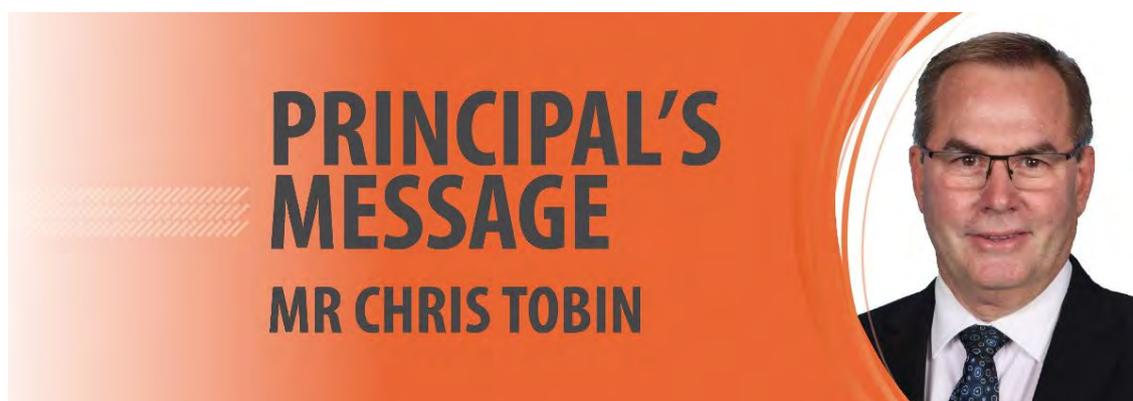


Merrimac State High School | Edition 3 | Wednesday 31 March[View this email in your browser](#)**NEWSLETTER | EDITION 3 | WEDNESDAY 31 MARCH**

Dear Parents and Caregivers,

COVID-19 has certainly thrown us some challenges over the last couple of days. I appreciate the speed of change, the revised information and conflicting media information can all lead to a degree of frustration. We understand that simple, clear and timely information helps resolves some of these concerns.

When we need to communicate with all parents and caregivers we have been using text message, email, the school website and Facebook. For the most part, we have been able to communicate any changing circumstances in a timely manner. You could great assist us by ensuring that your contact details as recorded by the school are accurate.

Please use the link to download a paper form to update your details. Please return the completed form to the school via your student.

Later this week we will be sending out the Year 7-11 student reports. Please take the time to review and discuss your student's performance. You will also note the details for booking a Parent / Teacher Interview. At this stage, we are planning for these interviews to be at the school.

Finally, I would like to thank the parents and members of our school community that have actively supported the school. Without your support, we would not be able to offer the opportunities for our students that we do. We look forward to continuing this great learning after our return from the Easter break.

While this Easter may be different to what we are used to, please take time to enjoy what family, friends and community have to offer.

**Regards,
Chris Tobin
Principal**

FROM THE DEPUTY'S DESK

JASON GIBBS

Term One is almost complete and always represents a period of time when students settle into a new year level, subjects and routines. Mid-semester represents an appropriate time to reflect on the success of this transition and consider strategies to assist with further progress in Term Two.

Productive habits and attitudes are an excellent predictor of performance and can be distilled into behaviours that will promote mastery, including:

Organisation of the mind: Cues that assist with the organisation of knowledge and commitment to long term memory.

Honesty: Mastery of a subject goes beyond understanding. Mastery requires additional time and commitment beyond the classroom.

Persistence: Mastery of a subject requires the ability and attitude to continue despite difficulty.

Practice: Mastery of a subject requires consistent revision and training of productive thought processes.

Are your results a reflection of sustained and effective efforts?

or

Do you need to improve/change your study habits?

There are no shortcuts to places worth going. Success is the result of consistent effort and hard work.

**Jason Gibbs
Deputy Principal**

FROM THE DEPUTY'S DESK

MONICA WRIGHT

Students at Merrimac State High School experience inclusive education where they can access and fully participate in learning, alongside their similar-aged peers, supported by reasonable adjustments (for students with disability) and/or teaching strategies tailored to meet their individual needs. Inclusion is embedded in all aspects of school life, and is supported by our culture, policies and every day practices.

