HOAX PHONE CALLS TO VICTORIAN SCHOOLS

As parents would be aware, there has been a spate of hoax threatening phone calls to Victorian schools in the last few days. Our school has not received such a call but I wanted to assure you that like all schools, we have an Emergency Management Plan in place for situations like this. We also practise Emergency Drills throughout the year to ensure staff and students know how the school responds to such threats.

The schools that have received a threatening call have enacted their Emergency Management Plans and they have worked well. I can assure you that the safety and wellbeing of our students and staff is always our top priority.

MERBEIN P-10 COLLEGE COUNCIL ELECTIONS - 2016

In accordance with DET guidelines, an election of members for the 2016 School Council will be conducted during February and March. The new 2016 Council will be formed from an election process and will be based on a membership size of 15, with a configuration of 8 parents, 5 staff (including the principal) and 2 co-opted community members. Due to the scheduled expiry of their terms of office several members of...
School Council will be retiring in accordance with DET guidelines and the Council Constituting Order. Consequently, the following vacancies are being declared:

4 Parent Category Vacancies
2 DEECD Category Vacancies

Up to 2 Co-opted Community Positions will be filled by the newly formed School Council following the conclusion of elections.

I would like to publicly thank the following retiring Councillors for their valuable contribution to the ongoing development of Merbein P-10 College over the past year:

- Greg Mann, Sandy I’Anson, Anne Kirby, Stephen Liddicoat (Parent Category)
- Sandra Luitjes and Tim Dreyer (DET Category)
- Graeme Worthington (Co-opted Community member)

The 2015 School Council is to be congratulated for supporting the school as we continue to grow as a successful P-10 community school. I also would like to sincerely thank Andrew Nemtsas and Graeme Worthington for the leadership they have provided in their roles as President and Vice-President respectively.

If either or both categories (Parent or DET) have more nominations than positions then a ballot will be conducted. All parents or guardians of students enrolled at the school are eligible to vote for parent members, and staff vote for staff members.

Parents who are DET employees may stand for election in the Parent Category, but only up to a maximum of two. This is to ensure that the majority of the college council is created through a combination of parent and community members and not DET employees.

Nominations for a position on the Merbein P-10 College Council will open on Friday, 5th February and close on Monday, 15th February, 2016.

The School Council will continue to play a vital role in achieving the best-possible outcomes for our young people and in ensuring that our school continues to build effective connections with the local community. I therefore encourage parents and staff to consider nominating for a position on the Merbein P-10 College Council and to support us in the important work that lies ahead.

Enclosed in this newsletter is a School Council Election Process Timetable and an information sheet that provides information about the role and membership of School Council. Parent nomination forms will be available at the school office for any parent considering nominating. If you would like a Nomination Form to be emailed directly to you, please contact the General Office. Nomination Forms can also be downloaded from the school's web page.

As mentioned above, if there are more nominations than vacancies an election will be called and candidates will be invited to prepare a statement of no more than 150 words. More details about the recommended content of statements will be provided for candidates if this occurs.

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**BRING YOUR OWN DEVICE - BYOD**

Under our “Bring Your Own Device” Program, students can bring their own approved digital device to use both at school and home.

Based on advice from our ICT team, the only categories approved for use in the 2016 BYOD program are iPad Minis, iPad 2s (or later) or netbooks/ laptop (Windows 7 minimum). We also support Apple MacBook laptops (OSX 10.8 or later). Other tablet platforms are not preferred for technical reasons.

If you would like additional information in regards to Merbein P-10 College’s BYOD Program please visit the schools webpage and navigate to the BYOD page as it explains the program in more detail.

**WHOLE SCHOOL ASSEMBLY**

There will be a Whole School Assembly held next Friday 12th February in the School Gym. The Assembly will start at 10.15am. The Primary students will leave the assembly at 10.45am before the Secondary Awards are presented. Parents are welcome to attend.

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**SCHOOL BANK ACCOUNT DETAILS**

- BSB - 063 714
- Bank Acc Number – 10060535
- Account Name - Merbein P-10 College Official Account

**UNIFORM SHOP**

- Open Tuesday 8.30 – 9.30am
- Open Thursday 2.00 – 4.00pm

If these times do not suit, please ring the school to make other arrangements.

**CONVEYANCE ALLOWANCE/BUS PASS**

Students or parents need to collect an application form from the school’s main office if they wish to apply for the allowance in 2016.

