



# Welcome

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Welcome to Year 9 at Mount Evelyn Christian School! I am so pleased that we get to be a part of your school journey. All of your teachers and administration staff look forward being a part of your learning journey this year. You are so valued and important to us, and it's an absolute privilege to be able to teach you.

“

*For we are  
God's handiwork,  
created in  
Christ Jesus  
to do  
good works,  
which God  
prepared in  
advance for  
us to do.*

Ephesians 2:10



*Mrs Karissa Esselbrugge*  
Assistant Principal (Secondary)

# Index

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<b>A Unique perspective</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>An Opportunity for Growth</b>	<b>24</b>
Transformative Christian Education	5	Year 9 Open Village	25
The Unique Nature of Year 9	6	Camps	26
School Values and Motto	7	Sporting programs	27
Transitioning to Senior School	8	Performing Arts	27
		Student Leadership	27
<b>A Dedicated team</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>A Celebration of Achievement</b>	<b>28</b>
Our Commitment	11	Celebrating student diversity	29
		Reports	30
<b>A Community of Learners</b>	<b>12</b>	Parent-Teacher Meetings	30
Pastoral Care	13	<b>Support and Resources</b>	<b>31</b>
Weelbeing	13		
Restorative Practice and Discipline	14		
Living in Community	15		
Dress code	16-17		
<b>A Program for Learning</b>	<b>18</b>		
A Biblical Approach	19		
Term Tasters and Electives	20		
Special Week and Wonder Days	20		
Examinations	20		
Victorian Curriculum	21		
The Timetable	21		
Homework Guidelines	22		
Schoolbox	23		
Technology	23		
Mathematics	23		





# A Unique Perspective

# A Unique Perspective

## Transformative Christian Education

**Learning at Mount Evelyn Christian School has a clear purpose: seeing the transformation of students and teachers so that they might have the mind, heart and life of Christ and be his disciples. At the centre of our convictions about education is that schooling is for responsive discipleship. It is our hope and endeavour that students will follow Jesus Christ in obedience.**

Discipleship involves responsiveness. As students engage with God's world and word they are encouraged to respond with wisdom and knowledge, with discernment and creativity, with playfulness and perseverance, with love and compassion. Responsive discipleship in the educational setting of the school is characterised by unwrapping God's gifts, sharing each other's burdens and working for shalom.

As disciples, students and teachers will understand themselves to be participants in God's work; the total renewal of creation which started with the resurrection of Jesus, was demonstrated in the faithful activity of his followers, and will come to completion when Jesus comes again in power.

MECS introduces students to the goodness of God's creation, the radical distortion in every dimension of life caused by human rebellion and the renewal of all of life in the birth, life, death and resurrection and coming again of Jesus.

Students will understand that they are invited to participate in the great mandate to develop and steward God's world, the great commission to be witnesses to God's coming Kingdom, the great commandment to love as Jesus loves, and the great communion to participate in the covenant community of God's people. They learn to be 'God's people in God's place under God's rule.'

Transformation involves shaping the desires of students and teachers towards the kingdom for the purpose of 'shalom', the integrated wholeness, wellbeing and harmony in every dimension of life that God intends for his creation. Transformation of heart, mind, spirit and life is the work of the Holy Spirit and the school shapes its educational experiences and settings in openness to the direction and guidance of the Spirit.

*Transformational Education,*  
(2014, MECS, p19)



# A Unique Perspective



## The Unique Nature of Year 9

*Understanding how to best support our Year 9 students is an important challenge for both parents and teachers of this age group. Students undergo significant physical and mental development during this time. They grow in independence and competence, learning to make choices that pertain to friendships and school life. Loving guidance from responsible and trusted adults in their lives is more important than ever.*

It is not only our students who can find this transition a challenge to navigate. Parents can often also experience a 'letting go' of their child.

Rick Wormeli, an experienced teacher and author, writes of students in this age group:

*"They move from concrete to abstract thinking and from absurdity to rationality, and back again. They deal with tremendous pressures from peers, parents, and society, all the while searching for identity, purpose, security, and acceptance. These shifts produce strong emotions. Acting out, feeling hurt, defining authority by defying it, and alternating between being a child and being an adult all create situations that demand guidance from compassionate adults who have lived through these phases."*

At MECS, our teachers seek to understand the unique challenges of this age group and constantly strive to provide developmentally appropriate learning opportunities. We desire to help our students thrive as they adapt to the increasing independence of the Secondary school years. We walk along side them during these years of change and uncertainty, as they begin to understand their unique, God given identities and move toward independence.

Much time and research\* has gone into understanding the changes that occur during these years. Young adolescents:

- Experience rapid, irregular physical growth;
- Have varying maturity rates;
- Experience restlessness and fatigue due to hormonal changes;
- Need daily physical activity because of increased energy;
- Have preferences for junk food but need good nutrition;
- Continue to develop sexual awareness;
- Display a wide range of individual intellectual development;
- Are intensely curious and have a wide range of intellectual pursuits;
- Prefer active over passive learning experiences;
- May show disinterest in conventional school subjects;
- Respond positively to opportunities to connect learning to real-life situations;
- Are developing a capacity to understand higher levels of humour;
- Are inquisitive about adults and are keen observers of them;
- Are increasingly capable of assessing moral matters in shades of grey;
- Rely on parents and significant adults for advice.

