



Edition 5 – April 16th 2024

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PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

Congratulations to the entire school community on the start we have made in turning the tide with our student attendance rates. As a reminder, in 2023, 51% of our students were absent for 20+ days (<90% attendance). 20 days of absence is a key leverage point as it has been identified as the point where a student's learning is affected by absence.

This term, 30% of our students had attendance rates of <90%. Although this figure is still worrisome, it is a step in the right direction and a considerable drop from 51%.

Further statistics from this term include:

- 26 students maintained 100% attendance
- 70 students had an attendance rate of more than 95%

Family holidays accounted for 73% of all absences. A short survey will be sent out via Compass this week to help us understand this phenomena and hopefully make steps towards turning this trend.

When we break down the classes, we see a classic pattern that is common across many schools. A classic concave shape. From our experience, this highlights where students are often most engaged. During Prep, everything is new and in Year 6, a range of different opportunities present themselves.

CALENDAR

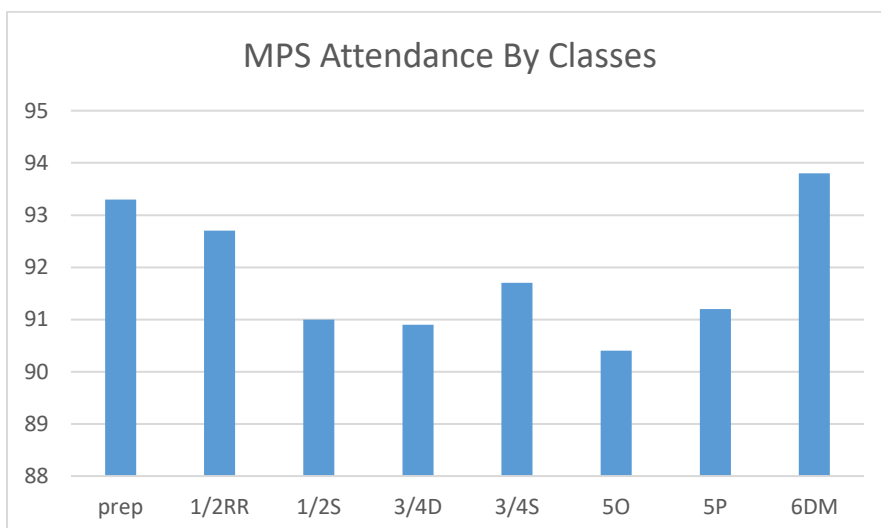
Current 16/04 – 30/04

16th Apr - Somers Camp
22nd Apr - Student free day
25th Apr – ANZAC Day (student free)
29th Apr - District Athletics @ Foster

Upcoming

10th May – 5/6 Winter sports
14th May – School Council, 6pm
15th May – MPS Cross Country
23rd May – Division Cross Country
29th May - 2025 Prep Info night, 5pm
31st May - 5/6 Winter Sport
6th June - Regional Cross Country
7th June - Pupil Free day
10th June – Monarch's birthday Public holiday
11th June - School Council, 6pm
13th June – Division Winter Sports
28th June – Last day Term, 2.30pm dismissal

MPS Attendance By Classes



The school tries to address this phenomenon via a range of strategies for the middle years. It is a time where school can become difficult for a whole host of reasons. Still, it is important that students develop grit and perseverance at this early age by working their way through what can seem mundane. With the support of their families and the school, we have countless examples of students turning their attendance right around. Congratulations everyone on a very bright start. With the exception of family holidays impacting on some students' attendance we are pleased that each class has attendance rates of over 90% and hope to continue this for the remainder of the year.

