

Alstonville High School Newsletter

Developing future citizens and leaders of the community – life long learning!



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Michael Coutts-Trotter Visits Alstonville High School

On Tuesday afternoon the Director General of Education for NSW visited Alstonville High School. During his visit Mr Coutts-Trotter met with school executive staff. He also spent time with Grace Skehan, Luke Myles, Will Jacobsen and

Hope Skehan – our School Captains. They discussed their plans for 2010 and talked to Mr Coutts-Trotter about his position.

The Director General met with representatives of our Digital Education Revolution team comprising Craig Groves, Leone Chapman and Allison Larrescy to find out about our initiatives to successfully introduce laptop computers into our classrooms. He then visited a year 9 Commerce class taught by Bruce Duckett and a student from Southern Cross University Matt Larsen and observed the students using the laptop computers.

He finished his visit with a brief tour of the school observing the construction of our new CAPA facility.

Mr Coutts-Trotter visited our school because he was impressed by what he knew about the school's long record of educational achievement. He also briefly met with Mr Chate who attended the same High School as Mr Coutts-Trotter.

Optional Senior Attendance System

This year Alstonville High School has introduced a new roll marking system across the school. The use of barcode identification for all students has decreased the time taken and improved the efficiency associated with the normal roll marking time.

One part of the new system which is optional, is the use of biometric finger scanning identification for quick identification of students entering and leaving the school. We believe that this could be beneficial for our Senior Students as they work on a flexible timetable where their entry and leaving times vary daily. It is important that parents and students realise that **this system is optional** and will only be offered to Senior Students. There is no in intention of doing away with the traditional roll mark time.

Our school has selected a biometric finger scanning identification program because it is fast, accurate, cost effective and non-intrusive. All fingerprints are unique and that makes them ideal for personal identification.

How does finger scanning identification work?

Using a finger scanner, the software scans the fingerprint to create and store individual templates of unique points that identify each student. When a student requires a pass for leaving or entering the school, the software again scans the finger and looks for a match in the database.

What about my child's privacy?

Although the computer software scans the finger for personal identification, **it does not store a copy of the fingerprint.** Instead, the computer program creates a template of the unique fingerprint characteristics. This insures the privacy of each student. **AT NO TIME IS A FINGERPRINT IMAGE STORED. NO FINGERPRINTS CAN BE RECREATED OR DELIVERED TO ANY AGENCY – GOVERNMENTAL OR OTHERWISE!**

When will the finger scanning take place?

So the system is in place for 2010 we intended to scan each year 10 student between the end of the School Certificate exams and the end of term 4. The scanning process takes less than one minute for each student.

It is important to us that your child's experience in school is educational and rewarding. We hope you will find this new system safe, easy, accurate and efficient. If you have any questions or wish your child not to be involved please do not hesitate to phone the school on 66 285222. Your feedback and comments are valued.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS 2009

9 th – 11 th November	School Certificate
13 th November	School Certificate
19 th November	Year 12 Formal
19 th – 20 th November	Peer Support Training
24 th November	Year 6 to 7 Orientation Day
25 th November	P&C Meeting
30 th November	Year 10 Dreamworld
3 rd December	Year 10 Dinner Dance and Assembly
8 th December	Year 7, 8, 9 and 11 Presentation Day
16 th December	Last Day Term 4 Students
17 th December	Staff Development Day
18 th December	Staff Development Day
27 th January 2010	Staff Development Day
28 th January	First Day Yrs 7, 11 and 12
29 th January	First Day Yrs 8, 9 and 10

**DON'T FORGET TO PURCHASE YOUR TICKET
IN THE
ALSTONVILLE HIGH SCHOOL
HONDA JAZZ RAFFLE**

A great opportunity to win a Honda Jazz car in a raffle with proceeds supporting the new Creative and Performing Arts facility at Alstonville High School.

The car is: Honda Jazz GLI Hatch, 1.3L 5 speed manual. Plus safety pack. Featuring ABS brakes and 6 air bags.

The Tickets:

\$10 each or 3 for \$25 – These tickets will be available at the Front Office of the school. They will also be for sale at the school Canteen before school and at Lunch 2.

Principals Report Continued

A National Conversation with Principals

On Tuesday and Wednesday this week I will be in Canberra taking part in a forum arranged by the Hon Julia Gillard MP, Deputy Prime Minister. I will be one of nine Principals from NSW Public Secondary Schools attending this forum. The invitation to attend the forum reads (in part) as follows:

"I look forward to meeting with you and commencing a conversation about the opportunities and challenges that you face as a principal and about how we take forward a shared agenda to lift the achievement of all our students.

As a leader implementing change and supporting student achievement in a local school, I recognise the importance of your role and your voice. This forum is an opportunity for you to have a say in the implementation of national reforms and to play an important role in discussing future directions for school education."