\*This We Believe: Keys to Educating Young Adolescents, (2010: Association for Middle Level Education).



# Junior Secondary Motto & Values

*Humility, Thankfulness, Self-Control, Co-operation and Adventurousness have been chosen as values because of their relevance to all young people. Each of these values meets the individual where they are at, forms a wonderful basis for rules and expectations, and assists to clearly articulate the culture we hope to cultivate in our Year 9 student cohort.*

**“Courage to believe and act.”**

This motto encapsulates how our faith and trust in Jesus results in Christ-like actions that reflect the Middle School values. It takes courage these days to truly believe in Jesus and to put faith into action.

## Humility

Often misunderstood or misinterpreted, ‘true humility is not thinking less of yourself, it is thinking of yourself less’ (CS Lewis). It is the quality of being courteous and respectful of others. Acting with humility is not about denying our own value or self worth. Rather, it affirms the inherent worth of others.

## Thankfulness

Thankfulness is a wholehearted response. It stems from a consciousness of God’s gifts and blessings. It is a joyfulness that erupts into praise. The Apostle Paul frequently encourages us in the Bible to ‘be thankful’ (Colossians 3:15), to ‘give thanks in all circumstances’ (1 Thessalonians 5:18), and says that our lives should ‘overflow with thankfulness’ (Colossians 2:7).

## Self-Control

Self-control is about acting with our ‘wise mind’ rather than with our immediate highly emotional/irrational or highly reserved mindset. Self-control is the ability to control our own behaviour. Sometimes this might also include controlling our immediate response to ‘run in fear’ of a challenge.

## Adventurousness

To be adventurous is to stretch ourselves beyond our comfort zone. It is about taking risks (in learning and experiences) within the safety of the school environment. It is not about recklessness, but rather it is about challenging ourselves and maintaining a growth mindset.

## Co-operation

Co-operation is a willingness and ability to work with others to accomplish a common goal. It works to maintain positive relationships with family, teachers and peers. It is about taking responsibility for the part we play in helping to bring out the best in all. Co-operation is welcoming, open, works within guidelines, listens and values.





# Transitioning into Senior School



# Transitioning into Senior School

## Supporting Year 9 Student Transition

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*As students step into the final years of their schooling, many important decisions need to be made around career pathways and subject choices. An important aspect of providing a smooth transition from Year 9 into Senior School is the delivery of timely and helpful information to both students and parents.*

As early as August each year, Year 9 students are required to select some subjects for Year 10. To assist in this process, two formal information sessions are provided. The first occurs in class where students learn of their options and also have the opportunity to talk to some current Senior School students about specific subjects. This is followed by an information evening and subject “expo” for parents and students. Ranges TEC is also an important part of this evening as students may elect to study there fulltime in Year 10 or for just one VET (trade) subject per week. These information sessions are followed by private parent/student interviews with myself and Education Support staff (if necessary) upon request. Sometimes more focussed, individualised discussions are needed to determine the most suitable pathway for students.

It is equally important that information about our transitioning students is passed on in a timely manner. Our secondary Education Support team and the Year 9 staff work very hard to provide relevant information prior to the Orientation Day in December so that students feel confident before the beginning of Year 10 that their needs will be understood by their new teachers. On Orientation Day students also complete a written survey that encourages them to share anything that they would like their teachers to know about them. This is always responded to well, indicating that students welcome this opportunity.

Once in Year 10, each student is allocated a pastoral care teacher. This teacher supervises students in their study periods and also intentionally “checks in” with students, encouraging them to share any concerns. Where student welfare concerns are raised, referrals may be made to leadership staff, parents, Education Support or the school counsellor. Having said that, all of the teachers in the Senior School have a heart to serve our students holistically so students are always welcome to chat to any staff member that they feel comfortable with.

Any feedback about the transition process into the Senior School is always welcome as we continually seek ways to improve the experience for our students.



*Mrs Amelia Koole*

Senior School Coordinator, Careers Coordinator & VET Coordinator



# A Dedicated Team



# A Dedicated Team

## Our Commitment

**MECS provides curriculum, teachers and a learning environment that recognises that Christ is Lord of all of life. We see each child as being created in God's image, with unique gifts that are to be celebrated and nurtured.**

*"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."*

**Ephesians 2:10**

This verse speaks to three areas: identity, purpose, and belonging:

- **Identity** – Students are created by God and are works of art whom he loves. They are not handiworks in waiting but are valued here and now.
- **Purpose** – God has plans for each of us. We encourage students to try new things, achieve their academic potential, discover skills and passions, and do good works now and in the future.
- **Belonging** – We are God's handiwork. This is a collective term; students belong to a community and we encourage them to seek out opportunities to serve others.

As teachers, we are committed to:

- Share a Christ-centred perspective of the world we live in and study,
- Being a caring and responsible guide to the students in our care;
- Providing a nurturing and purposeful learning environment;
- Providing timely and valuable feedback to students regarding learning tasks;
- Providing parents with both constructive feedback and encouragement regarding student progress;
- Making learning engaging and interesting;
- Challenging our students through academic rigour;
- Trying new things and being innovative in our teaching;
- Understanding and providing for the learning needs of each student;
- Providing models of what we expect of our students;
- Connecting student learning with real stories and real people in the real world.