**NEW CANTEEN LIST**

A new Canteen Price List for the Secondary and one for the Primary were sent home on last week’s newsletter. The Grade P-4 Canteen list is available at the Green Building Office and the Grade 5-6 and Years 7-10 Canteen list is available from the Canteen.
STUDENT RECORDS
Reminder that it is important to notify the school of any changes to your child’s address, phone, emergency phone numbers and medical records.

MERBEIN P-10 COLLEGE BREAKFAST PROGRAM
The Breakfast Program is being financially supported by the Merbein & District Community Bank & Merbein Development Association. The following organisations also provide volunteers to assist with the program; Merbein P10 College Parents’ Club, the Board & Staff of the Merbein & District Community Bank, Merbein Development Association, Merbein Lions Club and Merbein Rotary. If you are able to volunteer to help in the Breakfast Program, please contact Haley at the Merbein & District Community Bank. The Breakfast Program is held in the school cafeteria. All students are welcome to come along between 8.00am and 8.45am each morning if they would like a FREE tasty breakfast to kick-start their day’s learning.

YEAR 7 UNIFORM PACKAGE INITIATIVE 2016
A STATE SCHOOL’S RELIEF PROGRAM
Every Year 7 government school student enrolled in 2016 who is a recipient of the Camps, Sports and Excursion Fund (CSEF) automatically qualifies for a free uniform pack to the approximate value of $225. Included in the Uniform Pack are basic items.

Jumper x 1, PE shirt x 1, PE shorts x 1.
For girls a dress (or shorts or trousers) x 1 and a shirt x 1 (long or short sleeve).
For boys a shirt x 1 (long or short sleeve) and shorts or trousers x 1.

SECOND-HAND UNIFORMS FOR SALE
2 x long black cargo pants size A12, 1 x long black pants size B, 3 x black cargo shorts size C12, 1 x black basketball shorts size 14Y, 1 x polo shirt size 12.
2 x polo shirts size 14Y - they both have paint marks on them and are a bit faded (will give away if anyone needs them),
A bucket hat size XL/61 cm, bucket hat size L/59 cm,
1 x zip through polo jumper size 12.
Cost: $15 each for the long pants and the shorts, $15 for the jumper, $8 each for the hats and the basketball shorts. Contact Tracey Cantwell on phone 0428 510 388 if you are interested.

SCHOOL PHOTOS-
Mr Rhodes
School Photo Days will be held on Wednesday, 17th February and Thursday, 18th February. Most photos will be taken on the Wednesday. On Thursday, the Prep students and the Year 7 students will have their photos taken. Photo packs will be distributed as soon as they arrive in school.

EMAIL ADDRESSES
The school prefers to send the weekly newsletter and other important information home via email as this is the most reliable method. Please send your email address to: giddings.beth.l@edumail.vic.gov.au asking for the newsletter to be emailed to you.

Please note that those few students in Years 8/9/10 who still require a hardcopy of the newsletter, will need to collect their newsletter from the main office at the finish of their last class at the end of the day each Thursday.

SUNSMART-
Mr Rhodes
All students have had our Sun Smart Policy explained at a whole school assembly. The policy is attached to this newsletter. The key message is that students need to take measures to protect themselves against over exposure to the sun’s rays. At this time of the year the UV levels are regularly above safe levels between 9.30am-5.20pm each day whether the temperature is hot or cool. Each day students receive information about temperature and UV levels in the Daily Bulletin. Please ensure you supply your child with appropriate sunscreen. Students can safely lock their sunscreen in their lockers and use when required.

MERBEIN P-10 SUNSMART POLICY
This policy applies to all school events on and off site.

Purpose- This Sunsmart policy provides guidelines to:

- Ensure all students and staff have some UV exposure for vitamin D.
- Ensure all students and staff are well protected from too much UV exposure by using a combination of sun protection measures whenever UV levels reach 3 and above.
- Ensure the outdoor environment is sun safe and provides shade for students and staff.
- Ensure students are encouraged and supported to develop independent sun protection skills.
- Support duty of care requirements
- Support appropriate OHS strategies to minimise UV risk and associated harms for staff and visitors

Background - A balance of ultraviolet radiation (UV) exposure is important for health. Too much of the sun’s radiation can cause sunburn, skin and eye damage and skin cancer. Exposure to the sun’s UV during childhood and adolescence is associated with an increased risk of skin cancer in later life. Too little exposure from the sun can lead to low vitamin D levels. Vitamin D is essential for healthy bones and muscles, and for general health.


