Whole School Assembly -
Fri 19 Feb 9.30am
Please join us

Getting Started in Kindergarten

eElise getting started in Koalas with some lovely colouring
Growing Goodness

A number of years ago I read a book entitled, “He’ll Be OK: Growing Gorgeous Boys into Good Men”. At the time I was the mother of a ‘gorgeous boy’ and it was my deep desire that he grew into a ‘good man’. I am happy to report that, at 19, my son is well on the way!

I’m sure as we commence this school year together, this is also your desire as parents, just as it is ours; that our boys and girls grow into good men and women. But what does it mean to ‘be good’?

Apparently in this post-modern age there is no absolute good or bad – it depends on our own definition. If we think something is good, then it is! If we think a certain set of values or characteristics are good, then that’s fine. Or if we can’t decide for ourselves what is good then we let others do it for us – our politicians, our media, our idols, even our educational authorities. However, as a group of parents who have chosen to send your children to MECS, I’m sure you have your own ideas about what it means to raise up the next generation of good people.

The Bible tells us that to be good we need to follow God’s way. We need to love mercy and to walk humbly with Him. We need to be people of love and compassion. To be good, we need to see the ‘other’ – we need to be actively engaged in, and with, a hurting world. We need to be careful stewards of God’s creation. We need to see the goodness in each one of us, because we have each been created in God’s image. To be good we need to act responsibly in the world and towards each other. Our words and actions should build up and not tear down. We need to see the world through the perspective of a biblically-informed worldview. We need to follow the example of Christ in our living and thinking.

I’m not suggesting that as Christians we have a monopoly on ‘goodness’. Of course, through God’s grace, there are many people who don’t believe in God, but are still good. In fact, often their compassion, generosity and sense of justice put us to shame. However, we do believe in a God who sets the ‘absolute’ standard of goodness and it is this standard that should be the measure of all that we say and do here at MECS.

At different stages of a student’s development, they will want to push the boundaries. They will want a chance to explore new horizons, to be challenged and experience things outside of their comfort zone. They will wish to be heard and contribute to their learning. They will want choice, they will want relevance, yet I firmly believe our students also want to be good! They want to know their place in God’s world; they want to know who they are and they want to respond to the world in a meaningful way. They have a deep desire to be good people and to have the opportunities to keep on becoming good people.

Our task as educators is to provide meaningful and rich experiences so that our students can grow in goodness. It’s about offering a fresh, distinctive, Biblically-directed and God-inspired curriculum. Through challenge, encounter and choice; through times of activity and reflection; through being actively responsible for their own learning – we hope and pray that your gorgeous children will continue the journey of becoming good men and women of the future.

Your task is to always believe in your children, to think the best of them, to advocate for them and to model in your own life, what it is to be a good person!

What a privilege to be involved in the task of growing goodness!

Narelle
MECS Principal

---

FOCUS On... Friendships

“In order to have a friend, you must first be one.” Elbert Hubbard

Friendships are an important aspect of our lives - even more so for our children as they manage the often-complex years of growing up, discovering their place in the world and navigating the myriad of friendships they will develop over time.

As our children enter their school years, these friendships develop more out of our earshot. Some parents may even feel a little concerned that they will not know each of their child’s friends at school and whom they choose to be influenced by. However, there is much we can do as parents to help guide our children and teenagers through these years of critical relationship building. There may be days and weeks fraught with angst as our children encounter the reality of having numerous friends, differing personalities and misunderstandings. Developing the strategies to deal with friendship conflicts, tricky situations and issues of bullying are lifelong skills that will stand them in good stead for the years ahead.

From an early age, we can have conversations with our children about what makes a good, healthy friendship. What are the qualities we look for in a friend? These may include: honesty, trustworthiness, friendliness, dependability, humor, faith-filled and forgiving, just to name a few.

Lead by Example

Our children are often more influenced by our actions than the words we speak. Do you model what healthy friendships look like in your own life? Do you sometimes have to make difficult decisions about friendships and reinforcing boundaries?

By modelling your own positive friendships, you are leading by example to show your child the value in nurturing these relationships.

Finally, always keep the lines of communication open with your children when it comes to their friendships. Ask questions about how they are managing with friendships and how are they seeking to be a good friend to others. There will be times when friendship issues arise and they may likely need your guidance in working it through.

