Principal's Message

Another big week of achievement and success at Menai High. Jonathan Ryan has been selected to represent Sydney East in the Boys Water Polo team. We congratulate him and wish him well. Another fabulous team of students were recognized at last week’s assembly for the writing assistance they gave HSC students experiencing various forms of injury and disability. Rachael Ho, Amy Cover, Vittoria Camporeale, Rylee Jones, Claudia Kabic and Tayla Nisbet were commended by both Ms Lewry and HSC Supervisor Ms Sneddon as “reliable, supportive, efficient and providing great assistance”. This is the care, commitment, good will and citizenship we value so highly. At last week’s assembly Sarah Willetts was publicly congratulated by World Vision and the school for her appointment as a 2015 World Vision Youth Ambassador. Sarah and Ms Bessell recognized many students that contributed to World Vision fundraising including Tegan Charles, Alexis Condon, Lucas Cottell, Sarah Day, Tristan Doehr, Candice Durkin, Anneline Faust, Laura Fermanov, Isabella French, Hayley Graham, Madison Hammett, Olivia Henessy, Taylani Ireland, Kyra Jones, Monica Keech, Eloise Kieler, Alannah Lee, Emma Lonsdale, Erin McDonagh, Alicia Mollica, Anna Moran, Jacob Naden, Alyssa Oliver, Ziah Pereira, Aurora Rymaszewski, Dylan Roth, Maddison Stone, Ruby Van Steinberg, Pernilla Watson, Ethan Windsor, Maddison Gatenby, Taylor Kiningham, Rochelle Phan, Gurinder Singh, Caitlin Williams, Natalie Papangelis, Anton Amalfi, Hannah Banks, Leah Briscoe, Thomas Gao, Katherine Hensler, Rachael Ho, Shanina Kalan, Olivia Holmwood, Anika McLeod, Isabella Miletich, Neha Salah, Megan Tang, Melina Thompson, Chloe Traynor, Alec Van Zeyndorren, Nicola Barrett, Byron Dempsey, Lavinia Meyer, Vicki Milekovic, Josef Richmond, Rachael Weiss, Erin Isaacs, Jackie Nguyen, Deeyara Pillay, Andie Wendt, Bec Xirocostas and Elizabeth Golikova.

We were also very privileged and honoured to receive a substantial donation from Mr and Mrs Royalston supporting our Robotics project thriving under mentors Mr. Bena, Ms Loh and Ms Hanna. I can’t even begin to describe my delight and awe at being in a school where students are building a robot to participate in a national competition. Mr Royalston spoke to the assembly about our future resting with STEMS thriving in schools and his message shadows our assembly as well.

James Walker is another outstanding and amazing Menai High School student. He became the Australian National Champion in Perth mid year, and more recently he competed in the Oceania Championships in Fiji in September and came second. He is also a final in Club Menai’s Junior Sportsman of the Year which has yet to be announced. His discipline and commitment to his training is admirable which is consistent with our school values as well.

Mr McNeill was honoured by being awarded the NSW Maritime Medal by the Minister for his sustained efforts in education in his role as President of the NSW Marine Teachers’ Association which he founded in 1998. His leadership has seen the establishment of six hubs supporting the Boat Smart program and Marine Studies in schools. The latest development is redevelopment of the “Pilot House” on Watson’s Bay as a “Centre of Excellence” for sailing and marine studies including utilizing the heritage fleet. Students in NSW have amazing opportunities due to Mr McNeill’s care and commitment. We are all privileged to have him in our school.

I have also been greatly honoured by being presented a Principal’s Award at the Town Hall this week. The only reason I have been selected for this honour is because of the amazing things that the Menai team of teachers, teachers and parents do. I am always amazed and delighted to be the principal of this wonderful school.

The next bit of great news is that the Clean Energy Regulator has approved our application to be accredited as a power station. It is now official, we are now a “power station” and this finalizes our three year journey to self fund the creation of our own power station with the capacity to generate 180kw of power. It is this generations “Gift to the Future” which will not only release money previously spent buying electricity for enhanced teaching and learning but also to teach the precious lessons of sustainability by “walking the talk” in real time practice. Congratulations everyone, because this is everyone’s achievement for everyone’s benefit.

