Parent Newsletter

Issue 3 Published Weekly

18th February, 2013

Week 4B

Principal’s Message

Last week’s attention grabber had to be the swimming carnival. Congratulations Mr Robinson, Mr Newman and the PE team for organising and running another great carnival. It served our many elite swimmers well while affording perfect opportunities for fun, involvement and house spirit. Congratulations to the following Age Champions—James, Caitlyn, Courtney (12 years); Lloyd, Sarah (13 years); Jayden, Jessica (14 years); Harrison, Caitlin (15 years); Jon, Lauren (15 years); and Taylor and Marama (17+ years).

House Captains Pierce, Alyssa, Jack, Jasmin, Jacob, Ashley, Liam and Taylah did an excellent job leading their house at the swimming carnival. House captains saw Hewitt House come first, Bradman second, Freeman third and Lewis fourth. It was the wonderful and courageous efforts of often “swimming challenged” students earning participation points that determined the winning house. Well done everyone. It was a top day.

Other outstanding student achievements include Iesha selection for the State Drama Ensemble and Carolyn for the Sydney East Girls Softball team. Additionally the widespread effort and commitment of Mehia, Emily, Caitlin and Olivia was recognised through being awarded a Principal’s Award. One of the most amazing achievements was the 800 toothbrushes collected for children living on the Kokoda Track. This is a wonderful gift, small for each donor but massive to the receiver. A very special toothbrush for every child.

Well done and thank you to the following students who were COS8TR Enrichment Orientation Day guides—Zac, Caitlin, Erin, Alexandra, Jay, Liam, Olivia, Brooke, Keely, Brittany, Ruthie, Jack, Rachael, Georgia, Jordan, Ethan, Dale, Jade, Alexandra, Renee, Taylah, Zak, Alexandra, Tom, Jake, Heath, Liam, Matthew, Sarah, Scarlett, Julia and Sophie.

Last week’s P&C Meeting was well attended and we had the opportunity to thank the P&C executive for their efforts and commitment and then re-elect them to their positions. I know I speak for everyone when we thank them for offering to continue the great contributions made by the P&C in general and by President- Robynne Challiner, Vice President-Denise Arsmson, Secretary-Wendy Waterworth and Treasurer-Rita Agius.

I have received many emails and calls about last week’s traffic accident. Our injured student has been released from hospital in a lot of plaster but her prognosis is good. The introduction of the red express busses has proved to be very attractive and has generated a massive increase in student pedestrian traffic trying to access them. Students electing to use the express bus service, rather than the closely supervised school bus service, are crossing busy Old Illawarra Road at the beginning and the end of the school day. The changed circumstances clearly indicate the need for traffic management systems which protect students who are often young and still developing the cognitive skills required to manage very busy and complex traffic. I believe lights and a pedestrian crossing would serve our young people and local drivers well. I cannot see this happening without the voices of many being added to mine. This has been an ongoing battle without success to date. At a special assembly following the accident I spoke to students about the need for traffic safety. The message was well received but as is the way of youth, our concerns are quickly forgotten. By mid week a parent reported some extremely dangerous student behavior in the same area. Please support our safety messages through ongoing family discussion.

Please remind your children that tomorrow is the last day to return the rules compliance notes. Failure to do so will require them to write them out in order to confirm their awareness of the Code of Conduct expected of them.

There is a great FREE support service for parents available. We all know that parenting is challenging. Every parenting struggle from time to time with everyday issues or more complex ones. We know this because we have spoken to many parents in the last 12 months. The State Government funded helpline, Parent Line NSW, provides a unique free support service to parents across NSW. Highly skilled professional counselors are available 24 hours a day 7 days a week to take calls from parents and carers about any parenting issue, from tips on how to manage the morning routine, to concerns about distant adolescents to complex challenges of living in blended families. It is the only free counseling service available to parents during any part of their parenting journey, at any time of the day or night, anywhere in NSW. It’s convenient because parents can call when it suits them, they don’t have to arrange child care to talk to a professional counselor and they can call as many times as they need.

This telephone counselling line is 1300 1300 52. A website for parents, carers and professionals www.parentline.org.au provides a range of tips sheets for parents about contemporary issues facing families today, some parenting stories written by our counseling team that normalize parenting challenges and some links to other NSW wide services.

E McNALLY

Deputy Principal’s Message

Many Year 7 parents have asked for my advice on how to help their children settle in at high school so here are some tips to help Year 7 students settle in:

- Make time to listen to your child – especially their fears and concerns. They may seem trivial to you but if you take the time to listen and suggest and discuss strategies to overcome their worries it will go a long way towards helping them become more confident and self-sufficient.
- Encourage your child to start thinking of themselves as a young adult. This is particularly important when it comes to conflict resolution. Rather than dealing with conflict with a bit of juvenile “argy-bargy” or name calling, children should be encouraged to deal with conflict in an appropriate way such as Peer Mediation, seeking support from a year advisor or reporting the matter to school authorities. Giving your child permission to hit other children is never OK. Violence will always result in suspension.
- Support your child to ensure that they are organised with things such as school equipment and uniform.
- Many children find that there are few, or even no familiar faces in their new class. Keep your finger on the pulse of their school social life. Remind them that the best way to make a good friend is to be a good friend. Acting “tough”, bullying vulnerable classmates or becoming the “class clown” does not grow worthwhile friendships and you should have discussions around this issue. Encourage and enable your child to bring their friends home so that you also get to meet them.
- Be positive about their new school. If you have a concern with something that may be happening at school deal with it by contacting us and negotiating a resolution, don’t put the school down without trying to solve the problem.
- Think about any changes you might need to make at home so they have the time, place and energy for homework and homestudy.
- Encourage your child to participate fully in school life – particularly in extra-curricular activities.
- Ensure that your child has a healthy breakfast and that they either take child care to talk to a professional counselor and they can call as many times as they need.

