November Music Recital

Charlotte performs on the violin at the final recital for the year. Story page 6.
School Fees

In the Board meeting last week, the Board signed off on the fees for 2016. Of course all parents are keenly interested in what the school fees are for 2016, so here they are. I will discuss the whys and wherefores below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Three year old kinder</th>
<th>$1,600</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Four year old kinder</td>
<td>$2,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep</td>
<td>$3,430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60% of 1st primary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary School 1st child</td>
<td>$5,740</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75% of 1st primary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary School 2nd child</td>
<td>$4,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75% of 1st primary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary School 3rd child</td>
<td>$4,300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60% of 1st primary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary School 4th child</td>
<td>$3,430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60% of 1st primary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School 1st child</td>
<td>$7,590</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60% of 1st primary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School 2nd child</td>
<td>$6,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75% of 1st middle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle School 3rd child</td>
<td>$4,540</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60% of 1st middle</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior School 1st child</td>
<td>$8,490</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60% of 1st primary</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior School 2nd child</td>
<td>$6,380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75% of 1st senior</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior School 3rd child</td>
<td>$5,100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60% of 1st senior</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum fees per family</td>
<td>$16,100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Kinder fees are not included in the ceiling

Discounts
5% if all fees paid by the end of February
3% if half fees paid by end of February and half fees paid by end of July.

The fees shown in the table have risen between 3.8% and 4.3% above the 2015 rates. You may be wondering why an increase of around 4% is needed when inflation is around 1.5% (CPI). I want to share a few of our considerations.

Education costs increase at a greater rate than inflation

For around ten years now MECS has had to use an annual increase of around 5% to try and keep up with the Education Price Index (EPI). Unfortunately, for quite a few years now this EPI has been well above the CPI rate. In the year up to September 2015 the EPI was 5.4% (in the previous year 5.1%). The Board recognises that such increases create challenges for affordability, so to be able to have an increase less than the EPI is a positive outcome.

Government grants have a huge influence on our budget

Each time we budget we make estimates of what we’ll be receiving through government funding. More than 61% of the school’s income comes from government funding (Commonwealth and State). There is now an effective tool provided by the Department of Education to estimate Commonwealth funding. This makes funding estimates more accurate. It is the gradual increase of the Commonwealth funding because of the so-called Gonski funding model that has allowed us to hold our increase below the 5.4% EPI. Our school income is also subject to the vagaries of State government funding. That is somewhat dependent on the number of families that received the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) in 2015. Now that the EMA system no longer exists we aren’t sure what the State government will do to replace it as part of their funding model. We anticipate that we will not be worse off as they go about finding a new means of calculating our funding.

Viable financial planning

The Board requires the Finance Committee to always plan for a modest surplus, a practice in keeping with a ‘not for profit’ organisation that seeks to be financially sound and viable for the long run. A modest surplus for us usually entails something in the order of 2% of income (some school economic advisors recommend an 8 - 10% surplus). Our surplus allows for the ongoing maintenance and development of our campus, and enables us to pay off debt. In a real sense, the surplus is our investment in the school’s future. It is also good to know that the cost of salaries is expected to be about 71% of our income. The Board has a policy of paying our staff in line with those in the education sector (State and Catholic schools, not ‘grammar’ schools). A policy that ignored this would make it very difficult to attract the quality staff that we need.

MECS has a significant but manageable level of debt due to our building and development phase to create our vibrant learning environment. The Board has a very strict set of limits around how much debt the school is allowed to take on. Those strict limits mean that the infrastructure development that has taken place over recent years has not caused undue pressure on school fees. Of course, the present school community assists in paying off some of this debt (from each year’s modest surplus), but so will the future community, as they will also benefit from the new and refurbished facilities.

