Down on the Farm - Year 9 Special Week

Bethany & Caitlyn get to play with the chooks at Tom’s Paddock
What makes a safe and supportive school?

What are your memories of your school life?

Are they happy ones where you felt safe and supported? Did you feel connected to the school community and were you able to thrive and learn eagerly?

Or are your memories marred by experiences where you didn’t feel supported or safe? Were you anxious, unable to learn well and sometimes did not even feel that your personal safety was being looked out for?

We know that children learn best when they are comfortable, when they feel safe and when they are supported by meaningful relationships. A safe school is a supportive learning community where all students feel safe and are safe. In such a school everyone knows what is expected and there is the highest level of consideration of others. (http://safeschoolshub.edu.au)

When you reflect on your own experience you may realise now that your happy or unhappy experiences actually affected your ability to learn and flourish at school. You may also see how this impacts you working through issues with your own children in relation to them feeling socially connected and safe at school. Our experiences do impact us greatly.

It is pleasing to know that safe and supportive schools are something that all in our community want to work towards and that this is being given a top priority by government and educational bodies. We are no longer living with a ‘she’ll be right’ mentality. Schools want to strategically and intentionally be safer and more inclusive and focus on student well being.

The National Safe Schools Framework (NSSF) defines a safe and supportive school as one where the risk from all types of harm is minimised, diversity is valued and all members of the school community feel respected and included, and can be confident that they will receive support in the face of any threats to their safety or wellbeing.

The framework recognises that there is a strong interconnection between student safety and student wellbeing and learning. When harassment, aggression, violence and bullying exist there is less likely to be a caring, respectful and supportive teaching and learning community. When students feel connected to their school and have positive and respectful relationships with peers and teachers, they feel confident about their social and emotional skills and satisfied with their learning. (NSSF 2011).

This all seems pretty logical and achievable, but we know that this is not always the case and that we all need to be highly intentional to create such environments. There is some excellent work being done in our community to build capacity in young people. The Safe Schools hub speaks of the interconnectedness of community and that when all parties work together - boards, leadership, parents, teachers, students we can create an environment that is inclusive and connected with positive relationships as the key.

There is a lot we can learn and common grace would tell us that much of this work has origins in God’s plans for humanity to live and work together in love. We also know that if these ideals do not sit within a frame it is hard to sustain them. Can people just be good, kind and connected without any underlying values or beliefs? Can values exist in a vacuum? What will be the drivers of that good will toward other people and what will assist students and staff to work at respectful and responsible behaviours toward each other?

At MECS we believe that every child is uniquely created in God’s image. Every child and adult is part of the rich tapestry of life. We value inclusion and connectedness because of who we are in Christ. Over these last few weeks the Primary leaders have been exploring further what it means for us to be a safe and supportive school. We are part of an Independent Schools Victoria project called ‘Good to Great Classrooms’. By registering our school on the Safe School’s hub website we were able to undertake an audit of how we are doing in this area. It was pleasing to know there are lots of good things happening at MECS. There are also things for us to work on.

How can we all work together to continue to provide a safe, inclusive school? As MECS Primary we:

• use Restorative Practice for dealing with discipline and pastoral issues. (Find out more about this by checking the MECS website - Primary section.) This involves follow up when wrong has been done - working together on helping children grow, change and be transformed by seeking restoration and forgiveness.
• expect consideration for others in the form of polite and respectful behaviours both at school and at home.
• pray. We are all in this task together - parents, students and teachers and we need to rely on God. We can’t do this in our own strength.
• encourage working through issues and being willing to face painful events and memories and find healing.
• encourage gratitude and thankfulness for the good things God has given us each day.
• grow in emotional understanding and ability to handle tough stuff.
• build strong relationships with each other that model respectful and responsible behaviours.
• continue to partner together to build a strong positive community

“So in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts according to the grace given to each of us...Love must be sincere...Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves.” Romans 12:5-10

For more information go to http://safeschoolshub.edu.au and click on the ‘parent zone’.

Diane
Assistant Principal - Primary
Further Staff News
Sheryl Beams, our Canteen Coordinator, is also looking towards the future. She will finish her role at the end of this term. She is looking forward to spending more time with her grandchildren and working in a more casual way at a local café. We will let you know over the next few weeks what we intend to do with our canteen for the rest of the year. We thank Sheryl for her many years of assisting MECS in numerous ways and wish her well for the future.

