Welcome back to term 4.

NAPLAN
Year 9 students received their NAPLAN results along with their term 3 reports at the end of Term 3. I hope parents/caregivers have had the opportunity to read the information provided. If parents/caregivers have any questions or queries please do not hesitate to contact Year 9 Coordinator Mr Zammit, your student’s pastoral care teacher or Middle School Senior Leader Ms Hicks. Either of these people will be more than happy to answer your enquiries.

Staffing
This term we welcome back Mr Dunbar after extended medical leave, Mrs Gravelle after maternity leave and Mr Klose after long service leave. Unfortunately Ms MacKay will not be returning this term due to illness but we are fortunate to have Ms O’Dea return to the school as her replacement.

Parent/Student Opinion Survey
I would like to thank the 56 parents and 317 students who completed either the online or DECS Parent/Student Opinion Survey. As I have previously mentioned in earlier newsletters the information provided from parents and students was comprehensive and constructive in many areas that the school can improve on and areas where the school is achieving success. Staff will further advance the discussions already taking place as part of the annual review cycle by analysing these results and identifying areas for improvement. One area that came across loud and clear was the inconsistency amongst teachers as to how they worked with the students, the relationships they built and the effort they put into creating a stimulating and engaging learning environment. This is a significant issue that I see is preventing Murray Bridge High School moving from a good school to becoming a great school. Parents and students can be assured that I see this issue as a top priority and measures are being put in place to ensure quality teaching and learning takes place across the entire school. The results of the parent/student opinion survey will be available on our website shortly.

Incident at the end of Term 3
No doubt many parents are aware of the incident that took place towards the end of last term involving 3 male students. I trust all parents received my letter and have had the opportunity to discuss this issue with their student. I wish to reassure all of the Murray Bridge High School community that I have no tolerance of violence and took serious measures in addressing this incident. I was greatly heartened by the condemnation of this act by the student cohort. Of particular note was the overwhelmingly positive feedback I have received from students, parents and the community as to how the school responded to this situation. More importantly, that the student cohort has made their opinions known that they do not want this incident to be repeated. Judging by the fantastic Sports Day that was held last Friday and the fun had by staff and students I believe the school has made a significant step forward.
Rotary Dinner  By Ruth Hicks

The challenge for Year 12 Food and Hospitality students was to design and create a menu that demonstrated their understanding of the ‘Murraylands in Spring’ and to serve this meal to members of the Tailem Bend Rotary Club.

Students were being assessed on their ability to work in a team to demonstrate the total organisation and management of the function from design, costing, ordering, front of house preparation, food preparation and service.

The notion of seasonal food has become very blurred because fruit and vegetables are now available all year round on our supermarket shelves. The students discussed issues such as sustainability of food supply, the quality and nutritional value of fresh products and the role of agriculture in our local economy. Carlo DeMichelle from Farm Fresh described his philosophy on sourcing local produce and led us through his store describing what is currently available from the region.

The students came up with an exciting and taste tempting menu (see right) that really encompassed as much of the region’s produce as it could, and feedback from the Rotarians confirmed that it tasted every bit as good as it looked! The Glasshouse Restaurant looked stunning and spring flowers added to the atmosphere.

Special thank you must go to Carlo for his passionate and insightful presentation on the value of supporting regional growers, Corey from Top Notch for sourcing such tender and flavoursome lamb, and Murray Bridge Dry Cleaners for providing tablecloths.

Congratulations to all of the students!
Kiwanis donation  
By Phil Fitzsimons

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to the Kiwanis Club and their Chairperson Malcolm Allen for their kind donation of $1800 to support the purchase of 3 laptops for disadvantaged students.

I would also like to extend my thanks to Governing Council Chairperson Robert Smissen, who approached me with this idea and gave a presentation to the Kiwanis Club in my absence.

The laptops will be made available to 3 highly disadvantaged students with the intention of supporting their learning at school.

Mind Matters Report  
By Taryn Tahitahi and Sophie Ansell Year 11 students

On 28 and 29 September a group of seven students along with teachers, Mr McEvoy and Mrs Hodge, attended the Mind Matters Youth Empowerment Program at the Murray Bridge Golf Club.

