From the Principal…

Dear Parents / Caregivers,

By now, your daughter should have brought a letter home explaining that, given our commitment to the environment, we will not print the newsletter any longer. *What, When & Why* will be published on our website on a regular basis. Publication dates are also listed on our website (*News & Events/Events*).

School ethos
We thank all families and students who wear the correct uniform at all times. However, there is always a very tiny minority who let us down. We ask everyone to keep on supporting the ethos of the school, not only by ensuring that students wear the correct uniform, including safe shoes, but also by reminding students of the importance of behaving well on buses, crossing at the lights, showing respect towards self and others, working to the best of their ability and embracing all leadership opportunities we provide.

In partnership with you, we have worked hard over the years to gain the great reputation we enjoy now, but we can never rest on our laurels – we need to keep on being vigilant at all times and, once again I ask for your support.

Science Laboratories
Demolition will start any day. As expected, there will be some inconvenience during the building process, but we are more than willing to cope with some discomfort now in the knowledge that within a few months our girls will have access to excellent facilities.

AGM
This will take place on Monday 1 March at 7.00 pm in the Library Information Centre. All parents are welcome. You may wish to become a member of the Governing Council, join a subcommittee or just come along to learn a little more about the school and meet some other parents.

I hope to see as many parents as possible on Monday. Refreshments will be provided.

Swimming Carnival 2010

RESULTS
House winners:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overall</th>
<th>Fraser</th>
<th>514 points</th>
<th>Spence</th>
<th>485 points</th>
<th>Mitchell</th>
<th>462 points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>Mitchell</td>
<td>248 points</td>
<td>Fraser</td>
<td>246 points</td>
<td>Spence</td>
<td>242 points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>Fraser</td>
<td>268 points</td>
<td>Spence</td>
<td>243 points</td>
<td>Mitchell</td>
<td>214 points</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Individual Winners:

**Year 12**
Winner: Bianca Payne – Fraser
Runner-up: Diana Gomez – Spence

**Year 10/11**
Winner: Narelle Badenoch – Fraser
Runner-up: Saffron Ronson – Mitchell
Alisha Hillier – Spence

**Year 9**
Winner: Madison Murray – Fraser
Runner-up: Sara Krneta – Mitchell

**Year 8**
Winner: Sasha Van Beren – Spence
Runner-up: Shubi Dumra – Spence

As usual, the Mitcham Girls High School Swimming Carnival was a huge success, making the day enjoyable for all. With perfect conditions for a day by the pool, students and staff couldn’t ask for more. As always, it was a tight competition between the three houses. However, winning by 29 points was Fraser, taking out the senior and overall cups, with Mitchell winning the Junior cup by two points. All students enjoyed some friendly competition with their peers, and many thanks to Ms Liebeknecht for participating in events for her team.

Congratulations to all House Captains, who did extremely well with their organisational skills and enthusiasm; which was represented in the results from the day.
Cyberspace is an exciting, evolving space for girls to explore, express themselves and learn. Many studies have shown that girls are incredibly active in cyberspace; using social networking sites, writing blogs, sharing photos and videos, completing homework, creating online content and strengthening friendships.

How girls are exploring and using cyberspace

1. Frequency and type of online usage
   The Australian Communications and Media Authority (ACMA) conducted a study into internet use and social networking by young people in Australia. It was found that girls spent an average of one hour and 17 minutes online per day, ranging from an average of 30 minutes per day for 8 – 11 year olds, to 2 hours and 24 minutes for 15 – 17 year olds (ACMA, 2008). More girls than boys messaged or chatted online, visited social networking sites and used email. An Australian Broadcasting Authority (ABA) national study also found that children are increasingly accessing the internet for the first time at a younger age (ABA, 2005). Significantly more girls than boys participated in online communication activities, including messaging or chatting online, email and visiting social websites (ACMA, 2008). The data also showed that 80% of girls aged 14 – 17 years had posted their own material online. Girls were also more likely than boys to look up health, dieting or fitness information on the web (Lenhart et al., 2007). Finally, girls were more likely than boys to have an online profile, to have used social networking sites, to create and work on their own website and to have posted photos online.

2. Mobile phone usage
   The researchers in the ACMA study and a Finnish study, established that girls used mobile phones more than boys and that girls spent significant more time talking and messaging (ACMA, 2008; Punamaki, Wallenius, Nygard, Saarni & Rimpela, 2007).