Procedures - Staff and students are encouraged to access the daily local sun protection times at
sunsmart.com.au or on the free Sunsmart app to assist with the implementation of this policy. A combination of sun protection measures are used for all outdoor activities from September to the end of April and whenever UV levels reach 3 and above.

**Healthy physical environment**

1. **Seek shade** - A shade audit is conducted regularly to determine the current availability and quality of shade.

The School Council makes sure there is a sufficient number of shelters and trees providing shade in the school grounds particularly in areas where students congregate e.g. lunch, canteen, outdoor lesson areas and popular play areas.

The availability of shade is considered when planning all other outdoor activities and excursions.

In consultation with the school council, shade provision is considered in plans for future buildings and grounds.

Students are encouraged to use available areas of shade when outside.

Students who do not have appropriate hats or outdoor clothing are asked to play in the shade or a suitable area protected from the sun.

**Healthy social environment**

2. **Slip on sun protective clothing** - Sun protective clothing is included in our school uniform / dress code and sports uniform. School clothing is cool, loose fitting and made of densely woven fabric. It includes shirts with collars and elbow length sleeves, longer style dresses and shorts and rash vests or t-shirts for outdoor swimming.

3. **Slap on a hat** - All Primary aged students and all staff are required to wear hats that protect their face, neck and ears, whenever they are outside during term 1 and 4.

4. **Slop on sunscreen** - Students must provide their own SPF 30 or higher broad spectrum, water resistant sunscreen.

**Learning and Skills** - Programs on skin cancer prevention and vitamin D are included in the curriculum for all year levels.

Daily reminders are placed in the student bulletin on days when the UV index is 3 or above Sunsmart behaviour is regularly reinforced and promoted to the whole school community through newsletters, school homepage, parent meetings, staff meetings, school assemblies, and student and teacher activities and on student enrolment.

**Engaging Children, Educators, Staff and Families**

Staff and families are provided with information on sun protection through family newsletters, noticeboards and the website.

As part of OHS UV risk controls and role-modelling, when the UV is 3 and above staff, families and visitors:

- Wear a sun protective hat, covering clothing and if practical sunglasses when outside.
- Apply sunscreen. Seek shade whenever possible.

**Monitoring and Review** - The School Council and staff regularly monitor and review the effectiveness of the Sunsmart Policy (at least once every three years) and revise the policy when required by completing a policy review and membership renewal with Sunsmart at sunsmart.com.au.

Sunsmart Policy updates and requirements will be made available to staff, families and visitors.

**Relevant documents/links**

- DET Health, Safety & WorkCover
- Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) Occupational Health & Safety Guidelines
- Independent Schools Victoria (ISV) Compliance Framework
- Victorian Early Years Learning and Development Framework (VEYLDF)
- Building Quality Standards Handbook (BQSH): Section 8.5.5 Shade Areas (Oct 2011)
- Education and Training Parliamentary Committee Inquiry into Dress Codes and School Uniforms in Victorian Schools - Government Response
- Safe Work Australia: Guidance Note for the Protection of Workers from the Ultraviolet Radiation in Sunlight (2008)
**PRIMARY NEWS**

**PANCAKE DAY**
The Student Representative Council (SRC) will be cooking pancakes in the primary area next Tuesday, 9th February at recess. This is their first fundraiser for 2016. Students in Grades P-6 have the opportunity to order a pancake for their morning tea. The pancakes with jam and cream topping will sell for $1.00 each. All orders along with money must be returned to school no later than Monday 8th February. If you have not received an order form there is one attached to today’s newsletter.

**NAMING ARTICLES**
Please remember it is very important to name all your children’s property clearly, especially hats and jumpers, bags, drink bottles and lunch containers.

**LEVIES – PRIMARY PARENT PAYMENT 2016**
Thank you to the parents who have paid their levies. If you have not paid your levies, please call into the school office and do so as soon as possible.

**MERBEIN COMMUNITY BANK SCHOOL STUDENT BANKING PROGRAM**
If you wish your child to participate in this program, send your child’s bank book along to the Green Building Office every Thursday morning. The Bank will collect and process your child’s banking and then drop the bank book back to the school before the end of the school day.

**MERBEIN P-10 COLLEGE OUTSIDE SCHOOL HOURS CARE**
Outside School Hours Care (OSHC) is currently taking enrolments for 2016. Days are filling fast. Cheryll Hodge is our school’s OSHC coordinator and can be contacted on 0428 258035 if you have any queries.

