Dear Parents,

As we reach the midpoint of the term we appear to be suffering from quite a bit of illness with some rather unpleasant flu like infections knocking staff and students around recently and causing increased levels of absence across the school.

NAPLAN

My thanks to Ms Loel, Mr Allen, and the team who organised the Year 9 students very efficiently during the recent NAPLAN testing.

GAT

Next month about 450 Nossal students will be sitting the GAT. Every student who is enrolled in a Unit 3&4 study will take part and the gym, lecture theatre, and music area will be fully tied up for the day.

For more information regarding Nossal events, see page 2 or visit the ‘Coming Events’ tab on our webpage.
VACANCY TESTING

Following the GAT we will be holding an entry exam to create a waiting list for vacancies into Years 10 and 11 in 2016. Applications to sit this close early next week and I expect there to be close to 150+ applicants for the few spaces that may open up. Should you be aware that your child may be leaving Nossal during the year or at the end of 2015 – please let me know so we can inform those on the waiting lists as soon as possible so they can make arrangements to transfer schools at the end of the year.

ROTARY CLUB CAR RAFFLE

Please support this raffle. For the current fortnight Griffin and Garuda students will be selling books of raffle tickets as part of a House Competition. Then Phoenix and Pegasus Houses will take over the selling in an attempt to best the other houses. I have set a challenge for every Nossal student to sell at least one $20 book of raffle tickets and we will be awarding House Points and individual incentive prizes for those who sell the most. All the money raised goes to a very good cause – us. For every $2 ticket that we sell – we keep the whole $2, and all the monies raised will go towards the final completion of the school oval. I am determined that we sell our entire ticket allocation this year, because not only does it mean we maximise the funds being returned to the school, every ticket that is returned unsold is a funding opportunity that has been denied to another worthy organisation. I sincerely thank the Emerald Rotary Club and Ferntree Gully Nissan for this fantastic community service; this raffle provides much needed support for quite a number of local schools and charitable organisations. I have a feeling it might be our year to win the car – so please buy up big – we were very close last year.

UNIFORM ISSUES

We have become a little concerned that the school dress code is becoming a little lax for some students and we will be talking to a number to remind them of the rules, and what
image we expect all our students to portray. (At all times) I ask that all parents support us in this by ensuring that your children have the designated items of uniform; that they are clean and in good repair; are an appropriate size, and are worn in a way that brings credit to the wearer and the school. (I see many students in others schools wearing uniforms “badly” and it projects a very strong negative image for the school and the students). Dress/skirt length is emerging as an issue, and I don’t want our House Leaders and Leading Teachers wasting valuable time in enforcement of our published rules. As a guide, if the skirt hem is more than a horizontal hand width above the knee, it is probably too short and needs to be lengthened or replaced with one of the appropriate length. In some cases, the skirt waists need to be rolled back down! I don’t expect this to become a major issue for us and do not want to spend unnecessary time following up repeat offences, so we will speak with the students once, and then escalate the issue if they are unable to comply with the request. I am pleased to say that the vast majority of students are doing the right thing and generally wear the uniform well.

CONGRATULATIONS TO…
- Matthew Olejarz (Graduate 2014) who last week received an academic scholarship from Swinburne University for his VCE performance last year. He is studying first year Engineering and I was pleased to catch up with him and his parents at the Awards Ceremony last week.
- Bridgette Van Diepen (Year 12) who has won through to the second round of the prestigious and highly competitive Tuckwell Scholarship from ANU (Australian National University in Canberra) and who is also featuring in the year’s promotion of the “Paper Cuts” Book Design Competition that she achieved second place in last year.
- Roshan Ramesh (Year 11) who is becoming an artist of some renown in the local community (for very good reason). His “Casey Creations Competition” winning entry from last year has been on display in the Council Chambers and they have commissioned prints and an oversized reproduction of it for a feature wall in the newly opened Cranbourne Youth Centre (it is a stunning piece). It also appears on their website and Facebook page – as does his “Great Art Show” winning entry “Australia Bleeds.” He was asked to be a judge at this year’s Casey Creations Art Show, which will probably give others the chance to pick up a prize.

Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund
The Victorian Government have unveiled a new $148 million initiative to ensure all Victorian students can take part in school trips and sporting activities. The Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF) will run over four years and provide payments for eligible students to attend camps, sports and excursions. Families holding a valid means-tested concession card or temporary foster parents are eligible to apply. $125 per year will be paid for eligible primary school students, with $225 per year paid for eligible secondary school students. Payments will go directly to the school and be tied to the student. For further information, application form and frequently asked questions, please see the following links:
WORKLOAD

At Nossal I often find myself asking people (staff and students) to not work too hard, which is not what I have been used to in other schools. As we have mentioned many times, we need to ensure that our students and staff maintain a healthy and manageable balance in their lives, and at Nossal that is sometimes difficult to do, as most people are highly focussed, aspirational and committed to doing their best. We know that it is very challenging for some to maintain a balance – particularly when important assessments are looming, or deadlines coincide, or illness hits (usually when you are run down and overworked).

We have a number of programs, approaches and support services in place and are currently implementing several long term, big picture strategies to help us manage this issue more effectively. The “Whole School Approach to Wellbeing” is being rolled out and refined by the House and Wellbeing Leaders through tutorial groups and Nossal Time, and it has the potential to provide much greater levels of support and assistance to all of us, particularly when faced with challenging times. As part of our Strategic Planning process we are attempting to find ways to help our teachers work more effectively and to find a sustainable work-life balance. I have been teaching for a long time and the Nossal staff are some of the most dedicated and hardworking individuals I have ever seen.

They are generally very responsive to their students and put in huge hours outside the classroom, often to the detriment of their own health and their “non work” life. Some of this is expected and necessary, and “the system” relies on this. Studies show that many Australians work longer hours than workers in other countries, and in my experience, very few of our teachers would ever get away with a mere 40 hour week. The advent of smart phones, email and digital communication has exacerbated the issue significantly, and many of us fall into the trap of being online, on-call, and basically “at work” at all times of the day, night, weekends and holidays. I am perturbed by the number of times I hear staff and students looking forward to the weekend or holidays so they can “catch up on their work,” or when I send off a work related email at 2.00 am and receive several immediate responses. I am hoping to institute some initially simple strategies and processes at the school to enable us to address this issue positively – things like email and communication curfews; work free lunch and break periods; and “sacrosanct” rest, relaxation and recreational times at weekends and during holidays. We all know what we should be doing to maintain the balance – but it is becoming increasingly difficult to do so and therefore increasingly important that we take proactive measures to ensure we address it. Suggestions and input from the collective wisdom within our school community would be welcomed.

Roger Page
Assistant Principal News - Ms Sue Harrap

School Funding

During the last week of term one, the Victorian Association of State Secondary Principals (VASSP) (of which I am a member), was involved in conducting a symposium on “What Next for Victorian School Funding”. It brought together over 170 of Victoria’s educators, parents, the not for profit sector, public servants and politicians. The event examined the state of equity in Victorian schools and the capability of our school funding model to provide an excellent education for all students.

Deputy Premier and Education Minister the Hon. James Merlino MP addressed the forum to outline his ambitions for the ‘education state’. A report was presented comparing two groups of schools, one serving students from less advantaged families and the other more advantaged families. The report found that school-level education inequality rose in Victoria between 2010 and 2013, a change driven by shifting enrolment patterns. The report also highlighted the societal cost when students exit early from the school system. The report demonstrated that public schools have a significantly higher proportion (29%) of students in the lowest SES quartile, while this is 15% in Catholic schools and 8% in Independent schools. The report indicates that over the period since the Gonski Report was delivered in 2011, government funding (Victorian plus Federal) to government schools increased by 2.7% which is less than inflation. In the same period, government funding to non-government schools increased by 7.5% per annum, almost three times higher and well above inflation. Whatever the rationale for the disparity may have been, any substantive link to need or disadvantage seems to be missing.

Since then the Andrew’s state government have subsequently released their 2015 budget and made significant investment in education, which is pleasing, especially since they want to be known as the Education State.

Public vs Private Schools

On a similar note, I was recently interested to read the Review of Academic Studies of Public and Private School Outcomes in Australia, by Trevor Cobbold, (April 2015, Save Our Schools) and have highlighted here two of the major findings of this significant review.

The media creates league tables and independent schools like to promote their VCE achievements as a tool to generate further interest in their schools. The Review found that “raw comparisons of student outcomes in public and private schools generally show higher achievement in private schools…… such comparisons are misleading because public schools enrol the vast proportion of disadvantaged students who, on average, have much lower results than students from higher socio-economic status (SES) families. Fair comparisons of school performance adjust for differences in the social composition of schools and other background factors.” (pg 2) Once these factors have been taken into account, there is no significant difference between the results of public and private school students.