*"The Years 7-9 teachers at MECS are a cohesive and incredible team, and specifically skilled to work with this age group. They are more than teachers of subjects, they are holders of hearts who walk ahead of the kids and come behind them. The young woman I am raising is stronger, more confident, and has an increased capacity to dream her future because of the teachers around her."*

- MECS Parent





# A Community of Learners

# A Community of Learners

## Pastoral Care

*“Academic success and personal growth increase markedly when young adolescents’ affective needs are met. Therefore, every adult in developmentally responsive middle level schools serves as an advocate, advisor, and mentor. The concept of advocacy is fundamental to the school’s culture, embedded in its every aspect. Advocacy is not a singular event or a period in the schedule, it is an attitude of caring that translates into actions, big and small, when adults respond to the needs of each young adolescent in their charge.”*

*This We Believe: Keys to Educating Young Adolescents*, (2010: Association for Middle Level Education, p35).

**Every Year 9 student has a pastoral care teacher. While all teachers look out for the needs of students, the pastoral care teacher has the prime responsibility.**

The pastoral care teacher leads devotions with their students regularly, will write the developmental profile for school reports, and is the first person to contact if your child is facing challenges at school. The pastoral care teacher also takes students for Humanities classes.

Similar to how primary homeroom teachers are the liaisons between school and home, pastoral care teachers will contact parents with both ‘good news’ stories, as well as any issues that may arise concerning their child. Similarly, we encourage parents to contact the pastoral care teacher first with any issues. If an issue or query concerns a specific subject area, parents are encouraged to contact the subject teacher directly. In most cases, contact with the relevant teacher will clear up any concerns. However, where an issue has not been dealt with to your satisfaction, please contact the Year Level Leaders.

We encourage parents to remember to work with us! If your child tells you something about school that concerns you – please partner with us by seeking clarification and/or exploring solutions for your child’s concerns.

## Wellbeing

While the wellbeing team at MECS supports students across the school, we recognise that Year 9 is a crucial time in the development of young people as they go through Secondary School.

As this is also a period of significant developmental change, we seek to support Year 9 students in a variety of ways. The wellbeing team is actively involved in orientation activities, class discussions and school community events as we seek to build relationships and educate students on ways they can nurture their wellbeing. A range of lunch clubs are available for all Year 9 students, developed for the purpose of improving social connections and a sense of self-worth. Some students may also benefit from accessing individual counselling support to help them navigate the challenges they experience in daily life.

To contact the wellbeing team, students or parents may speak with the homeroom teacher or email [counselling@mecs.vic.edu.au](mailto:counselling@mecs.vic.edu.au)



# A Community of Learners



## Restorative Practice & Discipline

*Our approach to discipline follows the principles of Restorative Practice. This approach recognises and helps students understand that relationships are damaged when behaviour goes wrong, or poor choices are made.*

Students are continuing to learn how to respect themselves and others – their fellow students, teachers, and parents. Students learn to take responsibility for their actions and understand that there are consequences for their behaviour.

This approach acknowledges each person's perspective, helps to build relationships and helps students work towards restoring the problem. Students learn that issues and problems can be worked through resulting in forgiveness, healing and restoration. We believe that this process is in line with a Christian perspective – we forgive each other as God forgives us. We seek restoration of relationships, as God does with us.

Discipline incidents that centre around a breakdown of relationship are approached by having a 'Restorative chat' using the following four questions:

1. *What is the problem?* We help students identify what went wrong, and understand that the person is not the problem, the problem is the problem.
2. *Who is affected?* Who was hurt by these actions? How were they hurt?
3. *How can we fix the problem?*  
We assist students to see the need for an apology and for them to put right the relationship and things that have gone wrong. They identify that the relationship and trust has been damaged.
4. *How can we make sure this doesn't happen again?* We help students identify why it happened and what underpinned the action that caused the problem. Consequences appropriately applied help the student consolidate their understanding and set right the broken relationship.

Where necessary, parents will be informed of behavioural issues with their child. Parents support the school and the school supports parents by working together when there are problems. A timely phone call, email or meeting for serious incidents, keeps parents in the loop and ensures that students know that all the adults in their lives are working toward their growth and wellbeing.

Restorative Practice underpins our staged approach to discipline in Year 9. Teachers outline behavioural expectations at the beginning of each year, and students who choose not to follow these guidelines can expect follow up. The stages range from classroom management strategies (stage 1) such as a student being reprimanded and/or moved, through to a behaviour contract (stage 4) where parents, students and staff are working together to bring about behaviour change. These stages are outlined in the student diaries; we encourage you to familiarise yourself with the processes and discuss them with your child.





## Living in Community

*For all communities, there are ground-rules or guidelines, to ensure there is clear direction of expectations. The Year 9 community is no different. While most of the following rules are directed to students, it is important that parents understand what is expected of their children at school.*

### **ATTENDANCE**

For late arrivals, students must report to the main office to sign in. Administration staff will ensure the late arrival is immediately reflected on the student's class roll. Any early departure from school requires the parent/guardian to sign the student out via the front office. A note/email should be provided to inform staff of reasons for early departure or arranged via office staff.

