College Mission . . .

Building on a foundation of Christian values, the mission of Aitken College is to enable students to become informed and compassionate members of the wider community by inspiring academic achievement and creativity, nurturing self worth, encouraging environmental responsibility and committing to service with and for others.

Important Diary Dates for 2013

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>11 Mar</td>
<td>Labour Day Holiday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thur</td>
<td>14 Mar</td>
<td>Parent Teacher Interviews (Prep–12)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>27 Mar</td>
<td>Parent Teacher Interviews (Prep–12)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thur</td>
<td>28 Mar</td>
<td>Professional Learning Day (student free)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>27 Mar</td>
<td>Term 1 concludes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>15 Apr</td>
<td>Term 2 commences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thur</td>
<td>25 Apr</td>
<td>ANZAC Day Holiday</td>
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<td>Mon</td>
<td>10 Jun</td>
<td>Queen's Birthday Holiday</td>
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<td>Tue</td>
<td>18 Jun</td>
<td>Report Writing Day (student free)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>28 Jun</td>
<td>Term 2 concludes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>22 Jul</td>
<td>Term 3 commences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tue</td>
<td>13 Aug</td>
<td>Parent Teacher Interviews (Prep–5)</td>
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<td>Thu</td>
<td>22 Aug</td>
<td>Parent Teacher Interviews (Prep–12)</td>
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<td>Fri</td>
<td>23 Aug</td>
<td>Professional Learning Day (student free)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>20 Sep</td>
<td>Term 3 concludes</td>
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<td>Mon</td>
<td>07 Oct</td>
<td>Term 4 commences</td>
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<td>Mon</td>
<td>04 Nov</td>
<td>Mid Term Break</td>
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<td>Tue</td>
<td>05 Nov</td>
<td>Melbourne Cup Day Holiday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fri</td>
<td>22 Nov</td>
<td>Report Writing Day (student free)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon</td>
<td>09 Dec</td>
<td>Presentation Night (Years 3 to 12)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wed</td>
<td>11 Dec</td>
<td>Term 4 concludes</td>
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Term dates for 2013

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<th>Term</th>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>4/5 February</td>
<td>28 March</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>15 April</td>
<td>28 June</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>22 July</td>
<td>20 September</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>7 October</td>
<td>11 December</td>
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Important Diary Dates for 2013

Thought: “Knowledge is limited. Imagination encircles the whole world.” Albert Einstein

From the Principal

Welcome to a new school year. I hope that the holiday period was a time of rest and enjoyment for all. The beginning of each school year is a time of excitement, renewal, challenges and successes. I especially welcome new students and their families to Aitken College.

The staff have been busy and excited as they prepare for the new year. I encourage parents to get to know the teachers of their children, to become engaged with College activities and support wherever you can.

At the Information evenings this week, I talked about the importance of school and home working together. This poem summarised the importance of this co-operation.

I dreamed I stood in a studio
And watched two sculptors there,
The clay they used was a young child's mind
And they fashioned it with care.
One was a teacher; the tools being used
Were books and music and art,
One a parent with a guiding hand
And a gentle, loving heart.
Day after day the teacher toiled
With touch that was deft and sure,
While the parent laboured just as hard
And polished and smoothed it o'er.
When at last their task was done
They were proud of what they had wrought,
For the things they had moulded into the child
Could neither be sold nor bought.
And both agreed they would have failed
If they had worked alone;
For behind the parent stood the school
And behind the teacher, the home.

Author unknown

Attached to the newsletter is also an article from Michael Grose on 10 ways to promote mental health and well-being in young people. As he says, young people with good mental health, learn better and are more resilient.

Mrs Josie Crisara
Principal

2013 Tuition Fees

Term One tuition fees are due this Friday, 8 February 2012. Note that an administration charge of $55.00 per term will be charged for late payments unless prior arrangements have been made with the Finance Manager.

Mr Petar Gajic
Finance Manager

Aitken Alumni Function

The One Year Reunion of the Class of 2011 will be held on Friday, 22 February 2013. School tours will be conducted from 6.30pm to 7.00pm. Refreshments provided from 7.00pm to 9.00pm.