Gene VanderZalm, Principal

2024 CURRICULUM CONTRIBUTIONS

Thank you to those families who have paid their 2024 Curriculum Contributions. It's **never** too late to make a contribution if you have not yet done so. Payments can be made either by Direct Deposit into our account or cash/EFTPOS at the office. The contribution amount for 2024 is \$160 per child and \$20 per family for voluntary grounds levy. If you are unsure if you have paid this or not, feel free to enquire at the office or send us an email (meeniyanschool@education.vic.gov.au) and we'll check for you 😊

DISTRICT ATHLETICS YEARS 3-6

Consent and event details went home yesterday with students in years 3-6 who have made it through to the District Athletics in Foster on Monday 29th April. Please return the consent slip including payment if your child requires a seat on the bus, by Friday 19th April. Red singlets will be handed out over the next week.

SCHOOL COUNCIL REPORT

On 19/3/24, we held our Annual General Meeting, then our normal March School Council meeting, so there was a lot of formality to the evening. Many thanks to the hard work of the outgoing school councilors: Rebecca Browne, Sarah Mitcham, Katrina Markley and Tamara Symington for your years of service to the school and community.

The successful new school councilors are: Sheena Linke, Kelly Brooks, Jo Gammon, and Eloise O'Brien – welcome! All official roles were successfully filled with only a little change: President – Kate Thomas, Vice President – Katrina Benson, Secretary – Eloise O'Brien, Treasurer – Brad Kijlstra-Shone, Connect Group Representatives – Andrew Watt and Sheena Linke.

Of note in the normal discussions was Gene letting us know that the school has recently invested in seven sets of Coding Robotics equipment to complement the science and technology program. The equipment connects with ipads and allows students to input code, this is a new and expanding world and Ms Horkings is getting up to speed before introducing it into her classes. Where we are sure that the students will be excited to learn about. We also discussed the schools strategic plan and had a deeper dive into one of the goals. Last year the school had 51% of students have more than 20 absent days, which was quite shocking to us all. To understand this figure an absent day is every day a child is away from school including illness, or holidays or appointments or any other reason and is cumulative so if you have ½ days away they are added together as well.

What makes this shocking is that studies have shown that 20 days away has a significant detrimental impact on the child's learning. This is compounded by the education program, for example if your child misses a week then they may be missing out on fundamental building blocks of learning which may not be able to catch up so they are further behind each time in their understanding from the rest of their peers. What was also noted is that this isn't a trend across the state nor even with other South Gippsland schools this is something uniquely Meeniyans Primary School. To this end the school is going to put out a survey and we encourage all families to complete and be open and honest in their responses. This data will hopefully allow us to gain a greater understanding of why we have reached this position and what we can do as a school and community to change it and better support our children.

Andrew gave us an outline of some expected fund-raising events that are going to be scheduled later in the year; Trivia night, Colour Splatacular, raffles that will be announced closer to the dates. He also announced that the first day at the start of each term there will be a "Welcome back to term" catch up / coffee not just at the start of the year.

As always if you have any concerns or questions or if you would like to help out in anyway with volunteering, please feel free to come and chat to Gene or ourselves, any help is always appreciated!

Katrina Benson, School Council

APPLY NOW TO ENROL YOUR CHILD IN FOUNDATION (PREP) FOR 2025

The Department of Education has released the statewide timeline for enrolling in Foundation (Prep) for the 2025 school year. If you have a child starting primary school in 2025, it's time to enrol. It is important to follow the statewide timeline to enrol your child in Foundation. Enrolling your child in line with the timelines allows us to plan our classrooms, staffing and transition activities and ensures your child has the best start to school.

For more information, please read about when and how to enrol your child in Foundation at

[vic.gov.au/enrolling-foundation-prep](https://www.education.vic.gov.au/enrolling-foundation-prep).

Enrolment packs will be sent via email over the coming days. If you or someone you know has a child at a kinder or daycare other than Meeniyans Kindergarten, who may be interested in Prep at MPS for 2025, please contact the office.

YEAR 7 ENROLMENTS

Students in Year 6 will be receiving a *Year 6 to 7 Placement Information Pack 2024-2025* later this week. Parents/carers are to read through the information book, complete the Application for Year 7 Placement and return this form to school by **Friday 10th May** (this is the departments timeline and must be adhered to as we have to forward these forms to relevant secondary schools). This form needs to be completed and returned for all year 6 students even if your child is going to a non-government school next year.

