



Wednesday March 14th, 2018

Letter from the Alpine School Campus - Altitude about 1600m!

Dear Parents, Guardians and Families.

Hello again! We trust you all enjoyed the visiting weekend a week or so back, despite the long distances involved for many of you? The weekend was for you. We have heard many varied and mixed reports from your sons and daughters about the weekend, but more good than otherwise, which is totally normal! Some said, "It was great to see my family, but I couldn't wait to get back to the Alpine School!" You need to be assured that the time of **real** settlement at the Alpine School Campus is now happening for your son or daughter. Paradoxically, the time of departure is also rapidly approaching. I am sure you will notice the difference in your son or daughter between the recent visit and the conclusion on Wednesday March 28th.

The time following Visiting Weekend is, in our experience, a time when the communication may further decrease, perhaps after an initial "flurry" of correspondence just after the weekend. I am not sure if that will be the case with you? It is almost as if students need to see their parents again just to make sure everything is still okay at home so they can have "permission" to really immerse themselves in the final weeks. That lack of communication is perhaps one aspect of the "immersion". Be assured in our experience, it is normal and it is not about deliberately keeping you uninformed! For those of us who have experienced the monosyllabic "grunt" responses from teenagers (you know the ones, Q: "how was your day at school?" A: "Good" in a muffled, sandwich-eating way as more food is grazed from the fridge...), ANY form of communication is a bonus! No news is, truly & often, good news! If there is an issue, we will definitely call you!

We are looking forward to the individual achievements students will describe with their "Presentation of Personal Learning Project" and in their "SWAY Portfolio". Their initial assessment was a mid-term 'check in' review, undertaken with a peer of their choice and a staff member. This is a further development and reinforcement of the Australian Curriculum F-10 Rubric sheet your son/daughter has developed in cooperation with their Alpine School liaison teacher. We urge you to explore the learning with your son or daughter, as some of you have started during the visiting weekend. Our students are very impressive young people, and we have such faith in their and our future from meeting them. In the next week, the teamwork and drive in the students will be vital as they really begin to plan and work on their Community Learning Project (CLP). It may seem apparently late to begin, but it has already been worked on, through the likes of the team-building and solution-finding processes they have experienced to date, among other things. We find it takes students up to 3 to 4 weeks to really settle in to the Alpine School, not just the living, but the way we all learn and work here. It may also take that long for your son or daughter to settle into home again.

Learning, REAL learning is hard work. It is hard work because it challenges what we already believe and know. Teachers have traditionally been great question askers, but unfortunately, we tended to only ask the questions we knew the answer to! In designing their own CLP, students are really making tasks we don't know the answer to, nor do they, until it emerges after the process of project work. That is tiring, as are the processes of solution finding and resolution of different opinions, inevitable in a team setting such as this.

The three-day expeditions are underway this week. You can see the program for the term on our website via the <http://www.alpineschool.vic.edu.au/alpine/> page then clicking on the program timetable link. The trips are planned and determined by the weather conditions and group ability. Alpine camping presents real challenges and as mentioned, the students have learnt much from their initial camping experience prior to visiting weekend.

The program following the visiting weekend deliberately focuses upon the concepts of separation, mourning and overcoming aspects of adversity. Many of the challenges of the program are used as metaphors for the part of their "Portfolios" dealing with risk and challenge.

Lastly, in preparation for the departure day (Wednesday March 28th) the broad outline of the morning proceedings at the Alpine School will be as follows....

Please take note of the Wednesday March 28th running sheet as per below....

9.00am – 9.30am

- Alpine School staff will hold a departure ceremony for students

9.30am – 10.00am

- **School doors open for parents to arrive** and reacquaint with their children

10.00am – 11.00am

- All parents and students meet into dining room for student presentations.
- Student Presentations will involve a summary of their CLP as a group (1 minute), then each individual student will talk about their most important learning from the program that they will take away with them to use in the future.
- Show the end of term movie.
- Staff to read a 'farewell story'

11.00am

- All parents and students depart.

NOTE: If you arrive after 10.00am, please enter the school building quietly as presentations will be in progress.

As the departure day rapidly approaches, some parents and families may wish to make arrangements for their son's/daughter's travel off the mountain with other families. In the past, some families have mentioned buses and other arrangements. Can I remind parents that **if** you intend making this arrangement, that you please advise our Business Manager, Sally Doyle at the Alpine School of your intentions.

We look forward to seeing you reunited with your son or daughter on the morning of Wednesday, March 28th between 9.30am – 10.00am in the morning. As always, please travel safely.

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