I look forward to the opportunity that this forum might offer to express my concerns about plans to publish via a website, information derived from student performance in the new NAPLAN testing regime. NAPLAN tests were designed to be a test that provided a snapshot of student performance and were diagnostic in purpose. The idea that these could form the basis for league tables 'ranking school performance' concerns me greatly. I have not seen any data from any research anywhere in the world that has shown that school performance has improved as a result of these practices. On a more positive note I will welcome the opportunity to have an input into discussions about the formation of a national curriculum, increased funding for public schools and a nationwide system of teacher accreditation with the associated articulation of a set of standards related to educational leadership.

Year 10 Students Sit School Certificate Exams

This week students from year 10 sit their School Certificate exams. These are very important exams because they are the final formal state-wide exams that the students will undertake as members of the junior school. Year 10 students sit exams in Literacy, Mathematics, Science, Australian Studies – Geography, Australian Studies – History and Computer Studies. We wish our year 10 students all the best.

New legislation has raised the minimum school leaving age to 17 years of age and this is going to impact upon this group of year 10 students. Although they will be completing School Certificate exams next week students will be staying on at school until December. They will be starting work that prepares them for year 11, completing the compulsory All Your Own Work course, finalising some year 10 subject work and starting some introductory work revising essential material and skills for year 11 Preliminary Course.

A group of about 6 students will also be participating in additional Work Placements to help prepare them for TVET courses, or school based traineeships or apprenticeships. Year 10 students must attend school until after their Presentation Assembly and Dinner Dance. Failure to do this could jeopardise their School Certificate.

You Can Support Alstonville High School

Volunteers from the P&C are selling raffle tickets for a Honda Jazz to raise money for the CAPA performance space that we

are building. Support from the wider community has been very strong but the response from within the school community has not been as strong. **We really need your help – please buy some raffle tickets in the car raffle!** Tickets can be purchased through the front office. If you are able to sell some tickets for us please contact the school and ask to leave a message for Margaret Rigby who is coordinating the raffle on behalf of the school.

Newsletter Delivered via email

Last term we commenced delivering the school newsletter via email. If you wish to have the newsletter delivered by email please contact the school and provide your details and we will arrange to email the newsletter to you. The school newsletter is also available from the school website and also from the newsagents in Wollongbar and Alstonville. We also distribute paper copies to students during roll call. We will continue to do this for the remainder of this term. In 2010 we will only be distributing paper copies to those families who specifically request a paper copy and will be moving to distribute most of our copies of the newsletter via email or through the website.

Sustainability Committee

The Alstonville High School Sustainability Committee met at the end of term 3 and will continue to meet this term. Our next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday 17th November at 5.00pm in the staff common room. The Sustainability Committee is looking for more volunteers from the student body, parents/carers and the wider community. If you would like to help this group please come along to this meeting.

School Uniform Reminder

Canvas or cloth shoes are not permitted as part of our school uniform. We have been dealing with an increased number of students wearing these shoes to school recently. **We ask for parent and carer support in relation to this matter – please do not allow students to wear canvas shoes to school.** Students who persist in wearing incorrect footwear will find themselves being disciplined for persistent disobedience according to the school Welfare and Discipline Policy. We would hope to avoid this happening by having students wear the correct school uniform.

Supporting Local Businesses

Recently we held a meeting with the Police Youth Liaison Officer and representatives from Coles in Alstonville. We were concerned about the number of students from Alstonville High School who were going into Coles in the morning before school and on Wednesday afternoons, and the unruly behaviour of some of these students. We will be working together to ensure that this kind of behaviour is not a regular occurrence. Students, parents and carers are reminded that local businesses do not have to serve school students between the hours of 9.00am and 3.30pm unless they have a leave pass from the school they attend. Coles will be applying this policy and will be supported by the school and police. We would remind students that on Wednesdays they are to go directly to and from sport, and should not go via the main street or the Plaza. They should not visit shops on the way to or from sport. Students may not be admitted to shops (particularly Coles) before 3.30 on a Wednesday (or on other day) unless they are senior students with permission or unless students have a leave pass. Thank you for your co-operation – the vast majority of our students do the right thing and this message is simply a reminder about what we are doing to ensure that our relationships with the local community continues to be a positive one.

A Reminder About Mobile Phones

Students who bring mobile phones to school are expected to have them turned off from the start of school until the end of the school day. Parents who need to contact students during the school day can do this by ringing the school. Students who do not follow the school rules will have phones confiscated and returned at the end of the school day in the first instance. Ongoing problems will require parents' or carers' intervention by way of collection of the phone from school. Persistent disobedience will also be dealt with through the school's normal discipline procedures.

David Silcock
Principal

RRISK – REDUCE RISK – INCREASE STUDENT KNOWLEDGE

Parties - Will You Allow Alcohol at Your Adolescent's Party?

