Merrimac State High School is proud to be one of the first schools in Queensland to offer QParents to families of our Year 7, 8 and 11 students, as part of a pilot program in the first half of 2015.

The QParents web and mobile application provides a more convenient, easier way for parents and legal guardians of Queensland state school students to interact with their child's school. Parents will have secure online access to their child’s student information, anytime, anywhere, through a smartphone, tablet or computer.

QParents allows parents to connect instantly with their child’s school to access and manage their child’s student information, including:

- Attendance and absence details, as well as the ability to notify the school of an absence
- Behaviour details
- Academic report cards
- Class timetables
- Viewing unpaid invoice details, payment history, and making payments online (to be implemented at a later date)
- Viewing and updating personal student details, including medical conditions and address
- Enrolment details

QParents will assist both staff and parents in sharing and responding to information in an efficient and effective way. It won’t replace the traditional ways you communicate with our school, but it will provide another way to communicate with us.

We will be sending out invitations to parents of students in Year 7, 8 and 11 to register for QParents in Week 7, Term 1.

QParents won’t replace the traditional ways you communicate with our school but it will provide another way to communicate with us.

More information about QParents can be found at https://qparents.qld.edu.au/#/about or on our website.

DEAR PARENTS

Every four years the school undertakes a strategic planning process that sets our direction for the years ahead. This plan is our roadmap that informs parents, students and the community as to the school’s progression. The plan will provide a timeline as to future challenges and improvements. A key part of developing the plan is to consult with students, parents, staff and the broader community.

Consequently, we have now conducted surveys with students and will soon commence surveys of parents. After we receive input from staff and the broader community, a draft Strategic Plan will be made available shortly after the Easter vacation. Further consultation and input will be gained before the plan is published by July this year.

As the opportunity arises I would encourage that you have a say and help shape our plan so it delivers the school you want.

MORE ON PAGE 2

MARCH

10 March  Year 8 & 10 Immunisations
10 March  Academic List Lunch
10 March  P & C Meeting
11-13 March  International Surf Camp
13 March  Year 12 Julian Rocks, Byron Bay Excursion
18-20 March  Year 10 HPS Camp
20 March  Year 11 Marriott Surfers Paradise Resort Excursion
20 March  Junior Gold Coast City Council

YEAR 8 & 10 IMMUNISATIONS

10 MARCH

IMPORTANT DATES
**PRINCIPAL’S MESSAGE**

In this week’s newsletter you will also see a section promoting QParents. This App will be a great bonus to parents to have access to live student data and to keep the school informed of any family changes. Please become familiar with the App as we are activating the process early next term.

Chris Tobin  
Principal

**DEPUTY’S DESK**  
NEIL STEINHARDT

With our Senior Induction Night as well as Merrimac by Moonlight behind us it will be a very short time before we are starting our first round of exams. For Year 11 & 12 students these exams, mostly in Maths and Science, require a timetable variation, but normal lessons will still continue. For all other year levels testing will be done during normal class time. All assessment dates are available via a student’s Course Planner, but good practice would have it that students should also have these entered into their homework diary.

I would like to applaud the efforts of our Year 7 and Year 8 Coordinators, not only for Merrimac by Moonlight, but also for the work they have put into organising Year level camps. All materials for these camps have been distributed and as long as there is sufficient interest, I am sure they will be successful in bringing our groups together. For students not in attendance on the camps, normal lessons will still continue.

Neil Steinhardt  
Deputy Principal

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**School Attendance**

Welcome to our new parents and students and returning parents and students.

At Merrimac High School we expect and remind you of the importance of students attending all day every day as directed by Education Queensland. Are you aware that if your child misses just 20 minutes per day it equates to nearly 2.5 weeks of schooling per year. The recommended level of attendance by Education Queensland is 90% or above.

If your child is absent, we request that you:
- Send a text or reply to the absence text on 0447 100 250; or
- Send an email to absences@merrimacshs.eq.edu.au; or
- Call the school to advise of their absence; or
- Provide a written explanation of their absence to the Student Services windows on their return

Students who are absent during exams and/or for more than two days are expected to provide a medical certificate.

