Dear Senior Primary Parents,

Welcome to Term 4. This term promises to be an exciting term, especially for our Year 6s who will complete their last term of Primary School!

Thank you for attending Parent-Teacher interviews. It’s always enjoyable and valuable to chat with you about your child.

This year we are continuing our practice of running separate Year 5s and 6s Core Studies units in Term 4. The Year 5s’ topic will be 'Wonders of Earth' and the Year 6s will be exploring issues related to leaving Primary School and the transition to Secondary School. This unit is entitled 'The Next Step'.

Term 4 is ‘Hat Term’. Your child needs a broad-brimmed (at least 5 centimetres) hat to be allowed into the playground and for participating in PE classes. Hats are available from the school office for $8.

Please support us in following the dress code. The main issue for us is girls just wearing leggings without a skirt or shorts on top. If you are not clear on this please see us for a copy or look it up on the school website. Following the dress code shows respect and co-operation with the school’s policies. Time following up dress code incidents is time that could be much better spent!

YEAR 6 parents: please note the extra information included after this page for you about our transition program.

We are looking forward to a great term,

Ben Clark, Mel Dykstra, Michelle Ketelaar
Senior Primary teachers

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### Dates for your Diary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday October 19</td>
<td>Year 6 excursion to Hard Rock Indoor Climbing Centre</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday October 20</td>
<td>Year 12 final assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday October 27</td>
<td>Year 7 2017 Fun, fellowship and food information evening (for current Year 6 families) 6-9pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday November 16</td>
<td>Year 5 IMAX excursion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday December 6</td>
<td>Orientation Day – Year 5 and 6 students</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday December 9</td>
<td>Graduation – Year 6 students only. No Year 5 students allowed except siblings of Year 6s (their turn next year!)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday December 12</td>
<td>Primary Christmas Celebration 6 – 7 pm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday December 14</td>
<td>Last day of school for students - 2pm finish</td>
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Transition to secondary school is a big step. Even though our MECS kids have the huge advantage of staying at the same school and knowing most of the students who will be with them in Year 7, the time leading up to the end of Year 6 can be a very anxious time for many.

In our experience, the anticipation of transition is far more stressful for the students than the actual transition. In response to this, we have developed a program to support our students and hopefully eliminate as much stress and anxiety as possible. Below is an outline of this program:

**The Next Step’ Transition Unit**

- **Excursion to ‘Hard Rock’ Rock Climbing Centre**
  This experience provides [team bonding](#) through encouragement, [personal challenge](#), and a fun time together! When we return to school, we compare rock climbing with transitioning to Year 7 – you’d be surprised at how rich the analogy is!

- **‘All About Me’ project**
  This project encourages the students to look back on their life so far and [reflect](#) on how far they’ve come and their significant moments, events and people in their lives thus far. Seeing how far you’ve come, and what you’ve already achieved, helps build confidence to take on new challenges. This project is also an appropriate activity to do at the end of a significant era in their lives - the Primary School years.

  The project involves the making of a [poster](#), which includes photos of significant people/events in their life and has an [oral presentation](#) component where they present their poster to the rest of the Year 6s. This is a ‘taster’ of speaking in front of an audience - we start small to build confidence for their final task of this unit – their graduation speech. Most of this project is completed at school, depending on how well your child utilizes class time given.

- **Visits from Middle School people**
  Sharon Witt (or one of the other Middle School teachers) comes down to speak to us about [life in Middle School](#). She brings current Year 7 students (who were at MECS in Year 6) with her. After Sharon has presented different information regarding Middle School, the students are given time to [ask questions](#) of both Sharon and the Year 7 students. We also provide opportunity for the Year 6s to write down any questions they have before Sharon and the Year 7s come down. This helps those who are not confident to ask their question/s in front of everyone else. Any questions that haven’t already been answered by the end of the session are then answered by Sharon and/or the Year 7 students.

- **Visits to the Middle School area**
  During one of the weeks this term the Middle School students all go on camp. This provides us with a great opportunity to spend some [time in the Middle School classrooms and area](#) without the busyness of the Middle School students being present. We take our Year 6s on a thorough tour of all the Middle School buildings and have some of our lessons in the Middle School classrooms. This all helps to grow [familiarity](#) and hopefully make students feel more comfortable in this physical area of the school.
• **Public Speaking**
  At graduation, the students will each give a very short *speech* reflecting on the Primary years and on their transition to Middle School. During the lead up to graduation we guide the students in writing their speeches and teach them some things about public speaking. We *practice* the whole graduation ceremony and the students are given ample time to practice their speeches, both in small group and larger group situations; receiving encouragement and feedback from us as they do this.

• **Official transition events (eg Year 7 Information night, Orientation Day)**
  You will have been sent home information regarding this. This part is run by the Year 7 teachers, so any questions are best directed to the Middle School coordinator, Brad Turner on bturner@mecs.vic.edu.au.

• **Handover**
  Another benefit of transitioning from MECS Year 6 to MECS Year 7 is that detailed handover of your child in terms of their academic or other school related needs can occur. We, as Year 6 teachers, will meet with the Year 7 teachers before school begins next year and hand over any relevant and important information to the Year 7 2017 teachers. If your child has specific educational support needs, we will meet with Jo Miller (the Middle School Education Support Coordinator) so that she is aware of what your child’s needs and abilities are.

• **Homework**
  One of the things we will be focusing on in our 'Next Step' unit is personal organisation and accountability. This will include some added homework requirements some weeks, especially if your child does not complete tasks in class time. Please contact us if this is an issue for your child.

  We very much enjoy teaching this unit and spending this time with the Year 6 students. If you, or your child, have any questions or anxiety about transition, please feel free to contact us.

**Please note the Graduation date. A separate letter will be sent home with information regarding the Graduation details.**

Warm Regards,

Mel Dykstra and Ben Clark