THE JOURNEY TOWARDS 2015

Mt St Michael’s College
Parent Information Afternoon
Mt St Michael’s Important Contacts

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Home Room Teachers
Student Well-being and Transition
Frequently Asked Questions

Making the transition to secondary schooling is an exciting time for students. They are moving into what is often a larger school environment which can be very different from their primary schooling experience. As a parent of a son who has just started his first year of high school, I have fielded many questions from him about the year ahead. The following commonly asks questions and responses can help you as a parent to work in partnership with the staff at Mt St Michael's College to help your daughter start the 2015 school year confidently and on a positive note.

1. How can I encourage my daughter to make a successful transition?
   Be interested and enthusiastic about her move to high school. Your encouragement will help your daughter to make a successful transition to Mt St Michael’s. Listen to her experiences and expectations and actively support your daughter with a positive outlook.

2. What practical steps can I take to understand my daughter’s experience?
   Attend the key events that form part of the College’s Transition Program. The Orientation Day which the College holds in August is specifically designed to help parents and their daughters prepare for starting high school. Being there will help you understand your daughter’s experiences better. Work hard to keep communication open about all your daughter’s experiences.

3. How can I boost my daughter’s confidence in adjusting to change?
   Remind her that there are other new students and even those who have been to Mt St Michael’s previously who are feeling nervous. Most students will feel some degree of nerves and if your daughter remembers that she is in the same boat as everyone else, she may feel more confident about adjusting to the change. Emphasise that there will be people to help her adjust. Take the time to reassure her that she has it well within her to successfully step into MSM - a warm and caring school where amazing opportunities await her.

4. My daughter doesn’t know anyone coming to the school, what advice can I offer about making new friends?
   Remind her that she already knows how to make friends and that the events throughout the year will provide opportunities to forge these new friendships. Also, encourage her to join in school activities as this is a great way to make new friends with similar interests.

5. Is it normal for my daughter to ask so many questions about High School?
   If you are receiving lots of questions from your daughter, understand that this is very normal behaviour and within a few weeks of starting school, you will more than likely be lamenting the fact your daughter doesn’t ask you questions any more.

6. What if the transition process for my daughter does not seem to be on track?
   Most importantly, don’t panic. It is really important that you instil in your daughter a sense of calm and confidence. Help her see that all will work out well for her and that she has the capacity to successfully tackle each day one at a time. Each student will also have a dedicated Home Class Teacher who will take responsibility for her pastoral care with the support of a Year Level Co-ordinator. If things really do not seem to be going to plan, (which probably won’t happen) contact the appropriate person at school and discuss the issue with them.
Learning To Learn at a Glance:

**Study**

The Brain and its development:


Most consolidation of learning occurs at home. In preparation for 2015, the following tips are designed to implement now:

1. Students must be able to work through ½ hour to 1 hour of homework/study per night.
2. Students must not ask parents to do the homework or study for them, rather ask for assistance. Parents are able to support this process by questioning the student’s work by asking them to explain each step in the process to you. Should there be an error, parents point out the error but do not correct the error in thinking. Parents are to help the student, via further questioning, in identifying the error for themselves.
3. If there is no homework or study set by the primary school approach the class teacher for extra work, or generate this work through extra reading, accessing resources on the websites communicated in earlier E-News bulletins.
4. Have a well-lit area for study, without the distraction of technology, unless the technology is required for study. Be able to view the student’s computer screen at all times when students are working on the device.
5. Remove all phones/computers from the bedroom when sleeping. It is essential your daughter receives at least 8 hours of sleep. Current research has found that 5-6 hours of sleep does not allow for that final REM processes therefore reducing the amount of time the brain has for the consolidation of information.

**Homework**

In relation to learning – homework is a review of work that has been previously taught in class, either that day or earlier. As stated above, this can include material that was not assigned by the teacher, but generated by the student herself. It is encouraged that homework time is regular, and does not involve chores required at home.

