Whole School Assembly - Tomorrow 9.30am
Please join us!

JP's meet the Mini Beasts
Ambrie has a little friend come to visit
Dealing with Teenage Angst

Over the past twelve years, I have had many parents ask for advice for dealing with their teenager. “He always seems to overreact”; “She’s always crying over little things”; “He’s so stressed and he’s only in Year 7”; “She never tells me anything”; “He’s acting out, but I don’t know why”… Without a teenager of my own, one might ask my qualifications… but as a teacher and an Assistant Principal, dealing with teenage angst is a big part of what I do… and I love it! Teenagers have so much to teach us about life and about ourselves. So here are some ideas from the desk of the Assistant Principal…

1. Listen actively, and listen to the end.

Teens want to have a conversation, but they won’t attempt it unless they know that Mum or Dad is willing to listen. It’s frustrating for all of us when someone listens just long enough to try to fix it, or to offer advice or a lecture, when all you want is a listening ear. Well intentioned parents may miss the real issue because they stop short of listening to the end. They may feel like they’ve listened and helped their child, when they actually didn’t really hear the heart of their teen.

Be an active listener: stop what you are doing, and look at your teen. Give your full attention. Listen to what they are saying, and repeat back to them what you have understood the issue to be, to make sure you’ve heard them correctly. Give advice and answers only if they ask for it (no matter how hard that might be!)

Teens will often test you - they’ll share just enough to see how you will react. If you jump in with a lecture on how it was ‘back in the day’ or a sermon on purity, you may as well install a ‘No Vacancy’ sign on your forehead. Your teen won’t be coming back anytime soon.

So what happens after you’ve listened to the end? When you’ve heard the heartbeat of your teen, the challenges he or she is facing, and the emotions they are battling? Then you are equipped to help your teen with the real problem and offer realistic guidance to help them find his or her way.

2. Validation

Teens need to know that it is okay to have whatever feelings and emotions they are experiencing. Whilst we as adults may not fully understand or comprehend why they react the way they do, or why the emotional outburst is happening, we must never dismiss or make them feel that they are not allowed to express their feelings. The key is validation.

Validating = sending the message ‘Your feelings are okay’.

“I can see that you are really upset by what your friend said to you.”

By simply validating, without solving, you are opening up room for acceptance and dialogue. You are telling your teen – ‘come as you are… I’m here to listen and to try to understand’. 

Invalidating = sending the message ‘You should not be feeling the way you do’.

Some examples of this might include; “You’re overreacting”, “If you can’t handle this little thing, how are you going to cope in Year 12?”, “Get over it!” “Don’t act like a baby.”

Empathy and understanding will earn trust and respect.

Our ability to feel comes from being made in the image of God. When God sent his son to earth as a man, Jesus gave us the true example of how we should live and act. And while we don’t know much about how Jesus dealt with teenage angst, unrequited love, or too much homework, we do know that he was fully God and fully man – full of emotions. He wept. He was filled with joy. He got angry. Your teen may appear overly dramatic, sometimes even irrational, but they have a right to their feelings. This is how God made us.

3. Accept the emotion, not the commotion

There will be times when your teen needs to learn how to cope with the emotions they are feeling. They have a right to be upset, but they do not have the right to be rude or disrespectful. It is important to acknowledge and validate feelings, but also to teach the appropriate way to respond.

The key to this is to remain calm, be respectful yourself and show understanding.

Avoid fighting fire with fire - a yelling match will not end well. Nor will it teach your teen how to deal effectively with issues in the future.

As we read in Ephesians 4:26-27:

“Go ahead and be angry. You do well to be angry—but don’t use your anger as fuel for revenge. And don’t stay angry. Don’t go to bed angry. Don’t give the Devil that kind of foothold in your life.” The Message

And my final thought...

4. Pray

One of the most powerful things in your teen’s life will be the support of a praying parent. Pray that they will feel validated and accepted. Pray that the Holy Spirit will help guide your teen, because you and I won’t always be around; and as we know, sometimes life can be hard.

Karissa
Assistant Principal - Secondary
Ranges TEC

It was great to be able to introduce the Ranges TEC staff to you last week. This year, Ranges TEC will feature regularly in our newsletter, with stories and photos to give you an idea of what happens there each week. In the past, Ranges has been managed by an Advisory Panel made up of members from each of the founding schools. MECS now has oversight of all operational and governance issues and so Ranges TEC becomes in reality, a second campus of MECS. We are really excited by this development and look forward to sharing with you some of the great things happening to support students that are ‘wired’ for a more hands-on and applied learning environment.

Changes to Bus Pick-up

As communicated last week, we are trialling an alternative ‘departure point’ for students who catch the MECS buses. Congestion in the Kiss’n’Drop zone has been an issue for some time, but with the later finish time for our Middle School students, we have seen further gridlock as parents leave it that little bit later before picking up their secondary students. By taking the MECS buses out of this zone we are hoping to ease the traffic flow and make it safer for everyone. If you have a student on one of the MECS buses, you will have received more detailed information on this change. The Martyrs bus will still come through the kiss’n’drop zone about 3.40pm.