3. Parental perceptions
   In the ABA study, 99% of parents perceived the internet to be of benefit to their children, although 92% of parents mentioned at least one issue of concern in relation to children’s use of the internet (ABA, 2005). Most parents (92%) reported that they were involved in their child’s internet use in some way, but parents’ supervision of their children’s internet usage decreased as the child’s age increased (ABA, 2005).

Parents of girls were more likely to trust their child to choose internet content but reported having concerns about their daughter’s mobile phone use.

The cumulative conclusion from this research is that girls are incredibly, and increasingly, active online. They use online and mobile phone technologies to communicate in a variety of ways. Girls are at the forefront of cyberspace. Although there may be some potential warnings about the overuse of mobile phones and concern from parents about aspects of cyberspace, it is clear that girls are enjoying participating in cyberspace and there are many benefits to be found there.

Benefits of cyberspace

Given that adolescents are comfortable and active in cyberspace, some researchers have coined the term ‘digital fluency’ (Hsi, 2007). Digitally fluent youth are avid consumers of traditional media, electronic games and web-based information. Hsi (2007) says that being digitally fluent has many advantages because adolescents can become expert in many practices, including: taking on different roles and identities, engaging in multiple literacies and multi-tasking, taking ownership of media creation and online expression.

Another study on digital media outlined the literacy benefits of cyberspace. Gee and Levine (2009) found that Web 2.0 technologies and online video games in particular, can engage students and enhance their literacy skills. Williams (2008) also urges that young people are learning by experience how to enter new online communities through their reading and writing, and therefore gaining literacy skills.

Another suggested advantage for girls in cyberspace is associated with identity and role playing. Many online environments, including chat rooms, instant messaging forums and online games, allow girls to rehearse different representations of themselves. They can experiment with different forms of their identity, including playing with femininity and gender online before trying them out in the ‘real world’ (Kelly, Pomerantz & Currie, 2006). Hodkinson and Lincoln (2008) also explore the notion of identity and personal space though the practice of blogging, which girls are particularly active in. Online journals function as a personal space where adolescents can establish a social identity.

Often the advantages of cyberspace are intangible. Notley (2008) argues that it is difficult to measure online benefits for young people. She cites
Australian studies which show adolescents receive benefits from their online activities, including: civic, cultural, creative, educational, self-expressive, social and health benefits. International research has also concluded that online network usage enhances social capital. Higher levels of social capital are associated with better health, educational achievement and employment outcomes (Notley, 2008).

The rapid rate uptake of Web 2.0 technologies by girls, demonstrates that they enjoy being in cyberspace. Clearly there are risks which can be encountered online, but the development of skills in peer-to-peer knowledge sharing, collaboration and critical evaluation is evident in adolescents who are actively involved in cyberspace (Notley, 2008).

**Risks in cyberspace, cyberbullying and cybersafety**

Michael Carr-Gregg in his book *Real Wired Child* comments that “the age group most vulnerable to [online] harassment is that of early adolescence (13 – 15 years)... and the vast majority of this group is online daily” (Carr-Gregg, 2007 p. 13).

There are many different types of risk that adolescents and children face from being online or in cyberspace:

- threats from predators to personal safety
- viewing inappropriate material, including pornography
- cyberbullying
- financial risks
- identity theft
- internet addiction / online gaming addiction / mobile phone addiction
- poor physical health or tiredness from cyberspace overuse

Although there are many publicised cases of cyberspace danger, some research has found that the majority of adolescents are acting responsibly when they are online. A study into information disclosure on MySpace, a social networking site, found that only 13% of adolescents had disclosed their phone number or physical address on MySpace (De Souza & Dick, 2008). The researchers concluded that “by and large, children are acting responsibly in embracing this new technology; however, there are a significant number potentially at risk”.

**Girls and cyberbullying**

A simple definition of cyberbullying is one that refers to the use of online or mobile phone technology to harass or intimidate another person (Carr-Gregg, 2007). A recent study commissioned by the Australian Government found that the vast majority of Year 4 to 9 students had not experienced cyberbullying, with 7 – 10% of students reporting that they were bullied by means of technology over the previous school term (Cross, Shaw, Hearn, Epstein, Monks, Lester & Thomas, 2009).

“For girls especially, the use of [cyberspace] technologies is likely to represent a central part of their social being, an important tool for friendships and peer group inclusion and one that subsequently increases their likelihood of experiencing cyberbullying” (Lodge & Frydenberg, 2007, p.53).

