



School Council Update

June - Aug 2017

In This Issue

Council meeting insights

- Child Safety Standards
- School Costs
- What's next with Compass?
- Straight Grades for 2018
- School Camps
- Student Survey results
- Interschool events and communications
- Sustainability Building and Grounds activities
- Uniform updates
- Councilor Spotlight
- Who is on our School Council?
- Next meeting

2017 School Council Dates

1. 15th March
2. 10th May
3. 21st June
4. 16th August
5. 6th September
6. 18th October
7. 8th November

Contact Us

altona.ps@edumail.vic.gov.au

Winter planning for a beautiful spring!

Welcome to the APS school council update.

School grounds can look a bit worse for wear in Winter but not at APS! The recent working bee, painting of the vegie patch, new landscaping and planting of 50 new trees means the school is more than ready for Spring. School council played a role in each of these projects and we've been working on many behind the scenes actions also.

A big thank you to Bec for taking on the role of our minute taker this year, capturing all that we talk about isn't easy. Victoria thank you also for helping put this edition of the update together, there's so much to share Here's a quick update on who we are and what we've discussed at our June and August meetings...

Councilor Spotlight

Each issue we will feature some of our fantastic Councilors so you can learn more about us.



VICTORIA CUSHING

I've been a parent at APS for seven years, but it's taken until now to get involved in school council. I'd always been interested in putting my hand up but to be honest, I didn't feel I had much to offer.

What I've realised in my short time on council however, is that everyone has a valuable contribution to make.

So if getting involved is something you're considering, don't hold back for seven years like I did!

Our son Angus (Bonnici) is a current Grade 4 student while Finn graduated from Grade 6 last year. I'm especially interested in sustainability, recycling and reducing my use of plastics, but I'm also highly experienced at killing worm farms (I drowned them), a forgetter of my Keep Cup, and if you see Angus with a plastic sandwich bag, you know we've had a rough morning. It's a work in progress.

I work part time as a communications advisor and just for a bit of fun, also have MS. I am very grateful to the school, especially our wonderful admin staff, who have supported our family through all sorts of challenges. So if there's something relating to chronic illness, disability or any topic all that you would like shared with council, feel free to get in touch.

Hot Topics from our last meeting...

Our last 2 meetings have covered a variety of topics. In both meetings we conducted our usual review of the reports from each sub committee and also the Principal's report (which is very similar to the messages Kevin puts into the weekly newsletter). We then also covered a number of general discussion topics, some from the Leadership Team and some that were raised by parents.

Child Safety Standards

Updates on the implementation of Victoria's mandatory Child Safety Standards is now a standing item on the council agenda. We learned that APS staff have completed the implementation training, and a staff committee has been formed to review the implementation process. A Child Safe audit, based on the school's Child Safe action plan, has also been completed. A fact sheet will be distributed to parents and caregivers in the near future.

The Standards are a Victorian initiative to provide compulsory minimum standards for organisations that provide services for children to help protect them from abuse.

School Related Cost Estimates

Parent feedback has led us to consider how APS can best inform parents and caregivers of the costs they may incur throughout the school year. While only an estimate, it's hoped that making this information available will help families plan and hopefully prevent any unexpected expenses.

We are developing an overview of the kinds of costs, such as incursions, excursions, camps, after school activities, concerts, fund raising events and annual activities such as discos and the Father's/Mother's Day stalls. We would value your feedback on this idea, so please contact a councillor or the school office and share your thoughts.

What's Next With Compass?

A Compass portal update from Debbie Galvin highlighted a range of exciting new features to be added in the near future. We agreed to formalise the update process by adding a timeline for the rollouts. The new features will make it even easier to communicate with APS, and include the ability for parents to action permission notes, teachers to mark rolls and school administrators to upload learning data. Students will get Compass access in 2018.

Straight Grade Classes for 2018

Kevin explained the rationale behind the school's move to straight grades in 2018: student numbers are now at their capacity. This prompted a discussion regarding straight classes versus combined classes for future years and the reasons APS has required combined classes in the past (to make up class numbers at senior levels).

Being at full capacity means that there is no longer a need for composite Grade 3/4 and 5/6 classes. Kevin and the strategic leadership team have carried out a considerable amount of preparation work for straight grades in 2018, and the school community will be kept informed of updates in the APS newsletter.