### **MOBILE PHONE USE**

At the start of the school day, Middle School students are expected to hand in their mobile phones to their devotions teacher. They will be stored safely and securely in a purpose built locked cabinet for the day and returned to students at dismissal time. Students are not allowed to be in

possession of or use their mobile phone at school during school hours (8:45am–3:30pm) without teacher permission. Students found in possession of or using their phone without express permission can expect to have it confiscated and will be issued with an afterschool detention. The student can collect their phone from the main office at the end of the day.

### **INAPPROPRIATE LANGUAGE**

MECS does not condone inappropriate language such as derogatory comments or swearing. If your child is coming home reporting that offensive language is being used in the classroom or the playground, please contact their pastoral care teacher as a matter of urgency.

### **OUT-OF-BOUNDS**

If a student is discovered outside of the designated areas of the school, they will be issued with a lunchtime detention. Each classroom has a map of out-of-bounds areas. Middle School students are not permitted to enter the Primary School or Senior School at any time or access the Understorey without teacher supervision. Students are also not allowed to access classrooms at recess or lunchtime without direct teacher supervision.

### **PORTABLE SPEAKERS & HEADPHONES**

Students are not allowed to play music at school (either through headphones or speakers) without express teacher permission. If a student does not follow these expectations, they will be issued with a lunchtime detention. Generally, students will not be permitted to listen to music with their headphones. Firstly, it does not allow students to learn how to work in environments where there may be some distractions; and second, it can have a negative impact on the development of a positive, co-operative class culture. In some circumstances, such as when directed by Learning Support staff, students may be given permission.

### **CHEWING GUM**

Students are not permitted to chew gum on the school premises or on any school event. If a student is found chewing gum, they will be asked to dispose of the gum in a bin, and issued with a lunchtime detention.

### **CARING FOR OUR ENVIRONMENT**

God has blessed us with a beautiful school, and we are all expected to be good stewards - being careful to avoid littering or causing damage to property.

# A Community of Learners



## Dress Code

*The dress code is intended to allow students guided freedom and the opportunity to demonstrate responsibility in making sensible and considerate choices.*

Student dress should:

- support the central function of the school – learning;
- be appropriate and comfortable for a school setting;
- support the health and safety of students, including abiding by sun-smart and hat policies;
- be neat, modest, clean and in good repair;
- not have images that are inconsistent with the Christian ethos of the school (e.g. violent images, skulls).

### TOPS

- No underwear showing/not see through;
- No exposed midriff;
- No cleavage;
- No exposed underarm;
- Sleeves need to fully cover the shoulder and have underarm seam.

### SKIRTS & DRESSES

- Secondary School - Skirts/dresses must at least come to the tips of fingers when standing, arms straight and hands on thighs;
- The top of the dress (bodice) must meet the requirements for 'TOPS', or another top must be worn to ensure compliance.

### SHORTS, TROUSERS, JEANS & LEGGINGS

- Shorts must come to the tips of fingers when standing, arms straight and hands on thighs
- All long pants - no backside or underwear exposure at any time;
- Leggings of any brand (including MECS leggings) are permitted without outer garments, but they must be **modest** and **fully opaque**.
- No ripped clothing.

### HATS

- In Terms 1 & 4, students must have hats with them at all times, and on their heads when not under the roof-covered ways;
- Appropriate and recommended hats are available from the office. Alternative hats may be worn but must have a full brim of 6cms.



## Dress Code

### JEWELLERY & PIERCING

- Secondary School – two pairs of studs or sleepers (maximum 2 cm drop), no bracelets or anklets;
- No other facial jewellery in Middle School (Years 7-9). Senior School (Years 10-12) - one discrete facial piercing is permitted. All other jewellery must be removed (NOT covered);
- Rings: Secondary School – safe and subtle, maximum of 2;
- Necklaces should be single, subtle and safe (but are not allowed in Physical Education, Manual Arts or Science Labs).

### HAIR

- Should not be extreme and must be within range of natural hair colours;
- Should not cover eyes;
- Secondary School - hair may be worn down, except for subjects where it might pose a risk to safety (e.g. Physical Education, Science Labs, Manual Arts, Cooking classes etc). All students who have hair that is shoulder

length or longer need to have a hair tie with them to enable them to tie it back when required.

### FOOTWEAR

- Must be safe and provide good support;
- Must have enclosed toe and secured heel (when on tiptoes, the heel stays on);
- No Ugg boots, slippers, thongs, sandals or flimsy slip-on shoes.

### PHYSICAL EDUCATION & SPORT

- Runners (or other appropriate footwear) must be worn;
- Shorts should be no shorter than the thumb tip when standing (hands by sides);
- Years 7 – 10: shorts/skorts/track suit pants (no exposed zips or buttons)/fully opaque leggings and MECS sport top to be worn in PE and Sports sessions. No jeans.
- MECS Sporting Events - students are encouraged to dress in the colour of their tribe for these events;

- Interschool Sporting Events - students competing in interschool activities must wear **BLACK** shorts/skorts/opaque leggings or track suit pants with MECS sport top.

