MountElizaNorth PRIMARY

Kalori

INQUIRER * REFLECTIVE * COMMUNICATOR * RISK – TAKER * BALANCED * KNOWLEDGEABLE * THINKER * CARING * OPEN-MINDED * PRINCIPLED

Mount Eliza North Primary School strives to create a community of learners who are empowered to inquire, achieve and contribute to the world around them.

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ISSUE 1 – 29th January 2026

FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK...

Dear Parents and Carers,

Welcome back to the 2026 school year. I hope you had a wonderful break and enjoyed some relaxation and warm weather. I have loved seeing everyone back at school and am very excited about the year ahead 😊

It has been a fabulous start to the year as we welcomed back staff, students, new school community members and our Foundation students. Our Foundation students will attend four days per week until the 23rd February when they will commence full-time.

Our focus for the start of the year is around developing relationships, establishing routines and getting to know each and every one of our students. All of our Units of Inquiry to begin the year are centred around supporting this important learning.

We are also ensuring that we embed our newly revised school values which are:

Respect - We value ourselves, others and the world around us.
Integrity - We are honest and do the right thing even when nobody is watching.
Strive for Excellence - It's not being the best, It's doing your best.
Empathy - We understand the feelings and perspectives of others.

At Mount Eliza North Primary School we are committed to creating a safe, inclusive, and supportive community where everyone feels valued and empowered to learn and grow. We live our values every day through our actions, words, and choices.

New Staff

This year we welcome four new teaching staff: Samantha Thorne (year 1), Ashleigh Latham (year 5), Cassandra Morgan (year 6) and Tess Wright (year 6 – Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday). Tess Wright is sharing a class with Bonnie Gillan who is our Mental Health and Wellbeing Leader. Bonnie will be actively working alongside teachers in a coaching capacity to support best practice in classrooms.

KEY DATES

Wednesday 28th January
Years 1-6 commence

Wednesday 28th - Thursday 29th January
Foundation testing

Friday 30th January
Foundation students commence school

Wednesday 4th February
Foundation testing

Wednesday 11th February
Foundation testing

Friday 13th February
House Swimming Carnival Years 3-6

Tuesday 17th – Wednesday 18th February
Get to know interviews 3.45pm

Wednesday 18th February
District Swimming Carnival

Thursday 19th February
Welcome picnic 5-7pm

Tuesday 24th February
Get to Know Interviews 3.45pm

We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria and pay respect to the ongoing living cultures of First Peoples.

FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK continued...

Welcome Picnic

We would like to warmly welcome all families back to school and will be holding a 'Welcome Picnic' on Wednesday 11th February from 4pm until 6pm. Families are invited to bring a picnic and enjoy this on the school oval. It is a wonderful opportunity to catch up as a school community and also for families who are new to the school to meet members of our school community. We will have games and activities on the oval for students from 4.00pm until 4.45pm. We look forward to seeing as many of you as possible. Further information regarding this event will be shared via Compass.

School Review

Our school review was completed in 2025 and as a result of this review we identified two goals that we will work towards over the next four years. Each year we create our Annual Implementation Plan which breaks these goals down into smaller components and enables us to work strategically through achieving the overall goals for the school.

Our goals for the next four years are:

Goal 1

To maximise student learning **growth** in literacy and numeracy.

Goal 2:

To improve student wellbeing outcomes and engagement for all students.

In 2026 our work will focus on:

Leading and working in Professional Learning Communities (PLC's), implementing the School Wide Positive Behaviour Framework and continuing to develop a consistent multi-tiered system of support within our school.

2026 School Captains

Congratulations to Addison Fortnam and Josh Van Leerdam, who have been selected as our 2026 School Captains. I am looking forward to working with them as they support the leadership of our school and capably represent our students.

School Works

Last year I applied for some additional funding to repair the decks and stairs outside the Wellbeing Hub and a year 1 classroom. This was approved and subsequently there are other decks and stairs that will be part of this work. This work is intended to start in 6 to 8 weeks. I will keep the school community informed about any entry and access requirements during this time.