*see over page for details on the LSC information morning

BOOK CLUB

Issue 3 book club catalogues have been distributed today. All orders are to be placed via the LOOP app or Scholastic website by COB, Wednesday 1st May.

RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS

When I was 12 years old one of my friends had a really big problem. I was her best friend in the whole world and she shared this problem with me. I felt like I needed to look after my friend and keep her story safe, so to start with I did not share her problem with anyone because I thought that was the right thing to do.

I carried her problem around in my heart and in my head, worrying about her and wondering what it was that I could do to help her. One day my mum said to me 'Donna – you don't seem to be yourself. What is going on?' I knew I could not keep my friend's story to myself and that I needed someone to help me with this. So, I shared my friend's problem with my mum. Straight away I felt so much better – mum explained to me that some problems were not for kids to carry by themselves and that it was always important to share with a trusted adult if I wasn't sure.

Over the next weeks in our Respectful Relationships lessons students we will be learning about help seeking for both ourselves and others, because a problem shared is a problem halved.

Donna Giliam, Primary Welfare Officer

COMMUNITY NEWS

The following Community News articles promote community connections and communications.
They are not considered school activities.

Meeniyau Auskick:

Meeniyau Auskick is now up and running. Sessions are Monday nights 4pm to 5pm at the Meeniyau Rec Reserve, (starting last night) with the last session to be held Monday 24th June.

There will be a walking bus again from Meeniyau Primary for those interested. If you would like to be added to the list or for any enquiries contact Steve 0438762068.

To register, simply follow the link: play.afl/auskick and select Meeniyau Auskick Centre.



Karate @ Koonwarra:

The Kaizen Shoshin Kai Australia Karate club are welcoming new members. Classes run Mondays and Wednesdays at the Koonwarra Hall. Juniors are a 6pm start and seniors start at 7pm. The cost is \$10 per class plus yearly membership and gi. Enquiries welcome, please contact Sensei Chris Brown on 0427 026 963

Connecting Carers in Community - Play and Connect:

Do you care for a child with a disability? Do you find it hard to make the time to move your body or be active? Join in a Yoga program, for you, the carer while, we run a sperate active program for your young person to enjoy at the Inverloch Community House in The Hub.

Date: starting Tuesday 2nd April, 4pm-5pm. This program is FREE. To register, scan the QR code or contact GippSport on 0456 303 885 or gippsport.com.au/carers



Year 7 Information and Open Morning



LEONGATHA
Secondary College

MONDAY 29th APRIL - 9AM START

To begin in the Performing Arts Centre (PAC)
Students will assist with directions (as you arrive)

All Grade 4, 5 and 6 students and
their families are warmly invited



CHILD SAFETY STANDARDS

WHAT WE EXPECT AT MEENIYAN PRIMARY SCHOOL

- ❖ Everyone connected to our school can help children be safe.
- ❖ We have zero tolerance of any abuse of children.
- ❖ We have policies and procedures in place to protect the care, safety and welfare of children.
- ❖ There are clear boundaries about how adults in our school community may interact with our students.
- ❖ The new Child Safe Standards go further than child protection arrangements did in the past.
- ❖ The Child Safe Standards apply to school staff, volunteers, contractors, visitors and students' family members.
- ❖ Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility.
- ❖ To ensure you know how we are keeping your children safe at school, and how we would like you to support us.
- ❖ Unsupervised contractors will be asked about their child safety arrangements as a condition of working with us if they work with children enrolled in the school (or children can reasonably be expected to be present while they are at the school).

Please see further information on Child Safe Standards on our school website.

Community members are encouraged to raise any concerns about child abuse with the Principal or report directly to Child Protection / Police.

Meeniyah Primary School Beanie Order Form (\$20 each)



Name _____

No. of Beanies _____ Total \$ _____

Cash Direct Deposit (BSB: 063 518 Acc: 1007 1649) EFT

Rec No. _____