From The Principal

The swimming season has started and there is a sense of excitement among the girls as they “hit” the pool water during PE lessons or at lunch time. Being a single sex school, the girls feel free and confident to get into their bathers and jump into the pool. To be able to swim at lunch time, students need to have permission from parents. If your daughter has not yet organised a pool pass, she can either see a member of the PE staff for a Swimming Consent Form or download it from our website http://www.mitchamgirlshs.sa.edu.au/sport/, complete the form and return it to the PE office.

Parent Satisfaction Survey

Very shortly you will receive an email from the ACARA School Survey Team asking you to complete a survey about Mitcham Girls High School. It is a standard survey that many schools use and the responses will be collated by ACARA. The Mitcham Girls High School Parent Voice Committee has also added three questions to the end of the survey.

Your responses will be anonymous. The overall responses, however, will be considered carefully by the school, as they will inform the development of the MGHS Site Improvement Plan for 2017.

I am aware that survey fatigue is affecting us all and I do apologise for sending you another one to complete. It is a requirement of the Department for Education and Child Development that schools conduct these surveys each year and I would be really grateful if you could spend five minutes attending to this task.

External School Review

All public South Australian schools are reviewed by two external officers. Our review was conducted last week (7-9 November) by Liz Schneyder (Review Officer) and Richard Abell (Principal of Seaton High School). The draft report highlights the excellent NAPLAN and SACE results as well as the overall achievements of our students. They were complimentary about the number of co-curricular activities with which our students engage. It became very evident to them that “this is a happy school” and that the level of harassment/bullying is very low.

Of course, there is always room to improve and they have made three recommendations on how the school may move to the next level of achievement. Broadly the recommendations are:

• Further increase the expectations of students and build teacher capacity so that students move to the next level of achievement (go from good to very good), while maintaining the current positive culture.
• Continue to build a whole school curriculum leadership which will support contemporary teaching and learning practices.
• Ensure that the existing Performance and Development Program is consistently aligned to Site Improvement Plan.

continued next page
From the Principal

These recommendations did not come as a surprise to us as we had already planned to start addressing these areas in 2017 and will continue to do so over the next four years.

The final report has to be approved by DECD before we can disseminate it to parents and publish it on our website.

End of Year Celebrations

Hard to believe that another year is coming to a close. As you know, we like to celebrate the achievements of students and there will be two very special occasions held to honour them:

1. Celebrating Achievement Assembly for Years 9 to 11 students will be held on Monday 21 November at 12:05pm in the school gym. We welcome all parents.

2. Presentation Night will be held on Wednesday 23 November at Edwardstown Baptist Church, 7:00pm, in honour of our Year 12 students and Year 8, 9, 10 and 11 students who have achieved outstanding results. We welcome all parents to this Presentation and would like to especially encourage the family members of our current Year 12 students to attend this very important event.

Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM)

Work on the infrastructure of a STEM Centre has not yet commenced. However, we are starting to address STEM teaching methodologies. During Weeks 8 and 9 of this term the Year 8 and 9 students will work on projects or a line of inquiry which will require research, creative and critical thinking, the application of Scientific and Mathematical knowledge and even some Engineering.

It is possible that for the first few days, while students unpack the line of inquiry, they will feel somewhat unclear about what they want or need to do. The idea is that we do not rescue them. They must learn to feel comfortable with the “struggle” stage which will help them to “think how to think”. This is a new process for all of us but we are confident that the students will enjoy exploring ideas in groups.

In this newsletter we have included an article on single sex education (pages 4 and 5). It makes for interesting reading.

Antoinette Jones

Diary Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>November</th>
<th>December</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wed 16 - Fri 18</td>
<td>Thursday 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monday 21</td>
<td>Friday 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wednesday 23</td>
<td>Wednesday 14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mon 28 - Wed 30</td>
<td>Thursday 15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuesday 29</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 11 Aquatics</td>
<td>Year 10/11 Exams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whole School Assembly - Celebrating Achievement</td>
<td>Student Free Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation Night (Edwardstown Baptist Church)</td>
<td>End of Term 4 - Years 8 and 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governing Council</td>
<td>Year 12 (2017) Orientation Day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year 10/11 Exams</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance Performance</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12:00pm</td>
<td>2:25pm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Science News**

**ConocoPhillips Science Experience**
The ConocoPhillips Science Experience is a fun three days of Science activities for Year 9 and 10 students. Students with an interest in Science are given a taste of life at university as well as exposure to different aspects of STEM and career opportunities.