Venue: Chapel and Performing Arts Centre Foyer, Aitken College

RSVP: 15/02/13 to admin@aitkencollege.edu.au

Parents and Friends Association

Meeting dates for 2013:

Monday 18 February
Tuesday 30 April
Wednesday 7 August
Thursday 17 October
Thursday 28 November – Annual General Meeting

All are invited to join us at any of our meetings to meet other parents and learn how we contribute to the College. Look out for more information on the Aitken College Community Business Directory. More details to be provided shortly.

From the Deputy Principal

At the Parent Information Evenings I have given a brief overview of some new initiatives at the College:

New Aitken College website at: www.aitkencollege.edu.au, including the College calendar and Community Business Directory.

Students, and their parents, will progressively have access to My School Day, the electronic diary, and Elocker for sharing of class resources and submission of work.

Aitken College Canteen: The new Canteen operators, Metropolitan Canteens, have launched a new menu and introduced on-line ordering of lunches for Prep to Year 7 children; see further details below.
The new menu was included with the Parent Notices mailed home in January and is on the College website at: http://www.aitkencollege.edu.au/enrolment-information/canteen-list/

On-line ordering for Prep to Year 6 students is now available. To register, go to: www.flexischools.com.au, click on the 'Register' button and follow the instructions to set up an account. You can then place an order for school lunches that will be delivered to the classroom. An on-line ordering guide brochure is included with the menus on the website. Ordering may also be done using the Flexischools app for iPad or iPhone (search for Flexischools in the App store).

Brookhill School Notices

Year 12 Student Learning Conference: The year began for Brookhill on Monday in the members area at Moonee Valley Racecourse with the inaugural Year 12 Student Learning Conference. At this full day conference, Year 12 students started the day listening to keynote speaker, Linh Do, talk about her experience of Year 12 and the excellent work she is doing in the area of Community Service. Although only a few years younger than the Year 12 students, Linh has achieved a lot in the academic and service areas; information about the service organisation she runs can be found at the web site www.theverb.org. Students then participated in study skills workshops run by Elevate Education; these are the culmination of the series of workshops undertaken by all Brookhill students throughout years 10, 11 and 12. They also had a seminar with College Counsellor, Ms Jill Johnson on mental wellbeing during Year 12 and a seminar with Mr Clifton and Mr Murphy on the academic side of Year 12. The conference finished off with a formal sit down dinner in the committee room, at which a dozen of Aitken College’s high achieving past Year 12 students spoke to the current senior group about their experiences.

Year 12 Parent Information Evening: A reminder to all parents of Year 12 students that the Year 12 Parent Information Evening will be held at the College on Wednesday, 20 February. This is an important night, where we will be discussing factors which can enhance or distract from a successful final year of schooling.

College Photos: College photos are scheduled for next Friday, 15 February. All students should be in full, correct summer uniform on this day. Boys must be clean shaven and all uniform and grooming expectations must be met for students to be photographed.

VCAL News

VCAL - the Victorian Certificate of Applied Learning - is an accredited alternative to VCE. It involves a series of senior school completion certificates that has the flexibility to cater for students who work better in an applied manner; which is basically learning by ‘doing’ and experiencing educational activities in the context of real life situations. Students who have a clear career direction have thrived in this environment.

VCAL students also undertake two VET (Vocational Education and Training) courses during their two year program. This includes VET Business, which is delivered at Aitken and then numerous courses offered at various outside institutes, depending on a student’s interest. This year some of the VET courses the VCAL students are undertaking include Building and Construction; Engineering; Automotive and Electrotechnology.

Congratulations to the successful Aitken College VCAL graduates from 2012 who have either entered full time employment or are continuing with their studies or apprenticeships. Congratulations are also in order for the 2012 Year 12 students, Melanie Bakaj and Jenay O’Kane who received their Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award and Demet Misirlisoy and Paige McKnight who both achieved a Duke of Edinburgh Silver Award. All four girls worked exceptionally hard to achieve their goals and are to be commended for their outstanding efforts.