**STOMP DANCE – GRADES P-6**
Stomp Dance is coming to Merbein P-10 for a five day program. From 15th-19th February, the Stomp Dance Group will be teaching dances to all students from Grade P-6 during their PE classes throughout the week. Those lessons will be a valuable part of these students ARTS Curriculum which consists of Music, Dance, Performance and Drama. The cost for these performances and lessons is covered by the 2016 Excursion Levy. If you have not paid the levy the cost is $10 per child.

A permission note was sent home last Thursday with every primary child, please check that your child’s note has been returned and that their money/levy has been paid.

**HATS**
Students are required to wear a hat for all outdoor activities (NO caps).

**BLUE BOOK/LIBRARY BAGS**
Reminder that all students will need a suitable waterproof bag to put their library and reading books in to take home. Blue book/library bags are for sale at the school uniform shop.

**SEVERE FOOD ALLERGIES**
There are students at the school with severe food allergies. Please remind your child that their food is not to be shared.

**BRAIN FOOD**
Each child is encouraged to bring some ‘brain food’ to have every morning. Studies have shown that small amounts of healthy food continually throughout the day, helps with concentration and energy. Examples are: dried fruit, crackers, grapes, carrots, celery, cheese, plain popcorn. No nuts please. (Not roll ups, or chips)

**WATER BOTTLES**
Every student needs to bring along a plastic sport bottle of water (not soft drink or cordial or fruit drink, just water) to school every day to sit on their desks during class. Studies have proven that the brain does not function well if dehydrated. So it is best practice to drink plenty of water throughout the day.

NB: We have the refrigerated water fountain at school where the children can refill their bottles during the day.
ART SMOCKS
Please check your child has sent along an art smock or old shirt to school clearly labelled with your child’s name and their class teachers name also.

HEADLICE
Headlice is always a problem in schools. Below is a list of recommendations for parents to follow:
- Parents are asked to keep their child/ren’s hair tied back neatly at all times.
- Parents are asked to check their child/ren’s hair regularly.
- If Head Lice is detected on your child, prompt notification to the principal is important and will be kept confidential.
- If Head Lice is detected, please seek treatment from your local chemist, doctor or the MRCC Health Department.
- If you or the school detects headlice on your child, it is necessary for your child to remain at home until they have been treated and then checked by you to make sure they are clear of any headlice before they return to school.
These precautions will help the school to nip any further infestations in the bud.

GRADE 5-6 NEWS
The students and staff have had a fabulous start to the year with both literacy and numeracy learning groups commencing this week.

Unit Newsletter - A unit newsletter has gone home yesterday. Please take the time to read this and assist your child to be prepared for school.

Student Representative Council (SRC) Speeches will take place in the Grade 5-6 Unit next Thursday, 11th February commencing at 11.30am. Families are welcome to come along. Please sign in at the main office before heading down to the Orange Building.

Special Thank You - to both the Parents’ Club and SRC for their generous donation of $1000 each. The money has been used to assist us in purchasing new Event Uniforms. All students will feel very proud representing our school at Sporting and Academic Events.

GRADE 1/2 JELLYFISH NEWS
The Grade 1/2 students from the Jellyfish Room have made a bright and happy start to the school year. Lots of smiles and fun times together.

GRADE P-4 ASSEMBLY
The first Green Building Assembly was held today in the Beach End of the Learning Centre. The Grade P-4 Assembly will be held every Thursday afternoon at 2.45pm. Students will run the assemblies and teachers will award certificates for outstanding work and improvement. There will also be a special award presented each week for School Wide Positive Behaviour, awarded to students who demonstrate the school values of Respect, Responsibility and Quality in class and in the yard. Families are welcome to attend.

STORM PLAYERS VISIT
Storm players will visit the school tomorrow at 2.15pm. They will talk to students in Grades 3-6 about well-being, sleep, keeping hydrated and belonging.
AFTER SCHOOL
Earlier this week, we had lots of parents of Prep students watching their children while waiting in the middle space of the Sea End of the Green Building. It was extremely chaotic for the students trying to pack their bags at their lockers and to get organised. For OH&S reasons we are asking parents to wait outside the Green Learning Centre when picking their child up after school. The students will be dismissed from the green door in their homeroom. If parents are not waiting at the door for collection, students will be taken around to the playground at the front of the school to wait. Parents are welcome to attend these assemblies also.

