This Friday marks the conclusion of Term 1. It has been a very busy term, dominated by sporting events and related activities. The DECD swimming program across the first six weeks was really successful. The weather was good throughout this time and enabled us to complete the program in Term 1. This means that we will not be conducting swimming lessons toward the end of Term 4, as we have done in previous years. The purpose of the program is to teach swimming and water safety. These skills are essential for everyone, significantly so for the students at our school, living so close to the Lakes and Coorong and able to enjoy the many activities that our environment lends itself to. We hope that through this program our students develop confidence, skills and water safety that leads them to take up other water sports throughout life.

Indeed Sailing is a unique part of the Health and Physical Education Program in Year 7, and students have been involved in this activity throughout this term. Having this experience leads into Team Sailing, an event that Meningie Area School has participated in over a number of years. An earlier newsletter featured an article by Lachlan Brown, Team Captain about the experiences in this event held in Kangaroo Island in early March.

Athletics has made up the remainder of sporting events over the term. This week a team of Upper South East athletes went to SANTOS to compete (see article within this newsletter for results from the day). These students were chosen from the results from Interschool Athletics hosted by Meningie Area School on Tuesday 25th March.

As a school we encourage all students to engage in a range of activities that keep them physically active and engaged with others. We all need that balance in our lives as it has positive influence on both wellbeing and learning. It is clear in talking with students that throughout the Football and Netball season many of our students are involved with the clubs, and are physically active. Establishing such connections and involvement are so important, not just for now, but as lifelong pursuits.

Through the Coorong Council OPAL is connecting with the school and other community organisations to get people active. The year 7/8 class is taking on the Mayor’s Pedometer Challenge throughout
May. Currently the Library has details about this event that is not just limited to students but seeks to involve people right across the community.

**Cross Country Upper South East**

Just when you thought we were over sporting events, I am pleased to say we are hosting the Upper South East Cross Country here at Meningie on Friday 9th May. We have hosted this event for several years. Held at the Golf Club, plans are well underway. A letter containing relevant details has been sent home with interested students today.

**Attendance**

There is no doubt that attendance matters. We are on about it constantly one way or another. It is hard work, but we are getting there. Last year we moved from 84% overall attendance to 86% by the end of the school year. There is though a long way to go if we are to meet the DECD target of 94%.

Our recent testing data in Spelling, Reading and Maths clearly shows that students who are at school every day and have a pattern of good school attendance do best. There is no doubt that for some students school is easier than for others and they get off to a good start. In the Early Years their learning is often out in front. That is fantastic for them. However, if students are not here day after day, by mid-primary that advantage has gone. Too much time away from school means that the skills, knowledge and understandings cannot be gained sitting at home. Our new and current Australian Curriculum is rigorous and demanding. It builds from year to year.

Students who do not come to school every day and on time miss those fundamentals. Teachers have to move on and work with those that are at school. It becomes a catch 22 situation. Students late and absent quickly become disengaged in learning, and relationships with teachers and peers lose connection. Before long there are excuses as to why school is not a good place. Often what it boils down to is that the teacher and the class are at a different point and the work expectations and demands become overwhelming. Imagine how awful for the student who has not been to school. Over time it gets harder and harder. Behaviour problems begin, work avoidance kicks in and before long that pattern of non-attendance is well and truly established. The most important thing parents can insist on is getting students to school. Yes it might be hard. There might be arguments and excuses, but ultimately an education sets students up with options in their lives and some control over future careers and aspirations.

Across the school this term we have 25 students with perfect attendance. This is great to see. 25 students represents about 12% of the student population and compares well to 2013 Term 1 data when only 19 students had perfect attendance. Additionally, 81 students had near perfect attendance as compared to 92 students last year. This is based on data collected and represents 4 days away. Perhaps it doesn’t look so bad until we take into account that there are approximately 200 students enrolled at the school from Years R - 12. So we have some work to do.

**Reporting To Parents**

The Junior School has been conducting interviews with parents and caregivers over the past two weeks. Teachers value this opportunity and are really pleased that a high number of parents have come in to see where their child/children are at with their learning. I thank you for your support.

Middle and Senior School reports go home with students at the end of this week. Within the report envelope are details about Parent Teacher interviews. We seek your support in making arrangements as requested.

**Holiday Break**

I hope, that all families have an opportunity to have some down-time over the April school holidays, and on behalf of staff wish you well. Many parents and caregivers have been engaged in supporting us in sporting events throughout the term and I take this opportunity to thank you for your support. I will be on extended leave until Monday May 19th and in my absence Mr Mal Jurgs will be Acting Principal. He will be supported in leadership by both Ms Kathryn Hese and Mrs Kathy Quinn.

**Monica Williams**
STUDENT ATTENDANCE 2014

We, as a school, continue to monitor student attendance.

This year there is a **DECD target of 94%**. Each newsletter we have been including the weekly statistics of whole school student attendance.

Regular and consistent attendance is absolutely vital for a child’s educational outcomes and to help them make connections to the school, their peers and the wider community. If your child is ill or has a genuine reason for absence, please contact the school on the day of absence before 9.30am.

**PHUNCKTIONAL – WHO STOLE THE SOLE?**

On Monday students from Years 7 to 11 attended a theatrical journey, ‘Who Stole the Sole?’ which explored the theme of teenage communication, cyber-safety, relationships, homophobia and sexism.

The group are travelling South Australia and we were lucky enough to have them at our school.

The three actors were extremely energetic and the students were totally engaged in the play, as they explored many topics relevant to our students.