Encourage your child to pray for their friendships and seek ways to encourage others.

Sharon
Middle School Teacher
SKETCHER’S SCOOP

Great Start to the Year!

From all reports, last week was a great start to the year. Teachers commented on how settled and positive the students were; students seemed to be happy to be back into the swing of it and parents could get back into their ‘normal’ routines as well. Our new families were contacted by phone to ‘check in’ that our ‘newbies’ also had a good week. It seems as if that was the case which is great to hear. We thank God that this school is a happy and safe place to come each day and we pray that the ‘vibe’ of last week will continue throughout the year!

Communication with Parents

As we begin another year of partnership together, we want to affirm that good communication is central to that. We want to make sure that our communication with one another is always positive, productive and God-honouring. This is the case regardless of whether it is between student and teacher, student and student, parent and teacher or even between parent and parent! We are in the process of finalising a useful guide for parents to let you know who to contact when. This will ensure that your communication is targeted to the right person. However, it is the responsibility of all of us to communicate well. Let’s honour our partnership together by committing to this in 2016.

MP Science Incursion

Last Wednesday, our Middle Primary scientific core studies unit, Change Happens, was kick-started with a visit from the mad scientist Ben, from Fizzics Education. The students were treated to an array of colourful, explosive and messy experiments that linked in with what they will be studying, and tested their skills of predicting, observing and concluding. Despite my classroom floor being covered in a fountain of steaming green foam, all of us thoroughly enjoyed the experience and the students were able to gather some ideas for their own mini scientific projects later in the term.

Alistair
Middle Primary Cluster Leader

VIP Program

Each week in the primary classrooms, a VIP is selected! Depending on the cluster level, different responsibilities and privileges come your way. You may be able to sit on the comfy lounge to complete your lessons, you might be able to snack throughout the day, you might get to choose what activities and games the class gets to play, you might even get to bring in a special toy or treat from home. VIP’s finish the week by coming to meet with me in my office, where we enjoy morning tea together and chat about life in the Primary School. It gives me a great opportunity to meet and get to know each of our primary students. It is also one way in which we acknowledge that each student is a Very Important Person, known and loved by God, their family and our school!

Instrumental Lessons

As we begin the year, you might want to consider instrumental music lessons for your child. Our tutors are ready to go and would love some more students. Our instrumental program covers a wide range of instruments including guitar, drums, piano, violin and vocal. Penny, our new Instrumental Music Coordinator can be contacted by emailing. More information is on page 7 of this newsletter.

VIP Program

Each week in the primary classrooms, a VIP is selected! Depending on the cluster level, different responsibilities and privileges come your way. You may be able to sit on the comfy lounge to complete your lessons, you might be able to snack throughout the day, you might get to choose what activities and games the class gets to play, you might even get to bring in a special toy or treat from home. VIP’s finish the week by coming to meet with me in my office, where we enjoy morning tea together and chat about life in the Primary School. It gives me a great opportunity to meet and get to know each of our primary students. It is also one way in which we acknowledge that each student is a Very Important Person, known and loved by God, their family and our school!

Instrumental Lessons

As we begin the year, you might want to consider instrumental music lessons for your child. Our tutors are ready to go and would love some more students. Our instrumental program covers a wide range of instruments including guitar, drums, piano, violin and vocal. Penny, our new Instrumental Music Coordinator can be contacted by emailing. More information is on page 7 of this newsletter.
MECS Notes

After School Care
We’ve had a number of parents already sign up this year to try after school care, and make use of the free trial period. If you are considering using the service there are still places available.

Some parents are paying as little as $8 per session per child, dependent on the specific government rebate for each family. Children can be enrolled for just one day or up to five days, per week.

Our parents who use the program are reporting that the children love it and it is very convenient for parents.

Numbers are increasing but we still need more enrolments to keep this service financially viable.

If you are interested please contact me through the office (free trial continuing for the next two weeks).

Nicole
Community Relations

Whole School Assembly
On Friday February 19 at 9:30am we will hold our first Whole School Assembly for the year. Please join us as we come together to pray for a blessing on the year, and celebrate our community. A cuppa and some morning tea will be available in the staffroom from 9am-9:30am. We’d love to see you there!

