Work on this area will begin soon.

Christian Education Parent Seminar Monday Nov 16

We are commencing this set of seminars later this term for all new parents who have joined us since 2008. If you can't make this one, there will be more early next year. Parents will receive a specific invitation with more details this week.

Year 12 Study Camp

In the holidays (which of course as any good Year 12 can tell you aren't holidays!) a band of about 30 MECS and MDCS students ventured to Belgrave Heights for a study camp, accompanied by Martin, Sian (teacher from MDCS), three university students and Anne. Lots of time was spent doing the obvious, studying. It was interspersed by eating great food,

(many thanks Rosalie), playing some games, going for walks and spending time together. The camp went really well; students recognised that a lot could be achieved and that then they could have a good break. The university students and visiting teachers (thank you senior school staff and Jess) provided tutorials and expert advice.

Please pray for our Year 12s. It is now 'crunch time', with exams starting in a fortnight. There is an opportunity to get together with other parents and staff on Thursday 29th October at 7.30 **am** in Room 10 of the Senior School to pray for the students prior to the first exam on the Friday. It would be great to have anyone interested joining in.

Anne