Year 12 VCAL 2012

Mr Kim Forward  
Deputy Principal

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Year 12 VCAL 2012

Mr David Murphy  
Head of Brookhill
Glenarthur School Notices

Thank you parents, for making an effort to send your child to school neatly dressed. Thank you too for attending the parent information evening last Wednesday. Your presence and support are appreciated. If you did not get a copy of the various Parenting Helps handouts, please ask your child to see me to collect.

The Principal will address our first assembly on Monday, 11 February, at which the Glenarthur Student Council for 2013 will be announced. The formal investiture of these leaders is on Tuesday, 5 March; parents will be invited.

College Photos will be taken on 15 and 22 February. Photo-order envelopes will come home with your child. Please ensure your child returns the completed order with the correct payment amount, on the day of the photo. Family order envelopes will be available from the Heads of School and Reception.

An information letter will come to you via your child regarding the regular and successful Oxygen Factory seminars; Year 8 students on 7 March; Year 9 on 8 March.

The Senior [Years 8-12] House swimming carnival is on Tuesday, 19 February; do encourage your child to support their House. The House colour t-shirt is compulsory.

Forms: Please sign and return the various forms which will come home with your child.

The Australian Taxation Office once again offers students [who are over 13 years old] the opportunity to obtain a TFN [tax file number] in a convenient and simple manner, through the College. Application forms can be collected from Mr Bond or the Senior School office.

We look forward to working with you for your children’s progress. It is important to develop, from the outset, a positive attitude to studies and routine, and to look for the many new opportunities to expand responsibilities, and to demonstrate and develop leadership potential.

Mr Shelton Bond & Mrs Elpis Vlahopoulos
Head and Assistant Head of Glenarthur

Dunhelen School Notices

Welcome to all students and families who are new to Aitken in 2013 and welcome back to all of our existing students and families. It’s hard to believe the holidays are over and we are all back at school, but I am sure 2013 will provide us with many wonderful moments.

It’s already been a busy week in Dunhelen! We are settling into Middle School, had ID photos taken and are now busily preparing for Year 7 camp next week! In addition, our Year 6 students have welcomed their Prep buddies to Aitken College.

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce you to Dunhelen’s team of teachers: Mr Simon Adams (7A); Miss Christalla Koukoullides (7K); Mr Ben Prentice (7P) and Assistant Head of School; Ms Brigitte Seivers (7S); Ms Stephanie Simpson (7SL); Mrs Emma Dowling (6D) and Mr Nigel Keegan (6T).

I am sure that many of your children are still feeling a little anxious about the life in Dunhelen. Having spoken to many students, I know some are nervous about time management and of course, homework! These concerns are normal and I encourage you to speak to your child about them. Over the course of the next few weeks, teachers will be working with students on these matters, giving them some tips and advice, which should help ease some of this anxiety.

I would like to take this opportunity to encourage you to keep the lines of communication between school and home open. If you have concerns about your child in a particular subject area, contact their subject teacher directly.
have concerns of a pastoral nature, contact your child’s homeroom teacher. If any other matters are of concern to you, please don’t hesitate to contact myself or the Assistant Head of Dunhelen, Mr Ben Prentice. It can often be difficult to catch teachers during the school day and email may be a more convenient method of communication.

As some of you may be aware, Dunhelen has commenced the process of leadership elections. If you think your child would be a good leader, I urge you to encourage them to nominate themselves for the position of School, House or even Class captain. Nominations for School and House captain close on Monday 19 February. I wish all our candidates the very best of luck.

Once again a very warm welcome to all and I am looking forward to a wonderful year in Dunhelen.

Mrs Francis Scuderi & Mr Ben Prentice
Head and Assistant Head of Dunhelen

Cumberland School Notices

Welcome to the 2013 school year. A special welcome to Cumberland to the Year 3 students who have progressed from Fairview and also to the children new to Aitken College: Anin Kuriakose, Chayce Currie, Julian Torres, Alexander Milojkovic, Anthony Ceniti, Lara Stannard and Lavina Yakou. I trust that you will all have an enjoyable year.

I have already noticed some incorrect jewellery. Please read the relevant section in your child’s diary and be vigilant as to what your child is wearing to school.

Sarah enjoys reading

Another plea, this time with regard to holidays. Taking your child out of school during term time is disruptive to their education as they miss out on the concepts being taught and often miss special events. Extended holidays can also mean that the child takes a while to settle back into the routine and therefore misses out on what is going on in the classroom.