Transition Week for Year 10s
This week our Year 10s will participate in Transition Week. This provides an opportunity for students to focus on their vocational futures as they approach choosing their VCE subjects, and begin thinking about life beyond school. A variety of guest speakers and a visit to Box Hill TAFE and the Australian Catholic University are just some of the activities that make up this interesting and varied week. Thanks to Amelia Koole, our Careers Coordinator, for organising and facilitating this program.

Enrolment Pressures
As you may have heard, we are currently experiencing high demand for our kindergarten places, and a waiting list exists for some other year levels as well. However, we are currently looking at ways to expand our enrolment numbers so that we can accept more children, and will do everything we can to make this happen. If you have friends or family interested in the school, please encourage them to apply or call our office to discuss further. We look forward to sharing some of our plans with you over the coming months.

Potential Timetable Changes for our Secondary School
We are in discussions with our staff and students in regard to changing the timetable in the secondary school so that our Middle and Senior Schools are all on one timetable. This would mean all secondary students having 8 periods a day, with classes starting at 8.50am and finishing at 3.30pm; a 5 minute shorter day for our Senior School and a 15 minute longer day for our Middle School! The main reasons for such a change would be to streamline the creation of our timeline providing more flexibility for our staff to teach beyond just one section. It would also enable further collaboration and innovation across our secondary school. We are still in the process of identifying the ‘pros’ and ‘cons’ for such a move so if you have any comments that you would like to contribute please email myself or Karissa. We will be making a decision about this by the end of the term.

FOCUS On... Auditory Processing

What is Auditory Processing?
Auditory Processing is the natural process of taking in sound through the ear and the ability to accurately process the sentences and words into meaning. It is also the ability to hear the sounds of speech properly in the presence of background noise. When a person has a breakdown in this process, it is called an auditory processing disorder or delay. This deficit is present despite having normal hearing. Auditory processing is “what our brain does with what the ear hears” (Katz). When there is an auditory processing deficit, the ears can pick up the sounds, words, etc., but the brain is not able to process the sounds properly - the auditory information becomes jumbled up or confused and therefore, misunderstood.

Signs of an Auditory Processing Problem
- Difficulty understanding verbal information
- Difficulty following directions
- Difficulty with spelling and reading
- Difficulty with social interactions
- Difficulty with sound discrimination
- Difficulty with auditory memory tasks such as remembering the sequence of a story which has been listened to.
- Difficulty understanding speech when background noise is present
- Displays slow or delayed responses to verbal information
- Has difficulty reading phonetically. The student may not like to sound out words
- Has difficulty following directions
- May often seem confused, not knowing what to do in the classroom
- Performs better when the environment is quiet

What can be done to help
- Attract the student’s attention
- Watch out for language overload – the amount of language used and how quickly it is delivered
- Support auditory information with visual prompts
- Use short and simple sentences and allow time for processing
- Give one instruction at a time
- Give thinking time
- Develop routines that reduce the need for constant listening
- Reduce background noise
- Check for understanding. Ask the child to tell you what they heard

If you have any questions about Auditory Processing Disorder you can contact Primary Education Support Coordinator Shirley or Secondary Education Support Coordinator Jo.

Shirley
Education Support Coordinator - Kinder/Primary
MECS Notes

Students receiving paracetamol (Panadol) at school

First Aid has a supply of paracetamol tablets that we provide to students when necessary. In the past the students have received a slip to give to their parents indicating that they received paracetamol, what time they took it, and the reason for it. This process is not always reliable, as the slips don’t always make it home! We will now be sending an SMS or email to parents when their child receives paracetamol at school.

Likewise, if your child is given any other medication (eg ventolin, nurofen or antihistamines that you have provided) you will receive an email from first aid advising you the details of what your child received.

Please contact the office if you have any questions about this process.

Natasha
School Services Manager

Community Noticeboard

Did you know that we have a community noticeboard outside of the Main Office?

Here you will find lots of useful information such as the next apple delivery date, business and sporting club advertisements and upcoming events that are happening in the MECS Community and in our local area.

If you have an advertisement that you would like to have displayed, please drop it into the Main Office.

Cassie
Receptionist

Lost Property

Please check lost property (near First Aid). The racks are currently overflowing with un-named clothing (mostly jackets/jumpers).

Sandra
Administration Assistant

Friends of MECS

Entertainment Book

Your current Entertainment Book expired on Monday 1 June. Don’t miss out on buying the new one. You can order through the office or online at: www.entbook.com.au/193f695.