**Cybersafety for young people**

Research has shown that girls tend to be more cautious in cyberspace than boys and that girls are generally aware of the potential risks. Youn and Hall (2008) found that girls perceived more privacy risks when using the internet, and had a higher level of privacy concern than boys.

**Cybersafety for parents**

If approximately 67% of time spent online by young people is at home (ACMA, 2008) then clearly parents have some responsibility for protecting their children from the risks in cyberspace. Michael Carr-Gregg (2007) suggests that parents can even develop contracts with their children about how and when they can be online or use mobile phones. Treyvaud (2008) believes that parents and educators should also have an up-to-date awareness of risk for their children and students. She poses three questions that significant adults can ask:

- Content: what are young people accessing?
- Contact: who are they making contact with?
- Commerce: are they purchasing online? (Treyvaud, 2008, p.96).

There is a twofold problem with parents protecting their children from cyber-risks. Firstly, they are often not aware of what their children are doing in cyberspace, and secondly, they are unable to understand what and how their children function in cyberspace. Parents may not understand how to access Facebook, MySpace, Twitter or MSN. Education would seem to be the key. Many young people do not tell adults about cyberbullying or other negative cyberspace experiences, for fear that their internet access or mobile phone will be removed (Cross et al., 2009). Maher (2008) suggests that “if constructive change is to occur, parents may need to assume a more cooperative approach on managing online bullying” (p.56).

**Cybersafety for schools**

Like all schools, MGHS is aware of the issue of cyberbullying and has policies in place to deal with this form of bullying.

Many schools use filter systems and ban online social networking, as does MGHS.

Please talk to your daughters about the issues raised in this article.
Mitcham Girls High School is a professional, progressive learning community dedicated to providing outstanding educational opportunities for girls.

Mitcham Girls High School tries to meet the needs of all students and to help them attain their potential so that they may make a positive contribution to the world.

For any organisation to be successful we rely on all members of the team working together to support procedures.

Our effectiveness depends on staff, parents/caregivers and students supporting current procedures as well as change and we thank parents and caregivers for this support and look forward to ongoing support in these matters.

The major School Policies and Procedures are outlined in the student diary.

The following is a brief outline of some of these.

**Diaries**

Please look through your daughter’s diary and sign it on a weekly basis. You will be able to monitor your daughter’s progress and homework obligations through this diary.

The school diary is the major method of communication between the student, the school and the home and the inclusion of non-school related material is not appropriate. The diary is a public document, which can be viewed by teachers upon request and as such should be kept in an appropriate state.

**Dress Code**

All students are expected to adhere to the school dress code. Governing Council, Principal and Staff affirm this decision and seek parent and student support for the Dress Code Policy.

Students and parents/caregivers are informed of these requirements on enrolment and are expected to support it.

The Uniform Shop at Mitcham Girls High School is open from 8:00am – 1.30pm each Thursday during school term.

Uniforms are also available for purchase Monday to Friday, 9:00am to 5:00pm, at:

Uniform Management Services  
109 Rundle Street  
Kent Town SA 5067  
Tel. (08) 8363 5255

Methods of Payment: Cash, Cheque, Visa or MasterCard.

Photographs of acceptable combinations of the uniform and appropriate shoe wear are included in this newsletter.

Please be aware that jewellery, other than an inconspicuous symbol of religion, is not part of the dress code. Girls will be asked to remove jewellery or risk having it confiscated.

The wearing of makeup and/or nail polish is also not acceptable at school.

Students who do not adhere to the school dress code will have the option of borrowing an item of clothing from Student Services.

Incidents of non-compliance will be dealt with through the Behaviour Management process.
Public Transport Policy
With so many of our girls travelling distances to and from school we do have the occasional complaint about behaviour on buses. Girls travelling to and from school are expected to follow these guidelines:

- Follow the public transport code of conduct
- Consider the rights of all passengers
- Demonstrate appropriate manners and behaviour
- Keep bags under seats or on laps.

Senior girls are appointed as bus monitors and will report inappropriate behaviour to Year Level Managers who will deal with it through the Behaviour Management process.

Student Absence
Any absence from school impacts on learning – students who miss school are often disadvantaged – educationally and socially. Difficulties experienced can range from gaps in knowledge and continuity to missing out on important information, to social isolation as friendships break down.

To support your daughter’s success we ask you aim to make appointments out of school hours wherever possible and to encourage regular attendance.