One important way Merrimac State High School supports the social emotional development of students, particularly those who experience challenges forming friendships, is by offering various clubs and activities during break times to facilitate socialisation. Given the wide variety of options, there is truly something to engage everyone.

For those students who require a higher level of instruction to develop personal and social capabilities,

teacher aides within the Special Education Program lead a lunchtime club program 5 days a week to involve socially isolated students in games and activities and assist students with developing social skills.

For some students with an Autism Spectrum Disorder, a structured playground program may be the very best option as it:

- Provides a routine, safe setting for the teaching of social play skills
- Provides essential socio-emotional gratification
- Builds confidence and sense of self-worth
- Keeps the student with Autism Spectrum Disorder so busy and engaged that playground difficulties and conflicts simply don't occur

Day	Time	Activity	Location
Monday	First break (11:30-12:10)	Junior leaders – Years 7, 8, 9 meet. Anyone interested in leadership is welcome. If you have filled out a leadership application, your attendance is required	B1
Monday	First Break (11:30-12:10)	Peer Mentors Lunchtime Activities: Year 10 Peer mentors run games and activities for Year 7 students	V Block undercover area
Tuesday	Second Break (1:20-1:50)	Esports Club: Do you have dreams of being the next eSports super star? Are you a master of games like League of Legends, Rocket League, Super Smash Bros, Mario Kart or FIFA? Or are you just looking to give some new games a go? Mrs Simpson, Mr Ellul and Mr Davies are currently arranging students into competitions and permission forms will go home for two competitions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Fuse Club – Year 7-12 • The League of Legends –Year 8 -12 	N3 – ‘The Hive’
Wednesday	First Break (11:30-12:10)	Peer Mentors Lunchtime Activities: Year 10 Peer mentors run games and activities for Year 7 students	V Block undercover area
Thursday	Second Break (1:20-1:50)	The Enterprise Club: All students are welcome. Mentorship and assistance (skill building) is provided to students in running an Enterprise. They will be able to sell their products and services out of ‘The Hive’. They are provided an Enterprise Planning Booklet. Students will need to fund their project themselves (as the profits go back to them).	N3 – ‘The Hive’
Friday		You Can Sit With Me: Music, karaoke, games and activities run by Year 10 peer mentors for younger students	On the green outside the library
Everyday	Both Breaks	The Maker Centre: Come to STEAM to be inventive with lego and other materials	SPARK Centre (F Block)
Everyday	Both Breaks	Lunchtime Club: Table Tennis Tournaments Handball Matches Board Games	Special Education Program Playground

Monica Wright
Deputy Principal - Inclusion

SOCIAL SCIENCE & ENTERPRISE

KAY SIMPSON

A busy start to 2021 in the Social Science Department. We have provided many wonderful learning opportunities for our Social Science students, such as:

The year 8 SOSE participated in an in-school interactive historical presentation program called “Living History”. Students were able to touch and try on period artefacts, providing students with a sense of stepping back in time. It was wonderful so see our Merrimac students keenly interact with staff, students and presenters. A great morning had by all.

Mr Keith Banks author of the book “Drug, guns and lies – My life as an undercover cop”, spoke with the Year 10 Legal students regarding his life experiences in the Police Service.

The Year 11 and 12 Legal Studies classes were fortunate to have a guest speaker, Detective Acting Inspector Mr M Gundry from the Inner West Crime Group speak with our students about the Baden-Clay case. Students learnt how extensive police work investigations are, as well as the real costs involved in gathering valid evidence in order to make a conviction.

In addition to this, we have Year 8 SOSE classes involved in cross curriculum learning in Spanish and History and the YR 7 and 9 Academic Summit Classes were involved in a whole day Enterprise workshop hosted by the "Young Change Agent" organisation.

The department also hosts various clubs during the lunch breaks throughout the week in our new Enterprise room called "The Hive" room N3, everyone is welcome. The following is on offer:

- Esports Club – Tuesday first lunch
- The Enterprise Club – Thursday second
- Geography Club – Monday second lunch room N7

Lastly, I would like to congratulate William Dickinson and Ilan Lewinsmith in being selected to participate in an exciting new 10-week online Enterprise program run by the Epic Lab.

