

Semester 1 – Term 1, 3rd February 2015

Term One Important Dates

Junior Campus		Senior Campus	
10 Feb	Y7 Meet the HG Teacher Evening	9 Feb	Y10 Meet the HG Teacher Evening
23 Feb	School Photos	18 Feb	School Photos
25 Feb	Swimming Carnival	25 Feb	Swimming Carnival

Next Newsletter: 23rd February 2015

College Principal's Report

On behalf of the whole school community, welcome to the 2015 school year. A very special welcome to our new Year 7 students and their families, and to the many students who are joining the school in other year levels. We wish you all the very best for a happy and rewarding time at Victoria University Secondary College.

There are also several new members of staff commencing with us this year:

Jane Williamson – Student Wellbeing Manager
 Sacha Barry – Youth Worker
 Lucy Yang – Chinese Teacher
 Wayne Ding – Chinese Teacher
 Amanda Lambert – Food Technology Teacher
 Aprajita Saracino – Food Technology Teacher
 Tony Adam – PE/Rugby Teacher
 Stewart Cain – Strength and Conditioning Coach
 Kal Stavropoulos – Music Teacher
 Deidre Grealish – English/History Teacher
 Julie Foley – Office Administration

Congratulations to all of our students on the excellent way they have started the school year. They have settled enthusiastically to their studies, and have shown a really positive attitude to each other and to staff, particularly in terms of looking after and welcoming those new to the school. It is such a pleasure to work with them.

Senior Campus

5A Jamieson Street
St Albans Victoria 3021

P 03 8312 0200
F 03 8312 0211

Junior Campus

88 Billingham Road
Deer Park Victoria 3023

P 03 9363 1155
F 03 9363 8681

Trade Training Centre – Cairnlea Campus

Ken Jordan Road
Cairnlea Victoria 3023

Opening 2014

Correspondence To

PO Box 83
St Albans Victoria 3021

Email victoria.university.sc@edumail.vic.gov.au
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Introducing the School Captains

At the end of last year, our Student Leadership Co-ordinators arranged the elections for the 2015 School Captain and Vice Captain positions at each campus. Congratulations to the following students who were elected for 2015:

Senior Campus School Captains:

Jacob Tiauli



Jessica Else



Senior Campus Vice Captains:

Blake Chan



Yuksel Ismael



Junior Campus School Captains:

Karanita Seve



Hyrum Seumalii



Junior Campus Vice Captains:

Ave Hill



Melissa Sichampanakhone



It is an honour for them to be recognised in this way by their peers. The captains' first official duty will be to formally welcome the new Year 7 students as members of our school community. They will be excellent student leaders and school ambassadors, and we look forward to working with them throughout the year.

Student Attendance – “Every Day Counts”

Going to school every day is the single most important part of a child's education – students learn new things at school every day and missing school puts them behind. We all want our students to get a great education, and the building blocks for a great education begin with students coming in to school each and every day.

Missing school can have a big impact on students academically and socially. It affects their achievement, including at VCE, and, just as importantly, it affects their relationship with other students, and contributes to school isolation. There is no safe number of days for missing school - a student missing one day a fortnight at Year 7 will miss four full weeks by the end of the year. By Year 10 they will have missed nearly half a year of school.

Coming to school every day is vital, but if for any reason your child must miss school, there are things we can do together to ensure they don't fall behind:

1. Speak with their teachers to find out what work your child needs to do to keep up.
2. The classroom teacher will develop an absence learning plan and you can make sure your child completes the plan.
3. Speak with your child's Year Level Coordinator in the event of an extended absence. An absence learning plan may be needed.

The Government introduced new laws from 1st March 2014. These laws could result in parents being fined for not sending students to school without an acceptable reason. If your child's attendance is causing you concern, please let their Year Level Coordinator know so we can work together to ensure your child attends school every day.

New Year 7 Students Make a Great Start to the Year

Starting secondary school is a major event in a young person's school life. Students get quite nervous about how it will turn out and parents worry about their child making the transition successfully. If our early experience with the Year 7 students of 2015 are any indication of how they are fitting into the school community at VUSC, we should not be too concerned.

The year started so well with “The Great Race” day last week, where students met their home group teacher and peers, were allocated to a locker and mingled with their teachers at a delicious lunchtime BBQ. They participated in an afternoon session of activities run by their Village Leader. Students used the day to build relationships and create familiarity with their new surroundings. They were issued with a “Passport” and a “Great Race” booklet to record the events.

Since that first day, the staff have been very impressed with how quickly the Year 7 students have settled into school life. They look fantastic in their uniforms, are friendly, polite and eager to learn.

Thank you to all our parents for the support you give us, for everything you have done to contribute to the very positive start we have had to the year. We greatly value the partnership we have with you.

Please don't hesitate to contact the school if you have any concerns or questions about your son or daughter's academic progress or wellbeing. We look forward to working with you and meeting you throughout this year.

Elaine Hazim

Acting College Principal

Making a Smooth Start to School

An extract by Michael Grose, from Parentingideas Club

Starting secondary school or is a time of change and uncertainty, which places new demands on young people. Starting at a school or new campus can be just as challenging. Some kids take these new experiences in their stride but it is natural to experience some difficulty.