The second key point highlighted in the Review was that students from public schools appear to achieve higher university grades than private school students, despite the latter achieving higher entrance scores. The long term success of students from public schools speaks volumes about the educational experience students receive in public schools. Schools, like Nossal, that promote independence, depth and breadth of experience, and that focus on learning and progress over achievement and grades, serve their communities well by preparing young people with the skills and dispositions for navigating complex and uncertain futures.

SOS
save our schools
Assistant Principal News Continued...

Assistance with Uniform

By and large we are generally very pleased with the way our students represent us in public, both in their interactions with the public when out and about, and on transport, and with the way they wear their school uniform. With the onset of cold weather and the change of uniform from Summer to Winter, however, we have seen some creative interpretations of uniform creeping in. Some points of clarification about our expectations:

- Academic uniform should be worn at all times except on days when students have practical Physical Education classes and/or when they have sports training/matches at lunchtime, when they can wear the Nossal sports uniform
- Students representing the school at sports events must wear the Nossal sports uniform
- Skins, leggings and other compression sportswear items are not part of the Nossal sports uniform – they can be worn if they are not visible or students can change into these items for sporting activities, and wear them under the Nossal Sports Uniform.
- Black knee-high socks or opaque black tights are to be worn with the school skirt. Socks should not be above the knee
- School shirts should be worn tucked in
- Ties should be pushed up
- Winter skirts should be no shorter than about one horizontal hand span above the knee. Staff may request students alter the hem if skirts are deemed to be too short.
- Blazers (or Year 12 jackets) must be worn as the outer garment to and from school, every day when students are in academic uniform. The spray jacket is the outer garment for sports uniform.

We are seeking parent and student assistance to ensure our school uniform is worn consistently and with pride.

Student Leadership Forum

On **Wednesday May 27** the Student Representative Council (SRC) will be holding their own Student Leadership Forum. This is an SRC initiative designed to outline the student leadership structure and promote communication between the various leadership groups within the school, including:

- SRC Leaders
- Environmental (NEST) Leaders
- Global Health Leaders
- Wellbeing Leaders
- Audio Visual Leaders
- Drama Leaders
- Music Leaders
- Arts Leaders
- Maths Peer Coaches Leaders
- House Leaders
- Tutorial Leaders
- GLC Committee
- Community Based Health Promotion Leaders

Students will commence their forum at the beginning of P4 (12.20 pm) and it will run through until 4.30 pm. If your child is a member of one of these groups, they will be home later than usual. The SRC are providing a light lunch. We are delighted with the initiative shown by the SRC and look forward to seeing the outcome of their work.

Morrisby Report Parent-Student Information Session

Students and parents are invited to collect their Morrisby Reports on **Thursday 11 June at 7.00 pm in the Lecture Theatre**. A session will be run by Barry Darnell from Morrisby, outlining how to interpret the report. We encourage all students and parents to attend. Without this information session the report may be misinterpreted or worse still, be seen as a waste of time.
Week 9 of Term 2

Week 9 is a relatively unusual week at Nossal with a range of holidays and special events occurring:

- **Monday 8 June** – Queens Birthday Public Holiday - Pupil Free
- **Tuesday 9 June** – Curriculum Day for Staff for Assessment and Reporting – Pupil Free
- **Wednesday 10 June** – GAT and Digital Delivery Day
  Students studying any Unit 3 and 4 VCE studies will sit the General Achievement Test and are required at school only for the test. Students in Year 9 and 10 will remain at home and complete their classes online.
- **Thursday 11 June** – normal classes for Years 9, 10 and 12. Year 11 EduTest in the Gym and required at school from 8.30 – 12.30 pm only.
- **Friday 12 June** – normal classes for everyone.

Sue Harrap
Assistant Principal

Letter to the Principal

Dear Mr Page

I am writing to let you know some of the wonderful recent achievements of one of your students, Roshan Ramesh.

After winning first place in Visual Arts Years 10-12 category at Casey Creations in May 2014, Roshan kindly allowed the City of Casey Youth Services to display his winning artwork at our new Youth Information Hub in Narre Warren. Roshan then had professional prints made from his artwork and the City of Casey has purchased one to display permanently in the Narre Warren Youth Information Hub.