For students who are planning to be absent for more than five days are expected to obtain a Application for Student Leave form to gain approval for that leave. If this leave is for more than ten days then an Application for Exemption must be requested and approved by the Principal.

Just a reminder to students and parents if you are feeling unwell during the day, you are to come to Sick Bay and the attending officer will contact your parents and make arrangements for your collection. We request students do not contact parents directly, as the school will only need to contact them again.

Marian Moore  
Attendance Officer

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**PARENTS REQUEST FOR STUDENTS TO LEAVE SCHOOL EARLY**

If you wish for your child to leave school early, they are required to report to the office before 9am with a note from their parent/guardian. Your child will be given a “Request to Leave” Pass. This will clearly show the time the student is permitted to leave class.

The student then shows this “Request to Leave” Pass to the appropriate teacher. Once excused, the student comes to the office and obtains a “Leave Pass”. The Office records the time of leaving school.
MERRIMAC STATE HIGH SCHOOL | JUNIOR SECONDARY

JUNIOR SECONDARY

Highlighting the Junior Secondary students’ achievements and news headlines

MERRIMAC BY MOONLIGHT

Thank you to all families and students who attended Merrimac By Moonlight. It was a wonderful evening and a great opportunity for new families to meet staff and the student helpers from Peer Mentors and Student Council.

Thank you also for the valuable feedback regarding our Orientation Program and transition for our new Year 7 & 8 students. We value your comments and are responding to the specific recommendations. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive and our new students are loving High school. At the end of the evening, a random draw for 5 Canteen Vouchers valued at $10 each was made. Congratulations to the lucky recipients – Mr Wood (HOD Junior Secondary) will present you with your vouchers.

1. Alyssa Akanoa –Teau  7H
2. Nicholas Politakis   7E
3. Bayden Tagget   8H
4. Gabrielle Ngawati  7H
5. Preston Mastro  8G

Karen Farrow
Deputy Principal

As a parent or carer you play a vital role in your child’s learning. Building a positive relationship between home and school plays an important part in the education of your child. Talking with the school may help you in communicating with staff throughout the Junior Secondary School. Parents can provide a positive approach to education at a time when children begin to develop skills and attitudes to influence their own learning.

Parents can take an interest in their child’s learning by:
- Talking to their child’s teachers
- Attending parent–teacher meetings
- Taking an active interest in what their child is doing in the classroom.
- Promoting 100% school attendance

This term Year 7 camp will be conducted at Thunderbird Park on 25-27 March and Year 8 will be going to Tyalgum Ridge Resort on 23-25 March. These camps help build friendships among students, leadership qualities and lifelong stories and memories that will last a lifetime.

Camp letters have been given to students with camp details last week. Please contact the Year Coordinators Mrs Irons (Year 7) or Mrs Bechaz (Year 8) for more information.

Chris Wood
HOD Junior Secondary

TERM ONE has reached the half-way point and our talented English teachers are in full swing with the Rockin’ Reading sessions for Year 7 and 9 students. We are delighted to offer these Master Classes to students who have been identified with aptitude in reading and writing. The reading sessions will challenge and extend students through a series of skill building activities after school on Mondays and Thursdays during Semester One as part of our school-wide improvement in literacy.

Head of Department for Reading Mrs Neilson along with our new English teacher Mr Airey and Learning Support Reading teacher Miss Cassell have prepared engaging and innovative sessions to maximise opportunities for students to improve in reading strategies along with creative thinking and even some pizza and prizes!

With NAPLAN coming up in May students will participate in a variety of high order thinking and reading comprehension skills as well enjoy some rockin’ reading games and activities with our enthusiastic teachers. Many thanks to our fantastic team of teachers for this valuable opportunity for our English students and sharing their passion for reading. If any students are interested in attending, please ask your English teacher for more details.

Remember to keep reading! Read to learn – learn to think.

Kylie Wilson
HOD English
GALLIPOLI 100th ANNIVERSARY

The largest Anzac Day commemoration outside of Australia, is held at Gallipoli.

All visitors should be aware that the commemorative sites are the sovereign territory of the Turkish people and holding the annual Anzac Day commemorative services at Gallipoli is only possible due to the cooperation and generous assistance of the Government of the Republic of Turkey.

