Dear Parents/Guardians,

Although the school year draws to a close I would like to stress that it is very important that all students do something over the Christmas break period. All the students and the teachers have worked hard this year to learn and consolidate new knowledge and skills. The Christmas period is a long time in the life of a student and the hard earned gains in the classroom are quickly lost if they are not regularly reinforced. My recommendation is to allow them a break directly over Christmas, but in the weeks leading up to the beginning of the school year encourage your child to have a look over the work they did this year in key subject areas and also beginning reading the English novel for 2015. This is incredibly important as it will ensure that your child is mentally ready to take full advantage of beginning of the year.

Please take note in this newsletter are some key dates for 2015, particularly the start-up dates for students and the student events such as the swimming carnival which is early in the school year.

PTCA
I would like to thank the PTCA for the wonderful support that they have given to our students over the past year. The members under the leadership of Deb Alsop, have managed once again to raise considerable funds throughout the year from the highly successful Bunnings BBQ and the annual Shopping Tour and other community activities. This has enabled the College to purchase a number of resources to support our educational program.

BEGINNING OF 2015
The College has two Professional Development days at the beginning of the year. They are on Wednesday 28th and Thursday 29th January, 2015.

Year 7, Year 11 and 12 VCE students will start on Friday 30th January

Years 8, 9 and 10 students begin on Monday 2nd February.

Year 11 and 12 VCAL students begin on Monday 2nd February.

REPORTS
Parents/Guardians can access reports through Compass from 3.00pm on Friday 19th December 2015.
COLLEGE AWARDS NIGHT
The College Awards Night was held on Tuesday 16th December. Congratulations to the students who received awards and achieved exceptional academic results throughout the year. Thank you also to the staff who were involved in the organisation and presenting of awards. We would also like to thank our special guests: Mrs Carol Wells, Mrs Debra Alsop and Mrs Mary Schultz from the Country Women’s Association. Students who did not attend the Awards Night and Credit recipients will receive their Awards at the first House meeting in 2015.

ORIENTATION PROGRAM FOR 2015 YEAR 7 STUDENTS
On Friday 28th November, students from smaller or underrepresented primary schools attended for a pre-orientation day. The students started the day looking a little apprehensive but finished the day with new friends and big smiles.

EXAMS
We would like to congratulate all the Year 10 and 11 students for completing their exams. This is an important stepping stone for students and it is also a terrific learning experience for all involved. I urge all students to use their results as a building block and an opportunity to reflect and learn. I hope this active engagement will result in excellent results when it matters.

2015 COLLEGE BOOKLIST
For retail purchases (no Online ordering) you will need to print the Booklist from the Campion site or go onto Mooroolbark College website and visit Campion Books.

BPAY – REMINDER
If you are making a BPay payment for specific charges such as camps, excursions, iPad programs etc. it is essential that you contact the College for each transaction to ensure that your payment is allocated to the correct charges on your account.

This can be done by either; email – mooroolbark.co@edumail.vic.gov.au
Phone – 9727 8100
Fax – 9727 8188
Or a copy of your receipt brought in to the College Office.

By not notifying the College, BPay payments will automatically go towards the oldest outstanding invoice on your account.

Please address all your communication to Accounts Receivable at the College on 9727 8100.

UNIFORM SHOP
Please note: The new address for purchasing of School Uniforms by PSW is as follows:
Unit 8A, 51 Lusher Road, CROYDON
Phone: 9725 4664
Term 4 & 1 Trading Hours:
Monday—Friday 8.30am—5.00pm
Saturday 9.00am—5.00pm
Sunday—Closed

SCHOOL BAGS
A reminder that in 2014 Mooroolbark College school bags were introduced as a compulsory uniform item for all future students.

PRINCIPAL
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL
ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

NO STANDING ZONES
Shire of Yarra Ranges informs parents/guardians that Ross Pincott Drive is a NO STANDING area from 8am to 9am and 3pm to 4pm On the north side
NO STANDING ANYTIME.
Manchester Road has no standing areas. Please check with the VicRoads website re No Standing.

Photos will be taken by Shire of Yarra Ranges and infringements will be posted out by the Shire

Parents/Guardians of students in Years 8-11 are encouraged to buy a Mooroolbark College school bag if they need to replace their existing one. These can be purchased from the College’s uniform supplier PSW (Primary School Wear).

Lyn Godfrey
Assistant Principal

College Uniform Policy
Tattoos cannot be visible and must be covered at all times. In Victoria the legal age for a Tattoo is 18. Department of Health; Regulations of tattooing and body piercing; Legal restrictions on tattooing in Australia)
POETRY FROM OUR YEAR 9 STUDENT

I come here everyday
And for 6 hours I stay
Then I get ready for tomorrow
Ready for the Mooroolbark way.

I go to my class
With a mind of glass
To be smashed and made anew
And I do this for every class too.

Our teacher’s appreciation
And their matter of perception
Can truly help us achieve
The things we never believed.

High expectations, high standards,
excellence
These 3 things keep my education
strong, it won’t sway
As long as I stick to these things
Because it’s the Mooroolbark way.