PREP REST DAYS
The Prep Rest Days will continue every Wednesday throughout February. Most of the Preps completed their Numeracy testing yesterday. The remainder of the testing will be done in class time. Thank you to the parents who brought their children in yesterday. The information collected from the Literacy testing allows teachers to know what each child can do and what we now need to teach them, so we can start their learning journey from where they are at. The teachers in the Sea End of the Green Building will be participating in a Literacy PD next Wednesday.

WHOLE SCHOOL ASSEMBLY
The first Whole School Assembly will be held next Friday, 12th February at 10.15am. Students have been nominated by their teachers and the student with the most points will be awarded “Student of the Month”. Certificates are presented at these assemblies along with a $2.00 canteen voucher award. Parents are welcome to attend these assemblies also.

BEFORE SCHOOL TIMES
The doors of the Green Learning Centre open at 8.40am. Students who arrive at school before 8.40am are encouraged to either go to the Breakfast Club in our college canteen or to sit at the tables behind the Green Learning Centre until the Learning Centre doors open and students can then take their bags to their lockers. A teacher is on duty from 8.40am in the front yard. Please remind your child of their two options if they are at school before 8.40pm.

WOOLWORTHS EARN & LEARN
Thank you to the parents who returned their tickets. We have received five beautiful puzzles that the Infant students will be able to use.

SECONDARY NEWS

FORM TEACHERS AND LEARNING CENTRE LEADERS 2016 - Mr Rhodes
Below is a list of our Form Teachers and Learning Centre Leaders. Your child’s Form Teachers and Learning Centre Leaders are both important points of contact at school. If you wish to contact a teacher directly, please forward your email address to one of your child’s Form Teachers or Learning Centre Leaders via the school email address merbein.p10@edumail.vic.gov.au and it will then be forwarded on to your child’s class teacher if required.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year 8-10 Learning Centre Leaders</th>
<th>Liz Rankin, Chris Blackie and Chris Bettison</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 8-10 Form Teachers</td>
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<tr>
<td>8A Mr B Hill</td>
<td>8B Mr Johnson</td>
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<td>8C Ms Williams</td>
<td>8D Ms Donnelly</td>
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<tr>
<td>9A Mrs Byrne</td>
<td>9B Mrs James and Mrs McPhee</td>
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<td>9C Mr Bennett</td>
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<td>10A Mr Voegue</td>
<td>10B Mrs Dawson</td>
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<tr>
<td>10C Mr Hankinson</td>
<td>10D Mrs Smith and Dunbar</td>
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<td>10E Mr Willison</td>
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<td>Year 7 Learning Centre Leader</td>
<td>Mr Morgan</td>
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<td>Year 7 Form Teachers</td>
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<td>7A Mr Petrie</td>
<td>7B Mr Arney</td>
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<td>7C Ms Hibberd</td>
<td>7D Mr Hudson</td>
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</table>
VALENTINES DAY – Mr Rhodes
The Secondary Student Representative Council Executive (SRC) will be organising the Annual Valentine’s Day Stall. Secondary students will be able to purchase relatively inexpensive mementos as gifts to acknowledge friendships with other students in the school. The funds raised from the stall will go towards some of the SRC school based projects.

YEAR 7 IMMUNISATIONS – Mr Rhodes
The first round of school immunisations will take place on Tuesday 8th March. All year 7 students have been given Immunisation Cards. The school Immunisation Program is an important health initiative in all Australian schools. The immunisations help protect students now and in future years from potentially devastating diseases and viruses. All students should return their completed cards to the general office ASAP.

OPEN WATER LEARNING EXPERIENCE – Mr Rhodes
As part of our school’s commitment to water safety in the Murray River and Inland Waterways, the Year 7 students will attend an Open Water Learning Experience next Wednesday morning, 17th February. I encourage all our Year 7 students to participate and attend this fun and educational experience which is conducted by Lifesaving Victoria.

LOCKS ON LOCKERS – Mr Rhodes
All students are responsible for the security of their own equipment at school. We have supplied lockable lockers and have cameras set up at most locker locations. If a student has a BYOD computer or Ipad they MUST supply and use a lock on their lockers. It is strongly advised for all other students to use a lock on their lockers also, to ensure security.