Each year Australia and New Zealand conduct three commemorative services at Gallipoli: a joint Dawn Service at the Anzac Commemorative Site, followed by an Australian Memorial Service at Lone Pine, and a New Zealand Memorial Service at Chunuk Bair.

Attendance at the Anzac Day commemorative services at Gallipoli in 2015 will only be permitted for those visitors holding valid tickets issued through the Australian or New Zealand ballot.

Merrimac Student Awarded

I am so honoured to be attending the 100th anniversary ceremony at Gallipoli in April this year. I entered the Premier's Anzac Prize competition because it was an amazing opportunity to travel to Europe and learn about Australia’s war history. After making a presentation about the Anzac Spirit, I was one of 70 Queensland students selected to travel to Turkey, Belgium and France to visit historic memorials and grave sites. At two different grave sites, I will be presenting a eulogy about a soldier who died there. I’m looking forward to travelling to Europe to learn more about Australia’s history.

Phebe Mills
Year 10 student

FREE DENTAL CHECK-UPS FOR YEAR 10

Gold Coast Oral Health Services are now offering free dental check-ups and treatment to students enrolled in Year 10.

To arrange an appointment for your child telephone:

The Oral Health Client Service Centre
P. 1300 300 850
Monday – Friday, 8.00 am – 4.30 pm
Excluding Public Holidays

Gold Coast Oral Health Service provides a free dental program for all Queensland resident children aged four years or older who have not completed Year 10 of secondary school. A qualified team of dentists, oral health therapists, dental therapists, and dental assistants will work together to meet your child’s specific dental health care needs.

Dental health care is provided at dental clinics located across the Gold Coast or at mobile dental clinics located onsite at your child’s school. Parents/Guardians may be required to transport children to and from dental appointments.

Parents are encouraged not to wait to treat a problem; instead they are invited to arrange a check-up for their child/children at least once a year.

PCT

In PCT this term students have revised and practiced kitchen safety and hygiene, choosing recipes, planning recipes and preparing simple meals. They have designed a menu and prepared food for a three course meal. Students are involved in all aspects of the meal preparation and cleaning up before they sit together to enjoy the meal. They are practicing various table settings in preparation to eating out at a variety of establishments in Term 2. Photos show some of the students at their tasks in the kitchen.

Heike Orlow
HOD SEP
Highlighting the Senior Secondary students’ achievements and news headlines

National Day of Action Against BULLYING AND VIOLENCE

The fifth National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence will be held on Friday 20 March 2015.

This annual day provides a focus for all schools to say Bullying. No Way! and to strengthen their existing everyday messages that bullying and violence at school are not okay at any time.

Merrimac State High School has registered to be part of a growing nationwide movement to ‘Take a Stand Together’ against bullying and violence. Students will be participating in a range of events from 16-20 March.

Read about what bullying is and what sorts of strategies work to deal with it on the Bullying No Way! website; http://bullyingnoway.gov.au/

Amber White
Guidance Officer

CANTENEEN NEWS

Is it really week five already? Time is flying.

The Junior School have embraced the self-serve concept and most students like the arrangement and the canteen. We would like to thank all parents and students for supporting the school canteen and keeping us all employed.

Our Year 7 and 8 Parent Liaison Officer is Tracy McKewin. Tracy works in the canteen and has a child in Year 7 so if any parents have questions or concerns they can contact Tracy and she will answer any queries.

The juniors particularly like our famous milk shakes and smoothies and enjoy our pasta dishes that are still only $2.50.

Our canteen staff and volunteers are off to see ‘Risky Business’ which is being sponsored by ASCA and Streets ice cream to celebrate the start of yet another busy year. Watch this space for a film review.

Maryanne Cherry
Canteen Manager

Merrimac SHS expedition to Borneo in 2016

Merrimac SHS are delighted to announce that we are launching a very exciting program which offers students the opportunity to plan, fund and ultimately lead their own month long expedition to Borneo in November 2016.

This program will be managed by World Challenge, a pioneering educational organisation with 28 years of experience in delivering personal development expeditions for students. The expedition to Borneo is preceded by a training and preparation program, during which students play a major role in planning their itinerary, which will include project work in a local community and a challenging trek. Students are also supported in setting and achieving individual and team fundraising goals to help cover the cost of the expedition program, where on average, students raise over half of the total program cost. I would like to invite you and your son or daughter to a presentation delivered by a member of the World Challenge team who will discuss the benefits of the program, the fundraising support and safety back-up they provide, and how they deliver a fun, rewarding, and safe experience.