Our Capital works project is intended to start this year. Tentative timing suggests that it will commence around Term 3 this year. I will continue to provide updates of information as I receive it.

Bushfire At-Risk Register (BARR) School

Mount Eliza North Primary School is a DET Bushfire At-Risk Register (BARR) School. Schools and children's services listed on the DET BARR will be closed when a Code Red fire danger rating day is determined by the Bureau of Meteorology in our district. As a BARR school, we have clear processes in place to keep our school community safe. Included in this newsletter is detailed information for BARR schools. It is important that you read this information regarding the process should a Code Red day be declared.

FROM THE PRINCIPAL'S DESK continued...

Call for nominations for parents on school council

Information will be sent out shortly detailing the parent vacancies on School Council. If you would like to nominate to be a member of school council or are a current member of school council intending to nominate for re-election/co-option you will be required to hold a Working with Children Check Clearance.

Yours in Learning,

Caroline Chilianis
Principal

FROM THE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL CURRICULUM/PYP

Dear Parents and Carers,

It has been an exciting start as we warmly welcomed back our community to the start of the 2026 school year.

It has been a pleasure catching up with students and families to share stories of the break and talk more about what we were looking forward to in the new year.

We also welcomed the start of our new preps for 2026 today! It was great to have so many families join us on the school grounds during the first few days to assist their children in transitioning back to school.

STRONG START

The focus in classroom learning and the yard to start the school year has been centred around our new school values (Respect, Integrity, Strive for Excellence and Empathy) and setting high expectations. Intentional crafting of supportive, structured, engaging and challenging learning environments in every classroom contributes to overall achievement and the creation of learning conditions that help students to thrive. At MENPS, we are investing time early in the year to set those high expectations to ensure for a wonderful year.

PARENT TEACHER CONNECT MEETINGS

I would like to remind all families about our upcoming Parent Teacher Connect Meetings scheduled for February 17th, 18th and 24th. This important school event allows us to work in partnership with you to know more about your child and work collaboratively on goals for the upcoming year. We are hopeful we can meet with as many families as possible over these three days. Please see COMPASS communications for further information and booking details.

NAPLAN

NAPLAN will commence from Wednesday 11th March until Monday 23rd March 2024. Students in Years 3 and 5 undertake this testing. More information about the testing timetable and ways in which you can support your child/ren will be shared in the coming weeks. At Mount Eliza North we have a range of strategies in place to support students who are participating in the NAPLAN testing experience. Students are given the opportunity to access the Public Demonstration Site available for schools, teachers, parents, carers and students to familiarise themselves with the online tests. To support our students, all students will participate in online practise tests over the next few weeks. This will provide our students with insights into the formatting and types of questions included in the tests.

We look forward to a wonderful year,

Emma Parnell,
Assistant Principal
Curriculum/PYP

FROM THE ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL WELLBEING

WELCOME TO 2026 AT MENPS!

INTRODUCTION TO WELLBEING FOR 2026

I hope all families enjoyed a restful break and that our students are returning with excitement, and I am sure a few nerves, for the year ahead. The beginning of the school year is a time of fresh starts, establishing routines, and growing independence; at MENPS we are committed to supporting every child through this transition.

Student wellbeing sits at the centre of everything we do at MENPS. When children feel safe, connected, and emotionally supported, they are better prepared to engage in learning and build positive relationships. Throughout the year, students will continue to develop their social and emotional skills through classroom learning (Circle time, Respectful Relationships), whole-school wellbeing initiatives (Stop, Go, Tell strategy, playleaders and peer support mediators), and targeted individual support where needed through small group intervention and 1:1 support from the school Social Worker.

We are also going to be offering a range of social and emotional learning incursions across the year. These incursions will provide students with engaging, age-appropriate opportunities to strengthen skills such as emotional regulation, resilience, empathy, problem-solving, and respectful relationships. Delivered by external providers including Life Ed, Courage to Care and Kelly Nash, these are aligned with our wellbeing focus of building resilience and social skills, complement the work already happening in classrooms and help reinforce important messages in an engaging way.