Year 7 Art

by Zari
by Hollie
by Zoe
by Ali
MECS Notes

Can you help our Cycle B Students?

Next term the Year 7 & 8 Cycle B students will be looking at major issues that affect our world. Groups of students will work together to research one issue, and together create a mock aid agency to respond to the issue.

We would greatly appreciate some expert input from people who are working, or have recently worked, for an aid agency, to have some discussions with the students and challenge them to think more deeply about the complexity of the issue and how it can be addressed.

The issues we are discussing are:

• Maternal and Child Health
• Water and Sanitation
• Food and Nutrition
• Child Slavery
• Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Displaced peoples
• Aboriginal Health

If you have experience or knowledge in one or more of these areas or know someone that does, and would be willing to meet with a group of students, please contact Natalie via the school office.

Your insight and assistance would be extremely valuable!

Natasha
School Services Manager

Dad Pack Take 2!

Last week the MPA students presented Mr Ali C with a surprise ‘Dad Pack’ in anticipation of the birth of Mr and Mrs C’s third child.

The ‘Dad Pack’ included some serious items such as a voucher, books and a Dad picture frame, plus some less serious items such as a Sleepless Night Kit (complete with ear plugs and a dummy); Nappy Change Kit (complete with gloves; a peg & Kit Kat), teabags and lollies!

The MPA students secretly signed a card during their music lesson, whilst the pack was secretly created with the MPA students and their parents by Zoe’s Mum, Michelle, and Imogen’s Mum, Elissa, and was presented in a rustic, hand crafted box made by Imogen’s Dad, Tim.

Ali was thrilled and got quite a laugh out of the Dad Pack contents. He was most pleased it included a Kit Kat as a reward following a nappy change!

All the best Ali. MPA is praying all goes well & can’t wait to hear if your baby is a girl or a boy!

Elissa
MECS Parent

The Drama Leaving & Arriving

On the evening of Wednesday May 27 MECS VCE Drama students joined with students at Yarra Hills Secondary College to present their ensemble performances. MECS students researched migrant stories to devise their performances on ‘Leaving and Arriving,’ while Yarra Hill students explored body image and media manipulation in their ensembles entitled ‘Beauty is in the eye of the media beholder.’ It was a great night of entertaining and thought-provoking drama.

Congratulations to all performers on their successful ensemble performances! Now it’s on to the solo!

Marlene
VCE Drama Teacher

VCE Music Recital

Last Tuesday evening the VCE Music students performed at the first VCE Music recital for the year. It was a fantastic event with support from across the school community and some excellent performances from the students. The evening included musical items from both the solo and ensemble repertoires of each of the students and we were treated to some wonderful highlights in both categories. We were also joined by the VCE Music students from Belgrave Heights Christian School and their teacher, Darryl, with whom we are partnering again this year for Units 3 & 4.

Our students for this year are Nicholas, Katherine and Sophia (Units 3 & 4) and Kristoffer, Natalie, Skye and Naomi (Units 1 & 2). All of them are to be commended for the dedication and effort they put into their performances, and the way in which they presented themselves on the night. For our second semester recital we will be travelling across to Belgrave Heights Christian School.

Tim
VCE Music Coordinator
Whilst the air was chilly, the skies were blue as the Preps boarded the buses for a visit to the Mount Evelyn shops.

The children, armed with $2.40 (24 ten cent coins), were split into groups and embarked on their adventure to find out about the people who work in our community and the jobs that they do.

The warmth of the Post Office was welcome as they joined the queue to buy a postage stamp for the letter that each child had written. The bakery smelt so good when we arrived to buy a bread roll for lunch. But the treasure chest of the Op Shop was the favourite as the children rummaged through boxes and searched the shelves for something to buy for their own. The Preps practised their skip counting by 10s to pay for the items and they showed their best manners to the shopkeepers.

On our return to school, we enjoyed a lovely fresh roll for lunch, filled with our favourite fillings - even vegemite and jam with tomato!

We are so blessed with an amazing local community in Mount Evelyn! A special thank you should go to all the shopkeepers who we encountered, who were so patient when serving these young customers. We thank God for the people who work in our community.

The Preps had a brilliant outing and the day was once again “The best day ever!”

Alison
Prep Teacher
Year 9 Special Week

In Week 7 the Year 9s had an alternative curriculum week, which focussed on the main Cultural Studies unit for this term. We have been looking at food; how it is produced, what issues exist within the food industry, how topography and climate affect food production, etc.