Affordability

The Finance Committee and Board are very conscious of the MECS mission - “We provide Parent-governed, Christ-centred schooling … at a price affordable to those who are committed”. In order to make sure that Christian education is ‘affordable’, firstly fees need to be kept as low as possible and secondly, a mechanism needs to exist where some help can be provided to those who are committed but who can’t afford it. Where the fee rate is beyond those who are committed, the school has a means of assisting families. We do not use the allocated help to offer academic scholarships (a practice that we believe does not have a place in Christian education). Rather, once folk have shown they are committed they can apply for assistance through a confidential fee assistance process that assesses need.

We appreciate you

We know that each family in our community makes a financial sacrifice to invest in their children’s education. We know it is not easy. We hope that we have struck the right balance between keeping the school affordable and keeping it viable. Thank you for partnering with us.

Gerry
Administration Manager

From the Board

In the Board meeting last week we reviewed the External Relationships report, which looks at the health of the relationships that the school has with contacts outside our direct community, including the local neighbourhood, government representatives and the wider Christian school movement. The Board also received a report on the infrastructure projects that have been completed this year and the plans for 2016 to ensure continual infrastructure improvements for the school community.

Part of the meeting was spent carefully reviewing the impact of the 2016 budget, resulting in the approval of the 2016 tuition fees. This is discussed in further detail in Gerry’s editorial above. We also discussed the progress of planning for the Primary expansion building program. We will be providing an update on this exciting program to Association members in early December.

Bretlyn
on behalf of the Board.

Thursday 19 November 2015   Page 2
Year 12 Graduation
This week culminates with the Year 12 Graduation on Friday night at the Linley Estate in Kilsyth. This will be a great opportunity to celebrate with our Year 12s and their families, the completion of their schooling here at MECS. Please continue to pray for our Year 12s as they head off on various service trips and fun activities over the coming weeks - that they will be kept safe and enjoy the opportunities that are now before them.

Senior School Leadership
As we move rapidly towards the end of this year and confirm our plans for next year, we are pleased to announce that Emma will be taking up the role of Senior School Coordinator in 2016. Alongside Karissa, Emma will have overall responsibility for the smooth running of the Senior School. Amelia will step into the position of Year 10 Coordinator and continue her valuable role in providing careers counselling and coordinating our VET program. Roger will continue as VCE Coordinator, and Sharon and Adam will continue their oversight of Year 12 and Year 11 respectively. We thank each of these teachers for their willingness to take on additional leadership responsibilities in the school.

Middle School Camps
Next week the Middle School students and staff from across the Secondary School are heading off on their final camping experiences for the year. I will be joining the Year 9s on their trip to Canberra which I am really looking forward to. The Year 7s and 8s will be at either Inverloch or Wilsons Prom. Thanks to the parents who are assisting with the hiking and cooking on these camps – we really appreciate your assistance and couldn’t run our program without your support. We pray these experiences will be a great way to finish off the learning for the year and cement friendships that have developed as well.

Board Meeting
Last week, our Board met to discuss a range of matters. One of the key topics was the relationships we develop with organisations such as Christian Education National (CEN). It was pleasing to note that we continue to provide support and expertise in a number of ways. Jacqui, our Director of Teaching & Learning, continues to serve as an adjunct lecturer to support the professional development of staff right across Australia. She was also instrumental in the publication of a new CEN resource, Transformation By Design, a guidebook for teachers in developing curriculum that has a distinctive Christian worldview and focus. Gerry, our Administration Manager, was appointed as the Chair of the CEN National Board this year, and is doing a great job serving in this capacity. All of our teaching staff attended ITEC15, an international conference for Christian teachers organised by CEN, held in Melbourne this year. Other teaching staff have also assisted with the presentation of workshops at a variety of events. It is important to us that as a Christian school community, we continue to share what we have with others where possible. Our positive relationship with CEN is just one way we seek to do this.

Primary Staff for 2016
2016 is shaping up as an exciting year and as such, I am happy to introduce our teaching team.

Leadership Team
Di - Assistant Principal Primary. I will be assisted by two exceptional leaders; Melissa as Head of Student Welfare and Teacher Development and Ben as Head of Discipline and Administration.

