“You cannot plough a field by turning it over in your mind”  Unknown

PROGRESS REPORTS
The first set of progress reports have been completed and will be mailed home this week. Included in this newsletter is an explanatory document designed to answer questions and provide a guide as to the level of performance achieved using our Grade Point Average (GPA) system.

The progress reports are used by our Student Management teams to identify students who are performing at a high level and to acknowledge their pleasing performance. This group of students is known as our GPA All-Stars. The progress reports also indicate students who may be struggling or not performing at the expected level. The Student Managers and the Advocates will be speaking to each of these students and implementing some support mechanisms to get students back on track.

We encourage all Parents and Students to use the reports as a way of initiating discussion with each other about progress at school. Parents are welcome to contact the school if they have any concerns about student progress. There will be a formal Parent/Teacher afternoon held on Tuesday 27th March from 3.30-6.00pm, this will be based around the next progress report.
THE SUMMIT
On Tuesday the Year 11 students enjoyed a great day at 'The Summit'. Students were engaged in a variety of activities that required teamwork, physical and mental effort, a positive attitude and at times considerable courage. The students feedback was enthusiastic and positive, many re-telling their favourite activities and the challenges they overcame. They had certainly had worked up an appetite by the time lunch was served and appreciated the good weather as the day progressed. It was particularly pleasing to see how the group interacted and got to know each other.

The Year 11 cohort have now experienced the benefit of working together to achieve success and overcome fears and challenges and have a base from which they can build positive outcomes over the year.

Photos from ‘The Summit’ will appear in next week’s newsletter along with a report from the Swimming Sports which takes place today.

DRIVING CONCERNS
The Campus has been notified that there have been concerns reported about the behaviour of drivers dropping off and collecting students. As we have a number of learner drivers at the campus we are concerned at the poor example these practices are providing and of the safety issues they raise for pedestrians and other vehicles in the area.

The concerns raised include;
- Drivers parking in the bay at the front steps but facing in the wrong direction, which means they enter and leave by crossing over the double lines and the oncoming lane
- Drivers doing U-turns across the double lines
- Drivers parking on the road, which is not permitted due to the double lines and obstruction to other traffic

Another timely reminder is that the front of the campus is also a school speed zone and 40km is the speed limit between 8 – 9.30am and 2.30– 4pm on school days.

NEWSLETTERS
We will soon begin distributing the Campus Newsletter electronically and in preparation we ask all families to ensure they have supplied the school with a current email address. We have many addresses from the enrolment forms however it is not a complete list at this stage. There will still be some hardcopies of the newsletter available from the General Office for students to collect if emailing is not convenient.

STUDENT ACCIDENT INSURANCE
Parents are reminded that the Department does not provide personal accident insurance for students. Parents and guardians are responsible for paying the cost of medical treatment for injured students, including any transport costs. These costs may be recoverable where an injury is caused by the negligence (carelessness) of the Department, a school council or their employees or volunteers.

Student accident insurance policies are available from some commercial insurers. These cover a range of medical expenses not covered by Medicare or private health insurance.

2011 SEMESTER 2 YEAR 10 & YEAR 11 REPORTS
If your student has not received their Semester 2 Report from 2011, please ask your student to come to the General Office to collect it. We have reports from Morwell and Churchill Junior Campus as well the GEP.
Grade Point Average – Frequently Asked Questions

What is a Grade Point Average?

A Grade Point Average or GPA is a score that the school uses to assess the level of performance in relation to specific criteria of each student every month through the compilation of Progress Reports. The score is representative of how the student has performed across all of their subjects over the past month. The measure is used by Student Managers to track student performance and inform advocates in their support of students. We also include the score on the progress reports to help parents and students measure performance over the last month.

What the GPS is not.

The GPA is not a predictor of semester results or study scores. It is a valuable indicator of the level of performance in behaviours that are identified as being important contributors to successful completion of a student’s studies. The results from class assessment are more relevant to potential semester results or study scores.

How are GPA’s calculated?

The GPA is a weighted average of the ratings each student achieves on the five key indicators on the Progress Report: Overall Progress, Work Ethic, Work Completion, Conduct and Attitude. Each of these areas is allocated a score based on the level of performance as follows:

For Overall Progress, Work Ethic and Work Completion:

- Excellent = 10
- Good = 8
- Satisfactory = 6
- Concern = 4
- Unsatisfactory = 2

For Conduct and Attitude:

- Excellent = 5
- Good = 4
- Satisfactory = 3
- Concern = 2
- Unsatisfactory = 1

For each subject the scores are tallied and averaged by the number of subjects studied. This then gives a score or a GPA. As you can see the highest possible score of 40 would be generated by achieving “Excellent” in every area in every subject.

An NA or ‘Not Applicable’ may appear on reports for some courses and these are removed from the GPA calculation.
How do I know what a good GPA is?
At the school we divide the GPA scores into 4 categories; Above Average, Average, Below Average, Well-Below Average.