Thank you to: Rotary Club of Mitcham; Rotary Club of Brownhill Creek; Rotary Club of Unley; Rotary Club of Edwardstown and Uni SA for their support for this event in sponsoring seven students from Year 9. Each student is looking forward to this event at either Flinders University, Uni SA or The University of Adelaide during December.

Liz Rogers | Science Teacher

---

**STEM News**

**STEM Sista Graduation**
During the first week of the Term 1 holidays, three Year 10 students: Summer Till, Husna Arief Azali and Holly Castle participated in the inaugural STEM Sista Intensive Program. STEM Sista is a professional development program for girls run by Concept 2 Creation (C2C) which aims to develop young women and their confidence to achieve in STEM related careers.

On Tuesday 1 November, the STEM Sista Graduation was held in the Bragg Lecture Theatre at The University of Adelaide. At the graduation students not only received their certificates for the program but also networked with local academics and business to gain further advice on both STEM tertiary and career pathways.

The girls represented themselves and the Mitcham Girls community extremely well, with very high praise received from the program director.

If you are interested in becoming a part of 2017 STEM Sista program, details will be released later in the year or contact Mr Simon Brooks at simon.brooks378@schools.sa.edu.au for more details.

Simon Brooks | STEM Coordinator

---

**Middle School News**

An early highlight for Term 4 was the opportunity for the school to host around 135 Year 7 students on their Transition Visit in preparation for starting high school in 2017. The students had a very full day attending a variety of lessons, visiting the Library and attending a Dance Performance at the end of the day. Around 40 of the school’s Year 8s provided a range of support services to the visiting students, taking great pride and delight in showing off their school. A sincere vote of thanks is offered to all staff involved, as days such as this come on top of all the other things that we do.

A large group of next year’s students also gave up their Saturday morning to attend the ‘GifT testing’. This is an opportunity for students who may need extra challenge or extension in their learning, to demonstrate their particular abilities.

Finally, as the end of the year approaches, students should be focusing on making sure that all set work is completed to the best of their ability, so that they can move into their next year of schooling with a solid skill set. A grade of ‘C’ at the end of a teaching period indicates that a student has undertaken the required learning and performed at the standard required by the Australian Curriculum.

Zinta Ozolins | Assistant Principal Middle School
American psychologist’s claims contradicted by multiple international studies

American psychologist, Professor Diane Halpern recently visited Australia claiming that single-sex schools provide no academic benefits to students and teach children harmful gender stereotypes. However, Diane Halpern’s views are based on a 2014 meta-analysis that ignored multiple studies by internationally respected researchers demonstrating not only academic benefits from attending single-sex schools, but also that girls and women in single-sex environments are more confident and less harmed by gender stereotyping than their counterparts in co-educational environments.

During her visit Diane Halpern repeatedly referred to Erin Pahlke, Janet Hyde and Carlie Allison’s 2014 ‘meta-analysis’ of single-sex education studies to support her case, yet there are fundamental flaws in this analysis, including that only 57 of the 184 studies analysed were controlled studies. Even then, education research is not a pure science that allows for experimental and control group comparisons. In order to compare apples with apples, studies should only compare students who are randomly assigned to single-sex or co-ed schools. However, this only occurs in a few countries, including South Korea and Trinidad.

As a result, the studies included in the 2014 meta-analysis were drawn from countries across the globe with different cultures and education traditions and serving different types of students. In addition, while many international studies were listed in the meta-analysis, their results were not discussed. To cite just one example, the meta-analysis failed to discuss Hyunjoon Park’s 2012 study which found a “substantial” positive effect for boys and girls randomly assigned to single-sex high schools in South Korea.

Recent Australian research has also pointed to the benefits of single-sex education, particularly for girls in the fields of mathematics and science. In 2015, Kester Lee and Judy Anderson from the University of Sydney found that girls in single-sex schools have the most positive attitudes to mathematics, followed by boys in single-sex schools, co-ed boys and finally co-ed girls. Lee and Anderson concluded that, for girls, “single-sex settings resulted in much more favourable attitudes towards mathematics than those in coeducational settings”.