Parents are always welcome to attend Chapel and Assembly. Cumberland Chapel commences at 10.00am each Tuesday and Assembly at 10.30am. If you do attend please model appropriate behaviour in such a forum. The children are expected to sit quietly and not talk and to show appreciation through applause not cheering and it is important that the adults in their lives do likewise.

Tuesday, 12 February is the Cumberland Information Night. It will commence at 7.30pm in the Chapel and Performing Arts Centre. Afterwards parents are invited to move to the classrooms to hear from the class teachers. They will be informing parents of a variety of issues relevant to the class/year level. Please make every effort to attend. As this is not a night for children please endeavour to have your child minded on the night.

I look forward to a happy and successful year.

Ms Barbara Wyatt
Head of Cumberland

Fairview School Notices

Welcome! The first day of school for our new students was a day full of many blessings for our College. It was a day of celebration and of course mixed emotions for our families. The preparation of children starting Prep spans over six months and the hard work of all of the parents and staff during this time contributes to a successful beginning to school life. Beginning school holds many components; excitement, apprehension, anxiety, laughter and tears and these are all fine. All members of our community are supported and it was wonderful to see our new families join our College community. We welcome all our families to the 2013 school year. We look forward to a very exciting and rewarding year.

The Preparatory School staff includes:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Head of Primary Curriculum</th>
<th>Mr Ashley Penny</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prep C</td>
<td>Mr Daniel Catoggio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prep G</td>
<td>Mrs Nicole Gilbert</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prep K</td>
<td>Ms Maria Koullas</td>
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<td>One A</td>
<td>Mrs Anne Adams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One R</td>
<td>Mrs Natasha Radley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two R</td>
<td>Mr Ron Rees</td>
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<tr>
<td>Two Z</td>
<td>Ms Vera Zanko</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

We welcome two new staff members: Mr Catoggio, a Prep homeroom teacher and Mr Penny who will be overseeing Primary Curriculum teaching and learning.
Information Evening: The Preparatory School Information Evening is scheduled for Monday, 11 February at 7.30pm in the Chapel and Performing Arts Centre. The session will provide parents with the opportunity to meet their child’s homeroom teacher and discuss home and school expectations. It is crucial that parents attend, as it reinforces College procedures and ensures a smooth transition for the children.

School Photographs: School photographs are scheduled for Friday, 15 February and 22 February. Your child is required to wear their full summer school uniform. If your child has Physical Education or PMP on this day, they can bring their sport shoes to school. **They must not wear their sport uniform to school on this day.** Family photograph envelopes are available from my office (F8) and Reception. Families will be notified of the family school photograph schedule next week. However, the older sibling will be required to collect their younger sibling from their homeroom and take them to the Chapel and Performing Arts Centre.

Please take note of the following points:

- We request that the children bring to school a re-useable drink bottle and lunch box. We are also encouraging that the lunch box used eliminates the need for any plastic wrappers around food.
- Each child is required to have a bottle of water at school.
- Please ensure that your child is wearing the correct footwear. This includes: flat black lace up leather shoes or leather pull up boots, no buckles or velcro. Pull up boots are only worn in the Preparatory School and children entering Year Three must wear flat black lace up shoes.
- Your child must bring their hat to school everyday. Children without a hat will not be permitted to play outside or participate in their Physical Education class.
- It is also advised that your child bring a small tube/bottle of sun block. Please ensure that they have sun block on before they arrive to school.
- All school books and equipment should have been sent to school.
- Preparatory School children are not permitted to visit the canteen before school begins.
- Please ensure you check your child’s hair for head lice at regular intervals.
- It is also compulsory that all hair is tied back in a pony-tail at all times. If the hair is at a length which it can be tied back, it must be tied in a bottle green hair tie or ribbon.
- Prep and Year One children are required to bring a spare change of underwear, socks and trackpants/shorts (blue or green) to school.

