

MILDURA SPECIALIST SCHOOL

Newsletter No : 1

DATE: 30 January 2020

We value being: **RESPECTFUL** **SAFE** & **RESPONSIBLE**

Child Safe: Mildura Specialist School is committed to safety and wellbeing of all children and young people and has a zero tolerance for child abuse.



Striving for Independence

DATES TO REMEMBER

13th, 14th February 2020—Pupil Free Day
9th March—Labour Day School Closed



**TERM 1
SUNSMART**



Principal's Report



Welcome back to Term 1, 2020.

I hope everyone had a lovely holiday. It was great to see all the students arriving at school on Wednesday, in their school uniforms and eager to get to their new classrooms. A special welcome to our new prep students and students transferring from other schools. Thank you to families and staff for all the preparations to make a smooth start to the term.

Staffing: We welcome Alle Kay who will be taking on a Specialist role this year and Jordyn Nichols, in the Education Support role. Shenae Francis is returning after her leave. Judi L'Huillier is on leave for six months.



Holiday work - Buildings and Grounds: Thank you to Stan and Greg who worked during the holidays to remove the old mud brick barbecue in the Secondary yard. This was falling into disrepair. Maintenance and gardening tasks were carried out and the cleaners cleaned carpets, polished floors and cleaned the windows.

Please find the important information within this newsletter about the Department's **Mobile Phone Policy, Privacy Policy and information about the response to the Coronavirus outbreak.**

Thank you to all the students who continue to hand their phones in to be securely locked away.

Sunscreen has now been supplied to every classroom. If you have any questions, please see your child's class teacher.



Reminders:

Pupil Free Days: Just a reminder that **Thursday 13 and Friday 14 February** are scheduled Pupil Free days. Staff will be involved in training. Students do not attend on these days.

Student Support Group Meetings: Teachers will make contact in the coming weeks to schedule Student Support Group Meetings where Individual Learning Plan goals will be established for the year.

Penny Hale
Principal



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Privacy Policy: Our school collects, uses, discloses and stores student and parent personal information for standard school functions or where permitted by law, as stated in the [Schools' Privacy Policy](#) For more information about privacy, see: [Schools' Privacy Policy – information for parents](#). This information also available in nine community languages. Please take time to remind yourself of the school's collection statement, found on our website <https://www.mildss.vic.edu.au/>

Mobile Phones in Schools

On 26 June 2019, the Minister for Education, the Hon. James Merlino MP, announced a new mobile phone policy for every government school in Victoria.

The new mobile phone policy comes into effect from Term 1, 2020, and requires that students who choose to bring mobile phones to school must have them switched off and securely put away during school hours.



The role of technology

We live in an exciting and technology-rich world and mobile phones are an important modern day communication tool. The school acknowledges that access to a mobile phone by children is important to many of our families in providing a sense of safety for their child while travelling to and from school, and for confirming or changing after school arrangements.



Managing the impact of mobile phones

Mobile phones often create disruptions and distractions in classrooms. Establishing a 'mobile phone free zone' helps teachers to establish and maintain a focused and productive teaching and learning environment. Research has found that mobile phones can be disruptive in classrooms and open to misuse at school (e.g. accessing inappropriate content, cyberbullying, and unauthorised photography). Additionally, research shows that the unregulated presence of mobile phones in classrooms can undermine students' capacity to think, learn, remember, pay attention and regulate emotion. A summary of recent, relevant research is available on the Department of Education and Training's [website](#).

At recess and lunchtime our school also values the opportunity for students to communicate with each other face-to-face or be involved in activities rather than being focused on a device, particularly when using the device to engage with social media.

The new policy does acknowledge that technology is increasingly impacting the way in which students learn and communicate. Therefore, when a student has been given explicit permission to access and use such devices to enhance learning by the classroom teacher, mobile phones will be permitted for that specific purpose.

For a small number of students with particular health needs, an exception to the policy may be granted. Please contact the school if you would like to discuss this.

I encourage each member of our school community to read the new policy which is available on our website. This policy outlines the school's expectations of staff, parents/carers, and students regarding the safe and appropriate use of mobile phones by students at school.

Key elements of the mobile phone policy:
A new mobile phone policy comes into effect from **Term 1, 2020**.

Emergency situations

In the event of an emergency or if you need to contact your child, I ask that families contact the staff in the school office who will pass on a message as needed. The school acknowledges that this new policy may require some adjustments. As such, I ask for the support of all our families, staff and students in its implementation.

Coronavirus advice for parents, families and school communities

You may be aware of the outbreak of a novel coronavirus in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China. The Australian Government has advised that there is no cause for alarm with respect to the coronavirus and that the risk to the Australian public remains relatively low. The Department of Education and Training has consulted with Victoria's Chief Health Officer and Department of Health and Human Services to provide the following advice to parents, families and school communities.

Exclusion of well children or staff who have travelled to affected areas

In accordance with national public health guidelines and current information about the coronavirus from the Commonwealth Chief Medical Officer, it is not a requirement to exclude well children or staff from school if they have travelled to Wuhan, China, or any other areas where there have been reported cases, unless the following applies:

the person is a confirmed case of novel coronavirus; or

the person is a close contact with a confirmed case of novel coronavirus in the past 14 days.

If you think your child or a family member may meet one of the above criteria, please contact the dedicated hotline on 1800 675 398. Please keep Triple Zero (000) for emergencies only.

Seeking medical advice for your child

Please seek medical advice for any child who is:

experiencing fever and respiratory symptoms (including but not limited to cough, sore throat, shortness of breath, body aches or fatigue); AND

has recently travelled to Wuhan, China, or any other areas where there have been reported cases in the 14 days before of the onset of illness.