Thanks for your patience and co-operation as we get this right.

Staff Devotions & Connect Morning Teas

One of the facets for good teaching and learning, as discussed in our book, Transformational Education, is the importance of being in relational community. This is true not only for our students, but for all of us. Every morning our staff meet in various combinations for staff devotions. On Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday we all meet together as a whole staff to share God’s Word and begin the day in prayer. These devotions are led by our pastoral care groups and this year we are focussing on the different names of God. The aim of these groups is to make sure that every staff member is cared for, and well supported in prayer. As with all members of our community, our staff often face challenging situations in their own life, or that of their family and friends. We don’t want this to just be a place where people come to work, but a place of love and support.

It was also good to see our Connect Morning Teas start again this week. This is one way we make sure that our parents also feel part of this relational community. School is a big part of family life and feeling part of that community as parents is really important. Friendship, support, prayer are just some of things that parents enjoy when they connect with other parents. We know that our Connect Morning Teas only suit some members of our community, so please make the most of other opportunities to be part of MECS!

MECS Notes

New School Crossings

Yarra Ranges Council have advised us that in March they will be constructing a school crossing for Hawkins Rd and a school crossing for the York Rd service road. This is great news as we have always been concerned about students needing to cross those roads on their way home or to the bus stop. This will allow for official crossing supervision with the power to stop traffic, this is far better than our current arrangements with a teacher supervising the crossing of Hawkins Rd. There will of course be some disruption during construction, but that will hopefully be minimal they say. We are thankful to the council for responding to our concerns.

Dr Gerry B
Administration Manager

Whole School Assembly

Tomorrow - Friday February 19 at 9:30am we will hold our first Whole School Assembly for the year. Please join us as we come together in the gym 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
After School Care

3C MECS has a new Supervisor

If you have been using the after school care program this year you will have noticed that Casey, who did a lovely job of running the program last year, isn’t there anymore. The past few weeks have seen a number of different people running the program. You will be happy to know that 3CKids has now appointed a new supervisor to run the program on an ongoing basis. Hayley has started at MECS this week and below is a bit of information about her...

My name is Hayley. I have been working with children my whole life. It is my passion. I have worked in childcare and OSHC for 8 years.

I have two gorgeous children, so you will find me running around playing with them when I am not working.

I enjoy sewing, cats and continually learning different teaching styles and techniques.

I have a Monash University Teacher’s Aid certificate, a Diploma of Children’s Services, a certificate in Auslan, as well as animal husbandry.

I look forward to working with you and your children

Hayley

If you are interested in using this service please contact me through the office.

Nicole
Community Relations

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
Cook Off Day
Can you help out? Our Cook Off day will be on Friday March 4. If you can help even for a few hours, that would be great. You can let me know by emailing Nicole.

Frozen meals
In the meantime the freezer is empty. If you are able to cook a meal at home, label it with all ingredients used and the date cooked, and drop it at the office that would be most appreciated!

Prayer email
We have a weekly email that goes out with prayer points for our community. Would you like to join this team of praying parents? Email prayer@mecs.vic.edu.au and you will be added to the mailing list.

Nicole
Community Relations

New Book by Janette
Janette, who has been a casual relief teacher for over 30 years at MECS, has just had her second book published. Patches of Godlight – poems, prayers and contemplations includes extracts from her prayer journal alongside poems and colour photographs, making it an ideal gift. It has 152 pages, including 23 in colour, and is available for $30 from the front office. Janette is also available as a guest speaker at churches, women’s groups or camps. You can contact her by email: janettefernando@iprimus.com.au.

“This is the work of a courageous, sensitive, vulnerable, new millennium Psalmist, who like David of old, finds intimacy and faith in the realities of life. From the laundry to the cathedral, from the tragedy of NY 9/11 to the desert outback of Australia this is poetry on a journey to the Promised Land.”

John, Author, Preacher, Founder of God’s Squad

“Patches of Godlight is a raw, honest and inspiring account of the wrestle so many of us face in life; the questions we seek of God and the desire to know Him with greater depth and intimacy. This book reflects how, in our deepest struggles, and darkest hours, the Lord shines His light through the cracks and crevices of our lives, to remind us of his eternal presence.”

Sharon, Author, Educator

Congratulations Brenton
At our weekly SS assembly, Brenton (Year 11) was presented with a certificate from the University of Melbourne, acknowledging his acceptance into their prestigious Kwong Lee Dow Young Scholars Program.

Year 10 students who are very strong academically across a wide range of subjects and who show clear leadership skills are encouraged by their teachers to apply. Up to five students per year can be nominated from each school. Around 10,000 students across Victoria applied of which 750 students were accepted.

MECS Notes
Back to school asthma spike
Every year there is a well-documented rise in asthma flare-ups and hospitalisations when students return to school after the Christmas break. Asthma Australia has information for parents of students with asthma to help them prepare for school. Asthma Australia’s website and social media provide the latest information, including a checklist of what to do to help your child and a survey to complete to determine the impacts for parents/carers.

