FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Mid Term 4, 2012 Newsletter

My apologies for the lateness of the newsletter but I am sure that you understand that I have been running to catch up. Term 4 is a very busy term where budgets need to be finalised, Year 12 students begin their exams, Performing Arts have their showcases, staffing allocations are developed for the following year, accommodation plans for our growing numbers are formulated, planning for 2013 is undertaken in line with the completion of 2012, our Annual Reports are written, along with keeping up with innovations such as the National Broadband Network and the changes in the what, how and why we teach.

Cybersafety: Mahatma Gandhi said: “Be the change that you would like to see in the world”. My Mother, bless her soul, said: “if you cannot say anything nice, say nothing at all!” These two very wise people were influential beyond the worlds within which they operated. Gandhi was able to influence a nation (India) to gain self-governance from the British, through what he said was non-violent intervention and my mother taught me the lessons that I have endeavoured to pass down to generations of children. It saddens me when I hear of the new trend of “burn books” in social media forums. Like any tool, the Internet can be used for good and bad; it depends on the person using it!

These “burn books” single out an individual, and then make their life a living hell - if only the initiator of these “burn books” learnt their lessons from the above influential people. The world I wish to live in is one where everyone cares about each other and they are positive, strong and determined to get on with their lives, not to belittle and take other people down.

It is only together that we can bring about change, where home and school work together to teach our young people what is right and what is wrong. Where does our responsibility as a school begin and end? Whilst on leave a ‘burn book’ sprung up with Willunga High School’s name on it. It was launched at 10.43 p.m. on a Saturday evening and it targeted some young girls - who knew that young people could be so vitriolic and mean to each other? Do they realise the impact that they are having on the young person who is being targeted? Do they realise that what they say reflects more on themselves than on the person being targeted? Do they realise that it can be tracked back to them and do they realise that their comments stay on the world wide web forever? It will not be long before our legal system catches up and comments made on Facebook sites and other social networking sites will be open to scrutiny and people will be prosecuted for the slanderous and malicious acts that occur.
We (teachers and parents) need to teach our young people to **STOP** (before they decide to do something), **THINK** (about the impact of their actions and words) and **DO** (something positive and not negative). What they may think is a prank or a joke is not perceived by that person as anything positive and fun. Often we are asked what we can do and this information comes from Cybersafe Kidz:

**Prevent Your Child From Becoming a Target:**
Make sure your child knows not to post information that could be used maliciously.

Visit your child’s online communities and discuss the values demonstrated by those who participate.

Bullyproof your child by reinforcing your child’s individual strengths and fostering healthy friendships.

**Prevent Your Child from Being a Cyberbully:**
Make it clear that all internet use must be in accord with family values of kindness and respect for others.

If your child is being bullied at school, work with the school to stop the bullying and make sure your child knows not to retaliate online.

If you know your child has cyberbullied others, be very proactive in preventing any continuation. You can be held financially liable for the harm your child causes to another.

**Grounds:** I can honestly say that our grounds are looking fabulous. Thanks must go to Mark Garrett, John Chapman, Tom Hank and Dave Hooper who have been working with our Home and Property Maintenance and Doorways to Construction teams, managing a number of grounds improvement projects. Signage around the school has also been a positive innovation.

**Exams:** Year 12 exams have begun! Year 11 exams begin on November 12th, and Year 10 on November 19th.

**Facilities:** Gymnasium: A new gymnasium will be a priority in the new year. We have alerted DECD to the fact that we would like to have a “loan” and we have had a concept plan drawn up by the architects and a location has been selected. We now need to accumulate our deposit and endeavour to get the process actioned.

**New classrooms:** These will begin in mid-November, located near the Bike Shed. Music will move into this area and Special Needs will be relocated into the existing Music area. This will then free up the downstairs classrooms in the main building to accommodate the Year 9 classes. Lockers will be built in these classrooms, so we can continue to have a no bag policy for Year 8 and Year 9 students.

**New Fence:** A new fence will be erected around the school during this term, ready for 2013. It will be black and follow nearly the whole perimeter of the school.

**Student Achievement: Agriculture:** The Agriculture Team did extremely well at the Royal Show, gaining Show Champion for the steers, a number of firsts for the goats. Well done to Mark Whittington and his show team. The school will support the Agriculture Team in the upgrade of gear and uniforms for 2013.

**E-Learning and Cybersafety:** We are putting in place a strategy so that all of next year’s Year 8 and Year 12 students will have a computer for their personal use. Part of this strategy is to focus on the longevity of this type of programme. We will also be undertaking our Cyber safety program in 2013.

**Textbooks:** In 2013, all Year 8 textbooks will be electronic.

It has been a fantastic year but also one that has had its personal ups and downs. However we will move into the next year in a stronger, healthier and happier place than we have ever been before. I must say our students are the nicest, kindest and sweetest young things and it has been a pleasure to work with them. The staff are strong and committed and the parents extremely supportive. We have a great culture and it is a great place to teach and learn. How blessed we all are! It is important here to thank Corinne Garrett for her untiring support or our school and in her role as Chairperson of the Governing Council for the last 4 years. Her last child (Lachlan) finishes Year 12 this year and has begun his final exams. She has been a tower of strength and a wonderful supporter of our school!

**Janelle Reimann ~ Principal**