**Time Management/Organisation**

As students learn to develop their own strategies for study, review and memorisation, they become more adept at time management. To help students along, it is encouraged that their study/homework time is broken down into subject areas such as English, Mathematics, and Science etc. if at all possible. This sectioning of work will assist students in managing their time when receiving homework for various subjects at Mt St Michael’s College.

Encourage your daughter to pack her school bag the night before each day. This ensures the correct equipment has been included for school, and that thinking about the day to come is habitual. This would include her preparing her sports clothes, swimming outfits and any craft materials required for the day ahead.

Parental Support not Suffocation. Allow your daughter the ability to develop into an independent and resilient learner:

Suggestions to help protect your child on the internet

Where possible keep all internet capable devices in common family areas

Know how to disable location services on your child’s smart device

Check privacy settings on your child’s social media accounts

Be aware of the social media sites on your child’s device

Maintain direct and open communication with your child

Check your child’s online profiles and ensure the content is appropriate

Consider installing filtering and/or blocking software on computer

Ensure you have access to your child’s accounts in order to monitor them

Monitor your child’s phone plans and credit for unusual activity

Consider appropriate phone and data plans for your child

Consider what device you provide your child

Children should be able to tell you the name of their online contacts

Consider syncing smart devices to a family account

Know how to save copies of your child’s instant messaging chat logs

Consider the “Family Internet Safety Agreement” developed by QPS
Central to your daughter’s smooth transition to secondary and overall well-being is her participation in the College Positive Education Program known as Pos-Ed. This program aims to enhance emotional intelligence, health, well-being and happiness. It has assisted students to discover ways in which they can cope with adversity, recognise and overcome negative emotions and create a mindset of positivity (Ahern, 2013).

In order to support your daughter with her learning and well-being at the College, we must establish the importance of a positive (growth) mindset. Which mindset are you?

Read the statements below about intelligence – state whether you agree/disagree with the statement.

1. Your intelligence is something very basic about you that you can’t change very much.
2. You can learn new things, but you can’t really change how intelligent you are.
3. No matter how much intelligence you have, you can always change it quite a bit.
4. You can always substantially change how intelligent you are.

Statement 1 and 2 are fixed mindset statements. 3 and 4 are growth mindset statements (Dweck, 2012).

A growth mindset allows people to persist in the face of difficulty, whereas a fixed mindset is all about the outcome, if you fail or are not the best, then all the effort has been wasted. The growth mindset allows people to value what they are doing regardless of the outcome. When working on something, and difficulties arise, one can sometimes become tired, dizzy, bored or hungry, signs that a fixed mindset may be at work. When in this mode, think about learning, growth, challenge and the benefits of confronting obstacles.

Praise can be fuel for a fixed mindset if one is not mindful of how it is being interpreted. “Wow, you received 10 out of 10, a fantastic score, you are really good at this”. This type of comment can cause a student to identify themselves with a particular label/outcome; whereas the phrase – “wow, you received 10 out of 10, that’s a great score, you must have worked really hard”. The student is praised for the effort it takes to succeed rather than being labelled with a gift/talent (Dweck, 2012). A growth mindset can be developed with conscious effort. The Habits of Mind rely upon a growth mindset to be successfully implemented. Now is the time to have such conversations with your daughter, before she transitions to secondary schooling.
Coming Events

As previously communicated, the transition period at the College will be undertaken over a substantial period of time and involves a number of significant events. Please take the time to carefully read the Year 7 and 8 Transition Program events to be implemented by the College after the information sessions in February. It is important that your family actively participates in these events to ensure a smooth transition to secondary schooling.

Orientation Day Years 7 and 8
Thursday 14 August 2014, Sophia Centre
• Students and Parents attend
• Year 7 – 9am-11am
• Year 8 – 1pm-3pm
• Presentation on the significant components of a student’s transition to the College
• Parent/Guardian induction into life at Mt St Michael’s College
• Commence student’s social development and interaction with existing students

Assessment for Learning and Teaching
Years 7 and 8
Monday 20 October 2014, Sophia Centre
• Students only attend
• Year 7 – 9am -11am
• Year 8 – 1pm-3pm
• Continued social development and interaction with existing students