### MAKE-UP

- Secondary School – subtle make-up appropriate for school. No extra application during the day;
- No fake nails permitted.

All schoolwear options bearing the MECS logo are compliant with this dress code, and are available for purchase. Please ask at the office for more information.





# A Program for Learning

# A Program for Learning

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## A Biblical Approach

*At MECS, we believe that we live out of the biblical story. When we present a unit or topic, we seek to understand how our area of learning fits within God's story, and how God's story speaks into our topic. We acknowledge first and foremost that this world belongs to God - he created it and continues to sustain it.*

When developing curriculum, MECS teachers not only consider the topic in relation to the biblical story, but also our faithful responses to the learning of the unit. *While many educational approaches can focus on 'head' learning, MECS recognises that education is for the formation of the whole person.* This includes the intellectual, but also the emotional, physical, social, and spiritual aspects of our students. We desire to see our students grow in wisdom and character. We use *Threads* to help shape possible responses that relate to the head, heart and hand.

The *Threads* include:

- Loving God
- Building Community
- Caretaking Earth
- Celebrating Life
- Challenging Distortions
- Discovering Patterns
- Embracing Diversity
- Expressing Words
- Getting Wisdom
- Imagining Innovations
- Imitating Humility
- Overcoming Setbacks
- Pondering Creation
- Practising Hospitality
- Pursuing Peace
- Reflecting Creativity
- Relishing Play
- Seeking Justice
- Shaping Culture
- Showing Mercy
- Transforming Thinking
- Understanding Vocation
- Unwrapping Gifts

# A Program for Learning

## Electives

In Year 9, students have the exciting opportunity to select electives according to their interests. They need to select one elective from Line 1, and another elective from Line 1. Each elective runs for a semester, so students can choose different electives for Semester 2.

### Elective Line 1

- Horticulture
- Fine Art
- Design and Technologies- Wood
- Food Technology
- Visual Communication and Design
- Digital Technology and Robotics
- Drama
- 

### Elective Line 2

- Business, Justice and Entrepreneurship
- STEM
- Fine Art
- Year 9 Indonesian
- Music
- Food Technology
- Design Technologies - Textiles

## Special Week and Wonder Days

\*Students in Year 9 choosing to continue their Indonesian studies will have one elective block.

### SPECIAL WEEK

MECS has a long tradition of running an exciting program called **Industry Week**. Held in mid Term 3, the 'normal' curriculum is set aside for the week, and a special focus takes place. Year 9 students learn about running a business enterprise. The highlight of Industry Week is the **Showcase Evening**, where family and friends are invited to come and share in their learning, and also taste and purchase some of the products that students create for the Year 9 market.

### WONDER DAYS

These two days, held early in Term 2, are an opportunity for students to explore areas under the STEAM umbrella - Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Mathematics. Students will choose the activity(s) in which they will participate over the days. Activities will vary each year, but in previous years, these groups have focussed on flight, robotics, coding, forensics, geometric art, marble runs, game theory, mythbusters, fisheries (an overnight trip to Snobb's Creek), bridge engineering, the solar system, Lego systems, and 3D design utilising our 3D printer.

## Examinations

Year 9 students participate in examinations for English, Mathematics and Science in the last week of Term 3. By conducting examinations at this time, we get the opportunity to assess student understanding of the curriculum, and how much they can accurately apply their knowledge. This also helps teachers clarify misunderstandings that students may have.

Teachers help students develop a repertoire of revision techniques that will help in their examination preparation. These skills will continue to hold students in good stead as they progress through the Secondary school. Each examination covers all of the material that has been covered in the subject for the year to date.



## Victorian Curriculum

Our curriculum is based on the Victorian Curriculum (<http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au>). Teachers carefully discern and interpret the formal curricula and frame it for their own settings and the needs of the individual learners.

The Victorian Curriculum is the state's formulation of the Australian Curriculum. These frameworks provide curriculum developers with the content and achievement standards that learners should know and attain as they progress through the school.

## The Timetable

The school day is made up of four 75-minute lessons (or quarters) and cycles over a fortnight. Between/after each quarter is a break time of varying lengths – each serving a different purpose.

Each day begins with devotions in the students home class at 8:45am and the day finishes with a homeroom time from 3:20-3:30pm.

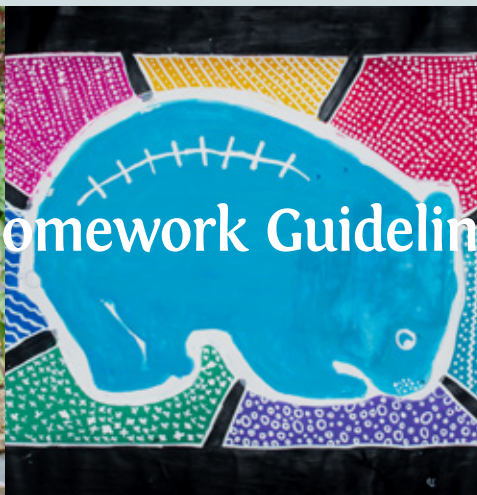
The forty lessons of the fortnight are distributed as follows:

Subject	Year 9
English	5
Mathematics	6
Science	5
Humanities*	9
Health	2
Scripture	1
Physical Education	2
Sport	2
Electives	8

\* Humanities includes History, Geography, Civics and Citizenship, and Economics.