It helps to remember the Five P's to help your young person settle in:

- 1. Promote friendships:** The quicker kids form new friendships the sooner they'll feel comfortable in their secondary school surroundings. Encourage your young person to be open to forming friendships with all sorts of kids; to be accepting of others who may be different to them; to take social risks by joining in activities even though they may feel uncomfortable; and to be friendly, approachable and positive!
- 2. Practice patience:** Patience and understanding in the early weeks is essential. Brush up on your listening skills as you help your young person adjust. Talk your young person about change and reassure them that it is normal to feel unsure or nervous in new circumstances. Let them know that many difficulties they face will be temporary.
- 3. Pursue a positive attitude:** Confidence is catching so make sure you see this transition time as an exciting challenge that your child can handle rather than an event to be feared. Ask them about the new subjects or interesting activities they are doing, and try to shift their focus to the positive aspects of school. Discuss settling in issues with the appropriate person such as a year level coordinator, but give your young person time to handle them on their own before seeking help.
- 4. Process their day:** Some young people may come home with fairly exaggerated accounts of secondary school and may not always paint a fair picture. They may become sensitive to things that they might have shrugged off at another school. Listen without judgment and show a real interest in their new school, while providing them with the space they need to get away for a while. Expect some behaviour blowouts as many kids let off steam in the relatively safe and stable environment of a loving family.
- 5. Plenty of sleep:** Young people spend a lot of energy in the first weeks adjusting to new routines, attending to teachers and working out the lay of their new social landscapes. Sufficient sleep will help them cope better with change in the early days.

Although secondary schools may seem a little foreign for those used to the relative intimacy of primary schools, one aspect is the same – *outcomes for students are maximised when schools and parents work together in the best interests of the student.*



VUSC News

College Board Elections

Nominations will soon be requested for parent members on the College Board for a two year term. There are three vacancies to be filled. If you are interested in nominating and would like to find out more about what is involved, please speak to the Principal or a Campus Principal on 8312 0200 or 9363 1155.

READING PROGRAM AT VUSC

In 2015 Year 7-9 students at VUSC will continue to take part in reading for 10 minutes at the beginning of every lesson in all subjects except Mathematics. All teachers will expect students to be engaged in the reading of fiction and non-fiction texts, and our classrooms are equipped with classroom libraries to support students in selecting 'just right books'. We will make books available to students in the week starting 9th February, although students are welcome to bring reading material from home.

How important is reading practice?

Students who read:

- Less than 1 min/day read 8,000 words/year
- 4.6 mins/day read 282,000 words/year
- 20 mins/day read 1.8 million words/year

Students who read more than 20 minutes a day have a greater chance of accessing learning across all subject areas, and successfully developing as academic learners.

How Parents Can Help

Parents can help by ensuring their children have an independent reading book in their schoolbag at all times. Parent involvement during home reading is an essential element in developing life-long readers. Encourage your child to read on a nightly basis, record their reading in the student planner and work with your children to complete regular written responses. It is fantastic to be able to listen to your child read, either for part of their nightly reading time or on a few occasions each week, however, when that isn't possible, a conversation about their reading is also effective.

English teachers have one reading lesson a week in the library which is focused on building student's reading comprehension skills; students are also expected to read for at least half an hour each night, and they are able to choose the books they read as long as they have chosen a 'Just Right Book'.

If your child needs assistance with choosing a 'Just Right Book' encourage them to speak to their English teachers as well as the school librarians. Our librarians do a fantastic job recommending books to students as they have a vast knowledge of past and new books that are sure to spark student interest. You can also join the local library and it is free! Brimbank Library is on the corner of Station Rd and Neale Rd near the Brimbank shopping centre.

You and your child may also like to browse through the books that have appeared on the Children's' Book Council Awards shortlists <http://cbca.org.au/Shortlist-2014.htm>

The Premier's Reading Challenge lists,

<http://www.premiersreadingchallenge.sa.edu.au/prc/pages/books/challenge/?reFlag=1>

Or The Inky's list (voted on by students).

<http://www.insideadog.com.au/inkys/2014-longlist>

There is also a great website, www.goodreads.com which has a variety of lists available alongside detailed descriptions. Please be mindful some of these books may be more appropriate for mature students. English teachers are responsible for the monitoring and assessment of your child's reading ability, so please do not hesitate to contact your child's English teacher if you have further questions.

Improve Your Outcomes – Join a Homework Club!

Homework Club is offered in the Resource Centre at the Junior Campus from 3.03pm until 3.45pm on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday afternoons. This is an excellent opportunity for students to revise their work for the day. AVID research shows that if students do not continually revise they lose most of the learnt material within a few weeks.

Strictly no games and non-educational computer use after school.

Additionally the library will be opened on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday mornings from 8.30am.

We look forward to students participating in these offerings from the College.

Mr. Gallagher

YEAR 7 CAMP!



Phillip Island Coastal Discovery Camp YMCA

A very warm welcome to you as our new students of Victoria University Secondary College! In 2015, you have the opportunity to attend a 3-night camp in Phillip Island. Year 7 is a very special year in a student's life and the camp is designed so that students can make strong relationships with other students and staff members which will make the transition to secondary school successful. Team building and new experiences are the key aims of this camp and it will certainly be the highlight of Year 7!

When: March 18th – 20th (Week 8, Term 1)

Where: Phillip Island YMCA Camp

Cost: \$270

Payment is to be made to the General Office by

Friday 6th March 2015

CAMP NUMBERS ARE STRICTLY LIMITED SO BE QUICK TO SECURE YOUR PLACE!

Email steele.karen.k@edumail.vic.gov.au or call Karen Steele or

Shaun Faulkhead on 9363 1155 if you would like to ask any questions!

