

Sunday October 4th, 2009

**Letter from the Alpine School Campus (Altitude 1600m)  
Arrival day!**

Dear Parents, Guardians, Families and students.

Welcome to the community of the Alpine School Campus for our Term 4, nine week program.

During the course of the next nine weeks we shall be writing to you several times. These letters will also be posted on our website and a student blog will be enabled for you to see and read about current and daily events. The content of the communications is to assist you with your side of the Alpine School Campus Experience. The letters will not necessarily deal with individuals and their achievements, but more about the living and learning process all students will be undertaking. We want to provide you with some early reminders and information for your arrival day and to perhaps help you on your return and continued journey. We hope to post images on the website from time-to-time as well.

The first and primary contact for the care and welfare of your son or daughter will be the Alpine School Campus Liaison teacher. He or she will introduce themselves to you today and also go through the medical forms. Later in week two, he or she will give you a phone call to share how your son or daughter is coping in their new environment here. Moreover, in every instance (be it to do with communication from staff or your child), no news is good news!

The health, care and wellbeing of your son/daughter while with us is our primary consideration. In the situation that your son/daughter requires a visit to the doctor or requires medication out of what is *normal*, a Alpine School Campus staff member will contact you. We will normally ask you to talk directly with the doctor and usually your son/daughter as appropriate.

Communication with your son or daughter at the Alpine School Campus is discussed in depth in the Parents Information Book. However, can I stress the incredible value of the **written letter**, snail-mail delivered, even in this age of email? We will encourage your son or daughter to write, and I am sure you will enjoy the narratives you will receive via email, although experience tells us frequency will diminish over time. Email will become available after students receive their laptops later this first week. Each student has a download and email-box limit and, despite our counselling, guidance and directions, many students exceed that limit and omit to clear their mail boxes, preventing emails. Please be patient, as this is a “resource management” skill we assist students in developing!

Many of you may have noted our web presence. Our new web page format is ready to peruse in the cyber world. Information is intended on being current and the website very user friendly. The address is [www.alpineschool.vic.edu.au](http://www.alpineschool.vic.edu.au)

Students are involved in a number of important processes this term; discovering their learning preferences, expeditions, selection of the teams for later terms, hosting a range of guests, developing a personal passport of their learning, presentation of their learning and ultimately a Community Learning Project presentation night for important school and community leaders.

Can we again advise that the following items are **strictly not permitted** at the Alpine School Campus and parents/guardians should arrange to take them home with them if their son or daughter has inadvertently packed them? Retaining some of these items may compromise his/her ability to remain in the program.

Pocket money

We can take no responsibility for the security of money that could be lost or stolen, so ask students not to have it! The Alpine School Campus shop will cater for student needs through an account. Students administer the shop with supervision and assistance from staff.

#### Personal Radios/Walkman/CD Players/MP3 Players

A CD/Radio player is supplied in the classroom area via the desktop and interactive whiteboard. Due to licensing issues, music CD's are not permitted to be shared from the Laptops or onto the school network.

#### Personal Electronic Games/Software

Not permitted to be loaded on our hardware. We believe these are very isolating and we have genuine licensing legal ramifications in our school setting.

#### Personal electrical appliances such as hairdryers, hair wands/straighteners and curlers, battery chargers.

These pose safety and ownership issues, as well as potential hair hygiene concerns.

Students need to talk to staff about their needs, usage and certificate/compliance for electrical safety.

#### Mobile Phones

There is an increased problem with security of calls, as well as access security of mobile phones. We encourage students to solve issues here rather than rely on communication elsewhere. Communication is available through email as well as written letters.

#### Incense or Candles

These are health hazards for some people, as well as being a safety hazard in our building.

#### Aerosol and Pump Pak containers

Deodorant, insect repellent, perfume and so on. These containers do not fit well with the rubbish and recycling program at the Snowy River Campus. We like you are concerned about misuse of propellants by inhalation or ignition.

#### Nail polish.

This is a health hazard as some people are allergic to the fumes from these products. Nail polish products can also be a safety hazard as they are flammable.

#### Cigarettes, illicit or non-prescription drugs and alcohol.

Possession, use or attempts to obtain these will result in immediate withdrawal from the program and the continuation in the program is not guaranteed. In the past these activities resulted in involuntary removal from the program and transport home at parent's expense.

We welcome and encourage the use of USB flash drives/memory sticks/portable drives for students to save work, data and images. HOWEVER, they must be free and empty of games and movie files. This protects our network from both copyright infringement and virus dangers. If unsure of the appropriateness of any music, please hand these to Staff on arrival and we will be check them with your son's/daughter' teacher at the Alpine School Campus.

We encourage a strong sense of stewardship, ownership and responsibility for the school, which ultimately becomes the students' home. While every effort is taken to assist students in making appropriate decisions, if students choose to do something that result in damage to Alpine School Campus property, **they will incur a cost for repair**. This is especially so with Laptop computers which tend to be fragile and portable. We encourage you to have last words of **“have a great time but please don't do anything silly”** before you depart!

It is normal for students (and parents) to experience “separation anxiety”, or homesickness, in the first week(s) of their experience here and maybe longer, maybe less. Please be assured this is normal and the Alpine School staff team is particularly vigilant and experienced in assisting students to cope with this emotion. For the most part this emotion will diminish. Please do not hesitate to call us, in confidence, if you feel in any way like this. While we make no promises about you being able to talk directly with your son or daughter, and often it only exacerbates the issues and indeed I strongly discourage it except in individual extreme situations, we are happy to be a listener to your experience if you require.

With every good wish.



Mark Reeves, BA (Rec.), Grad Dip (OE & PE), Postgrad. Dip (Organizational Change), MACE.  
Principal.  
On behalf of the School Staff team.



Russell Shem  
Campus Principal  
Alpine School Campus