DEAR PARENTS

Last week was extremely busy with the release of NAPLAN results, the culmination of the Chinese Study Tour and a visitation by 10 Chinese school leaders.

Our NAPLAN results have shown improvement in writing, spelling and grammar and punctuation and we are extremely pleased to see these gains. While we have seen some minor areas of improvement in reading and numeracy, we had anticipated more. We are now looking at what further measures we can take to improve these areas in 2016.

All parents should now have received their child’s NAPLAN results as they were sent home last week. Parents will have also received a copy of their child’s individual course planner. This individual plan highlights what work will be undertaken this semester and due dates for specific assignments. This information will greatly assist parents to understand their child’s workload and assist them to meet specific timelines.

MUSICAL A SMASHING SUCCESS!

Final night of our school musical on Saturday was a fantastic finish to months of hard work and dedication from staff and students.

A big thank you goes out to the teachers who have given up so much of their time after school and on the weekends to enable our students to have this wonderful experience. The teachers involved were: Hadeed Pourshafighi, Christine Deck, Emily Kite, Craig Mitchell, Damien Airey, Glenn Miles, Deb Body and Lynn Dyer. I would also like to thank our Arts’ staff as well as Chris Tobin, Neil Steinhardt and Chelsey Landford for all the extra time they have devoted in assisting us with the production.

The musical embedded excellent social messages that were delivered in a way that related well to teenagers. The music was very ‘catchy’ with many audience members telling us that they are still singing the songs! Our cast and students in the band and backstage displayed some amazing talent and I am sure the experience has left them with some wonderful memories. Thank you to all of you who supported us by coming to watch this popular musical. It is currently being made into a movie so look out for its release.

Lynnette Dyer
HOD The Arts

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IMPORTANT DATES

YEAR 10 INTO YEAR 11 PARENT INFORMATION EVENING
18 AUGUST

AUGUST

11 August   Year 6 into Year 7 Enrolment Information Evening
11 August   Parents and Citizens Meeting
12 August   Year 6 into Year 7 Summit Dance Auditions - Gold Coast Triple Threat Building
14 August   Oceanic District Athletics Championships - Griffith University Athletics Centre
18 August   Year 10 into Year 11 Parent Information Evening
19 - 21 August   Year 10 into Year 11 Interviews
20 - 21 August   Gold Coast Eisteddfod - Gold Coast Arts Centre
23 - 29 August   Snow Trip - Thredbo, Sydney
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PRINCIPAL’S MESSAGE

I also join with the many parents and students who offered congratulations to the cast and crew of the school’s musical “13”. The hard work and dedication was obvious to all who watched the show. Well done to all involved.

Chris Tobin
Principal

DEPUTY’S DESK

NEIL STEINHARDT

I would like to firstly congratulate everybody involved with the successful production of the musical “13”. It was an outstanding show and a first for Merrimac State High School in that it was staged in our hall. Our new and improved sound and lighting certainly got a good work-out. I am looking forward to seeing it used in our next major production – Multicultural Night, coming up in October.

A big welcome to our new International students and congratulations to the Year 12 Hospitality students for presenting such a great meal to them and their host families. Also a warm welcome to our Chinese Study Tour group. Apart from many other activities it was interesting to Mr Joseph, our Head of Department for Health and Physical Education, explaining the finer points of cricket to them.

We are now entering a very important phase for all Year 10 students. Parents should have received letters about our Information Evening on 18 August and will also be able to book appointments online. It really is making our students consider what subjects their recent results will enable them to select in Year 11, and with their Education Plans completed, begin to shape some of their future goals and directions.

I am looking forward to meeting with many of our Year 10 parents as we begin to chart future pathways for our students as they head towards post-compulsory education.

Neil Steinhardt
Deputy Principal

Dental Health Week

Dental Health Week takes place every year during the first week of August and this year the Australian Dental Association (ADA) aims to educate Australians about ‘Sports and Oral Health’.

The ADA is urging Australians who play sport or who work out to talk to their dentist, as their actions on the field or at the gym can be impacting their oral health.

MOUTHGUARD POLICY COMPETITION
(open 1 July 2015 and closes 23 August 2015)

As part of the ADA’s commitment to oral health promotion, the association is offering seven $1,000 grants to sporting clubs and schools in Australia. These grants aim to help sports clubs and schools promote mouthguard awareness and injury prevention. To go in the draw to win a $1,000 grant for your club or school, simply follow these two steps;

1. Visit www.dentalhealthweek.com.au download the mouthguard policy form and fill in the missing fields and implement within your club or school.
2. Upload a creative photo of your team implementing the mouthguard policy to the ADA Healthy Teeth Australian Facebook page, like the ADA Healthy Teeth Page and hashtag #dentahealthweek in your post.


DENTAL HEALTH WEEK

Dental Health Week will be held 03-09 August 2015 and aims to educate Australians about ‘Sports and Oral Health’. The Australian Dental Association is urging Australians who play sport or who work out to talk to their dentist – as their actions on the field or at the gym can be impacting their oral health. Visit www.dentalhealthweek.com.au for more information.