Prep (to be called 'Foundation' see page 4)
Jan (Cluster Leader) and Alison

Junior Primary
Kaye (Cluster Leader), Viv, Fiona, and Daniela as the additional Literacy and Numeracy teacher

Middle Primary
Alistair (Cluster Leader), Justine and Naomi

Senior Primary
Melissa, Ben (Cluster Leaders), Michelle (Numeracy Coordinator)

Music
Scott

PE
Jason

Indonesian
Rachel

New Staff

Fiona

Naomi

Scott

Fiona

Naomi

Scott

Primary Educational Support Coordinator
Shirley

Educational Support teachers
Genevive (SP Enrichment, SP Literacy Support, Individual Learning Plans, Program Management and Learning Assistant Support), Rachel (P-4 Literacy Support) and Susan (Assessment and P-4 Enrichment)

Diane
Assistant Principal - Primary
MECS Notes
Some Admin Changes

We wanted to let you know about a few changes to the way we have previously done things at MECS:

• **School finish time:** on the last day of the year, Thursday December 17, school will finish at 2pm. This is a change we are making for future years as well – the last day of the year will always finish at 2pm. This applies only to Term 4 – all other terms will finish at normal school finishing time.

• **Distribution of reports:** reports for all Prep-Year 9 students will be distributed on the last day of term this year, rather than the second last day. If for some reason you know your child will miss the last day of term, please contact the office to make an alternative collection arrangement. The reports for students in Years 10 and 11 will be sent home with a younger sibling, or posted home if there are no other children at the school. Reports for any students absent on the last day of school will be posted home.

• **Distribution of class lists:** class lists for 2016 will go home via email in January, in the week before workbreak week (January 18-22). The exception will be Preps (current K4s) who will receive theirs at the end of this year.

• **Changes to class names:** in 2016, our class names will no longer include the surname initial of the teacher (eg JPT referred to the JP class taught by Suse Timmins). Rather, they will be changing to a more consistent format. Preps will be changing to ‘Foundations’ and will be known as ‘Bilbys’ and ‘Geckos’. Other class names for the Primary and Middle Classes will be decided in the near future.

If you have any questions about any of these changes, please contact me via the office or nstaunton@mecs.vic.edu.au.

Our Newest Lawyer
We would like to congratulate Jake (class of ‘09) on successfully completing his Master of Laws (Juris Doctor) degree at Monash University. Jake has spent the last six years, since his graduation from MECS, working towards this momentous goal. In his last few years he has also been employed by Monash University as Student Success Advisor. Now that he is qualified we would like to celebrate the fact that Jake has been able to secure work as a Legal Assistant with Sharrock Pitman Legal. He started work last Tuesday at this legal firm which is based in Glen Waverley.

Dr Roger F
VCE Coordinator

Friends of MECS

Stationery Helpers
Helpers are still needed on the following days:
- Thurs 3 Dec 9am -12noon (packing)
- Tues 8 Dec 12noon - 3pm (sales)
- Thurs 28 Jan 8.30am - 12noon (sales)
- Thurs 28 Jan 1pm -3pm (pack up)

Help is also needed to unpack the storeroom and move it all to the Senior School on Wed 25 Nov from 9am - 10am.

More help is also needed to unpack all the new stock on Fri 27 Nov and Mon 30 Nov anytime from 9am -3pm in the study centre in the Senior School.

If you can help on any of the above days, even if it’s only for a few hours, please contact me. Thanks.

Evelyn

Book Fair News

Thank you to all students and parents who came along to support the Book Fair last week. Thanks to you, we were able to raise $713, which will be used to purchase new books or equipment for Gawa Christian School in the Northern Territory. This is a fantastic result! We had two lucky winners of the ‘Guess the Lollies in the jar’ competition: congratulations to Crystelle (MPB) and Megan (9Z) who both correctly guessed 108 lollies. Thanks again, we look forward to seeing you next June for Bookfair 2016.