There are two very important articles attached to this newsletter. They include:

1. Health Department advice about the withdrawal of the Chicken Pox vaccine from the school vaccination program 2014. Alternative arrangements are provided.
2. A Sydney Morning Herald article by Michael Carr-Gregg on the "Why" of children who run away from home. It could happen in any family and the insights provide simple and sound advice for us all.

Year 9 and 10 parents need to be aware that exam weeks being next week and revision should be a high priority this week.

Deputy Principal’s Message

Menai High School provides extensive opportunities for students to achieve academically, in leadership, sport and through participation in extra-curricular programs. The school vision is to prepare students for the 21st century learning by developing critical, collaborative and creative learners and to enable students to continue to seek and pursue the opportunities ahead and to fully participate in the global economy as Skilled Learners and Citizens. Ultimately, we aim to equip students to be Skilled for Life and to apply these important life skills such as team work, resilience, problem solving, healthy living, organisation, communication and adaptability.

The assessment and reporting period is under way. I remind parents that students should be engaging in regular home study and preparing for assessment tasks and final examinations. Students should also be reviewing their Personal Learning Plans (PLP) and keeping their assessment tasks and final examinations. Students should also be reviewing their Personal Learning Plans (PLP) and keeping their assessment tasks and final examinations. Students should also be reviewing their Personal Learning Plans (PLP) and keeping their assessment tasks and final examinations. Students should also be reviewing their Personal Learning Plans (PLP) and keeping their assessment tasks and final examinations. Students should also be reviewing their Personal Learning Plans (PLP) and keeping their assessment tasks and final examinations. Students should also be reviewing their Personal Learning Plans (PLP) and keeping their assessment tasks and final examinations. Students should also be reviewing their Personal Learning Plans (PLP) and keeping their assessment tasks and final examinations. Students should also be reviewing their Personal Learning Plans (PLP) and keeping their assessment tasks and final examinations. Students should also be reviewing their Personal Learning Plans (PLP) and keeping their assessment tasks and final examinations. Students should also be reviewing their Personal Learning Plans (PLP) and keeping their assessment tasks and final examinations. Students should also be reviewing their Personal Learning Plans (PLP) and keeping their assessment tasks and final examinations. Students should also be reviewing their Personal Learning Plans (PLP) and keeping their assessment tasks and final examinations. Students should also be reviewing their Personal Learning Plans (PLP) and keeping their assessment tasks and final examinations. Students should also be reviewing their Personal Learning Plans (PLP) and keeping their assessment tasks and final examinations. Students should also be reviewing their Personal Learning Plans (PLP) and keeping their assessment tasks and final examinations. Students should also be reviewing their Personal Learning Plans (PLP) and keeping their assessment tasks and final examinations.
Welfare News!

A great week of student good news.

Mrs Kendrick would like to congratulate Fatma Ibrahim, Lauren Horsnell, Zuriah Krautz, Erin McDonagh, Bailey Crene, Jo Rahme, Candice Durkin, Nathan Hewitt, Jessica Jones, Kyra Jones, Zac Kisur, Britney Symyniuk, Robert Townsend and Dominique Williamson for excellent storyboards in ICT.

Well done to Sami Au, Stephanie Hunt and Isabella Hockey from Ms Frages for their excellent ‘Party Business’ assignment in Food technology.

Well done everyone.

Year 11 Health Survey

Menai High School has been selected by NSW Health to participate in their Health survey. The aim of the survey is to get a picture of behaviours in youth today dealing with things such as alcohol, drugs, lifestyle, sport and use the information to target programs to deal with areas of concern. The survey will take 60 minutes and is run by staff from NSW health with myself supervising.

Year 11 is the year group NSW health is interested in and they have been given a permission note and information. The notes were due last Thursday but students will have an opportunity to hand it in this week. If you have any questions please contact me.

Head Lice

We have had a case of head lice reported. Please ensure you check your child’s hair thoroughly. If you detect Head Lice please wash their hair with medicated shampoo that you purchase from a pharmacy and follow all directions closely. Ensure the head lice have gone after you have completed the treatment.

Ms Y Mazoudier, Head Teacher Welfare

Wellbeing and Wisdom

Study Skills

Term 4 is well and truly underway, which means that the junior Yearly Exams are looming. This is the perfect time to remind our students that practicing effective study habits is crucial to achieving success in school.