SCHOOL WIDE POSITIVE BEHAVIOURS (SWPBIS) – Mr Rhodes
The 2016 Term 1 focus for SWPBIS is centred around students being punctual for classes, with correct equipment and completing good quality work. All students are expected to attend all classes with correct equipment and they will be marked on a session by session check sheet. Students who consistently do the right thing will be acknowledged and rewarded. The students who are not punctual or do not bring correct equipment to classes will have a graduated set of actions designed to teach them about the expectation. Students will also have spot checks on their work books which will be recorded. Students who are respectful of their equipment will be rewarded, those who aren’t, will have graduated consequences to help them learn about the importance of respecting equipment.

SECONDARY SWIM SPORTS – Mr Rhodes
The Annual Secondary Swim Sports will be held during the day, next Thursday, 11th February. On this day all students in the Secondary Section will be encouraged to enter the water and swim, walk or float to the other end of the pool at least once for the day to get important points for each student’s Sports House. More detailed information below.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION FOR PARENTS 2016 SECONDARY SWIMMING SPORTS – Mr Rhodes
The Annual Secondary Swimming Sports will be held next Thursday, 11th February at the Merbein Swimming Pool from 11.30-2.40pm. Students are expected to come to school in appropriate Sun Smart Clothing. This can be in House Colours. All students will be required to apply sunscreen regularly throughout the day and stay in the shade at every opportunity. Shade will be provided in the House Teams areas for students to sit while waiting for their events and to barrack for their team mates who are competing. Streamers are NOT permitted in the swimming pool area.

All students will be expected to participate in some events. The House Sports are based around participation, but also acknowledge sporting excellence. Some students may not be strong swimmers, but they are encouraged never the less, to swim in their house trial events. These events are swum in their House Teams and their House Team will gain points for every student in their team who participates. There will also be participation relays for students who are not strong swimmers. They will again win points for their House Team for participation. Students who have medical conditions that preclude them from swimming can still participate in land based events that will gain points for their house.

The timetable for the day is as follows.

- Students will have normal classes in Sessions 1 and 2 with Session 2 being shortened slightly.
- Buses will depart from Merbein P-10 to the pool at 11.00am.
- The first event will take place at 11.30am.
- The final event is scheduled for 2.30pm.
- Presentations to age champions and house winners will be held at 2.35-2.45pm.

A BBQ will be available for students to purchase food. Water will be available. The Kiosk will be open for students to purchase snack food and drinks. Students can bring a cut lunch and snacks into the pool. Parents are welcome to attend the sports to support their children.

A guide to events is outlined below.
- 11.30 – 11.45am Butterfly events.
- 11.55am-12.15pm Freestyle trials for house points every swimmer earns a point.
SECONDARY ENGLISH NEWS
Welcome to English for 2016.
This week students have commenced writing for the school’s annual writing competition. Over the coming weeks students are expected to produce two pieces of work for short-listed entry into the competition. Students will respond to pre-determined prompts to produce a narrative and a creative response in order to be in the running for a spot in the finals and a prize. The two pieces of work will also be used by teachers to assess the current ability of students and to determine what supports or extensions may need to be put in place for individual students.

So far students have brainstormed, planned and written their first draft for their narrative and are well underway to completing their first piece. Please have a chat with your child about their work and see if you recognise the narrative prompts as we have ‘borrowed’ the opening lines to some famous novels.

During the first week back at school many students also set goals for improvement in English this semester. Goals range from improving essay writing, improving spelling, becoming more confident with public speaking and reading more often. These goals should be in your child’s work book but a quick conversation with your child about their goals might produce some ideas about how you can support their learning goals at home.

Finally, all students must have their Essential English text book for their weekly SPAG classes in order to assist them with their learning. We understand that some students have the text on order and that they are on the way.

English staff are very open to communicating with home, so if you have any concerns or issues you wish to discuss, please feel free to contact any of us via the front office.

Photos of students working on their narrative for ‘Write On’

- 12.15 – 12.30 – Freestyle races – top 2 swimmers in each age group for each house.
- 12.35-12.45 – Breaststroke trials every swimmer earns a point.
- 12.47-1.10 Breaststroke races - top 2 swimmers in each age group for each house.
- 1.15 – House participation relay.
- 1.20 – 1.30 Backstroke trials.
- 1.30 – 1.50 Backstroke races - top 2 swimmers in each age group from each house.
- 1.55-2.15 Freestyle relays – top 4 competitors in each house compete.
- 2.15 – 2.25 Medley relays – best swimmer in each stroke in U14 and U17.
- 2.25pm – House relay.
- 2.35 Presentations.
- 2.50 return to school.