Asthma Australia recommends that you talk to school staff about your child’s asthma and the school’s medication policy, provide an Asthma Plan from the doctor and supply a spare reliever puffer and spacer for your child’s use at school.

For primary aged students:

Asthma Kids
Asthma Kids is an online, interactive tool to help primary school aged children understand what it’s like to have asthma and what they can do to help. Watch one of the introductory videos then take Chester’s Asthma Trail. There are prizes to win too! www.asthmakids.org.au

For secondary aged students:

Young People and Asthma
Asthma Australia is working with key organisations supporting young people’s health to help improve asthma health outcomes for 12-25 year olds. A Facebook page, Young People with Asthma – Australia, provides a range of information for these young people and their supporters. Every two months Asthma Australia run a Question and Answer session that is proving very popular. Check out the page for posts and promotion for upcoming Q and A sessions.

The Kwong Lee Dow Young Scholars program allows students to access a range of seminars aimed at assisting them in their VCE as well as provide them with a taste of university life. Students are also granted guaranteed entry to the University of Melbourne’s courses when they get over a certain ATAR (that is lower than what is normally required).

We would like to congratulate Brenton, who due to his dedication, leadership and hard work both at school and in the wider community is a well-deserved recipient of this award.

Amelia
Year 10 Coordinator, Careers Coordinator, VET in Schools Coordinator
On Tuesday the Junior Primary children were privileged to experience a wonderful Mini Beast Incursion. Here are some of the great memories the children have made...

I really liked the sea star and I never knew that sea snails could grow really really big!
*Mikayla*

I liked the echidna, Rosie. When I touched her she was soft and not too spiky.
*Judah*

We got to see animals. I held a box with a tarantula. We saw a preying mantis, a Tasmanian (Tassie) echidna, a twelve legged sea star, and a scorpion. I would like to have Sam the centipede as a pet but Mum and Dad probably won’t like it.
*Finn*

I liked the sea star. I got to hold a millipede and it walked on my hand. It tickled a bit.
*Hannah*

I liked petting the echidna. It was funny when the cockroach almost fell out of someone’s hand when they were holding it.
*Keira*
MECS Notes

MECS ROCK BAND
For all you keen rockers in Middle and Senior School (Year 7-12)...
...starting Wednesday Feb 24, lunchtime, with Lance!
To be held in the Middle School Music Room.
Come along and rock your socks off!

Immunisation Packs - Year 7
This is a reminder for all parents to please complete the information and return the immunisation envelope to the school office asap, even if you do not intend for your child to receive the immunisations.

MECS Canteen
We are excited to let you know that in 2016, students from Ranges TEC will be running our canteen services every Friday starting 11 March. To find out what will be on offer, the Ranges TEC students are offering free-of-charge Taste Tester sessions to MECS students and staff at recess (11-11:30am) on the following days:

- Friday, February 26 - Year 3 to 6 (outside the PUMP Room)
- Friday, March 4 -  Year 7 to 9 (outside the Understorey)

The canteen is looking at offering salads, a hot food, sandwiches, rolls/wraps, smoothies/juice and a bakery item. The Taste Tester sessions will offer a few samples of the menu but in a mini version for our students to try.

We look forward to your feedback and appreciate your support.

Vicky
MECS Canteen

Parents are warmly invited to attend the
Whole School Assembly
Tomorrow, Feb 19, 9.30am
in the MECS Gym
Coffee in staffroom 9-9.30am
Free to good home
We are doing a kitchen renovation and our 8 year old, still good Westinghouse one and a half electric oven will not fit. If you are interested I would need to know by tomorrow (Friday) and the pick up would be next week from Mitcham.

Mooroolbark Basketball
Mooroolbark Flashes Basketball Club are taking registrations now for the winter season. Miniball to U10 - first season fee free.
www.mooroolbarkflashes.com.au

Celebrate Mooroolbark Festival Talent Quest
Call for contestants. Apply by March 4 - Entry is free.
For Musicians, dancers, singers, comedians, bands and other talents. Festival to be held on March 18 at 7.30pm, Mooroolbark Community Centre.
Contact 0417 556 848, talentquest@celebratemooroolbark.com celebratemooroolbark.com/competitions

Precision Hair and Beauty
Hair Salon in Mount Evelyn, special offers: 15% off the following cut and colour packages. Phone 97361755.
Package 1: regrowth, cut & blowave, deluxe Treatment - $110
Package 2: full colour, cut & blowave, deluxe Treatment - $130
Package 3: full colour, 15 foils, cut & blowave, deluxe Treatment, toner - $145
Package 4: 1/2 head of foils, cut & blowave, toner, deluxe treatment - $160
Package 5: full head of foils, cut & blowave, toner, deluxe treatment - $190
Package 6: 1/2 head of foils, full colour, cut & blowave, toner, deluxe treatment - $210

First Working Bee
This Sat 20 Feb, 7am-1pm
BBQ Breakfast