By Kobe Shannon
Year 9 Student

MUSIC NEWS

On Thursday 27th November, many of our music students performed in the Music Department’s annual Christmas Concert, organised and run by our keyboard teacher, Erika Sykes.

Family and friends were treated to some wonderful performances by our piano and voice students, along with items presented by the College Choir, Keyboard Ensemble and combined Junior and Aspire Concert Bands.

The following day, students from the Junior and Aspire Concert Bands participated in a Rookie Band workshop at Lilydale Heights College, run by the North Eastern regional music coordinators.

Our students joined together with around 70 music students from other schools within our region, to workshop four new band pieces that they had never played before.

It was an amazing experience for all involved, seeing and hearing these young musicians prepare four new pieces in about 4 hours of rehearsals, ready for performance. Congratulations to all of our students who were involved in these two events.

Jonas Bahlo
German Teacher

DESPERATE NEED FOR SECOND-HAND BOOKS AND UNIFORM

With the State Government cutting the Education Maintenance Allowance for families, there will be more pressure than ever before on families who are facing financial hardship, getting uniform and books for their children.

If you have any good quality second hand uniforms or current used textbooks we would love you to donate them to the College so we can assist families. The greatest need will be at Year 7 and 8.

Simply drop any items to the General Office and ask they be donated for Student Welfare.

Your support will be greatly appreciated as we expect greater demand than in previous years due to the axing of the EMA.

John Nichol
Student Welfare Coordinator

186 Manchester Rd, Mooroolbark, Vic 3138
Phone: (03) 9727 8100 Fax: (03) 9727 8188 Web: www.mooroolbarkcollege.vic.edu.au
ASPIRE EXCURSION

On Friday December 6, the Year 7 and Year 8 Aspire groups went on an excursion to Melbourne. They went to the IMAX theatre to learn about space science, the Melbourne Museum to learn about Australian history and the science of Bugs. The students were then given a geographical mapping challenge where they needed to navigate Melbourne. Thank you to Mr Christopher Stephen, the 2014 Aspire Manager, for organising the excursion and for Miss Jennifer Young for teaching Aspire this year and for joining the excursion.

Samantha McIntosh
Teaching and Learning Assistant Principal
Mooroolbark College is committed to providing specialised facilities for its students to encourage focused learning and foster a stronger sense of belonging. The Year 12 Centre is a purpose built space, with air conditioning, heating and a multi-media screen for our Year 12 students. Students use the centre primarily to study during their non-timetabled classes in the silent study room.

In addition to furthering students' study, the centre also houses a kitchen with cooking facilities including sandwich presses and microwaves. Students are able to prepare food and eat it within the centre, and in keeping with the school’s culture the students are also responsible for the cleanliness and upkeep of this area.

The Senior School Program Managers and VASS/VET Assistants are located in an office adjacent to the Centre, so that their assistance and support is readily available to students.

The Study centre is used as a meeting space for Year 12 students and their Well-Being Leaders, and the Pathways Counsellors, allowing students easy access to advice about subject selection, tertiary courses and other pathways. In November the VCE Centre is converted into an exam venue for the exclusive use of VCE students.

SPACES AVAILABLE FOR YEAR 12 STUDY

There are a range of spaces available to suit student needs and styles of learning: Year 12 study room, the Maths Emporium, Common Room and Library.

CLUB 3/4

Club 3/4 is designed to create an opportunity for VCE staff to work with their students in a supportive but less formal environment.

How it is used by students and staff:

- Some students use it as private study.
- There are some students who work in study groups to support one another.
- Many staff come in and have a cup of coffee and identify any of their students who need their help. Many of the students don’t realise they need or want help until the teacher arrives.
- Some students come to get pre-arranged help with a particular teacher.
- Some students come to get help with a teacher and a co-ordinator will attempt to find that teacher for the student
- Club 3/4 is used for revision classes prior to SACs and other assessments.

Times and days:

Tuesday until 4.00 pm
Thursday until 4.00pm

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF THE YEAR 12 CENTRE?

- Students can study beyond school hours in an environment in which they are comfortable and away from the distractions that may exist in the home environment.
- Students’ study routine is continuous and not interrupted by travel. Students don’t need to leave and resettle in a new environment. Study time is maximised.
- Students have access to wi-fi and technology without the distractions of social media which cannot be accessed on the College network.

We hope that many Year 12 students will be encouraged to stay back after school and benefit from the positive and collaborative environment that exists in the Year 12 area.
SOURCES OF INCOME SUPPORT FOR LOW INCOME FAMILIES

Mooroolbark College is below the SFO threshold and as a result will no longer receive the equivalent of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) in 2015. We are providing the material below which outlines some of the income supports and organisations that might be useful to parents.

Commonwealth Government financial support for low income families
The Commonwealth Government provides a range of payments and services to help families look after their children's education, health care and other family issues. See page 10 for links to key Commonwealth Government websites.