Many parents and carers will be helping young people in their family celebrate birthdays, special occasions, finishing their school year or leaving school.

It is time for careful planning so that everyone enjoys themselves. Some parents may not be aware of their responsibilities in relation to supplying alcohol to under 18's.

Regardless of where the function will be held, it is against the law to obtain for, or supply alcohol to anyone under 18 years of age - even at private parties. This activity is often called secondary supply of alcohol - an offence that carries a maximum penalty of \$5,500 per offence or \$11,000 and 12 months prison in very serious circumstances. On the spot fines of \$550 can also be issued by police.

This information comes to you from the NSW Department of Liquor, Gaming and Racing. Check their website for further information:

www.olgr.nsw.gov.au/liquor_info_young_people_2nd_party.asp

Points to consider:

- ◆ What do you do if an underage guest arrives with alcohol?
- ◆ What do you do if students arrive intoxicated?
- ◆ What do you do if your alcohol has been consumed during the course of the party?
- ◆ How can you plan a successful party that addresses these issues?

It is much easier to plan and control what happens at your next party if you follow some simple guidelines. Here are some suggestions that can make a difference:

- ◆ Ideally RSVP invitations should be issued, giving as many details as possible about times of starting and finishing, the nature of the party, a dress code, how it will be supervised and how guests will return home. Indicate guests will be required to bring invitation for party entry.
- ◆ On the invitation, suggest guest parents contact host parents to fine tune details and discuss any concerns. This will ensure parents are not pressured against their better judgement and gives everyone permission to talk about supervision, safety, alcohol and drug issues etc.
- ◆ Have only one entrance or exit to make it easier to control who attends your party.
- ◆ Guest lists should be kept to a manageable size. If guest numbers are large, ask other parents to assist with supervision or consider hiring security personnel.

- ◆ Host parents need to be aware of appropriate return transport for guests and/or provide overnight, supervised accommodation.
- ◆ Make it clear in advance it is an alcohol free party. (Parents are reminded of the NSW Office of Liquor, Gaming and Racing penalties cited earlier).
- ◆ Alcohol at parties is not easily supervised. Alcohol can easily be consumed in advance or mixed with soft drinks prior to the party. Alcohol may be left outside in cars or hidden in bushes. Although these problems can occur, they are less likely if the party is well supervised.
- ◆ Confiscate BYO alcohol from under 18's. Return it to their parents or carers.
- ◆ If guests are a mixture of under and over 18's, there is less control over the consumption of alcohol. A nominated adult should serve alcohol only.
- ◆ Actively serve non-salty food throughout the party. This will slow down alcohol consumption for those who are drinking.
- ◆ Attractive non-alcoholic drinks should always be actively provided. For example, "Mocktails", non-alcoholic punches, soft drinks, fruit juices, coffee, tea and of course, water.
- ◆ If under 18's consume alcohol or other drugs during the party, their parents should be contacted and asked to collect them. Parents should be advised of unacceptable behaviour.
- ◆ Be firm about excluding gatecrashers. If admittance is by invitation only, gatecrashers are less likely. Prior to the party, encourage students not to broadcast party details in the school community, via the Internet or mobile phone. If gatecrashers arrive, ask them to leave immediately or tell them the police will be called.
- ◆ Parents should be present and provide active supervision throughout the party.
- ◆ If you are planning a large party, it may be a good idea to employ security guards.

Seven days before your party, complete the accompanying Safe Party Notification Form and forward to your local Police station. Have emergency numbers handy and call police before the situation gets out of control. Advise neighbours of your party as common courtesy.

Useful websites to help you plan a successful party and avoid problems:

www.det.nsw.edu.au/media/downloads/languagesupport/alcohol/acs_english.pdf

Alcohol: celebrations and supply information for parents

For safe party strategies

http://police.nsw.gov.au/community_issues/youth/safe_party_strategy

For safe Party strategies and registration forms

www.celebratesafely.com.au

This website has a party checklist, games and competitions on how to party safely for young people and information for parents.

http://www.youthsafe.org/safe_celebrate.shtml

This website has current safe partying information

Look for information about the RRISK Program and risk taking at our new website www.rrisk.com.au

Chris Osland/Head Teacher PD/H/PE

Year 12 Hospitality Crockenbouche

The final practical lesson for Year 12 Hospitality students was very exciting. Team effort and hard work resulted in a beautiful Crockenbouche or European Wedding Cake. This was their final creation after two hard years of practical lessons, showing all their skill, creativity and competencies. Well done!
Mrs Grace/Hospitality Teacher



Melbourne Cup Staff Luncheon

Year 11 Hospitality students experienced the pressures of catering for a crowd last Tuesday for the Melbourne Cup Staff Luncheon held at the school. A small, but enthusiastic class provided a buffet of hot and cold dishes for staff.
Mr Walker/Hospitality Teacher