Youth Services also recently re-opened the Cranbourne Youth Information Centre which has been refurbished and is located in the newly re-developed Cranbourne Park shopping centre. Roshan was asked if he would give permission for his winning artwork (depicting a zebra painted in rainbow colours) to be made into a large wall art to decorate the new youth centre. Roshan was very proud to be asked and we arranged for Roshan to come and see the final result last week where he was presented with a certificate by the City of Casey Mayor Cr Mick Morland. I have attached some photos for you. This is also the link to the Youth Services Facebook post regarding this: https://www.facebook.com/caseyyouth/posts/559649070842266

Roshan also gave the City of Casey permission to use another of his artworks, ‘Australia Bleeds’, for our post to commemorate ANZAC Day. Please click on the following link to see this post:
https://www.facebook.com/caseyyouth/photos/a.309065469233962.1073741829.301061070034402/555181484622358/?type=1&theater

Lastly, Roshan was invited to be a judge for this year’s Casey Creations competition. He accepted and was a great help in choosing the winner’s for 2015!

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you would like further information.

Many thanks

Gemma Rix
Youth Events Officer
City of Casey Youth Services
THE NOSSAL ART & TECHNOLOGY GALA

All funds raised will go towards Girls Education in East Timor

Thursday June 18
- Meath Auditorium -

5:30pm Static Display and Silent Auction
6-7pm Music
7:15-8:45pm Drama and Music

General Entry Tickets $5 through Trybooking
http://www.trybooking.com/HWXN

Refreshments will be available for purchase during the evening.

Don't forget to bring money to bid in the Silent Auction!!
Bond University Moot Court Competition

On the 7th of May the Moot Court Competition students of Nossal High School entered the city, with anticipation and excitement. The past few weeks were spent dedicated to preparing a case from Bond University’s Mooting competition. Our case concerned a 17 year-old girl who had made the decision to roll down a sand dune during a tour of a place called ‘Sand Island’ and suffered neck injuries as a result.

As the appellant, our job was to research and brainstorm all the possible arguments in which Sandy Adventures was liable for the injury of Buffy (the 17 year old girl) and to attempt to win the appeal case. These points were put to the judges against the defendant team. Our advocates, Malinthi and Dev were praised by the judges for their outstanding advocacy skills and abilities when delivering their arguments, whilst Shivangi (who had the role of instructing solicitor) was commended on her outstanding contributions to her formulation of rebuttals and additional points for our speakers.

The rest of the team: Sheri, Annie, Chris, Ser-main, Dhinya, Joyee and Karina, are commended for their efforts in researching and supporting our advocates. Without their support and effort our team would not have been as well prepared and ready to present convincing and comprehensive points to support the plaintiff’s appeal.

Overall, although we did not proceed to the next round, the experience was worthwhile and has given the team new knowledge on the procedure of Moot Courts, appealing, gathering information, whilst also having fun.

By Joyee and Malinthi

Wellbeing News

Mindfulness

Unless you’ve been hiding under a rock for the last couple of years, you’re probably familiar with the word mindfulness because it’s the buzz concept in the area of personal wellbeing. But what exactly is it? And why are schools from the elite Geelong Grammar to a local primary school like Yarraman Oaks embracing it?

Perhaps the simplest definition of mindfulness is “paying attention in a particular way; on purpose, in the present moment, nonjudgmentally.” It’s about cultivating self-awareness that sheds light on a young person’s inner life.

Like the weather, life is a continuum of highs and lows—passing states of happiness, disappointment, excitement, anger. Stepping off the continuum by being still and getting into a meditative state helps us balance our mostly automatic, unconscious reactions to what’s going on around us with more considered, conscious responses.

Done well, mindfulness can sharpen our focus through simply being calm and still (something some young people today have no experience of). It can help us improve concentration, manage stress, and just feel better about life and our place in it.

Mindfulness has been something Nossal has wanted to do since its very first year, but we have just been too busy to get around to putting it into practice. That is about to change. The wellbeing team is consulting with Janet Etty-Leal about the best way to introduce mindful practice to our school community, students and staff.

You can expect to hear more soon.

If you would like to know more, Janet is googlable at Meditation Capsules.

Leigh Candy
Student wellbeing counsellor
NEST News

‘Do More with Less’ Incursion for the Nossal Environment and Sustainability Team

On Thursday the 7th of May, the organisation CERES (Centre for Education and Research in Environmental Strategies) visited Nossal High School to run a ‘Do More with Less’ incursion.