Date: Wednesday 11 March
Time: 6:00 pm
Venue: School Hospitality Centre

To learn more about World Challenge, please visit www.worldchallenge.com.au.
AUSTRALIAN AIR FORCE CADETS
Welcome to 232 Squadron

The Australian Air Force Cadets (AAFC) is a youth development organization based on and administered by the RAAF. 232 Squadron, AAFC, is located at St Michael’s College, Merrimac. Parades are held each Wednesday night during the school term at 5.45pm for a 6.00pm start and finish at 9.00pm. Cadets must always be dropped off and collected from the main carpark at St. Michael’s College.

Wednesday Parade nights consist of drill practice and a debrief on current AAFC activities. This is followed by training on various subjects, including survival techniques, leadership, aircraft recognition and field-craft, to name a few.

Some of the activities undertaken by the AAFC include powered flying where some scholarships are available, field-craft, adventure training, firearms safety, drill and ceremonial, service knowledge, aero-modeling, navigation and gliding courses.

During the parade, there is a short stand down time of twenty minutes for canteen time at approximately 7.00pm.

The cost to participate as a cadet at 232 Squadron is $150 annually which provides for insurance coverage, office stationery, administration costs and assistance with fieldtrips and activities. Uniforms and some Field Equipment are provided by the Royal Australian Air Force.

Should you require further information or application documents for recruitment in January 2015, please do not hesitate to contact 232 SQN or the Training Officer Lawrie Pollard at pollard6@bigpond.com.

From the INDUSTRY LIASON OFFICER’S DESK

Defence Force Recruitment Information March 2015

For further information on military training and study at ADFA, register your attendance to an information session near you. Call 13 19 01 to confirm your registration to one of the following information sessions. 23rd March - Gold Coast or 24th March - Brisbane.

You can also attend our Facebook Q&A and chat live with ADFA cadets Thursday 5th March 6.30 – 8pm (AEDT).

How students can apply for a Tax File Number from January 2015

Students can apply for a TFN online and have their identity verified through an interview at a participating Australia Post office. More information on applying online can be found at ato.gov.au by searching for ‘QC27248’.

Students who are unable to visit a participating Australia Post office will need to complete the application form Tax file number - application or enquiry for individuals form (NAT 1432). More information about lodging this form can be found at ato.gov.au by searching for ‘QC22604’.

If you require any further information you can phone 1300 130 282 between 8:00am and 5:00pm Monday to Friday.

Rachel Skrabanch
Industry Liaison Officer

HOMEWORK CLUB

Homework Club is up and running on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, from 3.15pm-4.15pm in the library.

There is no need for students to book. They may just turn up and take advantage of the services available in the library, including printing, research, use of computers and wireless internet access. Teacher aides provide supervision.

The club allows students to receive help in a more personal environment, to ensure they remain on top of class content. We urge parents to fully utilise this opportunity by encouraging your child to attend.
Every runner makes a difference!

Sunday, 26th April 2015 at Robina's Cbus Super Stadium, Gold Coast

A fun running festival for all ages and abilities including a half marathon

The Gold Coast Bulletin Fun Run isn’t just a fun run, it’s a family event to promote a Healthy Body, Healthy Mind with a portion of the entry fee going to local charity.

Enter now at www.gcbfunrun.com.au
Every day counts

Most students attend school each day

9/10 go to school

Every day at school counts... Missing even one day can make a difference over time

Missing 1 day of school each fortnight = Missing more than a year of learning over 12 years

Low school attendance is associated with:

- lower academic achievement
- early school leaving
- future unemployment

Each 1% increase in student attendance may relate to 2-3 NAPLAN scale score points *

What schools are doing to improve student attendance

- Listening to student views on non-attendance
- Connecting to families and communities
- Recognising and rewarding good attendance
- Using sanction based approaches

For more information

Go to the Every day counts website: http://education.qld.gov.au/everydaycounts/

Great state. Great opportunity.

March 2014