



From the Principal

Welcome back to the 2023 School Year

We welcome a few new staff this year. Mrs. Valerie Tweedie will be taking the Year 5/6 Class and Mr. William Davis will be teaching German across the school. Mrs. Annie Patterson will be teaching, two days a week in the Foundation/1/2 class as Mr. James Hillard takes on the Primary Coordinator roll.

We also welcome Michelle Hensel to the front office where she will be undertaking administration duties.

Hopefully this year will be the first in a long time where school and learning will not be disrupted by COVID. However, it also means that all of those extra-curricular activities will be going ahead as normal and so first term will be a busy one. Swimming Carnival is on Friday this week and our Athletics Carnival is a fortnight later. These will then be followed by the regional and statewide carnivals. It is critical that students are here as much as possible for those days when normal teaching and learning is occurring so that they are able to keep up with their classmates and maintain a continuity of learning that is so essential for success at school.

There is still COVID in the community so if your child does show symptoms please keep them home and get them tested as soon as possible.

Change of classes

There have been a number of students who we were expecting to return to Coomandook Area School who have not done so and as a result, our funding is less than we anticipated when we formulated our budget last year. In response to this, we have looked at how we staff our classes and have combined some of

CALENDAR DATES-TERM 1

February

- 10th CAS Swimming Carnival
- 20th Interschool Swimming Carnival at Murray Bridge
- 24th CAS Athletics Carnival
- 27th Governing Council AGM

March

- 3rd River Mallee Districts Swimming
- 10th PUPIL FREE DAY
- 14th Interschool Athletics Carnival at Karoonda
- 15th / 27th NAPLAN
- 31st River Mallee Districts Athletics Carnival

April

- 3rd / 5th Year 11/12 Surf Camp
- 7th PUBLIC HOLIDAY – GOOD FRIDAY
- 10th PUBLIC HOLIDAY – EASTER MONDAY
- 14th END OF TERM 1 – Early Dismissal

May

- 1st START OF TERM 2
- 5th Murray Mallee Swimming

our Year 7 and 8 subjects as these are both small cohorts. By combining some classes and reworking our timetable we have managed to create a solution that provides the best teaching and learning outcome for our students within the constraints of our budget. We have Peter Jarvis here for the first five weeks covering those extra lessons so it gives teachers time to plan for the combined classes before Week 5.



Mobile Phones

The Department for Education's student use of mobile phones and personal devices policy has been updated.

The updated statewide policy will ensure we help promote:

- safe environments with reduced negative impacts from inappropriate use of devices at school, such as cyberbullying or exposure to harmful content
- classroom environments where teachers can teach and students can learn free from distractions caused by personal use of devices
- use of breaks as quality time away from screens, encouraging physical activity, play and meaningful face-to-face connections.

This means very little change from our previous policy, which states that mobile phones should be off and away during school hours, unless the teacher specifically wants students to use them for a lesson. This includes recess and lunchtime. I have spoken to all students and reminded them that if they choose to bring a device to school, they are responsible for its security. All students have access to a locker that can be locked with a padlock. This is the best place for their phones to be stored during the day.

We will be reviewing our current policy to ensure that it aligns completely with the Department's Policy, and any changes required will be in place by the Term 3 deadline.

Hats

Just a reminder that in Term 1 students are required to wear a sun smart, broad brimmed hat that protects their face, scalp, neck and ears from sun exposure whenever they are outside. Caps are not suitable for this

purpose. If they do not have a suitable hat, they will be required to stay in a shaded area during lunch and recess. Hats are not to be worn in class.

Movement Badges

Teachers have expressed concerns about students being out of class without permission. To manage this issue we have instigated a system of badges that teachers give to students when they have permission to be out of class to go to the toilet, or to the office etc. so that it is very easy for another teacher to see that they have permission. Students out of class during lesson times without a badge will be challenged and may be required to catch up on missed learning during lunchtime.

Governing Council AGM

The school's Annual General Meeting will be held on the 27th February in the Library Meeting Room at 7:30pm. Please come along and consider running for a position on the Governing Council.

Governing Council Report 2022

Coomandook Area School Governing Council works closely with the CAS Parents & Friends, SRC and the Principal. Being involved in the Governing Council is a great way to learn how and why decisions are made that affect student learning.

