Dear Parents and Friends

Welcome to another wonderful year of learning and teaching at Mentone Park PS! I trust that everyone had a wonderful holiday season.

I am excited to commence my 5th year at MPPS, and what a busy year it is going to be! Our 2 major activities this year are our school review and our building works.

The review process is undertaken every 4 years as part of the School Performance Framework and allows schools to improve their performance by engaging in a cycle of performance feedback that includes self-evaluation, review, planning, reporting and sharing exemplary practice across the system. There will be opportunity throughout this process for parents to be involved and provide feedback to the school. Please look out for these opportunities and assist us in making Mentone Park an even better school!

The building works program is also an exciting opportunity for MPPS to further develop as a school. Our number 1 project will be the upgrade of the student toilets, but exciting building work that will support our 21st Century approach to Learning and Teaching will be undertaken in the Year 3/4 area of the school. Many thanks to Fiona Longmuir, parent and School Council member, who is part of the steering committee for this project. We will be meeting with architects next week to get the ball rolling.

Our focus on Maths continues in 2015, with the final year of our Maths Specialist program. Mrs Kerry McKenna and Mrs Kate Drummond will continue to support our classroom teachers to improve their teaching and understanding of mathematics.

STAFFING NEWS

Welcome to our new staff members—Mrs Alison Lough as Assistant Principal, Mr Adam Sloan in Year 5/6 and Mr Matthew Hardie in Year 3/4.

These 3 are already proving valuable staff members and we are excited to welcome them to our school.

At MPPS we believe all teachers are leaders of learning and their classrooms. However, we also have a leadership structure that provides high level Professional Learning Leadership. These staff members may be your first point of call (after the class teacher) if you have any questions regarding the education of your child.

In 2015 our Professional Learning Leaders are:
- Foundation: Jo-Ann Struthers
- Year 1/2: Jayne O’Neill
- Year 3/4: Sue Grisdale
- Year 5/6: Adam Sloan.

THE YEAR AHEAD

In 2015 we are once again a host school for G.A.T.E.Ways, a program for gifted and talented students. Some of our year 5s will also get the opportunity to work with the John Monash Science School in term 2. We also have our Marine Ambassadors, selected last year, involved in sustainability education and sharing this with the whole school.

Of course there are also our regular annual events to look forward to—Bounce Back Day, Italian Day, Art Show, Carols Night, etc, etc. and not forgetting the Kids Crazy Carnival school fete on March 21st. What a great place to learn!

As per our whole school inquiry schedule, we kick off the year in our unit on “Healthy Mind, Healthy Body, Healthy Soul”. This includes a 5 week yoga program for all our students and will culminate in a family Wellness Day which you are all invited to, to share our learning (maybe even a yoga class for parents on the day!).

PARENT COMMUNICATION

This year will see some changes in our parent communication arrangements. Instead of a weekly newsletter, we will change to fortnightly whole school newsletters, alternating with fortnightly Year Level newsletters. These newsletters will contain information directly relating to your child’s learning and activities in that area. These will be available electronically, either on the website or via email. This will be the only paper copy of the newsletter sent home for the year, so please ensure your email address is up to date with the office for future notifications and be sure to check the website for future news.

SCHOOL COMMENCEMENT TIME

Classrooms will be open from 8:45am for students to enter. The teacher will be on hand for parents if necessary, but this time will allow children to complete activities such as unpack their bags, hand in notices and change take-home books to be ready to start learning at 9:00am sharp. As this routine is established, parents may like to stay for 15 minutes and assist the teacher with book introductions and book changing. More information to come on this.

STUDENT LEADERS

Next Monday assembly will commence at 2:30pm in the hall where we will announce our student leaders for 2015.

Teamwork  Integrity  Excellence  Respect
SCHOOL CONTRIBUTIONS
Thank you to those families who have paid their School Contributions or put in their forms to pay by instalments. Statements will be sent home over the next week as a reminder for those families who may have forgotten.

Remember—if you are having difficulties with payment please contact me to discuss payment options. **It is always best to do this at the start of the year, rather than have us chasing you for money later in the year.**

HOUSE SWIMMING CARNIVAL
The House Swimming Carnival is on Thursday 12th February at Bayside Aquatics, Mentone Grammar, outdoor pool. If any parents of students in Grade 3-6 are able to assist from 9:30-12:30 approx. please leave a message at the Office for Miss Laycock.

SCHOOL REMINDERS
To help support our mutual goal of providing the best education for your children in a safe and supportive environment, we ask parents to respect and follow our school policies and programs. Many of these are designed to ensure all children are safe at school and therefore I remind you of the following:

- Do not drive cars into the staff car park to drop off or collect students from Out of School Hours Care, or at any other time of the day. Do not walk through the car park at any time. Observe street parking signs.
- Enter and exit via the doors nearest your child’s room before and after school so that parents who have business at the office can have some privacy. The front door is for parents with business at the office.
- Nut Policy – At MPPS we encourage a nut free environment. This includes Nutella in sandwiches.
- Scooter and bike riders need to wear helmets and must not ride in school grounds. Bikes are to be placed inside the bike enclosure.
- Term 1 is a Sun Smart term, therefore all children need a hat.
- Assembly is at 3:00pm Monday afternoons, unless notified of an earlier start. This is part of the children’s learning when they listen well and celebrate achievements. We encourage parents to attend and to sit at the rear of the students so as not to distract them. We also appreciate little ones coming to watch, but ask that you try to keep them quiet during the assembly.
- Students arriving after 9am are considered late and will be marked as late. If you arrive after this time, please report to the office to receive a late slip to hand to the class teacher. We encourage all students to be on time as vital information can be missed.

- MPPS has a School Council endorsed Uniform policy that is enforced, including tying hair up, no jewellery and black school shoes. Please ensure your child is following the uniform policy when they come to school. This can be found on our website.

Thank you for supporting our school values in upholding these policies.

More information about school life at Mentone Park can be found in our Parent Handbook which is available on the school website.

I look forward to another great year together at Mentone Park. Have a great week,

Kendra

Kendra Parker—PRINCIPAL

MEET OUR NEW ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Mrs Alison Lough

What an exciting start to the year it has been for me. I am thrilled to be joining the wonderful team at Mentone Park and getting to know all the families in our school community.

I grew up in Frankston and spent much of my childhood around the Kingston area with both sets of grandparents having lived nearby. I love the city of Kingston and it was always my plan to return to the area one day.

I have lived in a few different places and taught at several schools throughout my career, most recently being Narre Warren South P-12 College where I was a part of the school leadership team.

I have a husband, Marcus and two children, Sarah 7 and Nicholas 4 at home and a stepdaughter, Jayme who is in Year 12 this year. We have two very spoilt little dogs, Bella and Walter who think they are in charge of the household!

My personal hobbies include frequenting cafes, walking the dogs on the beach, taking day trip adventures with the family and pottering around my garden.

I have a strong belief in the concept of lifelong learning and take a holistic approach to education. I aim to provide the best possible opportunities for students to feel safe, nurtured, challenged and supported, always maintaining high expectations and instilling a sense of pride and self-belief into all students so that in turn, they have high expectations of themselves.

I look forward to working with the children and families of Mentone Park Primary. Please drop by and say hello!

Alison Lough

Here I am with Australian Children’s Laureate and Senior Australian of the Year, author Jackie French.

Alison Lough