Nicole
Community Relations

Extra Parking
Our school neighbours (to the left of the Kinder parking) have kindly offered that on special school event days when traffic is extremely congested in the lower car park, we can make use of the grassed area in the front of their property for parents to park. This is next to the school: enter via the gravel service road. If you park in this area, please be mindful to exit via the driveway. It is important that we do not drive through the front yard or any of the neighbours’ gardens.

Student ICT Agreements
An email has been sent home about the Student ICT Agreements for this year. They need to be completed online by February 29. Thank you.

Mic
ICT Coordinator

GT Dates
9am PUMP Room
Week 4 Mon 22 Feb SP Red (Mel Dykstra)
Week 6 Mon 7 Mar MP Red (Justine Brookes)
Week 8 Mon 21 Mar JP Echidnas (Kaye Smith)

Meet the New Staff

Welcome Back To...

Friends of MECS

Cook Off Day and Community Freezer
Our first Cook Off day for 2016 is planned for Friday March 4. We would love your help. Please let me know if you can help on the day - even a few hours is appreciated!

In the meantime our Community Freezer is empty and we have a number of families in need of meals. Can you help us by contributing a few meals? Please put meals in disposable containers and write the date and all ingredients used.

Thanks so much!

Nicole
Community Relations

Kiss and Drop
The change to our Middle School timetable this year has had an impact on the flow of traffic in the Kiss and Drop. Could we please ask for your patience as we all adjust to these changes. Please give way to the buses in the Kiss and Drop area and let them move freely in and out. The quicker the buses can get in and out, the quicker the traffic can start to flow more freely again.

Thank you for patience.

Nicole
Community Relations
The first week of school is done and dusted! It was great to see everyone settle in. It looks like it will be a good year!

Ranges TEC staff

The following is a list of Ranges TEC staff and their various roles:

- Philip, Director
- Sue, Administration/Student
- Dee Dee, Administration/Finance, VET Courses
- Tim, Curriculum Manager
- Ric, Year 10 Homeroom Teacher, Horticulture Trade Teacher
- Paul, Year 10 Homeroom Teacher, Sport
- Julie, Year 11/12 Homeroom Teacher, VCAL Coordinator, Supported Education Coordinator
- Glenn, Year 11/12 Homeroom Teacher, Hospitality Trade Teacher
- Greg, Year 11/12 Homeroom Teacher, Furniture Making Trade Teacher
- Phillip, Building & Construction Trade Teacher
- David, Engineering Trade Teacher
- Vicky, Hospitality Trade Teacher
- Mark, Learning Assistant
- Lance, Chaplain
- Russell, Trades Assistant, General Maintenance
- Christopher, IT Support

Financial Assistance

CSEF (Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund) will be provided by the Victorian Government to assist eligible families to cover the costs of school trips, camps and sporting activities.

If you hold a valid means-tested concession, pension card or are a temporary foster parent, you may be eligible for CSEF. A special consideration category also exists for asylum seeker and refugee families. The allowance will be paid to the school and will be credited to your account.

The annual CSEF amount per student is $125 for primary school students, $225 for secondary school students.

How to apply

Contact the school office to obtain a CSEF application form or download from www.education.vic.gov.au/csef. For the CSEF application closing dates and more information about the fund visit www.education.vic.gov.au/csef.

MECS Notes

Note from Annora

Dear MECS community,

As you may have heard, I have taken a step back from my role as a Middle School Music Teacher this year and had planned to continue on in the Instrumental Coordinator role. However, due to unforeseen family circumstances, I have decided to resign from the Coordinator role and remain as one of the vocal teachers in our Instrumental Program one day a week. I have loved being part of the wider Music Program for 8 years and feel blessed to have been part of leading it’s development and growth. Thank you for your support and encouragement through the years and for allowing me the opportunity to speak into and guide the musical journeys of your children.

Blessings in Christ,

Annora

Exciting news in the Primary School

This week there was some exciting news shared in the Middle Primary Red class. Justine is expecting her first baby. Her class were thrilled to see the scan - pictures of the tiny new baby - and have started suggesting possible names! We are thrilled for Cameron and Justine and look forward to the baby being welcomed into the world in July this year. We will be keeping the MP Red parents fully informed as we get closer to the time, with news of teacher replacement. We also heard happy news from our recently returned Primary teacher, Jess, who is expecting her second child in July. Jess is working as our Prep PE teacher and SP Blue teacher for Art and one period of Numeracy. Congratulations!