Alex from CERES held a workshop with NEST (Nossal Environment and Sustainability Team) about alternatives that we can implement in our daily lives to promote sustainable living. Designated with a variety of tasks that explore the concept of sustainability and leadership, NEST learnt about the importance of the usage of renewable sources and the impact of leadership in encouraging change. CERES and NEST then combined ideas and compiled a list of qualities they saw as top priorities in a leader, giving insight into what values NEST needs to adopt as a group.

The workshop provided many new exciting ideas for future activities and the changes we can make to encourage the development of NHS as an eco-friendly environment. The incursion concluded with the students designing some projects to work on to improve sustainability around the school. We thank and greatly appreciate CERES and the teachers involved for organising such an informative and valuable session.

Centre for Education and Research in Environmental Strategies, is an award winning, not-for-profit, sustainability centre located on 4.5 hectares on the Merri Creek in East Brunswick, Melbourne. For more info http://www.ceres.org.au

Millie Chen
Environmental Leader
NEST
Paper Cuts 2015

The Paper Cuts competition is now open! Secondary school students have the opportunity to create a book trailer (short film) of their favourite book or design a book cover in any media.

Students may also interpret a book they are currently studying as part of the curriculum and they can enter individually or as part of a class activity.

By entering, schools go in the running to win Penguin book prizes, and winning students in both categories will receive an iPad and books supplied by Penguin Random House Australia.

*Paper Cuts* is part of the Victorian Premiers’ Reading Challenge. However students don’t need to register in the Challenge to participate.

Entries will be judged by industry professionals including world-renowned Australian author and illustrator, Graeme Base who is best-known for his books *Animalia* and *The Eleventh Hour*.

The competition closes on 31 July. For more information on Paper Cuts visit: www.education.vic.gov.au/papercuts

**IMPORTANT Student Access Hours**

While I am pleased that many of our students stay back late after school to study together or individually, I ask that they vacate the school buildings before 6.00 pm please (unless there is a special event on, or they have made other arrangements).

If staying after 5.00 pm – please exit the building via the main (automatic) front doors rather than leaving other exit doors unsecured.

Please note that students are effectively only under staff supervision at Nossal between the hours of 8.00am and 4.00 pm when teaching staff are on duty.

While the school may be open outside those hours, contract cleaners may be the only people in attendance, before 8.00am and after 6.00 pm, so students should not be on the premises outside those hours unless prior arrangements have been made.

Mr Page
PAPER CUTS COMPETITION 2015

Bridgette Van Diepen from Nossal High School, Berwick shares her experience as runner up in last year’s inaugural Paper Cuts competition. Secondary school students were invited to create a book trailer (short film) of their favourite book or design a book cover in any media.

Bridgette writes:

Rushing to Penguin Offices in Docklands one unusually warm winter evening, I had no idea what was in store for me. I had been shortlisted in the Paper Cuts competition 2014 for a book cover concept I had created of a childhood favourite, Isobelle Carmody’s Obernewtyn.

Greeted at the door by Penguin staff, I was promptly ushered inside and downstairs into an interview room to discuss my idea and design. After just a few minutes my interviewer enquired if I could ask Isobelle Carmody anything in this moment, what it would be. I pondered this for a moment (it was a hefty question) before delivering my response. I would ask when I would finally be able to read the concluding chapter of the series.

A prompt reply sounded from behind me. I turned around to come face to face with Isobelle Carmody, who admitted she had been standing quite stalkishly behind me the whole time.

This was just the beginning of a lovely and exciting night hosted by Penguin Books and the Department of Education and Training. However, my enjoyment of reading started long before that when I picked up Isobelle Carmody’s books by chance in primary school, and chose years later to present an artistic interpretation of a story I loved.

From my perspective, one of the most exciting aspects of reading books is that the story is different for every reader. The art a reader creates is a reflection of the story they see – what sticks with them in the weeks, months and years after the first reading. This competition was an opportunity to express just that (though meeting my favourite author was pretty awesome too).

By entering, schools will be in the running to win Penguin book prizes, and winning students in both categories will win an iPad and Penguin books thanks to Penguin Random House Australia. This year, entries will be judged by industry professionals including world-renowned Australian author and illustrator Graeme Base, best-known for his books Animalia and The Eleventh Hour. Paper Cuts is part of the Victorian Premiers’ Reading Challenge, however students don’t need to register in the Challenge to participate. The competition closes Friday 31 July 2015.
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