From the Principal - Angelique den Brinker

A few events over the past couple of weeks have brought into sharp focus for me two important areas that I believe as a community we should have some explicit and clear understandings of as this will improve the outcomes for our students.

Transition

As children grow up we need to consciously put in place little steps to help them achieve a growing independence. I often see students who have not had the experience of transitioning throughout their childhood and teenage years to turn 18 and suddenly everyone expects them to be an adult. This is unfair and I believe puts the students at greater risk of risky behaviours because they have not been empowered to make appropriate steps along the way. An example at our college is transport to school. Whilst almost all secondary age students in Victoria travel to school by public transport from year 7, the majority of our year 7 do not. There are some reasons for this. Our students come from further away and we need to put in place a travel training program to assist our students with the task.

However by Year 9 nearly all of our students should be travelling by public transport. I have seen how great it is for student's self esteem, their sense that they are moving on growing up, being responsible and that others believe in them. We should be looking in the Middle Years to give the students more responsibility and to trust them more in little steps as they grow towards being an adult. It is hard for parents to let go sometimes and to let our children experience life without us holding their hands but the rewards for both parents and students is a fully rounded person able to take on the challenges of an adult life.

Communication

Again I have first hand experience in past couple of weeks of communication issues that has made me think explicitly about communication for our students in a variety of situations. Empathy is about putting yourself in someone’s shoes and understanding their life from their perspective. As Principal of VCD I have the wonderful opportunity to doing just that, coming to understand what it is like to use two languages sometime simultaneously every day. I am learning Auslan, making mistakes, having the students teach me and trying to be understood. As parents I would like you to consider learning Auslan if you haven't started already. The benefit of learning Auslan will be increased level of communication with your child. This will have a direct impact on their learning at school as they will be able to share with you their day, you will be able to assist with homework including reading and other English work which is essential for their success at school when they enter secondary college. I am hoping in the coming weeks to having some exciting news about family friendly Auslan classes that will be offered to families to learn Auslan together.

Sailing

On Monday the secondary students have been offered a unique experience to participate in a sailing excursion on the Enterprise a tall ship that sails out of Williamstown. This is a free excursion provided by the volunteer committee who run the ship. Our thanks to Michael Womack for enabling all our students to participate in a sailing excursion in Port Phillip Bay. Parents will receive an excursion form on Thursday 14th May.
The primary children hosted a lovely afternoon tea for our special mothers on Thursday 7th of May. Each class baked goodies to share with everyone and it was lovely to see our mothers catch up with other mothers.

The theme focused on the nurturing and loving colour of pink as well as fundraise for breast cancer - thank you to those who contributed to the total of $160.80!

Hope all of the mothers within the VCD community had a lovely Mother's Day!

Middle Years

In Science Year 7 have been learning how to use the Bunsen Burner safely. They have been learning about the safe flame—Yellow and the Hot flame—Blue. They have investigated which flame is cleaner for heating and which part of the blue flame is hottest.

Last week students used the Bunsen Burner in an investigation to make a cloud in a beaker. They had boiling water in the beaker and sitting on top was a watch glass with ice in it. A cloud formed because the water boiled in the beaker, the steam rose and hit the cold watch glass. Condensation occurred. The Steam became water again (students likened this to rain) and then a cloud formed. If you look closely in the photo, you can see the top part of the beaker is cloudy.

Senior Years

Our VCE students are studying Health, English and Maths this year. Now is the time when SACs and work requirements are due and the workload may become heavier. We encourage parents to supervise their child with allocating time for homework each night.

Making informed choices and decisions about future pathways can be challenging for our students and their families. VCD will be offering workshops, information and resources about future pathways in June. Watch this space for Information regarding dates and workshops.

In the meantime, from May 7th to June 4th, the senior students (year 11 and 12) will be and are attending the Transition Pathways workshops on Thursday afternoons at the VDEI. This is organised by the VicDeaf who had consulted with our students in 2014 to gather information on what school leavers want to know. The workshops focus on self advocacy, how to work with interpreters, how to apply for work, future study opportunities, living independently and gap year. All students are expected to attend as it is critical that they are able to make informed choices and decision making about their future pathways. A form for media release (photos/videos taken during the workshop) has been distributed to students for parent permission. Please return this before next Thursday 21st.
School Wide Positive Behaviours

Our School Wide Positive Behaviour Program is so far an enormous success. Students look forward to our weekly assemblies when they are presented with certificates for showing positive behaviours related to our five VCD values of;

PRIDE
RESPECT
RESPONSIBILITY
RESILIENCE
LEARNING

FRUIT IN HOME GROUP

We are initiating our “FRUIT IN HOME GROUP” program at VCD to encourage all students to start the day eating something healthy and to provide them with a snack after the long trip to school. Could you please put an extra piece of fruit in your child’s lunchbox every day to support our goal of ensuring VCD students are benefitting from healthy eating? Primary students are already doing this; we would like to encourage secondary students to do the same.

Angela Maclean
Student Well-Being

More photos from the Mothers’ Day Afternoon Tea

Student Representative Council

Last week Jessiah, Adam and Ali were on hand to give some past students a tour of the school. These past students attended the school in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. They had many interesting stories to tell. One of them told us they were given numbers to identify them at school and their names were not used. One of the past students said that his number was 1,000. It was a wonderful opportunity for our students to show them the school as it is today and the opportunities that school now offers students. After the tour the visitors talked to the all the students at assembly about what happened at VCD during World War 2 when the students were relocated to Healesville for two years and then returned to VCD. It was great to have history presented from people who lived it and to recall their experiences from such a long time ago.
Parent Information

VCD Parent’s Group

Invites you to Morning Tea

Guest Speakers
The Whalans

Join us as the whalan family share their experiences raising 3 Deaf children. They have the unique perspective of having two of their girls raised in oral approach and their youngest through the sign bilingualism approach. This event will be Auslan interpreted.

Fri, 22 May
11 a.m.
VCD F.J. Rose Auditorium

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