Junior Primary Park Rangers

Evie, Judah, Summer & Samuel celebrating MECS National Park
So what about our VCE results?

Over recent months you would have seen much in the media about VCE results and tertiary placements for this coming year. So what about our students? How did they go? Did they all get into what they wanted to do? Have they been successful?

At MECS, these are not always straightforward questions. Not because our students haven’t done ‘well’ or weren’t ‘successful’ in getting into their desired courses; but because we live out of a broader story! A story that doesn’t measure success by an ATAR score or the successful entrance into a tertiary pathway. As I say in many enrolment interviews, we are not the sort of the school that displays our ‘results’ on a banner out on York Road; not because we aren’t proud of our students and their accomplishments, but because this sort of ‘marketing’ is only part of the story!

But for the record, in that limited snapshot, our students did do well. 100% successfully completed their VCE and our highest ATAR score this year was 90.95. Across the range of subjects, there were 135 A’s and A+’s and 7 study scores over 40! Not far behind them were 16 study scores of 38 or 39. These are the usual numbers that you will see in the media. We are very proud of those students who have been gifted with academic skills, and the way these students have been faithful to their gifting. Indeed, these numbers reflect some excellent individual results.

However, there is more to the story…

MECS has always had an ‘open’ enrolment policy when it comes to VCE; all students are welcome to complete their VCE here irrespective of their academic potential. We do not encourage students to ‘move on’ if we think they are going to struggle with their studies, if anything, we encourage them to hang in there. Our Senior School functions as a warm, caring and safe community, and for some of our senior students, this is more important than any final result.

It is important to remember that the VCE has been designed for all students, not just for those who are seeking tertiary entry. Thus, students who are simply seeking the VCE certificate often don’t worry about the ATAR because their vocational path does not require this. In fact, this year, nearly 10% of our students decided not to complete exams, yet 100% satisfactorily completed their VCE.

If we are serious about a radical Christian education where each child is given the opportunity to undertake VCE irrespective of their prospects, we must also be careful about focussing too much on VCE results at the expense of an education that shines the light of the Gospel on every area of study. Obviously, the aim is to do both. However, we need to acknowledge the pressure to produce ‘good’ results at the expense of ignoring Christian perspectives in our teaching. To take this path means not adequately preparing our graduating students with the tools required to worship God in every aspect of their life. Subjects that are rich in Christian perspectives, like POI, need to be maintained and it is vital our senior students and their families understand and fully support why we do what we do.

For some time now, we have worked towards developing a really strong learning culture in the Senior School. This culture is nurtured right throughout the Senior School, ‘kick-started’ by a wonderfully organised Year 12 camp at the beginning of each year, capable and competent teachers who can build on the strong foundations laid by the staff of the middle and primary sections, excellent attendance at VCE practice exams, a supervised study centre and strong leadership across the Senior School. We believe that the emphasis on ‘academic faithfulness’ - that every student should be working to their potential and unique gifting - creates a respectful and caring environment. Not everyone is capable of being the best, but everyone is capable of giving their best!

And so, as the leader of this Christian school community, I often watch with bemusement and frustration at the way ‘success’ and ‘results’ are talked about by some other schools. However, at the core of who MECS is, and as expressed in our mission statement, we want to provide all our students “with learning experiences that challenge each student to actively live for God in His world.” It’s impossible to put a value on that!

Narelle
MECS Principal

... we want to provide all our students ‘with learning experiences that challenge each student to actively live for God in His world’.

Kwong Lee Dow Young Scholars Program

Last year Bethany (Year 11, 2017) was awarded a place in the Kwong Lee Dow Young Scholars Program for this year, hosted by The University of Melbourne. This program of events and activities is designed to support and enhance secondary studies, inspire career plans and provide opportunities to interact with University community. It also affords the participants the opportunity to mix with like-minded peers and future leaders. We congratulate Beth on this opportunity and wish her well as she participates in this exciting program.

Beth was presented with this certificate of the award on Monday at the Senior School assembly. Her Dad Steve also attended.