**MAS SCHOOL CAPTAINS**

Caitlin Koolmatrie

Vice-Captain - No:ri (Pelicans)

I am in Year 11

My interests are:

- Netball
- Running
- Family
- Music

What I would like to achieve as Captain this year:

- Support students to feel comfortable and happy to be at school
- Minimise the occurrence of bullying and students to be comfortable speaking to Captains about these issues
- Fundraising activities including socials, casual days and sausage sizzles where all students can get involved

**SCHOOL REPORTS**

Middle and Senior School Term 1 reports have been sent home with students today.

Included in all report envelopes is an **Interview Request** letter. Also, in students from Years 6/7 to 10, is their **2013 Individual Learning Plan** with an explanatory letter.

If your child was absent today, their report will be kept in the library for the duration of the school holidays and you can collect it from there.

Sharon Gibbs, R-12 Report Coordinator

**QR CODE**

To access the Meningie Area School website to get school information, including policies and procedures just scan this code with your Smart Phone
SCHOOL UNIFORMS

As winter approaches we would like to take the opportunity to remind parents of our School Uniform Policy. It is really good to see most students in the appropriate school uniform.

This is a great achievement as it says a lot of things about the student, the school and family.

The wearing of school uniform is strongly supported by the School Governing Council as it creates a sense of identity and belonging, it enables students to be easily recognised in the yard, it creates a safe environment as visitors are easily identifiable and it removes competition.

However, it has come to the schools attention that while the current fashion trend for women and girls in particular is to wear tight leggings with a short top, but this is not appropriate in a school setting.

Most of our middle and senior students engage in community activities or in various workplaces and many employers have strict dress codes related to safety and appropriate clothing to be worn. As a school we are no different. We expect students’ consideration about what is appropriate and safe.

We seek parental support in this matter. Often a sensitive issue for teachers to discuss, we ask that you ensure your child/children are dressed for their main work environment, which is school, and set a high standard throughout the school.

In the first instance if your child is inappropriately dressed, a note will be sent home seeking your support in this matter. If there is no change in dress code then we will contact you and ask for the student to go home and change.

Parents can appreciate this is something we would rather avoid. We are, however, committed to maintaining high and safe uniform standards in the school environment.

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

My name is Dale Appelkamp.
I am currently in year 12 at Meningie Area School. As part of my stage 2 Community Studies project I am building steer pens for the 5 show steers. I have spent many hours planning the layout of the pens and I would really appreciate it if you could give a helping hand on Sunday the 18 \textsuperscript{th} May, 2014 at 10.00am. On this day I am putting together a working bee where the majority (if not all) of the fencing for the pens can be completed.

If you have any queries or need further information please contact me at the school on 85751106.

Dale Appelkamp (Year 12)

USE ATHLETICS

Four of our students competed in the USE Athletics at SANTOS Stadium on Monday 7\textsuperscript{th} April.

Individual Results were as follows:
Matt Hartman
1st U16 Shot Put - 10.83m
3rd U16 Discus - 27.32m
Hank Trevorrow
2nd U15 Shot Put - 10.90m
2nd U15 Discus - 28.07m
Kobie Hood
3rd U14 Javelin - 21.71m
Jane Tiver
5th U15 100m - 15.54sec.

Congratulations to these students for their contribution and commitment to the USE team.
Mrs Hood
TAKE HOME A BIG BROTHER OR BIG SISTER

Give your children the wonderful opportunity to have an international big brother or big sister by volunteering to host one of our exceptional international students arriving in Australia in July 2014 for their 3, 5, or 10 month programs. Our international students from France, Germany, Italy, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Spain and Colombia will live as a local, attend a local secondary school, arrive with their own spending money, and comprehensive insurance cover, all arranged by Southern Cross Cultural Exchange. You choose the nationality, the gender, the duration and the interests of the student that you feel is the best match for your family. Visit us at www.scce.com.au, email scceaust@scce.com.au or call us toll free on 1800 500 501, request our international student profiles, and capture the spirit of family and friendship!

Genevieve Eyre
Program Coordinator
Southern Cross Cultural Exchange
Tel: (03) 9775 4711
Toll-free: 1-800-500-501
Email: liaison@scce.com.au

NET SET GO!

Registration and first training on the 1st of May at 3:45pm at the Meningie Netball Courts.

Children aged 5-10 are welcome (will take 4 year olds if enough numbers).

Registration is $60 which includes all trainings and player packs.

Please contact Jo Williams for more details: phone 0418855962

LOST PROPERTY

There are several items which have been in lost property for some time now. These are pictured below. Also, there are several unnamed jumpers and hats.

If you think any of these may belong to your child, please call in to the front office to collect.

This was from Swimming Carnival

These came to front office on Interschool Sports Day

This was left behind after Interschool Sports Day at the Town Oval

Sharon Gibbs, Front Office
ABBAY’S UPDATE

Prom!!
Prom was great - I had a fantastic time. The theme was ‘Under the Sea’ and there were a lot more people there than I expected, as I had been told by lots of people at school that no one goes to prom, they all go to celebration - which is another dance in May. When getting ready and preparing I got a tan and my hair done professionally and then I did my own nails and makeup which turned out pretty good. My friends Ashlyn, Alex, Toni, Elyssa, Cara and I met at my friend Lucia’s house at around 5:30pm to take photos. We then went to Olive Garden to have tea before heading to prom.

Prom was very social, not formal at all. The dance floor was constantly full throughout the night. There was one country dance that everyone new, kind of like how we would do the Nutbush - I quickly picked it up, it was really fun to learn. After prom I headed to IHOP (one of my favourite places to eat), with my friends Jenny, Lane and Alyssa so we could have some midnight pancakes! I can now tick prom off of my ‘American Dream’ bucket list!

I know you are all about to have holidays so I will take this opportunity to wish everyone a safe and happy Easter & holidays, I will have another update when you return.