Highlights of our program for the week included visiting Tom’s Paddock (a beef and egg farm near Yea) and Jo’s amazing garden, watching ‘Temple Grandin’ (an extraordinary film about the life of a lady with autism and her impact on the beef industry in the United States) and watching a documentary called ‘Fat, Sick & Nearly Dead’, on an Australian man’s transformation through changing his diet.

Students were also involved in preparing and planting garden beds, as well as working in the kitchen to create a selection of dips and focaccias for our hike on Friday. The hike allowed us to engage in some healthy exercise, as well as see the track we had mapped topographically in action. We started in The Basin in the morning and trekked our way up the hill to Kalorama for our long awaited and hard earned afternoon tea.

The weather could not have been more perfect if we'd planned it ourselves. It was fantastic to have a change of pace and get to experience so many diverse aspects of the amazing world of food.

Tim
Year 9 Teacher
**Calendar**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tues 9 - Fri 12 June</td>
<td>Year 10 Trans Ed Week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thur 11 - Fri 12 June</td>
<td>Year 11 Exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri 12 June</td>
<td>Year 12 PE Excursion to RMIT</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues 16 June</td>
<td>AFL Collingwood Players Visit 2.30pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 17 June</td>
<td>Year 10 PE Excursion Preps Mount Evelyn Vet Incursion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri 19 June</td>
<td>Year 7 &amp; 9 Immunisations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues 26 June</td>
<td>Last Day Term 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 13 - Fri 17 July</td>
<td>Year 10 Work Experience Week 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 13 - Wed 15 July</td>
<td>Year 12 Practice Exams</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 13 - Tues 14 July</td>
<td>Year 11 Work Experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed 15 - Fri 17 July</td>
<td>Year 12 Intensives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thur 16 - Fri 17 July</td>
<td>Year 11 Work Experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon 20 July</td>
<td>Term 3 Begins, Welcome back Morning Tea 9am Staffroom</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri 24 July</td>
<td>Year 6 Positive Boys Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sat 25 - Sun 26 July</td>
<td>Year 9 &amp; 10 Performing Arts students performing at Dandenong Ranges Youth One Play festival</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tues 28 July</td>
<td>Parent Seminar B, Main Staffroom, 7.30pm</td>
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**MECS Community Notices**

**Newsletters deadline is 11am Tuesday on published week.**

**Email articles (images attached as jpg) to the Newsletter Office**

- Careers Newsletter No 8, June 9
- Performing Arts Letter
- Cycle B World Issues Notice
- Kinder Connections No 5

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**Drawers Wanted**
We would appreciate solid hardwood drawers (preferably deep) from unwanted furniture such as tallboys/desks/buffets. Happy to collect. Please text or call Dan on 0407 044 089.

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**Teacups Needed!**
If you have any unwanted tea cups (new or old, but preferably not chipped) that you would like to donate for a charity fundraiser event, please drop them in to the Main Office.

- Cassie Receptionist

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**AFL Holiday Program**
AFL Victoria in conjunction with AFL Yarra Ranges are running an AFL Holiday Program in Mount Evelyn for boys and girls 5–12 years old. It will be held on Wednesday July 8, 9am-3pm at Futsal OZ Mount Evelyn, 19-23 Hereford Rd, Mount Evelyn. Cost $60.

The day will be packed with AFL games, Jumping Castles and draft camp testing for the kids. Register now at [www.aflvicholidayprograms.com.au](http://www.aflvicholidayprograms.com.au)

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**Free Girls Basketball Skills Training**
The Saints basketball team are seeking primary girls aged 5 and up to come along to free basketball skills training sessions at Oxley College starting on Monday, 12 July for 6 weeks. 4–4.45pm.

No experience necessary, just an interest in basketball. Contact Debbie 9726 5327 to reserve a place.

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**Apples & Pears**
Next delivery is Friday June 19. Varieties available include Fuji, Granny Smith, Pink Ladies, Golden Delicious and Green Pears. Bags are 5-6kg and the cost is $10 for apples and $8 for pears. Please submit your order to the main office by 10.30am on the day of delivery and ensure you have your name and order written on the front of the envelope, with the correct money enclosed.

- Cassie Receptionist

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**Pasture Hay for Sale**
Weed free pasture hay, this season. Small square bales. $8/bale. Phone Tim on 0490 464 852.

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**Concerns about an advertisement or ad?**
If you would like to make a complaint about an advertisement or ad, please contact: 9726 5488 or cassiem@mecs.vic.edu.au

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