Similarly, in 2016 Dr Chris Ryan of the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research found that Year 8 girls in single-sex schools are more likely to enjoy and be confident in mathematics than girls in co-ed schools. In fact, girls in single-sex schools are equally as confident and more likely to enjoy mathematics than boys in single-sex schools. Dr Ryan found that these gender gaps are a “widespread phenomenon” across the socioeconomic distribution and in all sectors (government, Catholic and independent).

It is also important to note that the authors of the 2014 meta-analysis claim that single-sex schooling leads to harmful gender stereotyping, yet their analysis excluded many important studies investigating this topic. A noticeable omission is research by labour and gender economist Professor Alison Booth of the Australian National University. Her multiple studies, which have been cited around the world, demonstrated that girls behaved more competitively in single-sex classes and that young women randomly assigned to single-sex tutorials within a co-educational university environment were more likely to pass their first-year economics course and gain higher marks than those randomly assigned to mixed-gender tutorials.
There are many other studies in this field demonstrating that girls and women behave less competitively in mixed gender environments, particularly when ‘stereotype threat’ (where females are stereotyped as ‘bad’ at something, such as mathematics or economics) is a factor. For instance, Professor Claudia Goldin of Harvard University is currently investigating a variety of measures, including single-sex classes, as part of an experiment to encourage more young women to study economics at university.

Finally, it should be noted that Diane Halpern, and her colleagues who wrote the 2014 meta-analysis, are fundamentally opposed to the existence of single-sex education in any form, as is the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) which has taken legal action to prevent the opening of public single-sex schools and classes in the United States. Despite this, the number of single-sex schools in America increased from 34 in 2004 to 850 in 2014 and is still growing. In August this year, two girls’ schools opened in Los Angeles, including the Girls Academic Leadership Academy (GALA), the city’s first all-girls STEM high school.

Ultimately, there are excellent single-sex schools around the world, just as there are excellent co-educational schools. And there will be parents and students who prefer a single-sex learning environment and those who prefer co-ed. It is unlikely there will ever be consensus on which model is “better”, even among academics. What is important, however, is giving parents the facts about what the research does (and does not) show so they can choose which type of school is best for their child. Choice in education is far more important than a ‘one-size-fits-all’ approach.

References


Ski Trip
On the school “long weekend” in September a group of thirty one students and six staff arrived at the top of Falls Creek to enjoy a hearty buffet breakfast before collecting their gear and hitting the slopes. The weekend provided a range of weather from sun, rain and snow to winds that closed the lift for an hour on the second morning. This provided a great opportunity to build snowmen and play in the snow. The fresh powder allowed for soft landings for all the classic stacks and snowball fights, and was a highlight of the trip. The lessons this year were in the afternoons and provided much needed instruction for our ambitious students, a couple of whom had decided it was a good idea to attempt a Blue run on the first morning and got stuck half way down and had to be rescued by Mr Heddles.

The range of abilities was clearly evident and students were quick to form groups with others of similar ability and make the most of every minute with many staying out all day until the lifts closed. Nights were spent in the comfort of QT’s 5 star apartments cooking dinner, watching movies and soaking in the balcony spa.

Ski Trip 2016 has provided many amusing stories and fond memories for all involved and leaves many students excited to relive the adventure in 2017.

“I loved building a snowman with Brooke and Lauren as it was memorable.” Martina
“My favourite moment was going up the chairlift while it actually snowed!” Brooke
“My favourite experience was going on different runs with friends.” Caitlin
“I really enjoyed skiing on the soft snow and then learning how to snowboard.”
“The whole experience was memorable, I love snowboarding with friends, but I think watching Indi stack was the best part.” Neve
“The heated floors in the bathrooms were dope! Snowboarding was Rad!” Indiana
“The whole trip! Definitely worth the time.” Caitlin

Remembrance Day
The school community paid tribute to those fallen in war at a Whole School Assembly, observing a minute’s silence. We especially remember women in our armed services and women and children who have been, and continue to be, victims or war.

The SRC represented the school community and laid wreaths at the Unley RSL and Mitcham RSL Remembrance Day services.