As with the above advice, please call the dedicated hotline on 1800 675 398 to discuss further actions.

More information

For up-to-date information, please see the Department of Health and Human Services website: [Information for the public - novel coronavirus](#)

Welcome back to Early Years for 2020.

I hope all staff, students and families had a wonderful Christmas/summer holiday. It was so nice to see all the students arrive with big smiles on their faces ready for a new year to begin. I am sure there were some anxious parents this morning, especially from our prep families, but also many happy and relieved parents!!

Early Year's students will spend the first few days getting to know their new classmates and staff and share stories about their holidays. For the new students to our team, they will learn about classroom routines and familiarise themselves with the school grounds. There was lots of exploring this morning out in the playground. It was also great to see older students saying hello and showing them all the things to play with. The big pile of sand in the sandpit was a hit for many students.

Diaries will be sent home this week, so please feel free to write in them. It may be to share something exciting at home, a change in routine/upcoming appointment or to ask a question.

Below are some photos of students enjoying the sand pile and the playground from the first day of school.



Welcome Back to Upper Primary Section 2020

Welcome back to school from the Primary team. Today students eagerly joined their old friends and met new ones as they settled into their new classes. Teachers are excited about a busy term.

Details of events to be held this term will be finalised soon, notes will be sent home with further information.

Thank you to those families who have returned notes and it was terrific to see students wearing hats and bringing labelled drink bottles to school.



Kera-Lee and Annabel enjoyed time together at morning recess.

CANTEEN

If you would like to order your lunch next week, the Canteen will be in operation. Orders need to be in on Tuesday.

SCHOOL REMINDERS

EXCURSIONS

All excursions can be paid by instalments, either at the school office or online through the school account. See above for details for the school bank account.

Please ensure all relevant forms are signed and returned with payment before the due date.

CAMPS, SPORTS AND EXCURSION FUNDS (CSEF)

The Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF) commenced in 2015.

Families holding a valid means-tested concession card (Centrelink Card/Health Care Card) or temporary foster parents are eligible to apply for CSEF. \$125 per year is paid for eligible primary school students, and \$225 per year is paid for eligible secondary school students. A special consideration eligibility category also exists. Payments are made directly to the school.

CSEF applications forms are available at the front office.

MEDICAL

At Mildura Specialist School we have children who are at risk of an anaphylactic reaction to **nuts, eggs, figs, watermelon pineapple and kiwi fruit** in the school. Please be mindful of this when preparing your child's lunch or snacks.



HEADLICE

As a school community, we share the responsibility to control and manage head lice infections. Head lice have been around for many thousands of years and cannot be eradicated. Supporting each other to minimize their spread is vital.

It is important to check your child's head regularly with conditioner and comb even when you don't think your child has head lice.

MEDICATION

In the interests of safe practice, medication must be brought to the office in its original packaging by an adult and paper work completed to authorise school personnel to administer it.

Please note: Students are not to transport medication to school.

CANTEEN NEWS The canteen will operate each Friday; orders must be completed and returned to school no later than Tuesday morning of that week. Order forms are available to download and print from the MSS website. **All lunch orders must be in on Tuesday mornings.**



UNIFORMS

Our school uniforms are supplied by LASER SIGN & PRINT and are available from 3 Andriske Crt Mildura. Contact person is Darran Seaman, phone: 03 5021 1129 mob: 0429 437 858. For all other enquiries for uniforms please contact the school.

PARENT/GUARDIAN/CARER CONCERNS

If you have a concern with any aspect of your child's education, please contact the Office (5021 3311). They will:

1. Put you in touch with the appropriate person
2. Help organise a meeting with the appropriate person.

It is important that your concerns are addressed as quickly as possible.

PAYMENTS

School fees, camps, excursion and cooking costs etc. can be paid to our Bank Account details are

Commonwealth Bank

BSB: 063 557

Account No: 10080861

Please enter the name of student and activity you are paying for.

Thankyou

SCHOOL REMINDERS

IMPORTANT NOTICE

Parents/Carers please take note of Parent Pick Up times.

Early Years and Lower Middle Years: 2:40—2.50 PM

Upper Middle Years and Later Years. 2.50—3.00PM

This is to help ease congestion on Deakin Ave and for safety of cars and students.

STUDENT ABSENCES

If your child is sick or absent, you are required to notify the school as soon as possible **on the day of absence**. Notifying the school of your child's absence either prior to, or on the day that they will be away, helps ensure the safety and wellbeing of children and will fulfil your legal responsibility.

If your child is absent on a particular day and you have not contacted the school to explain why, the absence will be marked as unexplained.

Please notify the school by one of the following means:

- Phone: 03 5021 3311
 - Medical Certificate
 - Appointment notification
 - A signed and dated note with student's full name
-

SAME DAY NOTIFICATION OF STUDENT ABSENCES

New Education Department Attendance Guidelines

Schools need to know when and why a child is absent and you need to know if your child isn't at school.

From the end of Term 2 2018, all Victorian government schools are required to contact parents/carers as soon as practicable on the same day of an unexplained student absence. If your child is absent on a particular day and you have not contacted the school to explain why, the absence will be marked as unexplained.

This system also promotes daily school attendance. Going to school every day is the single most important part of your child's education, they learn new things every day – missing school puts them behind.

What is your responsibility?

Let the school know in advance of any upcoming absences or let them know in the morning if your child won't be at school. In order for schools to implement the same day notification requirement, it's essential that you provide the school with your most up-to-date contact details.

Generally one notification will be sent per family. Should there be circumstances that require both parents and carers to be notified, please contact the school to make the necessary arrangements.

What is the school's responsibility?

The school must notify you of an unexplained absence in relation to your child as soon as practicable on the same day.

We will let you know by phone.
