Welcome to the 2016 school year. I trust that all students and their families had a relaxing and enjoyable summer break.
I would like to extend a warm welcome to our new students, families and staff.

New Students:
Reception: Eli, Xander, Isabelle, Amber, Lily, Sonya, Max, Logan, Caitlyn and Scarlett.
Year 1: Levi & Stella
Year 6: Anthony
Year 7: Angus
Year 8: Gabrielle and Dillon
Year 11: Karsha

Staff:
Mrs Cherie Beech - Science and ICT
Miss Samantha Florance - HASS and English.
We also welcome back Mr Peter Carter - Mathematics and Science; following his Long Service Leave.

Unfortunately due to illness, Karen Bond has chosen to take leave for Term 1. In Karen’s absence, I will be the Principal. We are currently undertaking the process to fill other vacant positions, including the Deputy Principal role. I will advise the school community of any appointments when they are finalised. We are endeavouring to minimise the impact for students, however, I ask you to be aware that some changes to our Week 1 timetable may occur. Karen has included a piece in this newsletter and I am sure you will join me in wishing Karen a speedy and full recovery.

At the time of publication we have 192 students. 104 students are enrolled in the R to 6 section of the school and 88 students in the year 7 to 12 section. This figure is very close to the end of term 4, 2015 predicted number.

I would like to thank families and students for their efforts in ensuring that the full school uniform is being worn. At our Day 1 student assembly, it was fantastic to see almost all students in uniform. I remind families that the school dress code guidelines are available on the school website (http://www.ardas.sa.edu.au/) or in hard copy at the Front Office.

The proposed date for the AGM of the Governing Council is Monday 7th March. Confirmation of the date and information regarding the AGM will be provided in future newsletters.

Attendance remains on our Site Improvement Plan as in 2015 we failed to meet our 92% attendance target. While absence for illness or a significant family reason occur, there are still far too many absences that remain unexplained or are for family reasons that are in fact days off for a birthday, shopping or to attend a concert. Thank you to those families who always notify when their child is or will be absent and to those families that ensure exemption forms for a week or more of planned absence are completed. It would be appreciated if families could contact the school either prior to a planned absence or on the day of absence before 10:30am. If no contact is made with the school regarding absence, a text message, via the MGM Principal’s News
messaging service, will be sent informing the parent/carer of the student’s absence and requesting contact be made with the school.

I would ask all families to ensure that the school has your current phone number/s. If your contact details change during the school year, please update them through our Front Office.
The MGM messaging servicing will also be used to notify parents/families of other events. For example, on a catastrophic bushfire day, parents/carers of students using a school bus run will be informed via text message that the bus will not be running. The cancellation of the buses is a safety necessity.

Thank you to the families who responded to the Camps and Excursion survey which was conducted towards the end of 2015. Responses to the question: What do you see as the main purpose/s of a school camp included: to develop independence, extend learning opportunities outside of the school, attend a venue which relates to the years’ learning, with a mix of fun and educational activities and to spend time with friends.
The majority of responses favoured a maximum price of $100-$150. Many responses stated this would depend if there was a camp each year and also on the location of the camp.
In response to the question regarding the current cycle i.e. a camp each year in year 3-6 or a change to camp every 2 years in years 3-6, the majority of responses supported a camp each year.
In response to suggestions for camp venues, there was overwhelming support for the Illawonga campsite and Warradale (Adelaide). Other suggestions included: Victor Harbor, Adelaide Hills, Flinders Rangers, Clare, Burra and Canberra. When planning the AAS camp cycle our aim is to ensure that the camps are educationally based but have a mix of fun activities. A major priority is that they are affordable for families.

The AAS Camps and Excursion policy is currently being reviewed, with responses from the survey being considered during this process. As per the guidelines, parents will be notified of camps a term in advance. Excursions, including local walking excursions, will still be planned as required to support the current learning in classes; for example a visit to the Ardrossan Museum.

I remind families that the school day commences at 8:50am and concludes at 3:00pm. The Front Office and the yard open in the morning at 8:35am. The yard will not be supervised before 8:35am, so I ask that students not be in the yard before this time.
This year we have reintroduced afternoon Home group from 2.55pm-3pm. This time will be used predominately for distributing any notices and checking for the recording of Home Learning in diaries.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind families that the best way we can support students is for effective communication between the school and home and the home and school. Please do not hesitate to contact the school to discuss your child’s progress or to work through any concerns/ grievances you may have. Your first contact should be your child’s class or home group teacher. A good way to start this communication in 2016 is by attending Acquaintance Night on Tuesday 16th
February. The night will commence at 5.30pm with a BBQ (near the Gym), followed by R-6 Classrooms opening at 6pm to 7pm. We encourage 7-12 students and families to attend to meet with staff and other families, however, the 7-12 classrooms will not be open.

Next week, our year 7 students will participate in the Aquatic program at Port Vincent on 8th and 9th February. Students will travel to Port Vincent each day.

Swimming lessons for the Reception-Year 2 students are scheduled for Wednesday 10th February – Friday 12th February. This program will be conducted at Highview Holiday Village, with instructors Joy Birkin and Gabrielle Herd. Information, including consent forms and invoices for both programs were forwarded home on Monday. Please note the due dates for payments as no late payments will be accepted.

Late payments make it very difficult to finalise plans for events so in 2016 we will not be accepting late payments. I remind parents/carers that the option is available to negotiate payments in instalments. Please contact Dianna Honner (Business Manager), if you wish to use this option for a particular camp or excursion, as soon as you receive your invoice.

Leonie Peterson will be conducting the election of the SRC for 2016 during Week 1. I encourage all students to consider nominating for a leadership position.

Our School Captains were announced at the 2015 Presentation Night. I look forward to working with Mollie Rowntree & Calvin Perrie (Junior School Captains), Leah Rowe and Fergus Rowntree (Middle School Captains) and Hannah Goldsworthy and Georgia Kuhndt (Senior School Captains) and with the SRC throughout the year.

I congratulate the following students who were elected as House Captains for Yorke & Vincent this week.
Yorke: Georgia Kuhndt & Cole Nicholson-Kalme (Captains) Hannah Goldsworthy & Sebastian Lee (Vice Captains), Elisha Carter & Corey Abbott (Junior School Captains)
Vincent: Lesley Stratton & Brodie Haylock (Captains), Shania Badari & Logan Ames (Vice Captains), Ebony Wheare & Mitch Stone (Junior School Captains)

Our first whole school assembly will be held this Friday at 2.40pm in the Gym.

I look forward to seeing you at Acquaintance Night and working with you in 2016.

Kind Regards,

Margaret Roads
Principal