Vanessa Cole | Ski Trip Coordinator
Meredith Arnold | Assistant Principal
Whole School News

Defence Industry Pathway Program (DIPP)
The Maritime Skills Centre (MSC) and the ASC (formally Australian Submarine Corporation) are preparing secondary students for a career in the state’s defence industries. The MSC has partnered with TAFE SA (Regency Campus) to develop the Defence Industry Pathways Program (DIPP), which focuses on future skills and capabilities required in the highly skilled defence industry. The aim is to expose students to skill sets that can be applied to all engineering and advanced manufacturing career pathways. The DIPP course provides Year 10 and 11 students with opportunities to develop vocational skills as well as the ability to study a SACE accredited course with a focus on Advanced Manufacturing.

Year 10 student, Summer Till, is the first Mitcham Girl to be involved in the DIPP course. During Semester 2 Summer has designed and built a model submarine utilising Computer Aided Design (CAD) software and advanced manufacturing equipment including 3D printers. She also produced an industry-standard design brief which showcases her prototyping applications and analysing the effectiveness of her design.

If you are in Year 10 or 11 in 2017 and interested in the program, applications for next year’s Defence Industry Pathway Program (DIPP11) are now open. Application forms can be collected from Simon Brooks and are due no later than Friday 18 November.

For any further information about the DIPP11 course in Semester 1 2017, either contact Simon Brooks simon.brooks378@schools.sa.edu.au or Anthony Tonkin anthony.tonkin@tafesa.edu.au.

Simon Brooks  |  STEM Coordinator

VET / Tertiary / Careers

Certificate II in Retail Services
Twenty students studied the Certificate II in Retail Services at Mitcham Girls High School in 2016, under the guidance of Rosalie Iaggio (Trainer), and under a Memorandum of Agreement with Training Prospects (RTO).

The students worked on both theory and the practical aspects of the retail industry. For their final assessment they had to present their own business plan. The businesses ranged from cooking and catering industries, to book stores, wedding planning, clothes boutiques, travel agents and candle distribution. They had to explain the rationale behind their business and the incentives provided to entice customers to their business.

Jill Olifent  |  VET Coordinator
Keeping Kids Safe Online

Thursday 17 November 2016
7:00pm

Presenter: Susan McLean
Loreto College
Performing Arts Centre
316 Portrush Road, Marryatville

RSVP: events@loreto.sa.edu.au

Entry: Gold coin donation at the door. This donation will go towards the Loreto 2016 Vietnam & Cambodia Pilgrimage.

This informative session for parents and carers is delivered by nationally acclaimed cyber safety expert, Susan McLean. Susan's famous 'no nonsense' approach will cover the benefits of technology as well as the issues about which they need to be aware.

Topics include:
- **What are kids doing online** – What are the popular social networking sites, what are the legal ages to use them & why these rules should be obeyed.
- **Online Grooming** – What is it, when/how does it occur and what are the warning signs to look for?
- **Cyberbullying** – What it is, where it happens, what it looks like, how to prevent it and what to do if it occurs, including legal consequences and potential criminal charges.
- **Sexting** – the taking and sending of explicit images...what are the REAL consequences.
- **Potential dangers and safety tips** – how to assist children in your care to stay safe online via parental controls and restriction passcodes.
- **Office of the Children’s eSafety Commissioner** – Role, Resources & Reporting.
- **Practical tips** – building confidence in setting rules and boundaries around Internet use in the home.

About the speaker: Susan McLean is Australia’s foremost expert in the area of cybersafety and young people. She is a mother of three and was the first Victorian Police Officer appointed to a position involving cybersafety and young people. She took her first report of cyberbullying in 1994 and since then she has conducted extensive research and has completed advanced training in this area in both the USA and UK and is a sought after presenter and advisor to schools, elite sporting bodies such as the AFL, GPs, and both State and Federal governments. She is a member of the National Centre Against Bullying (NCAB) Cybersafety Committee and is afforded ‘expert’ status on the Safer Internet Programme Data Base. She is also a member of the Australian Government’s cybersafety working group and a published author. Her book ‘Sexts Texts & Selfies’, is the definitive parents’ guide to helping their children stay safe online.