# A Program for Learning

## Homework Guidelines



*Everyone has an opinion on homework. Some prefer students do all their work at school so that they have space for other activities outside of school hours. Others prefer receiving homework that helps with consolidation, extension, and the development of sound study habits. Whatever the opinion, research continues to support the importance of homework in the development of students as effective life-long learners, particularly during Secondary school.*

The quality of homework tasks plays a significant role in its usefulness. Homework should be developmentally appropriate, related to class work, and help foster effective study habits. The setting of homework should also take into account the need for a balanced lifestyle in our students. It should not 'take over' home life in place of family time, sports and recreation, employment, and church/youth group activities.

We encourage students to develop good study habits including maintaining a regular homework routine. It will involve a gradual age appropriate increase in homework expectations as they move

through the Secondary School. The rough guide is that they will do homework 4 nights a week of approximately 50-60 minutes.

### Teachers will support learners by:

- Providing homework tasks with purpose and clear instructions;
- Providing students with enough time to complete homework, including the consideration of home obligations and extracurricular activities;
- Ensuring students have the necessary resources and skills to complete homework tasks;
- Ensuring homework can be completed with minimum to no assistance;
- Assessing homework and providing timely and practical feedback and support;
- Setting varied, challenging and meaningful tasks related to class work to suit the students' learning needs;
- Equipping students with study skills so they are better prepared for independent study;
- Helping students develop organisational and time-management skills.

### Parents/care-givers will support learners by:

- Speaking positively about school subjects even if they were a challenge to you;

- Encouraging a growth mindset in learning, praising effort rather than ability;
- Ensuring there is a balance between the time spent on homework and family time/recreational activities;
- Communicating to teachers if there are any concerns related to homework;
- Encouraging effective time management – with the use of printed or online diaries/calendars;
- Providing an area that has good light, is quiet and free from distraction for your child to do their homework;
- Linking homework and other learning activities to the family's culture, history and language, linking with relevant services, clubs, associations and community groups.

### What students can do when there is no assigned homework:

- Read – it does not need to be a school novel or text;
- Practise typing skills;
- Practise mathematics skills;
- Practise physical education skills;
- Practise drawing skills;
- Play a musical instrument;
- Write a creative piece;
- Have a discussion with parents around an article in the newspaper/online;
- Further research into a topic they are studying or simply an area of interest.



## Schoolbox



## Technology



## Mathematics

**Schoolbox** is the learning management system utilised at MECS. This online portal allows your child to see and interact with content that their teacher has made available to them. All teachers are using Schoolbox to post assignment details, PowerPoint slides, lesson notes, and to enable online homework submission; students are able to use Schoolbox to submit their completed work and receive feedback from teachers.

As we move towards continuous reporting, Schoolbox is an important access point for parents to receive up to date information on their child's learning progress.

Year 9 students will be using a school issued Personal Learning Device (laptop), rather than sharing class sets of laptops.

All ICT learning outcomes of the Victorian Curriculum are integrated throughout the subjects undertaken in Year 9. At various times throughout the year, students will head over to the Yarra Ranges Tech School (YRTS) in Lilydale. MECS is a partner school of YRTS and is able to utilise the vast array of state-of-the-art technical equipment as part of the Project Challenges. These projects are designed to develop high-level transformative skills in students, such as:

- communication
- global citizenship
- teamwork
- adaptability and agility
- leadership
- critical thinking
- problem solving
- creativity and innovation
- self-management

Mathematics classes occur in unstreamed classes. Academic research has shown that streaming is detrimental to the majority of mathematics students.

Learning assistants are often timetabled to support students who require extra help in mathematics classes. Students who require extension and enrichment are provided with extended challenges within their regular classes. They are also able to participate in enrichment Flexi-maths, Critical thinking (STEAM) classes, the Australian Mathematics competition, and special enrichment days focussed on mathematics or STEAM (such as the Wonder Days).





# An Opportunity for Growth

# An Opportunity for Growth

## Year 9 Open Village

*Education is much more than the passing on of knowledge – it is about helping the students become well rounded, life-long learners. The Year 9 Open Village provides students a unique opportunity to explore who they are and how they learn best in an innovative and challenging environment.*

Throughout Year 9, students are encouraged to consider the way they work, think, communicate and behave. The students work with teachers to set realistic and challenging goals that will help them target specific areas that need further improvement. The input of teacher, students and parents ensure the goals are challenging but not overwhelming.

The Year 9 Open Village program incorporates the Cultural Studies components of the curriculum, covering History, Geography, Economics, and

Civics and Citizenship. There are 9 lessons spent in the Open Village each week.

A variety of *immersion experiences* are used to introduce each new area of study. These may be an activity, an excursion, a movie or other experience designed to spark curiosity and help a student engage with the curriculum. These experiences generally create a high level of enthusiasm and help the student to identify an area they would like to study further. Many immersion experiences are debriefed in small groups where students have the opportunity to ask questions and unpack the issues raised with other students and a teacher. Students are encouraged to ask questions and consider what a Christian response to the issues might be.