We know that wellbeing is strongest when schools and families work in partnership. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions or if your child would benefit from additional support. I look forward to working closely with students, staff and families to make this a positive, safe and successful year for everyone.

Until next time…

Lou Atkinson,
Assistant Principal
Wellbeing

Schools in Category 3 on the Bushfire At-Risk Register

School preparations for the bushfire season

Each year, we undertake a range of activities to ensure the safety of our school and to prepare for bushfires and grassfires.

An important part of this process is communicating to parents what will happen when certain fire danger ratings are issued to help ensure the safety of students and staff.

Our school has been identified as being at risk of bushfire or grassfire and is a Category 3 school.

Our school will **close** on a day forecasted as **Catastrophic fire danger rating** in our **fire district.**

Closure of the school due to a Catastrophic fire danger rating will be enacted when the Bureau of Meteorology forecast and related public safety messaging are confirmed. Due to uncertainties in the forecast, the timing of this confirmation may vary. Information regarding potential or confirmed Catastrophic fire danger days will be communicated to you via Compass.

It is also important to be aware that:

- No one will be on site on days where the school is closed due to a forecast Catastrophic day.
- Out-of-school-hours care will also be cancelled on these days.
- All bus routes that travel through the Catastrophic area will be cancelled.
- School camps will be cancelled if a Catastrophic fire danger rating day is forecast for fire weather district in which the camp is located, or if the travel involves passing through areas that have Catastrophic fire danger.

As part of preparing our school for the fire season, we have updated and completed our Emergency Management Plan and carry out relevant preparedness actions such as maintenance works.

What can families and the school community do to help us prepare?

- Ensure we have your current contact details, including your mobile phone numbers.
- Keep in touch with us by reading our newsletters, checking our website, by talking to your child's teacher or any other member of the teaching staff about our emergency management plan.
- Make sure your family's bushfire survival plan is up-to-date and includes alternative care arrangements if our school is closed due to Catastrophic fire danger. Further information can be found on the CFA's website.
- Action your family's bushfire survival plan if your own triggers are met. Our school community may be spread out across many areas and some families may be at higher risk than others. Your family's safety is critical, so please let us know if you are actioning your bushfire survival plan and if your children will be absent on these days.

We respectfully acknowledge the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Victoria and pay respect to the ongoing living cultures of First Peoples.

- If your child is old enough, talk to them about bushfires and your family's bushfire survival plan.

Families are encouraged to action their Bushfire Survival Plan on Catastrophic fire danger rating days in their district. The safest option is to leave the night before or early on the morning of the Catastrophic day. **On such days, children should never be left at home alone or in the care of older children.**

You can find more information on emergencies, warnings and preparedness actions here:

- Vic Emergency app – that can be downloaded on your android and iOS mobile devices
- Vic Emergency Hotline (1800 226 226)
- Website https://emergency.vic.gov.au
- Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/vicemergency)
- Twitter (https://twitter.com/vicemergency)
- ABC local radio, Sky News and other emergency broadcasters

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the department's policy?

The Department of Education annually assesses the fire risk of all schools and early childhood services with the support of the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO). They are allocated a category of risk (categories 0 to 6). Schools and services that are Categories 0-3 are published on the Bushfire At-Risk Register (BARR). Schools at some risk of bushfire and grassfire are published on the Category 4 List.

The department's Bushfire and Grassfire Preparedness Policy requires all schools and early childhood services on the BARR and the Category 4 List to close when a Catastrophic fire danger rating day is forecast in their fire weather district. All school bus routes which travel in or through a district with Catastrophic fire danger must also be cancelled.

The policy also requires that schools at the highest risk of bushfire (those in Categories 0, 1 and 2 of the Bushfire At-Risk Register) enact pre-emptive action plans based on the fire danger forecast for their Local Government Area (LGA).

Who issues fire danger forecasts?

The Bureau of Meteorology (BoM) provides public fire danger rating forecasts each day of the fire danger period using fire weather district areas. In Victoria, there are 9 fire weather districts, which are based on Local Government Area boundaries.

The department uses these forecasts when supporting schools to enact their pre-emptive bushfire actions plans.