It was wonderful to meet our new Preps and their parents yesterday at the first of our orientation sessions. There was a wonderful atmosphere and a very settled room. There are some that are very smart (they told us they were!). The new Preps will continue to visit over the next few Wednesdays.

Below are the term dates for 2015. You will notice a slight change to the start of the school year for 2015. I’m looking forward to the change as outlined below.

On Monday, 2nd Feb, 2015, the VCE students will head off on their VCE retreat while the Prep and Year 7 students will start; allowing them the ability to familiarise themselves with their environment and the play spaces in the school yard. These two year levels, Prep and Year 7, are the two year levels that experience the most change; Preps, as they commence school and Year 7 as they adjust to the new secondary structures, moving between classes, having different teachers and gaining a greater level of responsibility for their learning.

Year 8 – 10 students will start back on the Tuesday, 3rd Feb, developing an understanding of their new class and teacher. They will also participate in some testing through the middle of the day. This will assist the teachers in gaining an understanding of where the students are at as they commence the year, assisting them to find out what they have remembered and what they may have forgotten over the holiday period. This will ensure that planning for individual needs in the classroom, whether it be adapting the work to meet learning difficulties or having an awareness of the students that will need extending will be able to be catered for appropriately. These tests don’t require students to prepare as they are purely there to help the new teachers understand where the current cohort of students sit and plan appropriately for the coming year. It will also provide a benchmark for the student to reflect on the improvements they will make throughout the year.

On Wednesday, 4th Feb, we will work together as a school community defining who we are and what it means to be an MDCS student. Robert Marzano, a leading researcher in education, writes in his book, High Reliability Schools, ‘If students and staff do not have a safe and collaborative culture in which to work, little, if any substantive work can be accomplished…’ (This addresses)… the day-to-day operation of a school: What are the rules? How do we follow them? What will happen when the rules are not followed? How do we work together to make the school run optimally?

Over the last year the staff and various school families have been asked the question, ‘What does (should) an MDCS student look like?’ We have spent time exploring the responses and, as a staff, refining our ideas. The first Wednesday, as a whole school, we’ll be participating in some multi-age (Year 1 to Year 12) activities that help our students participate in explaining what these are. Throughout 2015, we will revisit the ideas discussed. I look forward to seeing our senior students take some initiative in this whole school event, as they work with the junior students.

We would love our school families to be a part of this day and invite you to join us on the first Wednesday back if you are able. A letter with more info will be sent out over the holidays inviting you along.

Prayer Point:
This week, we received some sad news. Martin Hanscamp, who worked here at MDCS for a number of years as a class teacher and Deputy Principal, has been diagnosed with cancer. This has been a sudden and unexpected piece of news. Can I encourage you to pray for Martin, Anita (his wife) and his family as they wrestle with this information. You may have seen Martin around as he has an office here at MDCS in his current capacity as Australian Association of Christian Schools (AACS) CEO.

Jason Riding
Parents Please Note...

Open Door Christmas Hampers

As a school community, we are partnering with Open Door Church and the Monbulk Care Network to help provide for those in need this Christmas. Each student is encouraged to bring in a minimum of one food item that could be included in a Christmas ‘Hamper’. Some suggestions include:

- Packaged ‘Christmassy’ treats such as Puddings, Fruit Mince Pies, Canned Ham, Chocolates, Biscuits
- Other basic ‘non-perishable’ food items
- Children’s Toys

Each classroom will have a box in which items will be placed, and we hope to present them to a representative from Open Door Church and /or the Monbulk Care Network, at our final assembly on Tuesday, 16th December.

So let’s aim to have those boxes overflowing……and be a blessing to those in our wider community.

For more information, please contact the MDCS Office.

MDCS Canteen Manager Wanted

MDCS is looking for a Canteen Manager to commence in Term 1, 2015. Duties will include, food preparation, ordering of stock, menu ideas, managing volunteers and most of all providing a healthy food service for students and staff. The hours are 10.00-2.30pm on most Fridays during the school year. The successful applicant will agree with and actively support the Christian ethos of the School.

Please email your expression of Interest to tdrummond@mdcs.vic.edu.au or alternatively submit a written expression of Interest to the office.

House to rent! A young couple, new to our school community, are currently house hunting for a rental property to live in next year. They are searching for a small, preferably 2 bedroom house in the area of Mount Evelyn or Lilydale. If anyone has any contacts in regard to leasing property within these areas, please contact the school office.

Prep Orientation Afternoon #2

Wednesday, 26th November
2pm - 3.15pm

While this is an orientation for the 2015 Prep class, Prep 2014 parents are invited to help welcome the 2015 prep parents, with a sharing time and afternoon tea. This will be held in the Staff Room.

All Prep Parents Welcome!

FORMS AND LETTERS SENT HOME THIS WEEK:

- Year 6 Graduation Information & Aquatic Excursion
- VET letter (selected students only)
- ACORN DVD’s

REMEMBER:

- 2015 Bus Request forms

NOVEMBER

21st - VCAA Exams end
21st—23rd Yr 8 Snowy River Camp
24th - Secondary Assembly (Yr 7)
26th - Prep Orientation #2
27th - Valedictory Dinner

DECEMBER

27th - 28th Year 9/10 Exams
28th - Year 11 Last Day
1st - Orientation Day Whole School
- VCE Unit 1 2015 Begins
- Primary Assembly (Yr 3/4CK)