*Ms Kerrie Neophytou*  
*Head of Fairview*

Careers News

Best wishes to students and parents for the commencement of the 2013 school year. We share the Careers Counsellor role at Aitken and our offices and the Careers Resource Room are located in the Senior School Building in B21. Every one is welcome in B21 and we look forward to meeting with and talking to many of the Brookhill students as the year progresses.

**Career News 1:** The first edition of Career News for 2013 has been posted on the College website. The following link will take you to the Careers Newsletter: [www.aitkencollege.edu.au/educational-programs/careers/careers-newsletter/](http://www.aitkencollege.edu.au/educational-programs/careers/careers-newsletter/). Edition 1 contains information about Career News, changes to HECS for Mathematics and Statistics units, useful websites, an Employment Expo at Highpoint, the UMAT, a plumbing careers Expo and more. You are also welcome to contact Careers staff in B21 or via email careers@aitkencollege.edu.au or by telephone 9333 1866.

*Mrs Clare Borg and Ms Rae Gibbs*  
*Careers Advisers*

Chaplain’s Corner

I would like to start the year with a story emailed to me: An eye witness account from New York City, on a cold day in December, some years ago: A little boy, about 10-years-old, was standing before a shoe store on the roadway, barefooted, peering through the window, and shivering with cold. A lady approached the young boy and said, 'My, but you're in such deep thought staring in that window!' I was asking God to give me a pair of shoes,' was the boy's reply. The lady took him by the hand, went into the store, and asked the clerk to get half a dozen pairs of socks for the boy. She then asked if he could give her a basin of water and a towel. He quickly brought them to her. She took the little fellow to the back part of the store and, removing her gloves, knelt down, washed his little feet, and dried them with the towel. By this time, the clerk had returned with the socks. Placeing a pair upon the boy's feet, she purchased him a pair of shoes. She tied up the remaining pairs of socks and gave them to him. She patted him on the head and said, 'No doubt, you will be more comfortable now.' As she turned to go, the astonished kid caught her by the hand and looking up into her face, with tears in his eyes, asked her. 'Are you God's wife?'

God can be encountered in the many acts of kindness and caring that we do for others. May I encourage you, as we start the new school year, to be an extension of God’s eyes, ears and heart as you meet new people; God can do amazing things through us!
Just a reminder to the new Prep parents, that I will be holding morning teas every Friday during Term 1, in the seminar room (above the Chapel and Performing Arts Centre foyer) from 8.45am - 10.30am (come for any part of that time), to help you network with other parents and to answer any questions that you may have, toddlers and grandparents are more than welcome! Also, for the first time this year, we are hoping to have a night for the Year 7 parents to come and meet each other, I will send out letters when the details have been finalised.

I look forward to opportunities to get to know you all better! 

Rev Jeanne Beale  
Chaplain

Environmental Programs Report

Environmental Programs: Hello and welcome back for a new and exciting year for Environmental Programs and Agriculture at Aitken College. It is my pleasure to introduce myself as Head of Environmental Programs. My focus for the year will be on evaluating current environmental initiatives across the College and getting as many staff members, students and families as involved as possible in fun programs throughout the year. The first Environment Committee meeting for 2013 will be held on Thursday, 28 February at 3.30pm in the Administration Building Boardroom. Parents and staff are encouraged to attend to discuss highlights from 2012 and to brainstorm ideas for Aitken Adventurers. See you there!

(Ms) Cristy Herron  
Head of Environmental Programs

Performing Arts News

As we commence a new year, we welcome Ms Jacqueline Flood to the team. Ms Flood will be teaching both Drama and Media and will be involved in staging this year’s Middle School Play.

A number of staff members have been busy over the holidays preparing for another full year of events in Performing Arts.

With the rather short Term 1, the first major concert, the ‘Performing Arts Captains’ Concert’ won’t take place until Term 2. The concert, which raises money for the Starlight Children’s Foundation through gold coin donation, will take place on the eve of the Anzac Day holiday, Wednesday, 24 April, commencing at 7.30pm.

Students, staff and parents are welcome to be a part of this event and our 2013 captains, Tessa Hulsbosch and Joshua Machen will be inviting anyone interested to get in touch in the coming weeks. If you have an idea for an item, please let them know as soon as possible.

