June 24, 2013

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Nossal News

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Dear Nossal Community

Planning for 2014
The School Leadership Team (amid exams and report writing) have been meeting to do some long term planning around staffing and leadership structures for 2014. Unfortunately our projected budget figures do not look good and under the current funding regime I am having great difficulty just staffing the school adequately, let alone allowing for smaller classes or less popular subjects to run, or providing time release for teachers to provide additional programs and support for students. Education funding has become a political football and I fear that much of the current debate is more about political popularity than education. Ill informed comment, widespread misconception and simplistic solutions fuel public discussion and political inaction. Funding figures published this week are contradictory and unedifying but from my perspective, the issues are very clear. Government schools are grossly underfunded and inequality has become entrenched. If we wish to have a world class system where education is valued and effective, it must be more than adequately resourced and the government priority should be to strongly support the government system. I am very pleased to be working within a school community that places a high value on education and it is time our political leaders showed the same courage and commitment.

Exam Week
My thanks to all staff, students and volunteers for ensuring that the exam week was smooth and effective. The GAT exam was the litmus test for us with over 400 Nossal students sitting this last week; just about filling all available spaces in the northern building. This week we have a testing process where Edutest will administer a follow up exam to all Year 11 students which will provide us with valuable data about the progress they have made since they were initially tested in Year 8 at the Exhibition Buildings. This information is used to inform our teaching and organisational decisions and will measure the level of “value adding” that we have been able to provide. Following the Year 11 test we will be holding an entry test for outside students wishing to be considered for any vacancies that may arise in Years 10 or 11 for 2014. We have over 100 individuals registered to sit this test. Testing for Year 9, 2014 took place last weekend at the Exhibition Buildings and overall applicant numbers were slightly higher again this year, with a pleasing increase in overall and first preference figures for Nossal.

Parents and Friends Association
This group held its second meeting last week and was well supported by an enthusiastic and committed team of parents who have a number of projects already underway and many more in discussion. I urge all parents and friends of the school to strongly support this group which will be of enormous benefit to the school community and will offer wonderful opportunities for participation and involvement at various events and activities. Please support the Year 9 students who we will be asking to sell community raffle tickets and purchase an Entertainment Book (information attached) to help the PFA with their establishment fundraiser.

Working Bee Cancelled
Please note that the working bee planned for this Saturday (June 22) has been cancelled due to the wet state of the grounds, predicted ongoing inclement weather and illness of some key personnel.

Year 12 Camp
All Year 12 students will be involved in a study and recreation camp at Phillip Island for three days this week. The camp was deferred from early term one due to industrial bans at the time and I thank Ms Soltys in particular for her excellent organisation (and all staff who will be attending) at this exceptionally busy time for teachers. Next year the camp will revert to the intended time and venue early in term one at Lord Somers Camp in Somers.

Year 10 Work Experience
Next week sees most Year 10 students involved in a work experience program and I have been impressed with the diversity of placement and the interesting work environments that some students have secured. Whether it be a placement that is directly related to an anticipated career direction, one that provides a new experience, or simply an opportunity to gain an insight into a workplace for a week, it will be a valuable and illuminating activity for most. I urge all Year 10 students to take full advantage of this time. As a teacher I was always fascinated to hear the student responses to their work experience which would generally range from disappointment that they weren't allowed to cut
hair at the hairdresser, nor practice medicine at the medical clinic, or dance with the State Ballet Company, to those who were offered part time or full time employment and many who decided that school was not so bad after all and that other career directions should be explored. I thank Ms Rackham for her organisation and look forward to hearing many glowing employer reports and student anecdotes.

Thank you
My thanks to staff for their dedication and commitment at this time of year where they are under enormous pressure to complete assessments, correct and provide exam feedback, write mid year reports and prepare for Semester Two programs. It is an intense and challenging time for them and as always Nossal staff are absolutely professional and inspiring in their commitment to their students.

Staffing
We have been interviewing teachers this week to fill some contract positions and to allow for some changes as a result of Dr Meath’s departure and subsequent role changes within the school. I am pleased to welcome Ms Kyleigh Wilson (Humanities) and Mr Loi Tran (Maths) as permanent staff members and Ms Michelle Warner (Japanese) who will be taking over from Ms Annabel Reeves later in term three when she will be on maternity leave. Sadly, we will be farewelling Mr Tim Watson (English) who will be leaving us at the end of this term to take up a position in another school. I thank him for his excellent work in the short time that he was with us and wish him well in his new school.

There are a number of positions still to be filled and there will be some changes to accommodate the staff movement incorporated into the Semester Two timetable.

Important Information from our AP

Report Distribution
Staff have been busy marking exams and writing Semester One reports. These reports will be distributed to parents via the post on the last day of term, Friday June 28. If you have any inquiries regarding your child’s report, please direct your questions to the teacher(s) involved when school resumes on Monday July 15.

Reporting on the Australian Curriculum (AusVELS) at Year 9 & 10
At Nossal we award grades for tasks on an 11 point A+ - E grading system, but we also report using the A – E system for the Victorian version of the Australian Curriculum, AusVELS. For the first time our Year 9 and 10 reports will show student’s assessment as compared to the standards on the AusVELS.

This still uses the following grading system:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Well above expected level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Above expected level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>At expected level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Below expected level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Well below expected level</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, the numbering system has changed. Across the state, at mid-year, the expected (or average) level of performance for a Year 9 student has a numerical value of 8.5 and in Year 10 it is 9.5.