Family Tax Benefits A and B
This is a two-part payment to help with the cost of raising children. To be eligible for Family Tax Benefit Part A, the parent must care for a dependent child who is:
- aged 0-15 years, or
- aged 16–19 years, paid until the end of the calendar year in which they turn 19, and:
- undertaking full-time education or training in an approved course leading towards a Year 12 or equivalent qualification
- with an acceptable study load, or
- has been granted an exemption from education or training requirements

Parents also need to satisfy an income test, meet residence requirements and be caring for the child at least 35 per cent of the time. The amount paid for Family Tax Benefit Part A depends on family income, the number of children in the family, and how old they are. The maximum rate per fortnight for a child aged 0-12 years is $176.82 or $4,597.32 per year. The maximum rate per fortnight for a child aged 13-19 years is $230.00 or $5,980.00 per year.

Family Tax Benefit Part B gives extra help to single parents and families with one main income. An example of this may be where one parent stays at home to care for a child full-time or balances some paid work with caring for a child. To be eligible for Family Tax Benefit Part B, the parent must have care of a child for at least 35 per cent of the time who is:
- a dependent child under 16 years of age, or
- a dependent full-time secondary student up until the end of the calendar year in which they turn 18.

The rate of Family Tax Benefit Part B is based on an income test and the meeting of residence requirements. The amount paid for Family Tax Benefit Part B usually depends on the age of the youngest child in the family. The maximum rate per fortnight for a child aged 5-18 years is $105.00 or $2,730.00 per year.
If a parent/family qualifies for Family Tax Benefit Part A or Part B, they may be entitled to other payments and services such as the SchoolKids Bonus (see below), Parenting Payment, Child Dental Benefits and many others.

Health Care Card
The Health Care Card provides help with the cost of prescription medicine under Pharmaceutical Benefits Scheme, Australian government funded medical services, and access to state, territory and local government concessions. Families may be eligible for a Health Care Card if they get specific Commonwealth payments or supplements or the maximum rate of Family Tax Benefit Part A.

SchoolKids Bonus
The Schoolkids Bonus is a Commonwealth Government payment to assist eligible families with education costs. The Bonus is automatically paid by the Commonwealth Department of Human Services in two instalments each year. Parents do not need to make a claim for this payment.

To be eligible for the Schoolkids Bonus, the parent/carer must:
- receive Family Tax Benefit Part A for a dependent child in primary or secondary education
- have a primary or secondary student turning 19 years or younger in the calendar year, who receives certain government payments
- satisfy an income test (applicable from 1 January 2015)

From 1 January 2015, eligible families will receive the Schoolkids Bonus in:
- 2 instalments of $211 for each child in primary school - a total of $422 each year
- 2 instalments of $421 for each child in secondary school - a total of $842 each year.
WEP Student Exchange – A Once-In-Lifetime Opportunity!

Ever wondered what it would be like to live in another country and to swap your vegemite sandwich for a pop tart or croissant? Applications for WEP Student Exchange Programs to over 25 countries around the world are now open for programs starting from July 2015 onwards. Choose from more than 100 short and long-term programs, designed to fit into your Australian schooling. Find out more today!

From Emily in France:
France has been amazing so far! I love everything and even though there is still a huge language barrier I’ve slowly started to understand more and more. The Paris Orientation was beautiful and I was so shocked that we actually managed to cover a lot of places in such a short amount of time.

The Australian and French schooling systems are definitely different from each other. All of my teachers are incredibly nice and understanding. I think in my first week I had a mini freak out because I couldn’t understand one word but being able to easily participate in Math, English and Gym has definitely helped and reassured me. I’ve even done a few tests for different subjects and actually managed to answer parts of it.

I’ve made quite a few friends, friends of my host sister and friends of my own. They’ve all been incredibly nice and try to speak English as well as French to me. Although I can’t understand what they say half of the time it’s still nice to hear them talk.

I absolutely love my host family; they are nothing short of perfect! My host sisters are absolutely hilarious and my host parents are always trying to help me. The family has been very welcoming and they are trying to help me out all the time but they’ve also integrated me into their lives. We all went to Dijon last Saturday actually.

Request Program Information Now

Whether you wish to go overseas or host an exchange student in your home, request an information pack today to find out more about WEP’s not-for-profit student exchange programs.

Visit: www.wep.org.au
Phone: 03 9598 4733 / 1300 884 733 (cost of a local call) or
Email info@wep.org.au

Stay safe on the roads this summer

The Christmas period is a high risk time on our roads. Following these safety tips is one way you can help to keep you and your family safe during the upcoming summer holidays:

- Check and service your car
- Plan and map out your trip, including rest stops at least every 2 hours
- Get a good night’s sleep before leaving
- Don’t drink any alcohol before or during your trip
- Check all luggage is secure
- Be aware of the speed limit and stick to it
- Keep children occupied with travel games and activities
- Provide an age appropriate and approved child restraint for children under the age of 7

Check on VicRoads website for information about road closures and fire warnings just before leaving.

For more information go to:
www.tac.vic.gov.au
www.vicroads.vic.gov.au
www.racv.com.au

or call the Yarra Ranges Council Emergency and Community Safety team on 1300 368 333.

Keep a first aid kit, torch and spare batteries, 2L bottle of water, small tool kit, jumper leads, rope, tyre pump and pressure gauge and a woollen blanket in the car at all times.

Find more information on a CFA website here.