Mind Matters is an approach to empowering young people to lead and take part in promoting positive mental health. Students, Hannah Kluske, Hannah Lewis, Ashleigh Horsnell, Nikki Dougal, Aaron Pratt, Taryn Tahitahi and Sophie Ansell were approached to join this program and had already participated in a one day lead-up empowerment workshop. The day involved many games and activities all centering around mental health and its promotion.

As a follow up to the program, the seven chosen students will be taking other Year 8 classes to share their new found knowledge with them. Overall, the day was a great success with students and teachers enjoying themselves.

Community Notice

Schools in the Murray and Mallee region are seeking volunteers to assist in the Community Mentoring Program.

Develop a relationship with a child (10-14 years of age) through a range of activities that you and your mentee would like to do together. Playing games, art/craft and chatting etc.

One hour a week to make a difference.

➢ Make a difference in a young child’s life
➢ Make new friends
➢ Make a real difference to the future of your own community
➢ Learn new skills

Life experience is the only qualification you need.

Would you like to know more about the program?

Information session
Monday 21 Nov, Tuesday 29 Nov and Tuesday 6 Dec 6.30 to 7.30pm
DECS Regional Office, Murray Bridge
20 Beatty Tce, Murray Bridge

Contact Luke Wilson to make a booking to attend a session and for catering and venue purposes.

Mob: 0457 764 318 or email luke.wilson4@sa.gov.au

Malcolm Allen (right) presents Phil Fitzsimons with an $1800 cheque
There are many steps which parents can take to guide children and young people in the safe and responsible use of technology: monitoring, supervision, positive role-modelling, etc. All of these depend on YOU, the parent, being at the computer or nearby whilst your child is online. As devices become smaller and more mobile, it is much more likely that you won’t be anywhere in the vicinity of your child when they go online. What is most important, then, are the decisions your child makes when you’re not around.

So how do you help guide your child’s moral compass to point them in the direction of ethical decision-making?

Talk about it
We often talk about having an open dialogue with your child about their rights and responsibilities in a social environment, whether online or offline, because it is an important component of promoting ethical digital citizenship. Having an honest conversation with your child about the benefits and challenges of online interactions will prepare them for what they may face, and also guide them in responding to those challenges in a safe and responsible way.

Set boundaries
Make it quite clear in your family what is acceptable and unacceptable when it comes to online behaviour. If your child knows that there will be consequences for their actions, it may discourage them from inappropriate behaviour.

You may also wish to set some guidelines as to how far your child should take on a problem on their own and when they should come to you or another trusted adult with an issue. This will give them an opportunity to resolve problems on their own, but also encourage them to come to you before things get out of hand. It can sometimes be difficult for your child to talk to you about some of the issues they are facing, but there are a couple of things you can do to make them more comfortable in doing so.

Firstly, don’t threaten to take away access to the internet. This will only discourage your child from confiding in you as they fear losing their online contact with friends.

Secondly, identify other people whom your child can talk to. This might be an aunty or uncle, older cousin or trusted family friend. You’ll need to discuss with this other trusted adult when they have to inform you of what your child has confided in them about too.

Time2Talk
This section provides some useful conversation starters for talking with young people about their use of technology.

- What are the biggest challenges facing young people online?
- What online issues are you comfortable tackling on your own?
- What issues could I help with?
- How responsibly do you think I use technology?

For more information go to the website http://www.thinkuknow.org.au/

Model ethical decision-making
All your efforts in encouraging the safe and responsible use of technology can come undone when your child sees you doing the exact opposite. If you break the “rules”, your child may see these rules as less valid and not worth following.

So what sort of behaviours should you be modelling? Following the law is an obvious start, so don’t use your mobile phone whilst driving, ever! Next, think about how you talk about friends, colleagues, neighbours and family members, especially when in front of your child. Whilst you aren’t using technology to say these things, it could send the message to your child that it’s ok to talk maliciously about others and they may then do this when online. Finally, if you’re trying to encourage quality offline time in your family, make sure you don’t answer your mobile phone during dinner!

How will you know if it’s working?
You probably won’t know if your efforts to encourage ethical decision-making are working, and it’s unlikely that your child will turn around and say thank you (at least not until they’re a lot older!). But that’s no reason to stop trying! Parenting is the most difficult job in the world, shouldn’t you put the same effort in as you would for a paid job? It might be tough, you might have arguments, but in the long run, you will be doing the best you can to give your child the best start in life.