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## Dates to Remember

**17th September****Parent Teacher Interviews**

4pm—8pm

**18th September****End of Term 3—2.30 finish****14th October****'Keys Please' program**

## Principal's Report—September 17th, 2009

I am very pleased to be able to announce that Miss Jessica Lane has joined the staff of Somerville Secondary College teaching Mathematics and Science. It is well known amongst the education community that there is a shortage of teachers in a number of disciplines – in particular Mathematics and the Sciences. Armed with this knowledge I was surprised that we had a significant number of applications and impressed with the quality of applicants. I would like to publicly thank Miss Bastone (Head of Science) and Mr Walters (Head of Mathematics) for their assistance with planning classes whilst the school went through the recruitment process. Miss Lane will be teaching Year 7 & 9 Mathematics and Year 9 & 10 Science.

### School Production

On Friday August 28<sup>th</sup> I had the absolute privilege of attending the first drama production presented by Somerville Secondary College. The production of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory was absolutely outstanding and a credit to Miss Andrews and the team of staff who supported her in challenging our students to perform to such a high standard. Congratulations to all the students who participated in the production – both on stage and back stage – a truly fantastic effort that has set the standard for future performing arts ventures. To Mr Britto, Digger, Ms Peirce and Mr Walters who bravely demonstrated their acting prowess – well done!

### Student Management @ SSC

Parents will have read recently some alarming headlines in newspapers, including such statements as:

*"Brat School - unruly kids are running amok in primary schools with the number of suspensions doubling in the past decade."*

*"More than 2000 primary school students were suspended last year as public schools struggle to cope with the surge in violent and unruly students."*

*"Public school principals, fed up with a lack of resources to deal with troublesome kids who endanger others and disrupt classes, have called for violent and unruly students to be isolated in special classes to cool off."*

Statements such as these suggest that in government schools students are uncontrolled and perhaps uncontrollable. We know that good discipline is important to parents - as it is to effective learning and teaching - and these media articles can undermine parents' confidence in the government schooling system. The articles arose from a submission by the VPA (the principals association that represents primary principals) asking for additional Student Development Centres where students who are especially disruptive can be sent for a period of time (usually a Term).

I hope that parents of Somerville Secondary College keep all this in perspective. When you walk around our school what you will see are students engaged in learning, with teachers able to work with them positively and effectively. Our discipline procedures are clear and agreed by the school community – we do not tolerate student behaviour which prevents others from learning. There are difficult students in our system, but at Somerville Secondary College you can be assured that the policies and processes we have in place will mean that your child will continue to receive a high quality education. Your support and involvement helps us to make sure this continues!

### September Holidays

I hope that all students and staff have a safe and restful September break and return ready to complete the final term of the school year on October 5<sup>th</sup>. Term 4 is eleven weeks in duration but as I have previously indicated - the last two weeks of this year will actually be the first two weeks of next year under the "Early Start" program. Under the "Early Start" program all students in Years 7 – 9 will be moved into their 2010 Form Classes and electives from December 7<sup>th</sup>.

In quite recent times schools across Victoria have been directed to respond to allegations of sexual assault in quite a different way to previous years. The text below is from a pamphlet for parents and Carers about sexual assault and the way schools must deal with such accusations.

This year we have had some students and parents quite puzzled by this new directive and to clear up this issue with students we had Victoria Polices SOCA (sexual offences & child assault) unit visit the college.

So that parents can also be better informed we will also be offering a similar information session for parents in term IV. This session will run for about an hour and advise parents of what constitutes sexual assault (you might be surprised) , what schools are directed to do about it and how as parents you can protect your children from both becoming a victim or being charged.

### What is Sexual Assault?

**Sexual assault** is defined as any unwanted sexual behaviour that causes **humiliation, pain, fear or intimidation**. Sexual assault includes rape, assault with intent to rape and indecent assault.

### Schools – Duty of Care

Schools have a duty of care to provide support to all students involved in an allegation of student sexual assault when the assault is:

- a) disclosed at school; or
- b) occurs at school or on school premises; or
- c) occurs on the way to or from school; or
- d) occurs where a student is otherwise in the school's care

Schools are required to contact police if they receive a disclosure of an alleged student sexual assault.

If your child is involved in an alleged sexual assault, the Principal will discuss with you the actions taken by the school and supports that are available to your child.