Industrial Action throughout 2012/13 may have an impact on some reports at Year 9 & 10
The long running industrial dispute the Australian Education Union had with the State Government resulted in delays to the examination and implementation of the Australian Curriculum in English, Mathematics, Science and History, right across Victoria. Whilst the dispute was resolved throughout this term, DEECD required teachers to report against the AusVELS in those four subject areas, during this reporting cycle. This did not allow teachers the time to refine courses to suit all of the assessment strands of AusVELS in those four subjects therefore, not all of our courses have been adapted to reflect the Australian Curriculum and some subjects may not be in a position to report against all of the standards. Where this has occurred your child will be given an NA (Not Assessed). This will not disadvantage them in anyway. Throughout Semester Two we will modify courses to more fully reflect the AusVELS.

Upcoming Course Counselling and Course Selection
Before the end of term students will receive the Senior School Handbook which outlines selection guidelines, time lines and all of the subjects on offer for 2014. We encourage students and parents to sit down with the handbook over the holidays and begin the planning and research required to make an informed decision about student courses for 2014. Throughout the first four weeks of Term 3 students will be asked to research and plan their courses and then select the
subjects they wish to study next year. We use this information to make decisions about which classes will run thereby ensuring we have the right staff in place.

It is vitally important that students are clear about their choices at this time, since whole school planning for 2014 begins as soon as selections are made. The best way to ensure you make decisions you can stick by is to follow a few simple rules:

1. Select subjects that you enjoy and do well in. Remember it is the child that has to complete the subject, not the parents.
2. Ignore VCE scaling – when you study a subject that you enjoy and do well in, you will do better than if you are doing something you lack interest in or aptitude for.

**Key dates**

- **Careers and Pathways Evening**
  An Expo of displays by Faculties, Universities and Professionals
  4.00 – 8.00pm Wednesday July 24, 2013

- **Senior Course Confirmation Appointments**
  A face to face meeting with a course advisor to confirm selections.
  An individual appointment for each child can be made from 8.00am – 8.00pm
  Wednesday August 7, 2013.
  More information will be provided in the near future.

### Calling for guest speakers

Nossal will be hosting its annual Careers and Pathways Evening on Wednesday July 24, 4.00 - 8.00pm. It is a very important night for all students and families as it provides informative discussions about student pathways and opportunities to speak to professionals and universities. We have representatives from all Victorian Universities plus many from interstate attending the night. At Nossal we have over 800 students and families and we would like to invite any parents or family members who would be interested in speaking about their profession or course, with a particular focus on their study pathway, to small groups of our students. This information is invaluable and we would really appreciate your time. If you are able to share your experience with some of our students on this evening, please contact the school on 8762 4600, informing us of your field of work or study and your availability.

### Subject Selections for 2014

We are entering an exciting phase in planning for 2014 in the next few weeks. All students need to be aware of critical dates for course selection throughout July and August.

**Senior School Handbooks**

The handbooks for 2014 will be available at school from Thursday June 27. Handbooks will be distributed to Years 9 and 11. Year 10 students will be given books at the start of Term 3 or may organise to pick up their book from the school office on Thursday 27 or Friday 28 June. Please note that the office will be closed from 1.00pm on Friday 28.

**Careers/Pathways Information Night Wednesday July 24, 4.00 to 8.00pm**

Displays from Victorian and Interstate tertiary institutions as well as other relevant information.

Topics covered by Professionals and Academics will be:

- Presentations
- The VTAC
- Process for Year 12 parents
- Extension studies
- Tertiary scholarships
- The Morrisby Report
- VCE and the ATAR
- Professionals and academics
- Domain and course information will also be displayed on the night
Senior Course Counselling and Selection

All students are expected to have a course selection interview. Appointments for all students will be available on Wednesday August 7. There will be no classes on this day as interview sessions will be run from 9.00am to 8.00pm. Information on booking a session will be mailed out with the semester reports.

For those who are unable to attend this session there will be times available on Monday August 12 and Tuesday August 13. Normal classes will run on these days. Students are able to leave class to attend this appointment with their parent/s. There will be no classes on this day however interview sessions will be run from 8.00am to 8.00pm. Information on booking a session will be mailed out with the semester reports.

Microphones & Headsets 2013

We wish to advise all parents that the microphone/headset supply as charged for 2013 will not go ahead. The unpaid $20 charge has been removed from your student's account. If already paid the amount of $20 will be transferred to outstanding charges or credited to your student's account for future charges.

Mission Australia's Youth Survey

If you're 15-19 years old, living in Australia and want to have a say about the things that affect you... here is your chance!

Mission Australia's Youth Survey is the largest survey of its kind in Australia. Government, academics and communities all use it to develop policies and programs for young Australians. The survey has been conducted annually since 2002 and aims to identify both the values and concerns of young people. In 2013 the survey focuses on education and employment, participation in community activities, subjective wellbeing, issues of concern, and sources of advice and support.

The survey closes on Friday 28 June 2013. To complete this survey online go to www.mayouthsurvey.com.au

Taking the 2013 survey

You may find some questions personal or upsetting. You can refuse to respond to any question.

If you need someone to talk with you can contact Kids Helpline 24/7 on 1800 55 1800 or go to www.kidshelp.com.au for online counselling. Kids Helpline is Australia's only telephone and online counselling service specifically for those aged 5 to 25 years.

Data collected will be used to produce a report on state and national results. Principals might request a report on school-level data. No identifiable information is collected.

Your participation in this survey is voluntary. If you change your mind you can stop at any time.