As always, we welcome parental involvement in Performing Arts and I would be interested in hearing from anyone who might have a skill they could share or just a willingness to contribute, perhaps learning a new skill along the way. We particularly need help in the areas of set construction, painting and costuming. If you feel you might have some time to offer, please contact me either via the College office or mcooper@aitkencollege.edu.au.

Another way of being involved is through our ‘Friends of Arts’ (FOA), a dedicated group of parents who assist during productions with canteen and helping feed the cast and crew during rehearsals. They are also a wonderful moral support in all we do. Initially, the easiest way is to come along to Friends of Arts meetings, held once or twice a term on Monday evenings, 6.30pm - 7.30pm. The first meeting is Monday, 25 February and will be held upstairs in the Chapel and Performing Arts Centre. FOA also keep a register of parents who may be able to help in some way, please forward your details to foa@aitkencollege.edu.au.

Mr Michael Cooper  
Director of Performing Arts

Visual Arts News

Welcome to returning parents and students and to all new parents and students. I hope that all students are prepared for the year and that they find the Visual Arts classes challenging and exciting. I remind parents and students to make sure that all art equipment including the smock for Primary children and apron for Secondary children is clearly named. Secondary students should name every pencil in their art kit and their visual dairy.

Artist in Residence Program completed in 2012: Artist in Residence 2012, Andrea Innocent. Andrea Innocent (Illustrator and Artist) completed a series of workshops with students from Year 2 to Year 11. She taught students the secrets of how she creates and develops characters using drawing and collage techniques. Each workshop was a one off presentation that ran during the students’ normal art class. A large number of students were involved. The Artist in Residence Program aims to engage students and give them a chance to meet a practicing artist. It is a great way to teach students about the design process and how an interest in Art can become a career. Students completed hand drawings using mixed media to add texture and colour. Andrea chose 30 of the character designs by students to then re-draw these into a digital form, using Adobe Illustrator.
Andrea also created a background that is a bird’s eye view of the school buildings. Students whose characters were used in the final design received an A4 colour copy of Andrea’s version. The final image with characters and school buildings was printed onto vinyl to the size of 2700 x 600mm. These are on display around the school. A larger print was mounted onto board and installed onto the roof in the Primary Art room. The Program is a huge success and something that students appreciate. Past students have mentioned how lucky they are to have been involved with this program during their school years at Aitken College.

If you would like to view some of Andrea’s work please see her website innocentgirl@otoshimono.org

Aims and objectives for the Artist in Residence Program: For students and parents to appreciate that art is an important part of our lives and that art reflects the personality of the creator and the culture in which it exists. The artwork will add character and a sense of fun and style to the college environment. In giving students the opportunity to take part in collaborative art projects they benefit from working as part of a team. Students feel a sense of pride and ownership in producing these artworks and ultimately the college environment reflects their ideas and personality. When working with an artist students learn new skills and experience the arts in a different learning environment. The finished collection of artworks currently in the form of sculpture, paintings, mosaics, seats and murals will document the progress of the college as an evolving school. Students learn valuable lessons about the design process and learn new technical skills from a professional.

Mrs Michelle McKay
Head of Visual Arts

Aitken College Chartered Bus Service
Expressions of Interest for 2013

There are vacancies on the following Aitken College chartered services for 2013:

**Oak Park**: From Oak Park, via Glenroy, Westmeadows, Attwood
**Strathmore / Essendon**: from Strathmore via Essendon, Airport West and Gladstone Park
**Roxburgh Park**: Meadow Heights via Roxburgh Park
**Greenvale**: Greenvale
**Sunbury**: Sunbury via Bulla

Please phone Diana Cohn on 9333 9124 if you would like further information.

Parent Indonesian Language Course

This year the Indonesian Language Faculty will be conducting a series of one-hour Indonesian language sessions for parents. Although the target group will be parents of students in Year 7, parents of students in other year levels are also very welcome. The course will be over six weeks with the first session being held on **Monday, 18 February** in S11 at 9.00am. The course will cover the basic Indonesian language that students learn at an introductory level. During the course participants will experience some of the games and activities that we do in class including ICT based activities on iPads. Apart from being a great way to support your child’s learning, this course may be beneficial for those contemplating a holiday in Bali and is also a great way to meet other parents in the Aitken College community. If you would like to participate in the course, or would like some more information, please email srogers@aitkencollege.edu.au by Friday, 15 February.