Di

Assistant Principal - Primary

Parents are warmly invited to attend the Whole School Assembly

Friday Feb 19, 9.30am
in the MECS Gym

Coffee in staffroom 9-9.30am
First Day of Kinder for Possums and Koalas!

The four-year-old children came bounding into the Kinder on Wednesday - their first day of Kinder. Once bags were unpacked and put away the children spent a short time in their morning welcome circle. We focused on how to greet others and sang a song:

When I see my friends,  
We like to go and play.  
First we do three friendly things,  
To have a real fun day.

Number one is ‘look’,  
Number two is ‘smile’,  
Number three is ‘say hello’,  
Let’s go and play awhile!

The children were off to a fabulous start! Then it was time for investigating and playing.

Wendy
Early Years Coordinator

The 3 year olds and Sarah, our new Assistant in the 3 year old group, have started the year fabulously. Orientation sessions went really well and the children have settled right in and have already begun to learn about the culture of our Kindergarten, including the routine for washing hands before eating their snack, wearing their hats outside and sitting together on the mat.

The K3s have also learnt each others’ names in their small groups. They have met their special Kinder pet friend (Bluebird/Rosella) that they will have an opportunity to take home throughout the year for a week.

Well done K3s. We are going to have a wonderful year of fun, games, songs and creating memorable moments, learning about our Lord and Saviour.

Lee
3 Year Old Kindergarten Teacher
Senior School News

Congratulations to Georgia-Rose VCE 2016 who has been awarded a place to study Biology at Melbourne University's prestigious Extension program. This program provides students with an opportunity to study at university during Year 12, gaining valuable academic skills and getting a head start on future studies.

As an Extension Program student, Georgia-Rose will complete first year Biology alongside her current Year 12 subjects. The program provides an academic challenge and allows her to explore Biology at a more advanced level. Students who successfully complete subject areas as part of the Extension Program and subsequently enrol in a University of Melbourne undergraduate course will be granted credit for that study, if the completed subjects can be taken as part of the chosen degree.

Being granted credit provides the option of accelerating through a course, or of having a slightly lighter study load at some stage during the degree. Alternatively, students may decide not to receive credit but instead obtain an exemption from a subject which gives time to take additional subjects and thus gain a broader degree.

Georgia-Rose who has an ambition to become a medical doctor, will begin her study program at Melbourne University in the last week of February.

Frog Bog Restoration

In 2007 The Age newspaper ran an environmental project competition to support the then infant ‘Earth Hour Event’, with prize money of $10,000 for first place, $5000 for second place and $2000 for third place. Members of the community were invited to put forward submissions for this money; the sole criterion being the restoration of the natural environment.

We put forward a proposal based on the construction of a frog bog. This was to replace the habitat of a creek that ran parallel to Hawkins Road on the original school property. This creek was buried and replaced by a pipe when the school sold off the blocks bordering Hawkins Road in order to fund the building of the Senior School.

The committee looked favourably on our proposal and awarded us the second prize. The VCAI class of 2008 designed and built the original bog and its viewing walkway and platform. However, some of the plants bordering the bog grew up through the rubber lining to the point that the bog only held water over the few days of heavy winter rain.

So in the last term of last year, a number of students joined me in restoring the bog. It was dug out, lined with concrete, smoothed over with a layer of cement, painted with a rubber membrane and finally covered with a layer of soil (to provide a Yabby habitat). And then God provided the rain. We planted two species of local water plants and this has enticed at least 3 female frogs to lay eggs. We have now got hundreds of tadpoles (species unknown). A special thank you to Darcy (Narelle’s son), John (MECS grandparent), Peter and Steve for technical advice as well as the many current Year 11 and 12 students who gave up numerous lunch times as well as holidays to restore this bog. Enjoy.

Dr Roger F
VCE Coordinator

MECS Notes

Enrol now to learn an Instrument at School

The Instrumental Program at MECS has now begun for the year. It provides a wonderful service to the school community, broadening the scope of educational opportunities offered. We are blessed to have a strong team of Instrumental teachers that coach, encourage and model a love for God and a love for music.

