Dear Parents and Guardians,

Welcome to the 2014 school year. I hope you have had an enjoyable and restful holiday break and are excited to get back into the routine of school life. To our new families, I trust that you settle in well and avail yourselves of the many programs we have on offer. We also have a number of new staff joining the College. This is an exciting time as they develop relationships with students that will grow throughout the year.

This year, the College is pleased to have the fortnightly newsletter, webpage, student planner, Parent Portal and Konnective App as important means of communication with parents. Apart from this first issue, our newsletter is distributed via our webpage with a push app notification from Konnective. Parents wishing to make use of this “push app” notification are asked to download this free App. More information is provided in a flyer with this newsletter.

In providing parents with targeted assistance with their queries, a Communication Directory can be accessed through the Parent Portal.

Prior to students commencing classes, teachers and support staff worked diligently to ensure a smooth start to the year. Along with this, the staggered start to the year involving different year levels commencing on different days will allow students to settle in well for the year ahead. I am looking forward to visiting assemblies and learning neighbourhoods in the next few days to see how students have begun the year.

With each Sub-School ably administered by a Sub-School Principal, the College continues to grow with 614 students in the Junior School (led by Ms Fiona Vale); 573 students in the Middle School (led by Mrs Linda Blakis) and 599 students in the Senior School (led by Mr Con Stamatelatos). The effective use of the College’s learning Neighbourhood design will continue to ensure that staff teams will be able to work with designated groups of students in order to cater for their individual learning needs. As educators we will continue to ensure that parent expectations of their children receiving the very best opportunities to succeed with their education in a safe and challenging learning environment are met.

On the final day of Term 4 last year, Mrs Natasha Biddick received notification that her application for an Assistant Principal position at a large northern metropolitan primary school had been successful. Mrs Biddick began as a foundation staff member at MRC. In her initial role as a Leading Teacher, she was responsible for establishing the College’s Junior School teaching and learning framework. As a Sub-School Principal, Mrs Biddick led the work of both the Junior and Middle Sub-Schools. Her contribution to the College is deeply appreciated and she will be sorely missed. We wish her every success in her future endeavours. We thank Mrs Linda Blakis who has stepped in as the acting Middle Sub-School Principal whilst the College advertises state-wide for a permanent replacement.

In the year ahead we look forward to a number of programs – all possible due to the size of the College. The implementation of the one-to-one device scheme has seen significant numbers of parents taking up the iPad and Tablet offer. As was illustrated in last year’s trial, these devices will greatly enhance student learning. With the appointment of Ms Marika Convey to the portfolio of Director of Languages and International Programs, our sister school partnerships will continue to prosper with Japanese students and staff from Akatsuki Junior/Senior High School visiting us in March. In April, I will be leading a delegation of senior staff to visit our Italian sister school for the purpose of establishing bi-partisan teaching and learning programs, as well as preparing for our student trip to Italy during the 2015 Term 1 break. Throughout the course of the year we will also be establishing opportunities for our students to undertake exchange programs in a number of overseas countries while at the same time, enlisting foreign students to study at MRC in reciprocal arrangements. Our community based partnerships begun with Berry Street and Victoria University (VU) last year will be expanded. The specialised KERVE program which we have devised will be delivered with support from Berry Street. The VU project will continue to have a large number of pre-service teachers based at the College for the purpose of undertaking their practicums as well as some of their university lectures and tutorials. Student Voice will feature more prominently this year, with Mr Tim Cottrell being assigned as the Director for Community Links and Student Leadership. Students will be encouraged to take on more leadership roles across the College and provide vital input into our curriculum programs and administrative processes. Their first task will involve meeting with our local state member of parliament, Liz Beattie, so as to present her with a 716 student signed petition requesting that funds be made available in this year’s State budget for the construction of Stage 5 of our building program. This year sees the expansion of our VCE/VET/VCAL teaching and learning programs with 42 units on offer. Senior School staff have done a tremendous job in preparing for the rigours of this program. Funding for our community hub project continues this year and we look
forward to running a variety of forums aimed at assisting parents to better assist the learning of their children.

During the term break a number of building projects were completed. These include:

- The arrival of 5 further relocatable buildings in lieu of the State Government's continual failure to provide funds for Stage 5 of our master plan. These air conditioned rooms will cater for the needs of our Senior School (Years 10 and 11) students and will be used to set up our new Languages Centre;
- Internal re-painting of some of our teaching and learning spaces;
- Re-furbishment of the MTech relocatable so as to accommodate the needs of the KERVE program;
- Completion of the futsal court adjacent to the Midland Building. This additional sports field will be exclusively used by Year 5/6 students each recess and lunch time (Our remaining students will have access at times other than these);
- Installation of additional fencing and hard surfaced pathways on the Middle/Senior School site will greatly enhance student safety and assist with pedestrian traffic;
- Construction of an additional student locker bay in front of the Brighton building will cater for the needs of our growing Senior School. New lockers will also arrive shortly to replace the existing timber lockers in the Paddington and Midland buildings;
- Renovation of the main gymnasium toilet blocks; and finally
- The extension of the Middle Sub-School office will provide more efficiency in attending to student, staff and parent needs.

Safety around the College remains a high priority. Parents are asked to take care when driving and parking around the College. Please remember that the College’s internal car parks are for staff use only and have not been designed as drop off or pick up points. For this reason, the gates to both the Junior and Main staff car parks are not to be accessed by students or parents. Please remind your child to use the designated paths and gates, rather than the car parks as a short cut to get in and out of the College. We have been informed that Council Officers will be monitoring traffic around the College and issuing infringement notices.