Free Course for Parents in Mental Health and Physical Injury

I have been contacted by Melbourne University about a study involving Mental Health and Physical injury issues. Two free first aid courses are being offered to participants in these areas in return for some monitoring of the perceived effectiveness of the training offered. There is no charge. I recommend any parent concerned about these matters and interested in increasing their skills in these areas to investigate further by contacting Julie Fischer, Trial Manager at the University of Melbourne. Email: jfischer@unimelb.edu.au or visit www.tpot.net.au

(Mr) Chris Ward
Director Chaplaincy and Student Services
Request for Crucial Parent and Staff feedback

The Chaplaincy Program plays an important part in the community and educational life of Aitken College. Weekly Chapel services aim to present values and issues of faith to the students in a manner which encourages, challenges and inspires in a way which is different to the purely academic and secular subjects. The Chaplaincy team also provides counselling to students for a range of issues including family breakdown, grief and loss and peer relationships, as well as lunchtime activities for those wishing to engage with faith issues and make new friends.

We receive some funding from the Federal Government under the National Schools Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Program which provides for a Chaplain 2 days per week. We are currently in our 5th year of the current funding arrangement and are now looking to secure this for 2013 and beyond. As part of accountability protocols the College is required to provide feedback from the school community with respect to perceptions and beliefs which relate to Chaplaincy provisions within the community, some of which I have outlined above.

To this end I am requesting parents and staff, or close members of the Aitken Community (Grandparents etc…) to give some feedback by completing the survey attached and returning to me, either in hard copy or to my email: cward@aitkencollege.edu.au. This will take only a little time but is essential for the College to meet ongoing funding requirements. I thank you in anticipation.

(Mr) Chris Ward
Director Chaplaincy and Student Services

Q.1 Do you support the Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Program at Aitken College as it offers Spiritual Direction and Emotional Well Being and Support services to the Community?

YES ☐ NO ☐ Comment: ________________________________

Q.2 Do you value the role Chaplaincy plays in a community such as Aitken College in underpinning the teaching concepts related to Faith, Values and the promotion of a Positive Ethos?

YES ☐ NO ☐ Comment: ________________________________

Q.3 Do you support Aitken College’s continued involvement with the federally funded National Schools Chaplaincy and Student Welfare Program which currently provides funding for a staff member two days per week?

YES ☐ NO ☐ Comment: ________________________________

Please feel free to give any other relevant comments on this matter:

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10 ways to promote good mental health & wellbeing in kids

This year make mental health a parenting priority. Kids with good mental health feel better, learn better and are better equipped to handle life’s curve balls.

It seems strange to talk about promoting good mental health in children. Shouldn’t all children naturally have good mental health habits? After all, childhood is supposed to be a pretty relaxed time of life, free from the pressures and stresses that come hand in hand with adulthood.

Sadly, it doesn’t seem that way. According to the Australian Psychological Society one in seven Australian children experience some type of mental health issue, with ADHD, anxiety and depression being the most common.

Having good mental health doesn’t mean kids don’t experience difficulties or worries. Feeling worried, sad or fearful is normal. Kids who are mentally healthy are equipped to handle many of life’s curve balls that come their way. They also don’t let their emotions overwhelm them. As a result they learn better and have more friends as well.

As a parent it’s useful to reflect on the mental health habits that you promote in your kids. Here are ten ways to promote good mental health and wellbeing in kids

1. Model good mental health habits: If you, like many parents, live constantly with stress then consider ways to actively minimise it, such as getting regular exercise, plenty of sleep and doing relaxation exercises. Not only will this improve your mental health, and make you easier to live with, it will send a strong positive message that mental health is important. It’s worth remembering that kids learn what they live, so make sure they see good mental health habits first hand.

2. Make sure they get enough sleep: Sleep is the one of the building blocks of mental health and wellbeing. Many children and just about all teenagers are sleep-deprived at the moment. Many parents are sleep-deprived as well! Children need between 10 and 12 hours’ sleep to enable proper growth and development, while teenagers need a minimum of nine hours. One of the single most powerful strategies to improve kids’ abilities to cope with stressful or changing situations is to ensure they get enough sleep.