Fiona
Library Manager
**Working Bee**

As we all know, little things can make a big difference, and that’s exactly how it was on Saturday at our working bee. We accomplished lots of small but important jobs, many of which don’t stand out, but all contribute to a big difference around the school.

We tried something different this Working Bee: we started the day with coffee and tea, and discovered it was great to start the day with coffee and a chat.

Our jobs for the day included washing the Prep toys, covering Prep books with contact, cleaning up store rooms, sanding and oiling blocks in the Kinder, putting a boat in the Kinder playground, cleaning out the dry river bed and replacing all the rocks, digging over the mud pit and cleaning it up, loading a whole lot of branches into a big bin, sanding and staining picnic tables, planting totem poles in front of the art room (worth a look if you get a chance), removing a garden bed in front of the understorey, picking up rubbish, cleaning pits and drains, pulling blackberries and pittosporums out, leaf blowing a lot of the paths and car parks, changing light globes, replacing chair stops plus some gardening and pruning!

We said farewell to some people as it was their last working bee, and welcomed some new parents and children to their first working bee. We had a great time together over morning tea, getting to know new people and renewing acquaintances.

A big thanks to everyone for coming along and helping out. Our last Working Bee for the year is December 5 - come along for a bacon and egg breakfast and a great time!

*Pete and Steve*
*Property Managers*

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**Cycle A Polynesian Expo**

Last Thursday, Cycle A had their annual Polynesian Expo! There were 4 countries represented: Tahiti, Samoa, Tonga and the Cook Islands. Each group of about 5 students researched and presented information about what was important to the people of their country. Island culture is quite unique, and each member of the group had to look at one area of culture in detail such as food, celebrations, language and history.

There was some lovely food to enjoy and even some dancing! The students did a great job at communicating their information and setting up their stalls creatively. Each Cycle A class had a few minutes to explore all of Cycle A’s presentations, then went back to their home class to do a more formal presentation. Well done, everyone!

*Nicky*
*Middle School Teacher*
Last Wednesday evening was our final Recital for the year. It was wonderful to see such a variety of students from throughout our school community performing a variety of pieces - from ‘Lullaby of Birdland’, to ‘Gaston’ from Beauty and the Beast! The students performed for the encouraging audience of family and friends with musicality, skill and courage. A highlight from the evening was a special performance from our host, Katherine. Katherine is one of our long-standing instrumental students who has also just completed her Unit 4 in Music Solo Performance majoring in Contemporary Voice. Katherine shared with us one of her original songs that she based on Proverbs 3:23-26. She shared openly about what inspired her to write the song and our audience was encouraged and moved by the beauty of her melody and the strength of her words. We look forward to what 2016 holds for our young emerging musicians and thank all the Instrumental Staff for their hard work and encouragement of each one of their students.

Annora
Instrumental Music Coordinator
‘My only love sprung from my only hate’

Love and death, tragedy and reconciliation. Who else but the famous Bard could entwine these themes in such a captivating way?

In Year 10 English we have been studying Baz Luhrmann’s rendition of Shakespeare’s famous play, Romeo and Juliet. Anyone who is an admirer of Shakespeare will recognise that he wrote his plays to be acted. For it is through acting, that plays like Romeo and Juliet can be best appreciated.

Last Friday the three English classes combined to perform the fast paced extravaganza. High-pitched voices were heard; wigs and dresses were donned by males acting as Juliet. Famous characters from The Lion King and current celebrities were drawn upon to give the play a modern touch.

A highlight for teachers was seeing students rise to the occasion and use their God given gifts in both humorous and entertaining ways. It was clear that students felt a degree of safety and confidence with each other that allowed them to perform in an uninhibited way.

The ideas of life coming through death and reconciliation through forgiveness remind us of Jesus and the life He offers to each of us.