If any parents would like their child to be dismissed from the pool they must provide a signed note on the day which is to be given to Mr Rhodes.

YEAR 10 UNIFORM
This year we continue the tradition of allowing our Year 10 students to wear a unique white polo shirt and black rugby jumper to recognise their last year with us.

The designs of the polo shirt and rugby jumper are very similar to last year.

All students should have received an order form this week. The cost of the polo shirt is $35 which should be paid to the front office by Wednesday, 10th February. The cost of the rugby jumper is $80 and should be paid to the front office by Wednesday, 24th February. Only items that have been paid for will be ordered.

If you have any queries please contact Mr Dreyer.

YEAR 10 SNOW TRIP
Year 10 students have received Expressions of Interest Forms for the 2016 Snow Trip. These forms expressing their interest in the camp need to be returned to the front office by Monday, 29th February. Details for the trip are also on the form.

YEAR 10 GRADUATION POLICY
Our newest Year 10’s have made a great start to the year. On Wednesday they were made aware of the Merbein P-10 College Graduation Policy and are now very clear about the expectations that they need to meet in order to attend the Graduation Celebrations at the end of the year. All students have also received information from their teachers regarding work requirements and how they can successfully complete each subject. The Graduation Policy and Year 10 Survival Guide are available on the School’s website and are also posted in each Year 10 Home Room. Should you have any subject specific questions, please contact your child’s teacher. General inquiries can be directed to Liz Rankin, email rankin.elizabeth.k@edumail.vic.gov.au
ON TOUR TENNIS – MILDURA LAWN TENNIS CLUB
Coaching for all levels and ages Monday to Friday.
3-5yrs 2.30pm Mondays and Thursdays only.
5-7yrs 4-4.30pm 8-10yrs 4.30-5.15pm
10yrs+ 5.15-6pm 12 yrs+ 6-7pm.
Private lessons are available on request. If you are interested, contact Dean Kyle on phone 0414826318 or email ontourtennis1@gmail.com

“CALL ME DAD” CAN A VIOLENT MAN CHANGE?
SCHS and the Men’s Behaviour Change Program invites you to join them in the 80 minute screening of “Call Me Dad”, followed by a Discussion Panel. Held the Mercy Theatre Mildura on 25th February from 6.30-8.30pm (doors open at 6pm).
Light supper provided/tea and coffee.
Register at www.eventbrite.com.au or contact Lisa or Sam on 50225444 for further information.

RELAY FOR LIFE
A Team Information Night will be held 11th February from 7-8pm at Sunitafe.
A Compulsory Team Information Night will be held 25th February from 7-8.30pm at Sunitafe. At least one member from all teams must attend!
For more information phone Rosemary Smallman 0400036443 or email rosie_j6@bigpond.com.au

SPIKE ZONE VOLLEYBALL STARTS SATURDAY
Sunraysia Volleyball will be hitting off the 2016 year in big style with the start of the Spike Zone Volleyball Program this Saturday.
The program runs for seven weeks, will be held at the St. Joseph’s Stadium each Saturday morning from 9:30–11:00am.
Each week participants will learn the skills and rules of the game in a coaching session with experienced, qualified coaches. This will incorporate fun games, challenges and team based competitions.
The Program is open to girls and boys under 15 and is targeted at anyone interested in learning how to play the fast exciting game of volleyball.
The Program costs $5 per week with fees payable on entry.
So, come down and join in, all are welcome!
Contact Allan Hassell for more information on allanhassell@me.com

HIGHLIGHTS

COMMUNITY NEWS

FREE RUGBY LEAGUE CLINIC FOR ALL AGES
With the Melbourne Storm. Held at the Aerodrome Touch Fields Mildura
TODAY, THURSDAY 4th FEBRUARY from 4.30-5.30pm.

MERBEIN JUNIOR FOOTBALL CLUB
The club is looking for someone or a couple of people to take on the role of coach/co-ordinator of their Auskick program.
Role involves taking the training sessions, starting early May 2016 and running them for ten weeks.
Program support materials and coaching support from junior coaches will be provided. No prior experience required, just a desire to have fun and encourage kids to have a go.
If you are interested please contact Graeme Dunne – President on 0407 235 751 or Geoff Stevens – Director of Coaching on 0407 502 465.