Heather
Newsletter Editor

Steve and Bethany with Narelle at the Presentation of the Kwong Lee Dow Young Scholars award certificate to Bethany
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. All of our new families are being contacted by phone to ‘check in’ that our new students also had a good week. It seems as if that was the case which was 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 make sure 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 2017.

MECS National Park

What a fabulous start to this initiative! Our primary yard has been virtually rubbish free and students have responded so enthusiastically to be mindful of the rubbish they produce. ‘Ranger Sketch’ has been out and about looking in lunch boxes and encouraging students to make this a normal part of what we do. In fact, students were lining up to proudly display their rubbish free lunches! Thanks to parents at home who are the ones making this happen – we appreciate your support.

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 have morning tea with me in my office. 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 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!

Welcome Foundation Students!

Last Thursday, the Geckos and Bilbies came to visit me on their first full day of school! Come and check out the beautiful tree paintings they produced with their handprints. They are displayed in the windows of my office. It is always a delight to meet the Foundation students and for them to see that the Principal’s office is not a scary place! I look forward to having morning tea with them as part of our VIP program.

A big thank you to our Primary families!

We have received a lovely letter from the Box Hill Salvation Army thanking us for the incredible generosity shown by our primary families at our Christmas Concert at the end of last year. Our donated grocery items made a huge difference to the families supported by the community service program of this church. Thank you for supporting this initiative!

FOCUS On... Starting School

We only have to think of how nervous we become as adults starting something new, to appreciate what starting school is like for our Foundation students. But it is more than that. Beginning school involves children seeing themselves as a different kind of person – a ‘school kid’, no longer a ‘kinder kid’, and that makes it a very impacting transition.

At MECS we call the transition from kindergarten ‘Footsteps to Foundation’. This starts in Term 3 involving visits from the child’s new teachers to their pre-school, several sessions of play, song and stories in the classrooms with their whole Foundation group, a visit to the specialist teachers, and finally a whole morning orientation session. Parent information sessions and opportunities to get to know one another are an important part of it too, as parents are also making a transition; some being school parents for the first time. We encourage parents to network and arrange play dates over the holiday so that the children will be greeted by friendly and familiar faces on coming back to school.

An article which reflected interviews with children beginning school reported that to help them feel secure, children like to know the routines of the day, know what they can and can’t do, and know where things that they need will be. In the Transition Reports we receive from kindergarten in comments from parents, teachers and children, we read that students would like to become familiar with the adults and children they will be spending their time with, and that they value their teachers getting to know about them individually.

This year we instigated a new kind of introduction to the school year. Instead of Foundation children coming all at once to school after a long break, they came with 3 other children in the two classrooms, had time with the Learning Assistant who helped them find their cubby hole and table and put all their lovely new school things away, and also had one on one time with the teacher to chat about holidays and family and play some rhyming, sounds and number games (a helpful assessment to see where to help the children build on their learning). The four children then had time to play in the garden together before heading home, ready to start full school days on Thursday. One child summed up the experience by saying it was “the best first day of school ever!”

We hope this “Say G’day and Have a Play” session helped the children to feel more comfortable and less daunted when they joined their class to begin big school days. We are aware though for some younger siblings, who are impatient to begin school like their older brothers and sisters, there was some disappointment that their first time at school is not long enough! Better to leave them wanting more!

When my child went to school, her teacher warned parents that our children would be ‘screamingly tired’. This is sometimes true. They definitely need sensitivity around giving them time to rest and refuel before being asked too many questions or having too much expected of them.

And it is true that some children believe that when they come home after their first day they will know all about how to read and write! It is good to draw on experiences where they have persisted to learn something like talking or riding a bike to help them see that it might take a while, but it will happen, and that we are proud of their efforts along the way.

This year’s Foundation students are off to a flying start!

Jan
Foundation Cluster Leader/Teacher
MUSIC Notes

Music Enrolment

It has been great to receive so many enrolment and re-enrolment forms for learning an instrument at school this year! If you are keen to learn an instrument or continue on with your lessons please pick up an enrolment or re-enrolment form from the Main Office and we will connect you in with one of our experienced and talented teachers!

For more information please don’t hesitate to contact me by email.