Kay Simpson **HOD Social Science & Enterprise**

ENGLISH **JENNA MOORE**

Last week our Academic Summit students attended the *Somerset Storyfest* with their English teachers. We observed students actively engage in a series of writing workshops and watching a play delivered by *Shock Therapy Productions*. The performance was funny, entertaining and at times 'shocking'. It not only captivated our students but it also shone a light on the impacts of bullying and poor decision making. The audience were confronted with the eye-opening experiences of these characters, the overall impacts of bullying and the significance of the choices we make. This play provoked the audience to reflect on who they are as people and what they stand for.

In addition, William Kostakis, a Greek-Australian author, delivered a 45 minute workshop – speaking about his life and the journey to becoming a writer. His sense of humor charmed our students as they appreciated the way he wore his heart on his sleeve which provided them a very real insight into what it means to be an author. He explored life lessons of resilience, identity, culture and loss – weaving them through his many anecdotes. A clear message he explored was the value of working hard and being authentic as he stated: *Your greatest asset is being yourself and celebrating that.*



Jenna Moore **HOD English**

My name is Alycia Shannon and I am extremely excited to be joining the Merrimac community as the Acting Head of Department – English while Ms Moore is on maternity leave. I have been fortunate enough to serve in many roles within the Department of Education, such as classroom teacher across both primary and secondary year levels and most recently, Junior Secondary and Teaching Learning Head of Department roles.

English gives students a voice and allows them to understand that words are powerful things: they influence people and can instigate change in the world. I look forward to partnering with staff, students and parents/carers to work together to ensure success and take Pride in Excellence.



Alycia Shannon **HOD English - Term Two onwards**

SCIENCE **BEN CRAMP**

What a busy term we have had to start off 2021. Merrimac has been a hive of activity this term, our Junior classes have just completed their first cycle of assessment as we lead into the Easter break. Our Year 7 classes have been looking at lunar cycles and the solar system. Merrimac by Moonlight was a fantastic opportunity for parents to share in the learning with classes star gazing and modelling cycles of the moon.

This term also saw four students from Year 9 and Year 10 attend the Griffith University STEM Ambassador conference at Parliament House. The day consisted of collaborative thought regarding what STEAM at Merrimac looks like and where they would like to see it go. The students had the opportunity to work with industry leaders and University affiliates from Australia and abroad.

In the curriculum space our Year 8 and Year 9 students have been studying concepts in the Physics realm and have been conducting various experiments to test theories and contextualise their knowledge.

Primary engagement is alive and well in the Science and STEAM space. The last few weeks our teams have visited local primary schools, including Surfers Paradise, Robina and Bellevue State Schools. Students have been developing rockets and water turbines to test their design and engineering skills.

Our Senior students are very quickly approaching the end of Unit 1 and Unit 3 respectively, with our Year 12 students soon to experience their first round of assessment confirmation. Our Year 11s have just had their first assessment experience in the ATAR system.

We have had some great real-world experiences happening in our senior science courses in 2021; Our Year 12 Science in Practice students taking water samples from our nearby catchment areas to test the water quality; our Year 11 students have been investigating fermentation and the products that can be produced through this method.

Our Year 12 Chemistry students recently spent a day at Griffith University in their Chemistry laboratories conducting experiments and collecting data for their Student Experiment. Students had the opportunity to experience university life for a day and thoroughly enjoyed the experience.

Our Biology students will have the opportunity to get out in the field later in the year to collect data related to their Unit 3 concepts.

Ben Cramp
HOD Science

LANGUAGES & INTERNATIONAL

JO FILMER

We have had a great start to the year with four new teachers joining our Department. In Spanish, we welcome Mrs Jackson, Mrs Rodriguez and Mr Warr. In Japanese, Mrs Hanzawa has joined us. Our block has been repainted and we are slowly decorating it to make it an enjoyable and comfortable learning environment.

We began the year with a cultural celebration of Chinese New Year with a Kung Fu master demonstrating his skills and a wonderful Chinese Musician playing the traditional Chinese Erhu – similar to a violin. We will end the term with a Cultural Movie for students who will be recognised for their excellent behaviour and effort this term.