3. Encourage your kids to exercise: When my mum would tell me all those years ago to turn the television off and go outside and play, she didn’t know she was promoting good mental health. She just knew that physical activity was a good thing for an active growing boy. Kids today get less exercise than those of past generations, which is an impediment to mental health. Exercise stimulates the chemicals that improve mood and release the stress that builds up over a day. An hour’s movement per day seems the minimum for kids. How much exercise does your child receive?

4. Encourage creative outlets: Kids should practise creativity if for no other reason than it helps them experience the state of ‘flow’. This is the state of getting so immersed in an activity that you forget about time and place. Writers and other creatives understand the concept of flow. It’s energizing and helps take stressed and worried kids out of themselves.

5. Provide a space of their own: Children of all ages benefit from having some space of their own where they can think. Quiet time and down time give boys the chance to let their thoughts wander around inside their heads. It also helps them get to know, and even like, themselves. Boys will often do their best thinking on their own, so they tend to retreat to their caves (bedroom) when things go wrong at school or in their relationships. They need to go within to find their own answer.

6. Talk about their troubles: A problem shared is a problem halved. Talking about what’s worrying you is a great way to remove the burden of worry and reduce anxiousness. Some kids bottle up what’s inside, while others will catastrophise a situation, which can make matters seem worse. If your child has a problem let him know that his
7. Help them relax: Make sure your child has a hobby or activity that relaxes them. The ability to relax and get away from the stresses of everyday life is essential. Some children who have real difficulty switching off may benefit from practising meditation or mindfulness, but most kids just need time to chill out so they can relax naturally. (I personally practise mindfulness and have found it a really helpful way to turn off my brain for a while!)

8. Have two routines – weekday and weekend: Most households are pretty highly scheduled these days. There are routines for getting up, coming home, eating meals and going to bed. These structures are necessary when we’re busy. Families need a second, more relaxed weekend routine that helps kids relax and unwind. It’s important to have this release valve if families are flat out busy during the week.

9. Foster volunteering and helpfulness: Social isolation is a huge predictor of poor mental health. Encourage your child to be connected to and help others in any way possible. Helping others reinforces social connectedness and the importance of being part of a community, as well as providing opportunities for positive recognition.

10. Bring fun and playfulness into their lives: Kids should be the kings and queens of play; however, some children live such full-on, organised lives that much of the natural fun and spontaneity has been stripped from their everyday life. Mucking around, which is code for having fun, is something many children of this generation don’t have time for. If you see your child constantly stressed or overwhelmed by events, change the mood by going to a movie, joining them in a game or seeking other ways to have some fun.

These ideas are basic common sense. However, as kids’ lives get busier these essentials get squeezed out. Here’s my recommendation to ensure that mental health habits aren’t overlooked or neglected.

First, see these habits as the building blocks of mental health. Don’t ignore or trivialise them. Talk to your children and tie these activities to their mental health. Do this in your own way and your own time.

Second, assess which of these habits need your attention and make some adjustments over time to push the pendulum back in favour of your child’s mental health.

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**FREE Michael Grose parenting resources to help you promote good mental health in your kids.**

- **Coping ebook:** 12 essential coping strategies every child can use when life gets hard
- **Poster:** 10 ways to promote good mental health & well-being in kids
- **Poster:** 25 Great Parenting Ideas (to stick to your fridge)

These great resources are waiting for you at parentingideas.com.au/ParentingIdeas-Newsletter. They’re available for a short time only, so be quick!
Match your savings for school costs, dollar for dollar, up to $500.

You may be eligible if you have:
- a Health Care or a Pensioner Concession Card
- a child at school or starting next year
- some regular income from work (you or your partner).

Contact Christian Unger, your local Saver Plus Worker:
03 8339 6517 / 0407 817 758 or cunger@bsl.org.au

Saver Plus was developed by ANZ and the Brotherhood of St Laurence and is delivered in Craigieburn and Surrounding Districts by the Brotherhood of St Laurence. Saver Plus is funded by ANZ and the Australian Government.