If your daughter is showing signs of being unwell in the morning it is expected that she will remain at home. The school does not have the facilities to look after girls who are sick and parents will be contacted to collect girls who report to the sick room during the day.

If your daughter is going to be absent please notify the school by a phone call before 9.30am. If an explanation has not been received by 11.30am a message will be sent, via SMS, to those parents/caregivers who have registered their mobile phone number with the school. The absence will also require a written note of explanation on the next day of attendance.

Late Arrivals
Students who arrive late to school are required to sign in at Student Services on their arrival. Persistent late arrivals will incur a community service penalty.

Again we ask for your support in encouraging punctuality to school.

Messages
Unfortunately the school Reception Office does not have staff available to deliver messages to girls during the day. In the case of an emergency we will endeavour to get a message delivered before the end of the school day.

Use of Information and Communication Technology Resources
Access to the school Computing Network, the internet and associated resources is a service provided by the school for educational purposes only and under strict conditions, which must be adhered to at all times. Any breach of these conditions will be dealt with through the Behaviour Management process. This may include the removal of access rights.

Use of Mobile Phones and Other Personal Electronic Devices
The use of mobile phones and other personal electronic devices is discouraged during school hours. It is recognised that some of these devices are either inappropriately or potentially disruptive in a school environment and, in some cases, activities may be unlawful or illegal. The school takes no responsibility for mobile phones or other personal electronic equipment that is brought to school. They are brought to school at the student’s own risk.

A user agreement is included in the student diary and is required to be signed by all students.

Students using an electronic device inappropriately will have it confiscated. Please be aware that any suspected e-crime may result in SAPOL intervention.

Thank you for your support in these matters we look forward to a successful and enjoyable year.

Penny Tranter
Deputy Principal
DRESS CODE Options
What, When and Why No 2, Term 1, 2010
The middle years

The early years of adolescence can be a turbulent time for teenagers and their parents and teachers. These are years when early adolescents are striving to become full members of their peer group. This is, of course, a peer group heavily influenced by pop culture which includes, for young girls, the pressure to look sexy without actually being sexual. Schools that come down hard on outward signs of belonging like hair products and piercings, can easily misinterpret their significance. Just like little children dressing up to look adult, young teens adopt the symbols of contemporary older adolescence without necessarily adopting the behaviour too.

Seeing such signs as rehearsal rather than rebellion will help schools and parents cope.

Characteristics

• Social life is the most important part of their lives but hobbies, sports and family also stay important.
• Their friends determine their clothes, their choice of music, their language and even the subjects they choose at school.
• Talking on the phone, texting, sending notes, chat rooms and emails are vital everyday forms of communications even with friends they have just been with.
• Their hormones and growth spurts mean they can act like children one minute and adults the next. They veer from being a delight to seeming like monsters.
• Their brain development and neurochemistry mean they can seem disorganised, untidy, impulsive, unreasonable and imprudent.
• Even the most rebellious teenager will usually return to the values their parents brought them up with.
• They love their parents and want their approval but parents are also agonisingly embarrassing.
• They have crushes but their friends are usually more important to them than actual dates. They are more likely to socialise in groups.
• They are cliquey, exclusive, and desperate to be accepted.
• They are ultra-sensitive to others being nasty to them but don’t recognise how nasty they can be themselves.
• They need both boundaries and space.
• They want to be cool and fear being excluded.
• They love teachers who are entertaining, humorous and kind.

Great Things About Middle Schoolers

They enjoy learning
They do as they are asked.
They are keen to help.
They are keen to participate.
They respect and like their teachers.
They are full of fun.
They are enthusiastic.
They have lots of energy.
They want to do their best.
They can hold an intelligent conversation.
They love to show how responsible they can be.
They soak up new ideas.
They have a social conscience.
They still have a lot of child in them.
They are not hard to please.
They love a joke, even a silly one.
They are open and honest.
Each one is different.
They share their feelings.
They reflect adult behaviour back to us.
They see the world in simple terms.
They are idealistic.
They expect a lot of the adults in their life.
They love whatever’s cool.

M Kerr
Assistant Principal, Middle School

Science News

Our school has been selected to participate in the Science by Doing trialling. The STELR project is a national initiative of the Australian Academy of Technological Sciences and Engineering (ATSE). The school has won the opportunity to trial this project to increase our students understanding of energy, circuits, global warming and the greenhouse effect.