R LINDSAY

IMPORTANT DATES & COMING EVENTS

Monday 18/2 School Council Meeting
Friday 22/2 Year 7 Orientation Dinner
Wednesday 27/2 Year 11 Assessment

Information Night
Monday 4/3 Zone Swimming Carnival
Wednesday 6/3 Open Night
Friday 8/3 25th Anniversary Dinner

Parent Newsletter

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e-mail: menai-h.school@det.nsw.edu.au Fax: 9543-5513
Welfare News!

Our Student Initiated Awards Scheme which began 13 years ago where students nominate themselves for a Bronze, Silver, Gold or Diamond Award will continue this year.

This award scheme rewards students for their consistent effort and participation. Students nominate themselves for a BRONZE, SILVER, GOLD or DIAMOND AWARD and must fulfill certain requirements to qualify for the award.

**BRONZE**—to gain this award, a student should achieve and maintain a good standard for a period of 10 weeks in one subject. They must:
- Be punctual
- Enter and leave the classroom in an orderly fashion
- Adhere to any necessary safety procedures
- Listen to all relevant lesson material
- Correctly follow all instructions
- Perform at an academic level in accordance with ability
- Bring all necessary equipment to class
- Maintain a book that is up-to-date, and as neat as possible within the student’s capabilities
- Be polite and respectful
- Wear appropriate school uniform

**SILVER**—to gain this award a student should achieve and maintain a good standard in the same criteria as above for 10 weeks in all subjects including roll call.

**GOLD**—this award is both a class and school based award. Students must achieve and maintain a high standard in the above criteria in all subjects over 15 weeks as well as being involved in at least two ‘out of class’ school activities such as Zone Sport, Band, Peer Mediation, SRC, SEC, Committees, Dance Ensemble etc.

**DIAMOND**—this is a class, school and community based award over 20 weeks. To gain a Diamond Award, a student must maintain an excellent standard in the criteria for a Gold Award as well as show that they are striving for excellence and leadership in 2 of the following areas:
- Academic
- Sport
- Community

All students except seniors must begin at BRONZE level and then proceed through the different levels, or they may apply for subsequent awards at the same level if they do not wish to attempt a higher award. Seniors can begin at Gold Level. It is our desire to reward students for their efforts and participation. All students have the potential to reach at least Bronze level. I hope many students will be interested in this award scheme. They can register this week in Room 5 at Lunch 1 with Mrs Hatzi.

**Motivational Media Presentation**

Today, Monday 18th February, the Motivational Media Group will present the program “MAD for LIFE”. It is screened on 3 giant screens. Whilst entertaining, the presentation also contains important messages about focusing on goals, maintaining a positive attitude, making wise life choices and making a difference in the lives of others. Year 10 will attend Period 1, Year 9 Period 2 and years 7 and 8 will attend Period 3.

**Absence from the Swimming Carnival**

Parents are reminded that if your child did not attend the swimming carnival on Wednesday 13th February, then a note, phone call or SMS message explaining the absence must be sent to the school. Otherwise, it will be recorded as an unjustified absence on their attendance record.

K Mundy
Head Teacher, Welfare

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**Kokoda Track Foundation**

Thank you so much. 796 toothbrushes and boxes of toothpaste have been collected by our school. What a fantastic effort. Your donations will brighten the smiles all over The Kokoda Track. Along with some other school contributions and city office collections, the Kokoda Track Foundation have reached their target of 3,000 toothbrushes. These toothbrushes were taken up to Papua New Guinea on Sunday 10th February. Check out how the toothbrushes will be received in the villages on the KTF’s facebook page over the coming weeks and on their website www.kokodatrackfoundation.org.

C Nelson, Teacher/Librarian

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**‘SRE’ or Special Religious Education Program**

Menai High School is starting a ‘SRE’ or Special Religious Education Program. This is a great opportunity for both Years 7 and 8 to explore the Ideas of the Christian faith in an open, educational and non forceful way. ‘SRE’ is for everyone of all religions and cultures and is a fortnightly class that will allow the students to explore their beliefs.

P Jones, SRE Teacher

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**25th Anniversary Celebration Dinner**

Friday 8th March, 2013
Revesby Workers Club

Tickets $50 each (ticket holders must be 18 years and over).

To purchase tickets using Paypal, follow the link on our facebook page—facebook.com/mhs25th. Or alternatively, please send a cheque made out to Menai High School P&C to the school no later than 27th February, 2013.

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**Open Night Concert**

Wednesday 6th March, 2013

If any student is interested please see Mr Smith or Mr Bradney ASAP

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**Year 11 Subject Change—Change of Date**

Year 11 Subject Change student meeting has been moved to Thursday 28th February 12.30pm in the Library from 21st February due to a Year 11 Biology Excursion

R Allen, Deputy Principal

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**Senior Seminar Program Schedule—21st February, 2013**

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<th>Year 11</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Period 2</td>
<td>English Standard, Legal Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Period 3</td>
<td>Business Studies, Design &amp; Technology, Industrial Technology (Wood/Auto), Maths General</td>
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<tr>
<td>Period 4</td>
<td>Business Studies, Dance, English Advanced, Maths 2 Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>All Day</td>
<td>Biology</td>
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