Dear Senior Primary Parents,

Welcome to 2017! We hope you’ve had a relaxing and positive holiday time with your children.

Following is some general information about Senior Primary that may be helpful for you to know.

**Teaching Team**

The teaching team for SP this year is: Ben Clark (SP Blue), Michelle Pinxt (SP Green) and Melissa Dykstra (SP Red). Sarah Piesse will teach Numeracy in SP Red, Scott Mealy will continue as our Music teacher, Rachel Jaraba as our Indonesian teacher and Jason Brown as PE teacher. Mic Dempsey (ICT) and Chris Bishop (Drama and Production) will also be involved in the Friday Morning Program. We will also continue to have the assistance of Kate Weekes (SP Green) and Sarah Piesse (SP Blue) and we welcome Helen Amery (SP Red) as our Learning Assistants. Helen, Kate and Sarah will be working in the classrooms during Literacy and Numeracy sessions to assist the teachers.

**Core Studies Unit: Trees and Forests**

The Core Studies unit for this term is Trees and Forests. During this unit, we learn about what an ecosystem is and look at examples of different kinds of ecosystems. The students learn about different types of forests, including our own school bushland, and also visit the Mountain Ash Forest in the Toolangi State Forest when we go on camp. Discussion and learning about human use of forests and appreciation of trees and forests is also covered. Throughout the unit, we continually ask the questions: ‘What do Trees and Forests have to do with God? What does this have to do with us? How should we be responding to this area?’

**Camp Jungai**

Central to our unit is our camp at Camp Jungai in Rubicon. More detailed information about this will be sent home very shortly, but for now please mark the dates into your calendar:

- **Camp 1** (Year 5)  Monday 20 – Wednesday 22 March
- **Camp 2** (Year 6)  Wednesday 22 March – Friday 24 March

**Graduation**

Another essential date to mark for Year 6 parents is Graduation. This will be on **Friday, 8 December**. Other dates for future events will be sent home during the year at appropriate times.
Other Matters

- **PE** is Monday for SP Red, Tuesday for SP Green and Wednesday for SP Blue. Please ensure that the students come dressed in the MECS green PE polo, shorts/tracksuit pants and appropriate footwear and hat. Leggings/skins are no longer allowed for PE unless they have shorts or sports skirt over the top. PE clothing requirements are compulsory.

- **Sport** activities will take place on Friday afternoon. It is compulsory for students to come dressed in appropriate footwear.

- **Homework** will be set weekly – both Numeracy and Literacy homework will be given out on Monday and is to be returned the Friday of the same week. Please send a note explaining why homework is incomplete or not handed in if your child is unable to complete their homework. Students will have one 'grace' per term, after this they will be required to complete a lunchtime detention. Both completing and handing in homework are important organisational skills that will help to prepare your child for Secondary School and improve their current personal organisation and accountability. Please note that the emphasis is on the process of setting time aside to work on homework and then returning it. We do not set a large amount of homework in Senior Primary and do not wish the work to be onerous. If your child is unable to complete their homework after working on it for more than 40 minutes per week (combined Numeracy and Literacy), please see your class teacher so that we can modify their tasks. Likewise, if the tasks are causing a high level of stress for your child, please talk to us. Homework should not be something that adds undue stress to your child or to your family life.

- **Art** sometimes gets messy! Please send along a labelled 'smock' to be worn to protect clothing when necessary. An old shirt may be used for this purpose. If you do not send a smock and your child gets messy we cannot be held accountable!

- **School Attendance**: Please make sure you ring the school’s attendance register if your child is going to be away from school.

- Please send along a box of tissues with your child for a shared class supply – we go through many of these each year, particularly in winter.

- **Extra Stationery**: Your child’s extra stationery will be kept at school and supplied when your child uses up/loses items. Please note that your child is expected to keep their books in good condition - books that are graffitied on or defaced will be asked to be replaced at their expense.

- **Hats** are compulsory for **Recess/Lunch, PE, Sport and excursions during all of Term 1 and 4**. Please ensure your child has an appropriate hat (broad brimmed all around). In compliance with our sun-smart policy, children who do not have a hat will be required to sit in a specific covered area and will not be allowed into the playground.

- **MECS Dress Code**: Please enforce the MECS dress code. Having to follow this up takes time that teachers could be using in other ways and having the students abide by the dress code helps teach them respect for rules and procedures (even though they may not agree with them!). We appreciate your support in this. If you are unaware of our dress code, please see your class teacher or read a copy of it on the MECS website. Our biggest issue in this area is girls’ shorts. Their shorts must come down to at least mid thigh. Please help us by not allowing your daughter to wear shorts shorter than this. Please also do not allow your daughter to wear leggings to school without a skirt /shorts over the top.

- **iPhones** and other electronic items are not to be used during school hours. If your child travels by public transport and needs to take a phone or other electronic item to
school, these must be handed in to the office at the beginning of the day. The item can be picked up at the end of the day. Failure to comply with this procedure will mean the item is confiscated – firstly overnight and then for a longer period of time.

- **Early Departure/Late Arrival:** If your child is late or has to depart from school early, please ensure that your child signs the ipad in the office.

- **Water Bottle:** Students will be encouraged to have a water bottle on their desk and are strongly encouraged to bring fruit (unprocessed – container of dried fruit or nuts OK) for 'fruit break' to be eaten sometime around 10am. This snack time helps boost their fruit intake and is a valuable source of energy during the long morning session.

- **Rubbish Free Lunches:** As you know MECS will no longer dispose of students’ rubbish and wrappers. We encourage you to send rubbish free lunches with your child. Please name your plastic containers.

**Key Dates for Term 1**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Welcome Back Morning Tea</td>
<td>Monday January 30</td>
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<tr>
<td>Whole School Assembly</td>
<td>Friday February 17 at 10am</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grandparents and Special Friends Day</td>
<td>Thursday March 9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Labour Day Public Holiday</td>
<td>Monday March 13</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Photos</td>
<td>Friday March 17</td>
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<td>SP Connect Morning Tea</td>
<td>Monday March 20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Camp 1 (Year 5)</td>
<td>Monday March 20 – Wednesday March 22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Camp 2 (Year 6)</td>
<td>Wednesday March 22 – Friday March 24</td>
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<tr>
<td>Parent/Teacher Interviews</td>
<td>Monday March 27, Thursday March 30</td>
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<tr>
<td>School Term Ends</td>
<td>Friday March 31</td>
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If you have any questions or concerns about your child or about what’s happening in our classes, please feel relaxed and welcome to come and discuss them with us. We greatly value the opportunity to work in partnership with you.

We look forward to a fantastic year!

Kind regards,

The Senior Primary Teachers

*Ben Clark, Michelle Pinxt, Melissa Dykstra*