Two staff have been invited to attend a two-day Professional Learning Seminar to be held in March 2010.

Science by Doing aims to improve science learning by:

• Engaging secondary students through an inquiry-based approach.
• Supporting school-based learning communities that acknowledge and build upon teacher expertise.
Parent Seminar – FREE
MGHS school community is invited to attend a free seminar called *Sowing the Seeds of Happiness – A Parent’s Guide to Empowering Young People.*

Working in partnership with Eastern Region Councils, the City of Unley is hosting this unique seminar for parents, teachers, counsellors and others working with young people.

*Sowing the Seeds of Happiness* focuses on positive communication, and helps to identify and contrast the effects of negative communication. Created and delivered by Youth Opportunities, the seminar deals with questions like:
- What is it like to be a young person in 2010?
- How can you help young people to maintain a positive self-image?
- What influences young people to make decisions?
- What tools can parents and teachers use to help young people make good decisions in any context?

*Thursday 4th March, 6.30pm – 8.30pm*
Unley Civic Centre, 180 Unley Road, Unley (enter via Oxford Tce)

Light supper provided

**Bookings Essential: 8240 3133 (extended to 28/2)**

If you require any further information, please contact Sandra Robinson on 8372 5114.

G. Hirsch-Brown, **Counsellor**

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**Sports Results**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team</th>
<th>Round 1</th>
<th>Round 2</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Year 8/9 Volleyball</td>
<td>Mitcham 1 def Mitcham 2 1 - 2</td>
<td>Mitcham defeated Unley 3 – 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Indoor Soccer</td>
<td>Mitcham 2 drew Adelaide 2 – 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Adelaide defeated Mitcham 1 3 – 1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open White Volleyball</td>
<td>Mitcham White defeated Mitcham Navy 3 - 0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open Blue Volleyball</td>
<td></td>
<td>Hamilton defeated Mitcham 3 – 0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mitcham defeated Pasadena 4 - 0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Diary Dates – Term 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>March</th>
<th>Monday 1 – Wednesday 3</th>
<th>Year 12 Aquatics</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday 1</td>
<td><strong>Governing Council AGM (7.00–7.45pm)</strong></td>
<td>Year 8 Assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 2</td>
<td>Year 9 Assembly</td>
<td>School Tour 9.15am</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday 3</td>
<td>Year 9 Assembly</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 9</td>
<td>International Women’s Day</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday 15</td>
<td>Governing Council 7.00pm (training)</td>
<td>Senior School Assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 16</td>
<td>Year 8 Assembly</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 17</td>
<td>Year 9 Assembly</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday 22</td>
<td>Senior School Assembly</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday 23</td>
<td>Physical Resources Mtg 9.00am</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday 25</td>
<td>School Tour 9.15am</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday 26</td>
<td><strong>What, When &amp; Why No. 3 Home Sports Day</strong></td>
<td>Year 10 Risky Business</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>End of Term 1 – Reports distributed. Dismissal 3.15pm</strong></td>
<td>Year 9 Assembly</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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SCHOOL DENTAL SERVICE

The South Australian Dental Service provides a range of dental services for children at clinics throughout Adelaide and all major country regional centres.

Dental care is provided by dental teams comprising of Dentists, Dental Therapists and Dental Assistants.

All preschool, primary and secondary students aged 18 years and under, are eligible for care with the School Dental Service. Fees and conditions apply.

From 1 July 2009 there will be some changes to School Dental Service fees.

- All School Dental Service care is free for preschool children (general and emergency).

- Children who are dependents of / holders of Centrelink Concession Cards, Veterans Affairs Pension Concession Cards or School Cards are eligible to receive free dental care (general and emergency).

- For primary and secondary school children who are not dependents of / holders of the above concessions, a fee will apply for each course of general dental care provided.

- Students with a Commonwealth Government Teen Dental Voucher are welcome to use it at the School Dental Service. If presented at a School Dental clinic it will entitle them to a full course of dental treatment including preventive care and any treatment if required.

- Dental emergencies treated at a School Dental Clinic between check ups will be covered by the fee paid at your child’s most recent check up.

For information about appointments and fees, contact your local School Dental Clinic on: 8271 0371.

Parents of children with specific physical or intellectual needs should contact their local School Dental Clinic to discuss their child’s needs.

In case of a dental emergency contact your local clinic to arrange an appointment.

For after hours emergency advice phone 8232 2651 (children only).