JUNIOR GOLF PROGRAM TERM 1 – MILDURA GOLF RESORT
Mondays 4.15-5.15pm (February 1st – March 14th)
Wednesdays 4.15-5.15pm for Handicap Golfers (February 3rd – March 16th)
Saturdays 9am-10am (February 6th – March 19th)
Cost $59 per term. All clinics conducted by PGA Professional Brendan Rowse. Phone the Resort for an application form or for more information.
**2016 TOUR DE MURRAY**
Family Fun Day to be held 6th March at the Mildura Lawn Tennis Club. Ride it. Run it. Walk it. Entry fee includes BBQ lunch and refreshments. For more details visit www.chancesforchildren.com.au

**ELECTRIC LIGHT THEATRE (ELT)**
Presents ‘A Night At The Theatre’. A show full of music, comedy, drama and dance variety and performed by Sunraysia young people. Show dates are 5th and 6th February. Tickets available at the Mildura Arts Centre or online www.eltmildura.org. Evening and matinee shows available. Below is a photo of some of the ELT cast who are either past or current students from Merbein P10 College.

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**PANCAKE DAY FUNDRAISER**
**ORDER FORM GRADES PREP-6**

**Tuesday 9th February, 2016**

Number of Pancakes ☐ $1.00 each ☐ Gluten Free $1.00 each

Total amount enclosed $ ......................

Student Name ........................................................................................................... Grade ..........................
## 2016 School Council Election Process Timetable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EVENT</th>
<th>DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a) Notice of election and call for nominations</td>
<td>Friday 5 February 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b) Closing date for nominations</td>
<td>Monday 15 February 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c) Date by which the list of candidates and nominators will be posted</td>
<td>Wednesday 17 February 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>d) Date by which ballot papers will be prepared and distributed</td>
<td>On or before Mon 22 February 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e) Close of ballot – 4.00 pm</td>
<td>Tuesday 1 March 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>f) Vote count and Declaration of ballot – 4.30 pm</td>
<td>Tuesday 1 March 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>g) Special council meeting to co-opt Community members (the principal will preside)</td>
<td>Wednesday 2 March 2016</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>h) First council meeting to elect office bearers (the principal will preside)</td>
<td>Wednesday 9 March</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Graeme Cupper**  
Principal
School Council Elections (2016)

What is a school council and what does it do?

All government schools in Victoria have a school council. They are legally formed bodies that are given powers to set the key directions of a school within centrally provided guidelines. In doing this, a school council is able to directly influence the quality of education that the school provides for its students.

Who is on the school council?

There are three possible categories of membership:

- **A mandated elected Parent category.** More than one third of the total members must be from this category. Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DET) employees can be Parent members at their child’s school as long as they are not employed at the school.

- **A mandated elected DET employee category.** Members of this category may make up no more than one third of the total membership of school council. The principal of the school is automatically one of these members.

- **An optional Community member category.** Its members are appointed by a decision of the council because of their special skills, interests or experiences. DET employees are not eligible to be Community members.

The term of office for all members is two years. Half the members must retire each year, creating vacancies for the annual school council elections.

Why is Parent membership so important?

Parents on school councils provide important viewpoints and have valuable skills that can help shape the direction of the school.

Those parents who become active on a school council find their involvement satisfying in itself and may also find that their children feel a greater sense of belonging.

How can you become involved?

The most obvious way is to vote in the elections, which are held in Term 1 each year. However, ballots are only held if more people nominate as candidates than there are positions vacant.

In view of this, you might seriously consider

- standing for election as a member of the school council
- encouraging another person to stand for election.

Do I need special experience to be on school council?

No. What you do need is an interest in your child’s school and the desire to work in partnership with others to help shape the school’s future.
What do you need to do to stand for election?

The principal will issue a notice and call for nominations following the commencement of Term 1 each year. All school council elections must be completed by the end of March.

If you decide to stand for election, you can arrange for someone to nominate you as a candidate or you can nominate yourself in the Parent category.

DET employees whose child is enrolled in a school in which they are not employed are eligible to nominate as parents for the school council where their child is enrolled.

Once the nomination form is completed, return it to the principal within the time stated on the notice of election. You will receive a Nomination Form Receipt in the mail following the receipt of your completed nomination.

If there are more nominations received than there are vacancies on council, a ballot will be conducted during the two weeks after the call for nominations has closed.

Remember

- Ask at the school for help if you would like to stand for election and are not sure what to do
- Consider standing for election to council this year
- Be sure to vote in the elections.

Contact the principal for further information.