As exams approach, it is expected that all students will be preparing for them in addition to their normal homework requirements. Students need to engage in active study and not simply read through their notes. This may be in the form of making a set of study notes for each subject by pulling out the key concepts from their book work, preparing mock exams for themselves, making flashcards for key terms and definitions or by involving parents to test them on what they’ve learnt. The NSW Department of Education website is a great place to start for ideas on study and exam techniques:


The Wellbeing Wisdom Team

Menai High School Performing Arts Night

Again, to celebrate Performing Arts at MHS for 2014 we are having our End of Year Dance/ Music Showcase, displaying the many talents of our students.

Date: Thursday 4th December
Time: 7pm
Venue: School Hall
Ticket Prices: Adult - $10, Child/Pensioner - $5 and Family of four - $25

Note: Tickets can be purchased at the front office from Monday 3rd November and will also be sold at the door from 6pm on the night of the performance.

Senior Seminar Program Schedule — 6th November, 2014

| Period 2 | Business Services, Design & Technology, English (Standard), ESL, Geography, Industrial Technology (Timber/Auto), Information Technology, Maths 2U |
| Period 4 | Chemistry, Geography |
When a child runs away it results in heartbreak for all
Eleven-year-old Michelle Levy has thankfully been found and safely reunited with her parents, who must have undergone an agonising weekend, after disappearing at around 6.30pm on Saturday, wearing only a white party dress with black, orange and yellow flowers on it and a black sash.

The exact reasons behind the thin, 150cm tall, red-headed, blue-eyed freckled girl's decision to abscond from her home in North Bondi and meet up with an older man, are unknown and will quite rightly probably not make the public domain but the saga raises some interesting questions.

First how often does this happen? The National Missing Person's Unit reports that of the 30,000 people reported missing each year, over half are under 18, so on average about 41 kids run away from home a day, across Australia, so Michelle's case is not unusual. However her age is unusual, as the average age of running away is about 13 to 15 with the young people who run away most often reported to the authorities and located within 48 hours.

But why this age group in particular? Psychologists point to three major reasons.

First, the brain development of teenagers is incomplete with the frontal cortex (often referred to as the home of the voice of reason) still developing and the capacity to predict the consequences of their actions not yet fully developed. As part of this process some young people can develop the belief that they are 'ten foot tall and bulletproof' and take risks that other people wouldn't take.

Second, many young people in this early, middle adolescent group are often asking the question 'who am I?' and, in the process, are testing parental limits and boundaries and experimenting with new experiences, some of which may be extremely challenging to adult carers.

They are often torn between wanting complete autonomy and the desire to be nurtured as they were in childhood.

Lastly, at no other time in one's life is the desire to be with one's age mates as strong, and it is in this phase of adolescence that peer pressure (on steroids) can kick in and override parental authority. If the young person is associating with other disaffected or disaffiliated young people, any plan to runaway may gain legitimacy from these peers.

So why do they do it?

While, Open Families Australia (which merged with Whitelion in 2011), an outreach charity that works with homeless youth across Australia, says around 80 per cent of the children it helps are homeless as a result of family breakdown but children and young people from families in all walks of life run away from home for all kinds of reasons. They include abuse, parents separating or the arrival of a new step-parent. Others might have done something they're ashamed of and they're afraid to tell their parents.

Dealing with a runaway child elicits a plethora of powerful emotions, a mix of anger, hurt, rejection, fear and guilt. Parents often ask whether they are to blame and imagine every possible scenario, from the best to the worst. In our culture, running away from home has been romanticised in film and literature, often portrayed as a great adventure where someone seeks a better life or even is running away to some far off war.

The contemporary reality, as Michelle's parents will no doubt attest, is far more serious. Today the reality is that rather than running toward a specific new situation they are more likely to be running away from an existing issue — and the act of absconding is often a cry for attention. Not only do runaways leave frightened and concerned parents behind but they may become homeless, get lured into prostitution, sexually transmissible infections, malnutrition and truancy and are at a much higher risk of alcohol and other drug use.

The take-home message for all parents from the Levy family experience is to set limits and boundaries early, be consistent in parenting and try and maintain the lines of communication, only arguing over things that matter, seek compromise and try to negotiate. Above all maintain a developmental perspective.

Monitor and supervise your child and try and seek to build resilient children.

As Frederick Douglas said, it is easier to build resilient children than to repair broken men.

Dr Michael Carr-Gregg is a child and adolescent psychologist and the managing director of the Young and Well Cooperative Research Centre.
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