**Above Average (GPA 32 - 40)**

Students achieving above 32 on their GPA are considered to be performing at a high level. This does not mean there is no room for improvement but does suggest that the student is on average performing at above the average level of performance. These students are considered our monthly “GPA All-stars” and receive a letter of congratulations from the school as well as having their names published in the newsletter.

**Average (GPA 24 - 31.9)**

Students achieving at this level are performing above the minimum standard but still have significant room for improvement. A close look at the Progress Report will show strengths and weaknesses. Discussions with class room teachers should be undertaken to discuss strategies for improving identified areas of weakness.

**Below Average (GPA 16 - 23.9)**

Students performing at this level are below the minimum expected level of achievement. Consistently performing at this level will likely lead to failing units of work. All students performing at this level will meet with an advocate to discuss how significant improvements can be made. Many students at this level will be required to attend support sessions to support them in moving above the minimum acceptable standard.

**Well-Below Average (GPA 8-15.9)**

Students performing well-below average are in immediate danger of failing their studies. Many of these students are likely to exit the school due to major problems with attendance or work ethic and will be supported into more appropriate options where possible. Very few students ever reach this low level of performance.

**What do I do if I am concerned about my GPA?**

Examine your Progress Report closely – look for strengths and weaknesses. Look for patterns, for example is there a problem in all subjects in class work, if so what do I need to do to improve? Is the problem in one subject or many?

By reflecting closely on your report you will able to have a more specific and informed discussion with your teachers and/or the advocates about how to improve. The focus of these reports is on improvement – what do you need to do to improve. The Progress reports are only an indication for you to realise where your strengths and weaknesses are and what sorts of conversations you need to have with your teachers.
School Council Elections

School Council notice of Election and call for Nominations will begin on Monday 20th February. 4 Parent member positions (3 positions of 2 years and 1 position of 1 year), and 2 DEECD employee member positions will be vacant. Nomination forms can be obtained from the office of each campus and must be lodged back at the school by 4.00pm on Monday 27th February. If the number of nominations is less than the number of vacancies, a notice to that effect and calling for further nominations will be posted in a prominent position at the school. Further reading and timeline dates are available within this newsletter.

Information for Parents

School Council Elections 2012

What is a school council and what does it do?
All government schools in Victoria have a school council. They are legally constituted bodies that are given powers to set the key directions of a school within state-wide guidelines. In doing this, a school council is able to directly influence the quality of education that the school provides for its students.

Who is on the school council?
For most school councils, there are three possible categories of membership:
• A mandated elected Parent category – more than one third of the total members must be from this category. Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) employees can be Parent members at their child’s school as long as they are not engaged in work at the school.
• A mandated elected DEECD employee category – members of this category may make up no more than one-third of the total membership of school council. The principal of the school is automatically one of these members.
• An optional Community member category – members are coopted by a decision of the council because of their special skills, interests or experiences. DEECD employees are not eligible to be Community members.
Generally, the term of office for all members is two years. The term of office of half the members expires each year, creating vacancies for the annual school council elections.

Why is Parent membership so important?
Parents on school councils provide important viewpoints and have valuable skills that can help shape the direction of the school.
Those parents who become active on a school council find their involvement satisfying in itself and may also find that their children feel a greater sense of belonging.

How can you become involved?
The most obvious way is to vote in the elections, which are held in Term 1 each year. However, ballots are only held if more people nominate as candidates than there are positions vacant.

In view of this, you might seriously consider
• standing for election as a member of the school council
• encouraging another person to stand for election.

Once the nomination form is completed, return it to the principal within the time stated on the Notice of Election. You will receive a Nomination Form Receipt in the mail following the receipt of your completed nomination.

Generally, if there are more nominations received than there are vacancies on council, a ballot will be conducted during the two weeks after the call for nominations has closed.

Remember
• Ask at the school for help if you would like to stand for election and are not sure what to do
• Consider standing for election to council this year
• Be sure to vote in the elections.
Contact the principal for further information

Do I need special experience to be on school council?
No. What you do need is an interest in your child’s school and the desire to work in partnership with others to help shape the school’s future.

What do you need to do to stand for election?
The principal will issue a Notice of Election and Call for Nominations following the commencement of Term 1 each year. All school council elections must be completed by the end of March unless the usual time line has been varied by the Minister.

If you decide to stand for election, you can arrange for someone to nominate you as a candidate or you can nominate yourself in the Parent category.

DEECD employees whose child is enrolled in a school in which they are not engaged in work are eligible to nominate for parent membership of the school council at that school.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2012 SCHOOL COUNCIL ELECTION PROCESS AND TIMETABLE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Name of the School: Kurnai College</td>
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<tr>
<td>a) Notice of election and call for nominations</td>
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<tr>
<td>b) Closing date for nominations</td>
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<tr>
<td>c) Date by which the list of candidates and nominators will be posted</td>
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<tr>
<td>d) Date by which ballot papers will be prepared and distributed</td>
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<td>e) Close of ballot</td>
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<td>f) Vote count</td>
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<td>g) Declaration of poll</td>
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<td>h) Special council meeting to co-opt Community members (the principal will preside)</td>
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<tr>
<td>i) First council meeting to elect office bearers (the principal will preside)</td>
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