Annora
Instrumental Coordinator

MECS Notes

Immunisation Packs - Year 7

Immunisation packs were sent home this week for Year 7 students. Please make sure you complete the information and return it to the school office by Monday February 13.

Should you not wish for your details to be provided to the council, please advise the school office in writing office@mecs.vic.edu.au by Friday February 17.

If you have any questions in this regard, please contact the main office.

Photo Permissions

When you enrolled at MECS, we collected information about your consent for us to use photos of your child/ren in either school publications or social media (without names). Unless we hear from you, we will assume that you are still happy with the level of consent you provided to us at the time, and will continue to use photos of your child/ren in the same way as we have previously (or not use them, as the case may be).

If you would like to change your preferences, or check what permissions we have on file for your family, please contact the office.

Note that MECS Kindergarten obtains consent annually.

MS Art Request

The Middle School art room is in need of empty glass jars of all sizes. Please no jars that have contained nuts. We also need small/medium spray mist bottles (often used for hair care & cosmetics). If you have either of these items please send to the office. Many thanks.

Olivia
Middle School Art Teacher

Friends of MECS

Cook Off Day

One of the wonderful ways we support our community during the year is with frozen meals. We love being able to bless families who have had a new baby or those facing a difficult time by providing them with a meal. Once a term we have a ‘Cook Off Day’ to fill our Community Freezer.

Our first ‘Cook Off’ Day for the year is on Thursday February 23. Please let me know if you can help out by emailing Nicole.

It is a wonderful day of getting to know other parents and helping out at the same time!

If you are unable to help but would like to support the day, we would appreciate donations of canned tomatoes, tomato paste, sultanas, long life milk, arborio rice, bread crumbs or cash donations.

New MECS Parent Prayer group: Mondays 2.15 - 3.15pm

Join us and pray for the next generation every Monday during the school term from 2:15pm – 3:15pm.

We live in a culture that seeks to steal our children. God gives us the privilege — He calls us to intercede for them. The Lord is able, and in control.

Experience the joy of replacing anxiety with peace and hope when you pray scripturally and specifically for your child and our school.

All welcome in the Principal’s office (meet at the main office if you are unsure where that is). Bring your bible.

For more details feel free to contact Rachel.

Nicole
Community Relations

Facebook

Have you checked out our Facebook pages? They are a great way to see exciting things that are happening around the school.

Like the pages for regular updates

https://www.facebook.com/MECSPastStudents/
https://www.facebook.com/MecsPastStudents/
https://www.facebook.com/MECSPastStudents/

Wrestling News

Oceania Championships 2017

March 10-12, 2017, Pirae, French Polynesia

2017 is the 15th Anniversary of MECS Wrestling and we have some exciting news. As you might remember, in October 2016 Jack and Jacob both won their weight and age divisions at the Australian National Wrestling Championships. A couple of weeks ago, both boys were selected by Wrestling Australia to represent Australia in the 2017 Oceania Championships. MECS has graciously offered to send these two wrestlers and their coach (me) to the tournament in hopes of earning Australia a couple of gold medals. The competition should be far tougher than the Australian Championships and the boys have already begun training with me 5 times/week in preparation. As the MECS Wrestling coach, I couldn’t be more thankful to our Lord for gifting these boys with their talents and opportunities. I also acknowledge that there is no such thing as a ‘natural’ wrestler and both boys have virtually never missed a wrestling training or weight session offered at MECS some 40-50 times per year. Jacob has been faithful for around 8 seasons while Jack has been faithful since he came to MECS in 2015. Congratulations to both boys and to MECS for facilitating a successful and inclusive wrestling and weightlifting program over 15 years.

We welcome all new and returning weightlifter and/or wrestlers in 2017. The Lifting Lunch Club begins Term 2. Wrestling begins Term 3. Both programs are Wednesdays and Fridays at lunchtime and for both girls and boys Years 7-12.

Adam
Wrestling Coach
Taking Enrolments Now!

Are you planning on using the After School Care Program this year? Start the enrolment process now, as approval can take up to two weeks.

Contact the office for more details.