Please note that the Public Transport Authority (PTA) has decommissioned the bus stops adjacent to the College in Hampton Street and Windrock Avenue. A revised Craigieburn bus network has commenced which includes more frequent services on Grand Boulevard during school peak periods. The nearest bus stops to Mount Ridley College will now be located on Grand Boulevard at Highlands Shopping Centre and near the intersection of Grand Boulevard and Royal Terrace. Please refer to the map on MRC Connect for further information.

Research clearly indicates that regular student attendance is crucial in order to gain a successful education. This includes being at school on time – an important part of school organisation which encourages students to be well prepared for the start of their day. Please remember that all student absences must be supported by a note from home or a phone message left on our absence line (ph: 8338 3636). For your convenience we have placed an attendance note sheet on our website. Without any communication, your child’s attendance record will be marked with an unexplained absence. All unexplained absences will be followed up for further explanation. Students undertaking VCE/VET/VCAL units need to adhere to the attendance regulations as set out in their Senior School Handbook.

The start of the new school year provides families with an opportunity to obtain all correct items of uniform. As you are aware the College has a Student Uniform Policy. In line with College Council endorsement and parental expectations, the policy will be administered by staff with infringements being followed up. It should be noted that students undertaking practical subjects (wood, metal, fabrics, electronics etc.) must wear appropriate footwear. Families experiencing financial hardship are requested to contact the Student Wellbeing team. In cases where religious beliefs require modification to the wearing of the uniform, parents are requested to set out the reason(s) in a letter addressed to me.

Families are encouraged to access a more comprehensive version of this newsletter via our website www.mountridleycollege.vic.edu.au

I am looking forward to a great year ahead at the College, along with the conversations with students and parents. Through team work and mutual support we can continue to work on promoting high standards and the importance of life-long learning.

HOST FAMILIES REQUIRED IN TERM 1

For the second year in a row, MRC is proud to host students from the Akatsuki Junior/Senior High School in Japan. This will occur during the last week of Term One. As a result we are seeking families from our College who are willing to host our exchange students. Interested families are asked to Ms Marika Convey, our Director of Languages and International Programs, to register their interest by Tuesday 11th February.

Remuneration is offered to host families.
Many thanks to the large number of families who have paid the Essential Education Items. These Items are now overdue. Prompt payment to the Main Administration Office would be greatly appreciated. Funds collected allow use to resource student programs that without this money we would not be able to do.

Payment for elective subjects undertaken by Senior School students is required by Friday 7th February.

If you have a healthcare card please take the time to come to the Main Administration Office to complete an application for EMA for 2014.

Essential Education Items can be paid by cash, cheque or card at the Main Administration Office.

For your convenience, Bpay is also available. Please telephone the Main Administration Office to obtain your unique reference number.

Reminder: Year 7 Activity Program

As Part of the Year 7 orientation program at MRC, Year 7 students participate in a 2-day activity program. This program is designed to allow students to interact with their new class mates and teachers. Participation in this program is compulsory as it is an essential part of their transition as Year 7 Students. The cost of the program is $75.

Day 1 Thursday 27th February: Melbourne Sports and Aquatic Centre
Day 2 Friday 28th February Fitness Works Activity held at Mount Ridley College

Permission and payment is due by Friday 7th February and needs to be submitted to the Middle Sub School Office.

CANTEEN LUNCH ORDERS

Lunch order system operates as follows:

Junior School (Prep—Year 4)
Lunch orders need to be placed in the lunch order box in your child’s classroom. Please do not take lunch orders directly to the canteen. Lunches are then collected through the class teacher.

Middle School (Years 5—8)
Lunch orders are to be directly placed with the canteen by no later than the end of recess. Students collect their lunch from the express line at the canteen.

Senior School (Years 9—11)
Lunch orders are to be directly placed with the canteen by no later than the end of recess. Students collect their lunch from the express line at the canteen.
## DATES TO REMEMBER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>31st January 2014</td>
<td>MAIN ADMIN OFFICE OPEN 8:15am – 4:30PM</td>
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<tr>
<td>31st January 2014</td>
<td>YEARS 1, 2, 3 AND 4 STUDENTS COMMENCE SCHOOL</td>
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<tr>
<td>3rd February</td>
<td>PREP AND YEARS 9 AND 10 STUDENTS COMMENCE SCHOOL</td>
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<tr>
<td>6th February</td>
<td>College Photos for Years 5—11 students</td>
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<td>7th February</td>
<td>Final Payment due for Year 7 Activity Program</td>
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<td>12th February</td>
<td>Prep to Year 4 Information evening—Doors open at 6:30pm for a 7pm start</td>
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<tr>
<td>12th February</td>
<td>VCE/VET/VCAL Parent Workshop—Doors open at 6:30pm for a 7pm start</td>
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<td>13th February</td>
<td>College Photos for Prep to Years 4</td>
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<td>18th February</td>
<td>College Council 6pm</td>
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<td>19th February</td>
<td>Classroom Parent Helper’s Course 7pm</td>
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<td>24th February</td>
<td>Years 5—11 Swimming Carnival</td>
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<td>27th-28th February</td>
<td>Year 7 Activity Program</td>
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<td>10th March</td>
<td>Labour Day Public Holiday—Students are not required at school on this day</td>
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<td>14th March</td>
<td>Years 5—11 Athletics Carnival</td>
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<td>21st March</td>
<td>Harmony Day</td>
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<td>25th March</td>
<td>Immunisations for Year 7 and 9 boys and all Year 10 students</td>
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<td>25th March</td>
<td>College Council 6pm</td>
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<td>4th April</td>
<td>Term 1 concludes—Students will be dismissed at 2:30pm</td>
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**ATTENTION PREP PARENTS**

Please provide a spare change of clothes in case of emergency. We suggest underwear, socks, tracksuit pants/shorts and a T-shirt. Please placed these in a labelled plastic bag in your child’s school bag.