Let me introduce myself. My name is Penny and I am the Instrumental Music Coordinator, having taken over from Annora this year. I have been teaching piano at MECS for over 6 years and am a parent of two students in the Senior School. I love teaching here because there is such a nurturing spirit and love for God that sees each child as unique and born with a God-given purpose. I look forward to meeting with many of you, chatting and answering any questions throughout the year. I work in conjunction with the classroom music and performing arts teachers to provide a cohesive and unified program across the whole school.

We are currently taking enrolments in piano, keyboard, guitar, singing, violin and drums. It is the perfect time to think about learning an instrument in 2016 at school. I encourage you to pick up an Instrumental Enrolment Form at the Main Office. If your preferred instrument does not appear on the form, please submit it anyway and I will be happy to discuss the options with you.

Some benefits of learning an instrument:

- Learning an instrument can assist with improving your memory, increase concentration, coordination, learning, language and comprehension.
- Students who study music from an early age do better at a range of subjects.
- Playing an instrument helps develop kid’s creative thinking and motor skills.
- Music helps kids become more active listeners.
- Learning an instrument fosters patience, perseverance, self-discipline and confidence.
- Music is beneficial to your overall well-being and can relieve stress.

And if you still need more... It’s FUN!

We are very excited with the opportunities in our Instrumental and Performance Program this year. 2016 brings some wonderful performance opportunities for all students who learn an instrument (including those who learn outside of school). In partnership with the classroom music teachers, there will be a range of Performing Arts groups held during the week for students to be a part of. There will be more details next week.

For further information, please contact me.

Penny
Instrumental Music Coordinator
## 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.

### 2016 Term 1 Week 2: 8 Feb - 14 Feb

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fri 12 February</td>
<td>SP Swimming</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2016 Term 1 Week 3: 15 Feb - 21 Feb

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tues 16 February</td>
<td>Year 11 &amp; 12 Basketball Foundations Connect Morning Tea from 8.45am Staffroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>JP Wild Actions Incursion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed 17 February</td>
<td>MP Swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SP Scienceworks Excursion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year 9 City Day Excursion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>VCE Music Excursion 4.30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri 19 February</td>
<td>Pre Assembly Parent Morning Tea Staffroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9am</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Whole School Assembly 9.30am Gym</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>SP Swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sat 20 February</td>
<td>Working Bee including Breakfast 7am-1pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2016 Term 1 Week 4: 22 Feb - 28 Feb

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon 22 February</td>
<td>Years 7-9 Swimming Carnival</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues 23 February</td>
<td>Year 9 Basketball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>JP Minibeast Dress Up Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed 24 February</td>
<td>MP Swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs 25 February</td>
<td>Year 10 Basketball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri 26 February</td>
<td>SP Swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New Parent Dinner 7pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 2016 Term 1 Week 5: 29 Feb - 6 Mar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon 29 February</td>
<td>Middle School Connect Morning Tea from 8.45am Staffroom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tues 1 March</td>
<td>Year 12 PE Excursion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed 2 March</td>
<td>MP Swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Year 8 Basketball</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>MP Community BBQ 5pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thurs 3 March</td>
<td>Years 7-10 Interschool Swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fri 4 March</td>
<td>SP Swimming</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>K4 Connect Morning Tea from 8.45am Staffroom</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Bus Boarding Trial

**15 February to 26 February**

For the next two weeks we are going to run a trial for students who catch the MECS buses. This trial does not affect students catching the Martyrs bus. Students will board MECS buses where they are parked near the gym rather than at the Kiss n Drop. This will ease traffic flow and make Kiss n Drop safer and calmer. Students affected will receive briefings about how this will work. Primary students will be escorted by a supervising teacher to the buses at 3.30pm. A letter with details will be sent home to families that use the MECS buses. If the trial is successful we will continue with this arrangement going forward.

**Dr Gerry B**  
**Administration Manager**

### First Working Bee

**Sat 20 Feb, 7am-1pm**

**BBQ Breakfast**

- VCE Music Excursion (last week)
- Foundation Connect Morning Tea (last week)
- Bush Telegraph Term 1 (Foundations Newsletter)
- Year 9 City Camp Letter
- Kinder Connection Newsletter 1
- Year 7 Immunisation Program (last week)
- VCE Units 3 & 4 SAC & SAT Dates (last week)
- Year 7 and 8 Clifford Camp Letter
- Year 9 City Camp Letter
- 4 Year Old Kinder Parents Morning Tea

**Notices sent home this week and on Website**