It gives parents an opportunity to voice their opinions on certain policies and procedures and on certain committees – Uniform, Bus, IT, Assets & Grounds.

We have discussions around educational programs that staff are interested in applying, the use and maintenance of our Assets and Grounds, and most importantly, approve the school budgets.



For the last couple of years we have struggled for numbers at our meetings so we have approached the Minister to accept some changes to our Constitution.

This will mean in the future that there will be less seats available to represent parent's interests but hopefully this new constitution will create a more streamlined way of fulfilling the Governing Council duties. Thank you to all our councillors for their time and dedication to our school.

The Education Department recently supplied new templates for many policies so GC and Staff worked together to fill in the gaps, discussing for where we would like the focus of our school to be. Assets and Grounds committee won a grant to update the Science lab, but unfortunately our current building is not quite up to standard so we have done some shuffling around of class rooms. This is still a work in progress and if you are interested please consider joining the GC to understand what this is going to look like in the future.

Our active A&G committee worked with the groundsmen all year with new playgrounds and gardens. We held a working bee last year and thanks to all who came.

We supported SRC this year with their amazing fundraising and it was great to see such an enthusiastic group working to create opportunities and resources for their peers. The uniform committee works with the school and hopes to build a school team-spirit by introducing new items for purchases.

The bus committee has met a few times and has sent a communication to the Education Minister regarding the availability- or lack

thereof - of transport to the local school of right. We hope to highlight this issue for rural

areas and look forward to trying to achieve the best outcome for local families.

Our parent survey asked families what they thought were the best things about Coomandook Area School and also the things that could be improved. One of the things for improvement was that students could have more opportunities for camps and excursions. Staff have taken this on board and have made every effort to create these events, even in these challenging COVID times. When this survey comes out please make an effort to share your opinions with those who are happy to try to accommodate the needs of the school community.

At our last meeting, we reviewed the schools interim budget and the Site Improvement Plan. Governing Council is excited to help enable and encourage the Staff and students at Coomandook Area School achieve the goals set in this plan.

Please consider attending the AGM, early 2023, when the School Annual Report will be provided and comparisons will be made against the goals set in the Site Improvement plan and what we actually achieved and how, as a school, we got there. There will be six councillor seats to be filled.

Thanks you again to all families who take the time to support the volunteer positions at the school and look forward to working together in 2023.



Coomandook Area School Governing Council Elections

The Governing Council welcomes everyone to the 2023 school year. In particular, welcome to the new students and families who have come to Coomandook Area School.

Annual General Meeting is to be held on Monday, 27th February at 7.30 p.m.

All school community members, parents and care givers are invited to attend.

Chairpersons report, Principals report & the Finance report will be provided and the 2023 Governing Council will be elected.

The following Governing Council Members will be continuing their two year term in 2023 - Karen Schmerl, Marie Peterson, Cristy Spry, Jane Watson.

The following Governing Council Members are retiring and are eligible for re-election- Fluer Kleinig, Louise Pitt, Leslie Barney, Ryan McArdle, Winnie Jones & Emily Thomas.

We thank those not returning for their time and commitment.

There are 4 x two year terms and 2 x one year term vacancies available.

Nominations are preferred in writing or can be provided verbally on the night.

Nomination forms are available from the front office.

If you would like to know more about becoming a Governing Councillor, further information is available from Governing Council Members or the front office.

We are looking forward to a productive, successful year in 2023.

Other Important Information

SCHOOL FEES

Material & Services Charges Tax Invoices will be sent out this week to all families. Included with the tax invoice will be M & S Rebate Credit Notes, school card information and payment options. If you have any questions please speak with the Finance Officer.

FAMILY INFORMATION

When any of your family information changes please let the front office know so our records are up to date. Whether it is a change in phone number, address or emergency contacts for your children.

ABSENTEES

Please be mindful if your child is going to be away from school, parents must contact the front office staff with the reason for the absence before home group at 9am. For planned absences the school may be notified via planned absence forms included in the school newsletter. For longer planned absence an exemption form is need to be completed prior to the absence. If you have not notified the school of your child/ren absences you will be sent an SMS requesting a response.