In Spanish students have been learning how to introduce themselves, and basic verbs allowing for short general conversation to give them confidence in speaking. We are also very excited to launch the start of a Pen Pal program with the Antamira School (Madrid, Spain). We hope that students will enjoy the opportunity to connect and learn about what life is like in Spain. Our Year 8 Sport Summit have also had the opportunity to be involved in a cross-curricular opportunity with SOSE, where in Spanish we are teaching students and giving them the cultural context. Our Year 9s with Mrs Jackson have participated in a Socratic Seminar style discussion on dating customs in Australia compared with Latin American Countries. We learn about the spectacle itself and the controversy around it. Our seniors are reading a novel in Spanish which is based on the true immigration story of a Guatemalan family.

Our Chinese VET program that we launched over two years ago is a growing success with enrolment numbers gradually increasing as our students find the learning experiences and outcomes of great value, especially for future employment opportunities. We hope to continue building on this success, and have seen much larger numbers this year with 45 students now enrolled into our VET program.

The Juniors in Chinese have been working hard and are enjoying using our Education Perfect platform. We have seen excellent results when students are using this educational tool to assess their learning and understanding. Our VET students in Year 9 have been studying hard this term in their first unit of the VET program, and begin their first speaking tasks this week in their unit 'TV & Movies'. They are the third cohort to enrol in the two-year Chinese VET program. Year 10 students will complete Unit 2 'At the Restaurant' this term, and will be halfway through the VET program. They will complete and receive their VET Certificate in Applied Language in Chinese at the end of the year which is very exciting.

Jo Filmer
HOD Languages & International

UPCOMING EVENTS
SAVE THE DATE

Parent/Teacher Interviews

Tuesday 27 April

Parent / Teacher Interviews will take place on the second week of Term Two, from 3.30-7.30pm.

Interviews are to be booked online using the [SOBS booking system](#).

Bookings will open for parents and carers from 4pm on Thursday 1 April until 9am on Monday 26 April.

[MORE INFORMATION](#)



NOTICES

Echo Zheng selected as Mayor's Student Ambassador

Congratulations to Year 12 International Student Echo Zheng on being selected as one of the Mayor's Student Ambassadors for 2021.

The program offers a select group of students behind-the-scenes experiences, personal development, cultural happenings, professional networking events and the opportunity to lead and facilitate activities across the city.

Congratulations Echo!



I appreciate having this opportunity to participate in the Mayor's Student Ambassador Program and feel very lucky to be one of two high school students accepted.

I have already met a lot of excellent students in this program, and I believe that being part of this program is undoubtedly one of the most precious memories that I've ever had.

-Echo Zheng



Introducing Hugo Brouste

"I am the new chaplain here at Merrimac. It is all new for me as it is my first year working as a School Chaplain. I am loving it so far! I am here three days a week on Monday, Tuesday and Friday.

My role is to provide emotional, social and spiritual support to the school community, students as well as staff and families in working closely with the wellbeing/support team of the school and local organisation to best answer the



needs of each person.

So far, my main focus has been to be visible to student and staff so that they get a chance to know who I am and what I do. It is at the same time a great opportunity for me to get to know the staff school as well. They have made me feel welcomed and appreciated at here at the school. Which is amazing! Thanks guys.

I am also working at Merrimac State School 2 days a week, and I now feel like I am finding my feet in both schools. I love playing sport (mostly soccer) and building connection with student through it.

Please come and say Hi if you want to. I would be delighted to meet you."

P & C Executive

We are thrilled to announce the newly appointed members of our P&C:

Julie Nilsson - President
 Helen Stubbs – Vice President
 Maryanne Cherry – Secretary
 Michelle Leaman – Treasurer.

All parents and caregivers are invited to our P&C Committee, who meet on the second Tuesday of the month, at 6.30pm. The P&C Committee is a great opportunity to provide feedback on the future direction of the school.



QATSIF Creative Arts Competition closes Monday 24 May

The Queensland Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Foundation (QATSIF) Creative Arts Competition is now open to all Queensland secondary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander artists.

The competition is open to all styles of creative arts – including visual arts, poetry, music, dance, performing arts, photography and videography.



[MORE INFORMATION](#)

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