FROM THE PRINCIPAL’S DESK

STUDENT ATTENDANCE

Without a doubt daily attendance at school is the key to success in learning. You may be busy right now and not have time to read the following, so I ask that you come back to this article before the start of Term 2 or cut it out and put it on the fridge where you can refer to it in the future.

Absence is a big issue for schools. Not just Meningie Area School, but schooling in general. If families do not support children in developing regular routines about school attendance then children will not maximise their full potential. At Meningie Area School we collect a lot of data that is used to inform our practice. It is really clear that attendance is the number one factor that affects student progress, and students are never too young to develop good school routines and habits.

Picture this: The school year is about 40 weeks long which equates to approximately 200 days. If a student in Year 1 misses on average 1 day a week then over the year this equates to 40 days. 40 days = 8 weeks. This is almost a term. If this pattern continues at this rate, by the time the student is in Year 4, he/she has missed almost a year of learning and is probably operating as a Year 3. You can imagine that by now the student has developed a range of strategies to get out of going to school, and will use a lot of avoidance strategies not to do the work in class.

If this pattern continues and it doesn’t get any worse, by the time this student is in Year 9, he/she has now missed almost 2 years of school and would have the knowledge, skills and abilities of a Year 7 student. School is by now not a fun place at all. The work is hard and quite stressful. Even more work avoidance strategies can be seen.

Imagine if the pattern continues, and the student is at Year 12. The student is now being asked to engage in a curriculum with expectations the same as everyone else in South Australian schools, and is just about to go out into the work force and compete for jobs and/or further study positions, but has the skills of a student of about Year 9/10. The chance of being successful is now really difficult.

Please, if nothing else, think about this. As parents/caregivers you have it in your hands right from the start of your child’s schooling to start them on a supportive journey. If your child is moving through the school and is absent from school, take action. Close the gap. Support attendance, and the learning program at Meningie Area School so that your child/children have the necessary skills in life to get and hold down jobs and engage as active and informed global citizens.
ATTENDANCE AWARDS

At the end of term assembly, students are presented with awards for perfect and near perfect attendance.

At the end of this term 11 students were here everyday or engaged in a school based activity, while 43 students had near perfect attendance. In total this represents about 25% of students being here daily, throughout the term.

END OF TERM

With the end of Term 1 concluding this Friday and the much looked forward to holiday break, I take this opportunity to thank the staff, students and parents/caregivers for their support and involvement in the life of the school, and wish everyone a great holiday. Hopefully everyone can find time to spend quality time together, especially over Easter, and enjoy the last of the Autumn weather.

It has been an extremely busy term, particularly with the school swimming program and various sporting carnivals and events. Student engagement in sport as well as the music program, environmental activities and special days like Harmony Day are valuable opportunities for students to develop a whole range of skills and abilities and would not be a part of our school calendar if they were not valued.

Equally it has been a busy time for teachers. With the implement of the new SACE, the roll out of the Australian Curriculum and a focus on primary Maths and Science, teachers have a busy time of it updating their understandings and looking at strategies to implement curriculum expectations with students in class.

A whole school assembly will be held this Friday 15th April at 11.40 am at the flagpole near the library and we hope to see many parents/carers attending.

Monica Williams

MISSING CLOTHING

Could parents/carers, especially those of Junior Primary students, please check cupboards, bags, etc. for any school uniform items that might have another child’s name on them?

There are new articles disappearing weekly from the school. Could you also instruct your children to look at their jumpers when they put them on to see if they have the right one?

4/5 CLASS GRIEVANCE STRATEGIES

The 4/5 Giles class have been discussing and suggesting ways to help us to deal with unkind and bad behaviour from other people. Strategies: things to do when we have a grievance.

1. **Walk Away**  2. **Get Help**  3. **Serious**

1. **Walk Away** means to ignore and walk away from people being unkind. We can write a note and post it to Miss Giles if it keeps happening.

Grievances we can walk away from; Poking fingers, rude noises, whining, nagging, poking tongues, breathing in your face, pulling faces, staring, not listening, no eye contact, body language, following, back chatting and interrupting.

2. **Get Help** means you tell a teacher on yard duty or in the class. Miss Giles, Frau Palka, Mrs Mason and Mrs Hood. Always write a note and post it to Miss Giles so she knows what has happened.

Grievances we can get help for have been happening 2 or 3 times; Teasing, staring, name calling, bossing, spitting, language, swearing, body language, following tripping and touching.

3. **Serious** means we go straight to the nearest adult: teacher in class, yard duty teacher or the front office (if someone is hurt or being hurt). Always let Miss Giles know what has happened.

Grievances we need to take seriously and get help straight away; Sexual harassment, bullying, violence, hitting, pushing, throwing things, racist language, stealing, drowning, threatening, touching inappropriately, black mailing, breaking your things, making up and passing rumours, love notes, unkind notes laying around, crowd bulling and egging people on.
From the 16th to the 18th of March, 7 students from Meningie Area School travelled to Victor Harbor to compete in the Regional Team Sailing Competition. The competition was held over two days and 7 teams including Meningie participated.

We headed over Wednesday night with Mrs. Appelkamp, Mrs. Lord and Mr. Woolston. With our little sailing experience we were all nervous and had no idea what to expect from the competition. When we arrived the first thing we had to do was a weigh in. This determined whether or not we needed to carry any water weights when we sailed. After that we headed in to the welcome dinner to learn about any information for the next couple of days. That night we stayed in the Victor Harbor Yacht Club and as we had to be up at 6.30 the next morning we needed an early night.

In the competition there were two fleets of boats; Meningie fleet and Victor fleet. They could be identified by the colour of jib the boats had. There were 3 boats in each team and the teams competed against each other around an S shaped course. As a boat crossed the finish line they received points. 1 point for first, 2 points for second, 3 points for third and so on. The team with the lowest combined boat score won.

To get to the sailing boats from the shore “rubbers ducks” were used. This resulted in our team getting quite wet and cold even before the sailing started. The first day of the competition showed our inexperience with the sailing and weather conditions. To assist us with completing the course we sailed with coaches from other teams. To make it fair to the other teams Meningie wasn’t allowed to score any points. Over the course of the day we lost many team members to the cold and sea sickness. The second day our skill had improved greatly and we were able to complete the course with less assistance from the coaches.

Overall the competition was a great experience and we increased our knowledge of sailing. The help and preparation of Mr. Woolston, Mrs. Appelkamp and Mrs. Lord was much appreciated.

Marni Hood (Team Captain)