Jonny, Shannon & Sharon
Year 10 English Teachers
### Calendar

#### 2015 Term 4 Week 6: 16 Nov - 22 Nov
- **Mon 16 - Fri 20 November**
  - Year 11 Exams Week 2
  - Year 10 Exams
- **Fri 20 November**
  - Year 12 Graduation

#### 2015 Term 4 Week 7: 23 Nov - 29 Nov
- **Mon 23 - Fri 27 November**
  - MS Camp Week
  - Year 10 Work Experience Week 2
- **Thur 26 November**
  - Year 5 IMAX Excursion
- **Sat 28 November**
  - Canberra Camp Returns

#### 2015 Term 4 Week 8: 30 Nov - 6 Dec
- **Mon 30 November**
  - Prep Big Night Out
- **Fri 4 December**
  - Primary GT (SPD)
- **Mon 7 December**
  - Year 11 Exams Week 2
  - Year 10 Exams
- **Fri 11 December**
  - Prep Big Night Out
  - Year 12 Graduation

#### 2015 Term 4 Week 9: 7 Dec - 13 Dec
- **Mon 7 - Fri 11 December**
  - Year 12 2016 Orientation
  - SP Indonesian Cook Off
- **Tues 8 December**
  - Orientation Day (Prep - Year 10)
- **Thur 10 December**
  - MP Indonesian Cook Off
- **Fri 11 December**
  - MPB/SPD Indonesian Cook Off
  - Year 6 Graduation

### MECS Kindergarten Job Opportunity

We have a 3 Year Old Kindergarten Program Assistant position available. For details please check out the employment section of the MECS website.

**Michelle Smith**

HR Administrator/VASS Coordinator

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### MECS COMMUNITY NOTICES

MECS does not endorse the products or services of any private advertiser. No responsibility is accepted by Mount Evelyn Christian School for the accuracy of information contained in advertisements or claims made by them.

#### Free to good home
- Pine desk. 110cm wide. 162cm deep. 75cm high.
- Pine TV cabinet. 123cm wide. 52cm deep. 74cm high.
- Pick up Mount Evelyn. Call John 9737 0171

#### Montrose Orangutan Market
- Dec 5, 9am-3pm, Montrose Town Hall. Proceeds to Orangutan Outreach and the Sumatran Orangutan Conservation Program. Lots of crafts.

#### Kids of Gold Camp
- Camp for building self esteem and confidence in kids. Open to Primary children in Years 4-6 in 2015 and 9 year olds in Year 3. Activities from low ropes, initiative activities, wall climbing, games and drama.
- Fri 12 - Sun 14 Feb 2016 is the weekend for new campers. $65. Held at Lyrebird Park Beenak Road, Yellingbo. Contact Kids of Gold, 0418 170 027 (Jenny) or 9737 9475/0415 427 396 (Gary). Visit www.kidsofgold.org.au

#### Foster Care Information Session
- More foster carers are desperately needed to help fill the gaps for emergency, respite and long term care situations. Learn how you can make a difference by attending our next information session on Monday November 23, 7.30pm, 47-51 Castella St, Lilydale. Carers come from all walks of life. For bookings and enquiries call 1300 889 335 or visit www.anglicarevic.org.au/events.
- For more information call Robyn on 9728 3739 or Ann on 9725 3548.

#### Apples & Pears
- The next delivery will be tomorrow Friday November 20. Please hand your order in to the office in an envelope by 10.30am that morning and ensure you have your name and order written on the front of the envelope, with the correct money enclosed. Varieties available include Fuji, Granny Smith, Pink Ladies and Green Pears. Bags are 5-6kg and the cost is $10 for apples and $8 for pears.

**Cassie**

Receptionist

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### Working Bee

**Saturday 5 December**

7am-1pm - Breakfast Provided

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### Notices sent home this week and on Website

- **Headlice Notice to Primary School**
- **Careers Newsletter 17 Nov 18**
- **MP & SP Indonesian Food Taster Class**