Money Matters

What is CSEF?

Information for Parents

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 Health Care Card or 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

School Photo Date Change

Our school photo day has changed. The new date is Tuesday 28 March.

Helen

School Services Officer

Casual Relief Teachers

If you are a qualified teacher and interested in doing CRT work at MECS for the primary or secondary schools we would like to hear from you. Please go the MECS website and download a CRT Application Procedure and Application Form. Email enquiries and applications to Michelle.

Term 1 PS GTs

Mondays 9am PUMP room on the following dates:

- Week 5, Monday 27 February
- Week 8, Monday 20 March
- Week 9, Monday 27 March

MP Blue (Ali)

MP Red (Carly)

Parents and friends welcome.

JP Parent Information Afternoon

Thursday February 16 at 2pm

Junior Primary parents are warmly invited to come along to an Information Session in the PUMP room to hear about the JP program for 2017. This is a valuable time to learn more about the JP program, ask questions and get to know other JP parents and the JP teachers. Please come at 1:45pm for a cuppa and a chance to chat. The information session will commence at 2:00pm. For those who are unable to attend, relevant information will also be sent home.

MS Lunchtime Activities

Students, please check the noticeboard for more information and if you want to participate make sure you sign up!

Tuesdays: ‘No Homework Club’. No need to sign up, just come and catch up on your work in the library.

Wednesdays: Make a short doco film - this will be for the duration of the year.

Thursdays: All things Japanese

Fridays:

- Term 1: Performing Workshop - stand up comedy and drama intensive
- Term 2: Public speaking
- Term 3: Drawing – learn different styles
- Term 4: Latin dancing

Leonie

Middle School Learning Assistant

Money Matters

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MECS Notes

Congratulations to Savannah

We have just been informed that Savannah (Year 11) has been selected in the inaugural female Eastern Ranges ‘Towards Zero TAC’ girls Under 18 AFL team. This team plays all over Victoria and if you wish to watch Savannah play, she is scheduled to play a game at Richmond’s home ground (Punt Road) on Good Friday. Members of the Eastern Ranges Under 18 side may be selected to play for the Vic Metro U-18 team and at the end of the year to be taken, at the national draft, by one of the eight teams that currently play in the exciting women’s AFL competition (currently running). Savannah’s hard work and determination over many years has been rewarded and we are all very proud of her. Congratulations Savannah!

Dr Roger F
VCE Coordinator

MECS is a Child Safe School

You will no doubt be aware of the extra checks that are being put in place for all organisations that work with children. MECS has fully embraced any steps we can take to protect all of our students to make us a Child Safe School. Part of this will have some impact on parents who volunteer in the classroom, and for school activities such as excursions and camps. We are so thankful for parent helpers and the lovely partnership opportunity that volunteering provides. This year, as part of our accreditation as a Child Safe School, our aim is for all parent helpers to participate in a Child Safe briefing session. These briefings will occur as 5-10 min session within other parent events eg the Foundation & JP parent information sessions. We will also offer one or two other opportunities for parents to attend. Parents who would like to assist in the classroom can then take away the Child Safety Policy booklet, read it and return the Acknowledgement Slip to the office. All parent helpers must also have a current Working With Children Check (WWCC) registered with the School Office before committing to becoming a Parent Helper.

We will continue to provide you with information on opportunities for you to attend the Child Safety briefings.

Natasha
Enrolments and Office Manager

Foundation Students
First Day of School

Last Thursday was a big day for our Foundation students and their families as they began their Primary School journey. After kisses, hugs, and goodbye waves, students from Foundation Bilbies and Geckos settled in for a wonderful day of learning, playing, and making new friends. There was so much to explore and learn as students engaged in Investigations, played in the MCG during recess and lunch time and experienced a new, daily routine.

Highlights of our first day included: walking to the Principal’s office where the students met the Principal for a lovely chat and created a beautiful artwork with all of their handprints; after lunch, Marrie, one of our teacher librarians, visited the classroom to read a story; this was followed by a walk to the library for more wonderful stories and for students to learn how use a browsing stick to mark the place on the shelf where their book came from. Back in the classroom, we placed the first star on our ‘100 days of school’ chart – all very exciting!