Once the student has chosen what interests them, they work closely with a teacher to develop a project. This process is aided by a project proposal sheet, helping the student to consider what questions they are trying to answer, who their target audience is, what form the project should take, how it will challenge the student, and how it can be broken down into manageable steps.

Each term there is at least one compulsory task for students to complete while other projects are negotiated with a teacher. Every compulsory project is designed to challenge students in a different way. Through such projects the students are given opportunities to develop and grow in a variety of areas. Effective collaboration with others, pulling their weight in a team situation, managing time well, striving for accuracy and precision are just a few of these and each area has been identified as being an important skill for ensuring ongoing success.

Each student has a homegroup teacher who tracks their progress and they also have access to a whole team of teachers they can work alongside.

*Seminars* are regularly used to give the students targeted instruction on a specific topic. These are held in small groups and organised to repeat a number of times in the week so that the students can select when they attend.

Through the intentional design of Open Village the students are drawn into a rich opportunity to develop essential skills for life and learning both inside and outside the school environment. It is our hope that this program will help equip students to become transforming agents for positive change in the society in which they live.



# Camps

## Camps in Year 9

Year 9 camps are held during Terms 1 and 4, and all costs for camps have been included in school fees.

**Term 1: City Camp (5 days)**

**Term 4: Canberra Camp (6 days)**

*Camps and other 'out-of-classroom' experiences are an important part of the educational program at MECS. Each camp is an extension of the work done in class and is not regarded as an 'optional extra'. Students are required to attend camps just like they are required to attend school each day.*

Camps are a priority at MECS because of the way they enhance the learning of our students. It is valuable for students to learn about various aspects of God's creation but to also experience them first hand. Learning is greatly enriched by impactful experiences.

Camps also allow staff and students to respond creatively to learning situations by thinking 'outside the box'. They provide opportunities for students to shine and demonstrate their God-given gifts in ways that do not readily occur within the general classroom.

### What else are camps important for?

- Developing important life skills such as independence, perseverance and resilience;
- Developing interpersonal skills;
- Developing problem-solving skills;
- Fostering community;
- Encouraging students to take on new responsibilities;
- Leading them to pursue appropriate behaviour in new situations be it public places, meeting other adults, taking on duty group responsibilities or sharing a tent/cabin.



## Sporting programs

The MECS Sports Academy is for keen and dedicated students who desire to improve their fitness and skills.

Each week the Academy has one before-school fitness session, and one after-school session where students can choose to focus on skill development in either Soccer or Netball.

The Academy also provides opportunities for students to participate in relevant tournaments. In the regular sports program, students have the opportunity to represent MECS at Interschool Sports in the CSEN (Christian Schools Events Network). These include individual sports such as Swimming, Athletics and Cross Country; as well as a variety of team sports.

Through this program, Interschool games will be played fortnightly on Wednesday afternoons. There are also opportunities for students to try out for the christian schools state teams.

Keen students should also keep an eye out for Tribal Challenges held during lunchtimes throughout the year.

## Performing Arts

Students gifted or interested in the areas of performing arts have a number of different opportunities to develop their skills, including our instrumental program, our band and ensemble opportunities, and our biennial Secondary musical/drama production.

Our **Instrumental program** at MECS includes a team of tutors providing lessons in a range of instruments. At recitals, our community of parents, friends, staff and students gather to support our soloists and ensembles from throughout the school.

Every second year the Secondary School coordinates and performs a **Production** to the school community. All Secondary students are invited to take part with auditions held for the main roles. The most recent production (2021) showcased fabulous dramatic, musical, and dancing talent in the 'Wizard of Oz' Young Performers Edition.

Middle School students are invited to join the **Secondary band**. Rehearsals occur during lunchtimes, and the band performs in assemblies, productions, musical evenings and community events such as Open Days.

## Student Leadership

The Secondary School has a Student Leadership program where students can build their leadership skills, be mentored in their role as a representative of the student body, and take an active part in a range of events and initiatives in the life of the school.

Nominated by staff, or by individual request, the Middle School student leaders are elected by our Middle School staff and Executive Leadership. Students serving on the Student Leadership team are a dedicated group of students who have a passion and desire to actively contribute to the culture of the MECS Secondary school, represent their peers and serve God and the wider school community with their gifts.

Mentored by staff and the Assistant Principal Secondary, students meet fortnightly during the school term to learn 'on the job' as they plan and run a range of initiatives and events throughout the school, or contribute in other active ways in the running of the school; Open Days, assemblies, community events etc.

Students are further supported and equipped through training days, networking, camps and other community events.





# A Celebration of Achievement

# A Celebration of Achievement

## Celebrating Student Diversity

*One of the facets of Transformational Education is 'Oriented for students.' This approach recognises that teachers treat each learner as a unique individual, made in God's image, known to him by name and nature, gifted specifically by him and responsible directly in service to him. As teachers we work with the very crown of God's creation - the bearers of his image (MECS, 2014, p121).*

All of our students are different and demonstrate their learning in different ways. At MECS, we believe that the learning of our students is broad, dynamic, and full of variety. It cannot simply be recognised in a neatly packaged written report distributed twice a year.