CASHIER WINDOW OPENING HOURS

From the beginning of 2016, the school cashier window will be closed on Mondays. It will operate 8.00am to 1.45pm from Tuesday to Friday.
JAPANESE RESTAURANT VISIT

Over the past six weeks our Year 9 and Year 10 Japanese students had the opportunity to visit a Japanese restaurant in the local area for an authentic Japanese meal experience. The restaurant offers Teppanyaki, which is a style of Japanese cuisine that uses an iron griddle to cook food. The word “Teppanyaki” is derived from teppan, which means iron plate, and yaki, which means grilled, broiled, or pan-fried.

Our students were served by professional Teppanyaki chefs who displayed amazing knife skills which depict ancient Samurai sword skills! Students were literally ‘thrown’ their food!! For example, once they had cooked the fried rice, the chefs packed it tightly into a bowl they then tossed the rice at our students to catch! They ate Teriyaki chicken, miso (a smelly fermented soy bean paste, but very tasty)!

Our students were able to practise their Japanese skills by commenting on the food and talking to the staff in the restaurant.

A fantastic time was had by everyone and we look forward to offering this opportunity again next year!

Joanna Filmer
HOD LOTE

Year 8 DMT Comic Book Creations

The Year 8 Summit Digital Media and Technology class have started to create their own comic books, based on a super hero story.

The start of the term included a brief history on how comic books originated and how super hero’s have taken over the planet.

We have a literacy and ICT focus of not only story writing but identifying and creating onomatopoeia. Displayed are some examples of onomatopoeia that the Year 8’s have created using Adobe Photoshop, and the start of their super heroes and villains for their comic books!

Lisa Cowderoy
HOD Business/Technology
**SCIENCE**

This is a busy term for Year 11 Science students as they undertake their first Extended Experimental Investigation (EEI) in each of the authority subjects.

Biology students are studying invertebrate behaviour and are in the midst of designing experimental methods that will investigate factors that affect cricket movement. Students will spend the next two weeks manipulating a variable in the crickets’ external environment – such as sound, light intensity, smell or temperature – in order to find out if this changes the direction or rate of cricket movement.

Chemistry students are busy analysing water samples from several Gold Coast waterways. They are conducting numerous tests in order to assess the properties of water from several locations in the local area. One such test involves the use of a spectrophotometer from Griffith University, which students use to test for the presence of metals in the water.

Physics students are taking on the role of rocket scientists for the term. They are currently researching the science of rocket design and motion and will test their hypotheses by building and launching model rockets on the school oval in the coming weeks.

Year 10 students will soon be making decisions regarding continued study in the sciences. Please contact me if you would like further information about senior Science course options.

**Anjuli M Dillon**
HOD Science

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**2014 Australian Vocational Student Prize Winners**

The 2014 Australian Vocational Student prize is a federal government award that recognises the achievements of students who completed their senior secondary studies while undertaking vocational education and training during secondary school or as school based apprentices or trainees.

Year 12 graduates Alejandra Cardona Quirama and Alexander Kuhnemann were nominated by the school for this award. On Tuesday 28 July 2015 Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham, the Assistant Minister for Education and Training, announced the AVSP winners for 2014. Both of these Merrimac State High School graduates are recipients of this prize. They are two of 500 young people from various states and schools to receive this accolade. Congratulations to these graduates and their families!

**Rachel Skrabanich**
Industry Liaison Officer

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**CANTEEN NEWS**

Celebrate Canteen Week was promoted by ASCA as an opportunity to say a big thank you to our wonderful staff and volunteers who are essential to making the canteen run smoothly and efficiently. It was an opportunity for us to trial new menu ideas, increase student engagement and generate a bit of buzz around the canteen. The students enjoyed the extra colour and the staff enjoyed the extra attention.

A big thank you to everyone involved, it was much appreciated.

**Maryanne Cherry**
Canteen Manager
**NOTICE BOARD**

Stay informed about what’s happening around our school

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**SAFER SCHOOLS INITIATIVE**

**Parent Information Sessions**

Parents play an important role in preparing their teens for end-of-year celebrations. If your teen is planning to partake in Schoolies, it’s important to talk to them about their plans.

The Queensland Government’s Safer Schoolies Initiative (www.schoolies.qld.gov.au) does not promote participation in Schoolies, but seeks to enhance the safety and responsible behaviour of school-leavers at the Gold Coast, Airlie Beach and Yeppoon. Each location provides services to support school-leavers, including street patrols, walk-home services, schoolies-only areas, free water and medical assistance.

The Safer Schoolies Initiative will be hosting parent information sessions about Schoolies across the Gold Coast in August and September. These sessions will include presentations by the Schoolies Welfare Coordinator and representatives from the Queensland Police Service, the Office of Liquor and Gaming Regulation and Crime Stoppers Queensland. The session will cover the Gold Coast Schools community safety response including what to expect at Schoolies, safety and welfare of your teen and how parents can remain involved.

Parent information sessions will run:

- **Tuesday 25 August, 7-8pm**
  Upper Coomera Community Centre, 90 Reserve Road Upper Coomera

- **Tuesday 1 September, 6-7pm**
  Southport Community Centre, Lawson Street Southport

- **Thursday 3 September, 6-7pm**
  Varsity Lakes Community Centre, Maddocks Road, Varsity Lakes

For parents that cannot attend the information sessions, be sure to follow our Facebook page (https://www.facebook.com/schooliesinfoforparents) where we provide important information about what happens at Schoolies, the Safety Response and up-to-date information across the Schoolies period.