Well done to all of our Foundation students – we are so happy to welcome you to our school community.

Steph
Foundation Geckos Teacher

Meet the New Staff

Natalie
MS & SS Teacher

Andrew
Senior Maths & Physics

Brett
Learning Assistant

Sarah
Specialist Maths

Paul
Humanities Teacher

Naomi
3 Y old Kinder Teacher

Sam
Learning Assistant

Marilyn
Learning Assistant

Beth
Learning Assistant

Steph
Foundation Teacher

Sarah
PS Teacher

Rachel
PS Teacher

Ange
PS Teacher

New Roles
MECS National Park is looking fantastic! JPs have embraced the National Park and become National Park Rangers. They made their own hat with reminders about what it means to be good stewards of our wonderful creation. Containers have replaced rubbish, and any rubbish that has been brought to school has been put back in lunchboxes. Let’s keep up the great work of keeping our school looking beautiful.

Fiona
JP Teacher
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.

Garage Sale
Massive Garage Sale on Saturday 11 February 8am to 4pm.
221 Cambridge Rd, Mooroolbark.
Downsizing, everything must go! Jewellery, crockery, wall hangings, toys, furniture, washing machine, books, games, craft, glasses, plants and much more!

Mooroolbark Talent Quest
Celebrate Mooroolbark Festival is holding the Red Earth Unearthed talent quest on Friday March 24 at 7.30pm at Mooroolbark Community Centre. Apply online at celebratemooroolbark.com/competitions/red-earth by March 10. Free Entry.

Scorpions Basketball Club
It is time to register for the winter season at SCYC Scorpians Basketball Club. You are invited to join this family-friendly club, playing a sport that you can enjoy all year long through all weather conditions. All new registrations will receive a 50% discount for your second season. Contact Glen at scycscorpians@gmail.com

Car for Sale
Looking for your first car? Quality and safety at a good price. 2009 Hyundai Getz. Easy to drive auto, registered until August 2017. Only done 130,000 km. RWC.
Yours at the great price of $4,995
Only selling because we need to update to a family car. Ring Pete 0478 417 178.

House Cleaning Services
Currently seeking an additional one or two clients for house cleaning services. Tasks include vacuuming, mopping, dusting, kitchen/bathroom/toilet cleaning, etc., but job can be tailored to suit your requirements. $30/hour. Call Heidi Geluk on 0403 573 792 if you'd like a little help.

Free Parent Seminar
The impact of pornography on young people has been described as an emerging public health crisis. What can parents do? The issue will be addressed in a free seminar for parents hosted by Independent Schools Victoria on Wednesday 15 March 2017, from 6 pm to 8 pm. Hugh Martin, a psychotherapist and founder of the Man Enough program, will provide expert advice and lead the discussion.
The seminar - the first of the Parent Seminars at ISV program - will be held at the ISV offices at 40 Rosslyn Street, West Melbourne, and light refreshments will be served. ISV is close to public transport, and there is plenty of parking.
To register, send your name to Student.Services@is.vic.edu.au with the words ‘Parent Seminar’ in the subject line.

First Working Bee
Saturday 18 February, 7am-1pm
Starting with Breakfast

Lost
A gold necklace with Jesus on a cross has been lost. It is of family significance so please keep an eye out for it. If found could it please be handed into the office so it can be returned to the Year 9 owner.

Found
A Pandora ring was found on the Martyrs Bus.
Also found at school was a Mooroolbark Flashes Basketball medal and some crystals in a plastic container.
Please see the main office if you think any of these belong to you.

Notices sent home this week and on Website

• Kinder Connections 1 (last week)
• MP Community BBQ
• VCE Basketball Notice 2017
• Year 9 City Camp Letter
• Year 7 Clifford Park Camp Letter
• Year 8 Man Camp Letter
• JP Term 1 Newsletter
• Careers Newsletter 7 Feb
• Year 11 Legal Studies Excursion Notice
• Year 8 Inspiring Girls Camp Letter
• Year 7 Camp Abseil Tower Permission