### If Your Child Discloses a Sexual Assault, You Should...

- Accept what your child says and give them time to say it. Tell them you believe them
- Let your child tell you in their own words what happened
- Give reassurance that telling somebody was the right thing to do
- Tell your child that they will be supported

### Who Do I Contact If My Child is Involved in a Sexual Assault?

Contact the police and ask to speak to someone from the Sexual Offences and Child Abuse Unit.

Contact your child's school and inform the Principal. The school will ensure that a number of supports are made available to you and your child.



## College fundraising



Last newsletter we ran an insert for Billy G's Gourmet Cookie Dough as our fundraising effort.

There are seven different types of flavours, and it comes in a convenient tub. Replacement order forms are available from the college. The closing date is 7th October. There are prizes for every tub sold. The more tubs sold, the bigger the prize! The proceeds will go towards sports uniforms for our students.

Thank you

Somerville Secondary College School Board

## Programs & Initiatives

Vic Roads 'Keys Please' program for parents and students is now on the 14<sup>th</sup> October.



### Thank You!

The College would like to publicly thank the Wishart family for their generous donation of \$100 towards the purchase of our inter-school sports uniforms.

We would also like to thank our anonymous donor of \$250 towards sports uniforms as well.

These donations, together with the proceeds of our fundraiser 'Cookie Dough' drive should enable us to outfit our students who will be representing our college when they play inter-school sports!

"George & Carol Thompson are the proprietors of Recover Oz an Educational Resource Centre. They have been running Recover Oz for approximately 10 years, seven of these in Somerville. Their business handles educational resources which focus on eating disorders, drug and alcohol and other addictions. George is an experienced drug rehab counsellor who also handles a 26 bed rehab centre at Malvern Private Hospital and lectures at schools and community centres. We would like to acknowledge and thank George and Carol for their very kind donation of DVD's dealing with adolescent issues to the value of 600 dollars for our Resource Centre."

Thank you!

## Absence Policy Explained

Notice to all Parents of Somerville Secondary College students.

**We are often asked by parents for the College's expectations with regard to student absences – the list below will hopefully answer most if not all of these queries.**

**The college requests that parents/ guardians -**

- Promote and provide organisational support to their child for full attendance and participation at the College on all designated school days
- Ensure that the student attends and is punctual each school day. ( at SSC punctuality for some students is a real issue).
- Notify the College on the first day of any absence (telephone 59731098)
- Notify the College in writing (preferably in advance) if a student is to be absent
- Provide written explanation to the College for each student absence – whilst some parents query why phone and write – the written explanation is the only legal way we can record an absence as approved.
- Work cooperatively and collaboratively with the College and their child to develop and implement improvement strategies when attendance has been inconsistent due to reasons deemed unsatisfactory by the College. Your child's form teacher is the first person to contact when attendance is an issue.
- Support their child's learning during consistent or prolonged absence – again your child's form teacher is the person to contact first for assistance with long term absences.
- Work cooperatively with the College in supporting the child to return to school and reintegrate after prolonged absence – one more time – the form teacher is the person to contact with assistance to achieve this.
- Contact the form teacher or Student Management office (59731000) for assistance if a student is resistant to attending school.
- Ensure that contact details for the child are correct and up to date.

# Ads & Community Announcements



St Andrews Church in Somerville has opened its door to a long awaited Youth Group **GET CONNECTED** held every Friday night for fun activities, crazy games, film nights

meet new people, eat delicious food and much, much more

St. Andrews Church 6pm-7.30pm  
 2 Eramosa Road West Cost \$3.00

Coming next term!  
**Spring Car Boot Sale** in our front car park.  
 \$15 per car—More Info  
 59 731087

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 Thank you.— Sue Curran   
[scurran@somerville.sc.vic.edu.au](mailto:scurran@somerville.sc.vic.edu.au)



Is your child hurting or abusing you?  
 Breaking things around the house?  
 Do you feel you are losing control?  
 Want to handle conflict better?

**Out of Bounds?**  
 Reclaim Calm and Respect in your family!

**Out of Bounds?** an eight week group program for parents / carers of young people (11-18) who are violent or abusive in the home

The group offers parents / carers:

- opportunities to develop strategies for managing their child's behaviour
- a supportive environment in which they can share their experiences

**When?**  
 Weekly from Thursday 8th October - 26th November 2009, 7.00pm-9.30pm

**Where?**  
 Eleanora House, 1527 Nepean Road, Rosebud (In front of Rosebud Hospital)

**Cost?**  
 Gold coin donation per session

**Bookings essential** - leave your details with reception at:  
 Peninsula Health—Community Health - 5979 2894

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