There are a lot of ways to celebrate, observe and recognise the learning of our students. Some of these ways are structured and formal, such as parent-teacher meetings and written reports. Many other ways are less formal, but just as significant in showcasing student learning, growth and achievement. These include opportunities for parents to come and see the students in action at sports days, showcase evenings, recitals, productions, community events and whole-school assemblies. Teachers are more and more placing an emphasis on the 'audience' of student work, so that student efforts have authenticity and meaning and do not simply fill recycling bins at the end of each year.

In inviting family and friends to 'come and see' the exciting learning that takes place at MECS, we celebrate our wider 'relational community.' Together, we worship the Creator God, whose creativity our students are reflecting.

### *Learning on show*

Students are provided with many opportunities to showcase their diversity of gifts and talents. Keep an eye out for:

- **Music recitals** - These are held throughout the year. Make sure to read the school newsletter for details of upcoming events.
- **Secondary Production** - The next production is to be held in 2023 during Term 2.
- **The Middle School led Whole-School assembly** - Whole school assemblies focus on the learning highlights of each section of the school. The Middle School typically host this assembly early in Term 3.
- **Sports Days** - Parents and friends are welcome to come and cheer on students at swimming, athletics and cross country carnivals.



# A Celebration of Achievement



## Reporting



## Parent Teacher Meetings

*Student achievement is graded according to the year-level standards expected at the time of the report. (See table below).*

Other grades include S or N (Satisfactory or Non-Satisfactory), or percentages for assessment tasks. If you are confused or uncertain about any of the results or grades on your child's reports, please do not hesitate to seek out teacher(s) for clarification.

We currently use continuous reporting where parents will be able to access on Schoolbox ongoing updates on their child's progress.

Parent-teacher meetings happen twice a year – generally towards the end of Term 1 and the beginning of Term 4. They are an excellent opportunity to get a general overview of your child's progress, find ways you can support them at home, and possibly address any minor concerns that have arisen.

The meetings are held over MS Teams and are of 10 minutes duration. Parents will be sent a notice home earlier in the term explaining the booking process using Compass. Parents are encouraged to see as many of their child's teachers as possible, and should include their child's Cultural Studies teacher.

Parent-teacher meetings are not designed for more serious concerns to be tackled. If this is required, please arrange to meet with the relevant teacher at another time.

Performance Level	Meaning
<b>Well Above Standard</b>	Shows a complete understanding of the concept, knowledge or skill, and extends understanding beyond the requirements of the achievement standards by demonstrating a level of skill at least 12 months beyond expectations for proficiency
<b>Above Standard</b>	Consistently and independently demonstrates mastery of concepts and knowledge or skill and extends understanding beyond the requirements of the achievement standards by demonstrating a level of skill at least 6 months beyond expectations for proficiency
<b>At Standard</b>	Consistently demonstrates mastery of concepts and knowledge or the ability to perform the skill as articulated in the achievement standards required at this time of year.
<b>Below Standard</b>	Demonstrates partial mastery of concepts and knowledge and a basic ability to perform the skill as articulated in the achievement standards required at this time of year.
<b>Well Below Standard</b>	With significant teacher support is able to demonstrate partial mastery of concepts and knowledge or a basic ability to perform the skill as articulated in the achievement standards required at this time of year



# Support & Resources



*The task of parenting, educating and advocating for teenagers is full of moments of joy, fun and reward. These young people have an amazing purpose in God's unfolding plan, and what a pleasure it is to walk alongside them and assist them in discovering their uniqueness. However, knowing exactly how to support our teenagers can sometimes be an overwhelming and daunting task.*

Here is a list of resources we recommend to parents, to help in navigating their child's adolescent years:

## Websites:

- <https://www.focusonthefamily.com/parenting>
- [andrewfuller.com.au](http://andrewfuller.com.au)
- [headspace.org.au/friends-and-family/life-issues](http://headspace.org.au/friends-and-family/life-issues)
- [cybersafetysolutions.com.au/session-for-parents](http://cybersafetysolutions.com.au/session-for-parents)

## Books for assisting young people navigate their teenage years:

- *Beyond This Moment* - by speaker and ex-MECS student Nathan 'Dubsy' Want
- *Growing Up By the Book* by Patricia Weerakoon
- *Sext's Texts & Selfies* by cybersafety guru, Susan McLean
- *Teen Talk (Collection)* by Sharon Witt (MECS Middle School Teacher)
- *Surviving Adolescents 2.0, Beyond Cyberbullying, Real Wired Child and Strictly Parenting* by Michael Carr-Gregg

## Books for assisting teenagers as learners:

- *Mindset* by Carol Dweck
- *Smart but Scattered Teens: The "Executive Skills" Program for Helping Teens Reach Their Potential* by Colin Guare, Peg Dawson, and Richard Guare
- *The Crumpled Paper Was Due Last Week: Helping Disorganised and Distracted Boys Succeed in School and Life* by Ana Homayoun

## Conferences:

- [resilientkidsconference.com.au](http://resilientkidsconference.com.au) - Initially launched by Sharon Witt, this yearly conference includes a line-up of experts all focussed on assisting parents, educators and professionals to improve the resilience of our children and young people.



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