School Camps

Get out your diaries! The dates for the 2018 and 2019 school camps are confirmed.

Camp Wilkin 2018:

Grade 3 from 27 to 29 August
Grade 4 from 13 to 15 August

Camp Adanac 2019:

Grade 5 from 19 to 22 August
Grade 6 from 26 to 29 August

Student Survey

A synopsis of survey results was circulated via email prior to the meeting. Overall the results were very positive however there are always areas to look into further.

Some of the areas the survey identified that could be improved relate to social resilience outside of the classroom, for example in the playground and during break times. We also noticed variances between the different cohorts of students that can be explored further so running focus groups of students was also discussed.

The surveys provide great insight for teachers and the leadership teams to look at ways to bring strategies for improvement using the Growth Mindset approach right throughout the school. Altona Primary School results have not yet been compared to other schools' results but when we have that data we will also track the results over subsequent years.

Interschool Events and Communication Timelines

We spoke at length about the best way to communicate with families with children involved in interschool sporting events such as Hooptime and representative sporting carnivals.

While APS aims to give parents and caregivers at least two weeks' notice about these events, it isn't always possible. This is especially true for events with progressive rounds of competition or those that depend on venue availability to schedule the next round.

We recognise the impact such short notifications can have and agreed that for all team events where some dates are uncertain, families will be told of the confirmed dates at the start of the process, and be given an explanation of why future dates are not available. Updates will be given as soon as they are known.

Sustainability, Building and Grounds Subcommittee

The SBG subcommittee is in full swing represented by councilors Kevin Enright, Chelsea Hughes and Victoria Cushing, and parent representatives Adeline Barham and Lynda Giles-Holmes. Please feel free to contact them with your ideas.

The school recently completed a playground audit and will now upgrade, fix, remove or replace items. We are currently investigating a range of new initiatives, including ways to reuse, recycle or donate surplus or leftover classroom stationery items. How great does our new area look!!

Another idea being considered is how we help keep the school well maintained; perhaps having families adopt an area, such as a nature strip or small garden area, and take care of it over the school year.

The SBG is also involved in the planning of an overall strategy for the school grounds in collaboration with the school gardener and a landscape architect. Suggestions are always most welcome!



School Uniform Options

We are exploring options to include a school jacket and beanie hat on the uniform list. Both items are optional and investigations into cost and quality are continuing. We agreed that a suggestion to include rugby top was not an option, as the \$75-85 cost was too expensive.

Who is on our School Council?

Over the last few months we have had some changes in the council. We congratulated and then said farewell to Monique David, who resigned from her council role following the birth of her new baby. Thank you Monique for your valuable contribution!

Monique's departure meant we had the opportunity to welcome back former school councilor and last year's vice president, Peter Roberts and are very pleased to have his wise council and expertise back on the team. Thank you Pete for rejoining the team.

Laura McKendrick also stepped down from her role on the council and whilst we were sad to see her go, it has enabled Debbie Galvin to return to the team consistency when Kevin Enright takes his upcoming period of long service leave as Debbie will be acting in his role for that period.

2017 School Council	Finance Committee	Policy Committee	Sustainability, Building & Grounds Committee	Family & Friends Committee
Alexis Beckwith (President)	Aaron Hunt	Nicole Fridey	Victoria Cushing	Chelsea Hughes
Chris Graham (Vice President)		Debbie Galvin	Chelsea Hughes	
Rebecca Letson (Secretary)		Peter Sheehan	Kevin Enright	
Victoria Cushing			Parent Members:	
Peter Sheehan			Adeline Barham	
Chelsea Hughes			Lynda Giles-	
Peter Roberts			Holmes	
Aaron Hunt				
Kevin Enright				
Nicole Fridey				
Kerryn Rayson				
Debbie Galvin				

Our next meeting in September...

If you have items you'd like to raise for discussion at our next meeting, we would all be pleased to talk with you.

In the meantime your child's teacher, the lovely ladies in the office, Kevin, Nicole or Debbie can also assist with any questions or enquiries. We are all here to help.

We hope you enjoyed reading more about the School Council and would love to hear any feedback or ideas that you may have.

Kind Regards,

Alexis Beckwith
School Council President