Dear members of the Mount Carmel College community

I am thrilled to welcome you to the 2017 academic year – a year that promises us wonderful opportunities in relation to learning and to further building our community. I hope that students, members of staff, and families have been re-energised by a summer break and feel ready for the challenges that the year ahead offers.

Welcome to the following staff members who join our Mount Carmel community in 2017:

Mr Stewart Bennett: Teacher of Year 8 Science, Year 9/10 Outdoor Education and Year 8 STRIVE; Year 8 CLAN Teacher (rejoining staff after 2 years’ leave)

Mrs Ratchaneel Chainuwong: Teacher Assistant
Miss Emma Jenkins: Teacher of Year 7 EXPLORE, Year 8 & 10 Theology & Spirituality, Year 9 & 10 History; Year 7 CLAN Teacher

Mrs Alicia Jones: Personal Assistant to the Principal
Mr Graham King: Teacher of Mathematics, Years 8, 9 & 10
Mrs Kristin Leeds: Japanese Teachers, Year 3-10 (Kristin will join our community later this term and Ms Joanna Robinson will be a temporary Japanese Teacher until her arrival)

Ms Melinda Levy: Teacher Librarian
Miss Wenjun (Lexie) Liu: Teacher of Chinese, Years 7-9
Miss Bianca Polley: Trainee Receptionist
Miss Caitlin Richardson: Teacher of Year 10 English, Year 9 Theology & Spirituality, Year 10 History & Geography, Year 10 Sociology, Growth Project; Year 10 CLAN Teacher

Miss Kate Trdin: Sport and Recreation Trainee
Miss Sophia Tucker: Childcare Supervisor (mat. leave position)
Miss Hannah Warwarek: Teacher of Year 8 & 9 English, Year 9 History and Year 9/10 Writers’ Workshop, Year 9 CLAN Teacher
Mr Jeff Watson: Bus Driver

I know parents will join me in welcoming these staff to our school and working closely with them over the coming year.
In addition to our new staff, we also welcome 97 new students to our community, including 24 Kindergarten students, 32 incoming Year 7 students and 41 students new to other levels throughout the College. I trust and hope sincerely that they will find Mount Carmel to be a place of welcome, a place where they will feel safe, nurtured and supported. Our College commitment is that we believe in the growth potential of each and every one of our students and are dedicated to walk with our students on their learning and faith journey.

In closing, I share this beautiful prayer for the new school year:

**PRAYER FOR A NEW SCHOOL YEAR**

God of our past, our present and our future,
God of our dreams, our designs and our decisions,
Be love in us as we journey through this new school year.

Be our inner vision, that we may see life through your eyes,
Be our inner hearing, that we may listen well for your call,
Be our inner judgment, so we may discern clearly that which gives life,
Promotes growth, and nurtures love.

As we move into this school year,
fill us with hope and abiding trust that you dwell in us,
So that, in both joy and sorrow, we radiate hope.

Amen

God’s blessings for the week ahead,

*Susan Ryan*
Principal

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**FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL**

Kinder Students and Year 7 Students
Dear Parents / Carers

At the beginning of a new academic year we have so much to be grateful for. Hopefully the holidays spent with family and friends have allowed the students and staff to rest and re-energise for the coming year. We give thanks and express our gratitude for the arrival of new students, parents and staff who are joining our community. I would like to especially acknowledge the Kindergarten children as they begin their school journey at Mount Carmel College. Thank you Class Teachers and Teacher Assistants for your tremendous work in preparing classrooms and designing engaging learning opportunities for the students. To the parents and carers, we thank you for your hard work in ensuring that the children have commenced the school year well prepared, fully equipped and ready to go. It is a privilege to work in partnership with you in the care, education and formation of your sons and daughters. Our hope is that the learning journey for each and every student will be one that supports their wellbeing and holistic development, and to foster discerning, creative and critical thinking.

STUDENT SAFETY – BEFORE AND AFTER SCHOOL ROUTINES

Student safety is our primary concern. At the beginning of each year it is important to outline the arrangements for before and after school supervision and pick-up.

Students should not be left unaccompanied on school grounds before 8:20am when playground duty commences. After school duty concludes at 3:20pm. Those students who are being collected immediately after school in Quorn Street will be escorted to the top gate where they will be supervised until 3:15pm. At this time they will be brought back to the playground for supervision. If you are collecting your child in Quorn Street, please ensure that you do not park on the Children’s Crossing. All students must cross at the Children’s Crossing and we ask all adults to model this behaviour as well. At 3.15pm a hand bell will be rung in the playground, indicating that students are to assemble on the basketball court to catch buses. The duty teachers will walk the students to the front of the College and across the road at the traffic lights.

If there are any students remaining in the playground at 3:20pm, they are to wait at or just outside the O’Brien Resource Centre (library). If parents are with their children in the playground after 3:20pm, they will need to supervise them on the play equipment. Please note that the play equipment is not designed for toddlers; only school aged children.

To avoid congestion and potential danger near the staff car park, we would appreciate it if parents collect children from the basketball court. Arrangements should be made with our office staff for After Hours Care if you are unable to collect your child by 3:20pm on a regular basis.

PRIMARY WELCOME AND INFORMATION EVENINGS

Children are most successful in a learning environment where teachers and parents work closely and cooperatively together. All parents are invited to the Welcome and Information Evenings:

Kinder to Grade 5, Tuesday 14th February:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6:00pm - 8:15pm</td>
<td>The O’Brien Resource Centre (College Library) will be open for drinks and nibbles for parents, carers and teachers.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Class Meeting Times** (in respective home classrooms)

- 6:15pm - 7:00pm Kinder / Prep
- 7:00pm – 7:45pm Grade 1 / 2
- 7:45pm – 8:30pm Grades 3 / 4 and 5
HEALTHY LUNCH BOXES – NUT ALERT

Recess is from 10:40am to 11:05am and lunch is from 12:40pm to 1:30pm. Classroom teachers supervise students for the first 10 minutes of lunch. We encourage as much healthy food in our students’ lunch boxes as possible. Establishing healthy eating habits is of primary importance and we remind families that nuts are not to be consumed at school. This includes foods such as peanut butter, Nutella, hazelnut spreads, health bars and biscuits that contain nuts. There are a number of students who experience severe and life-threatening allergic reactions to nuts. Ideally students should only bring water to school in their drink bottles.

UNIFORM

Students in Grades 1 to 5 are permitted to wear their full sports uniform to school on the day that they are scheduled to have PE. The Grade 3 to 5 students will need to wear their College track suit and spray jacket with the gold polo shirt to and from school, not the navy and gold sports top. This procedure will be in place for the duration of the year. All students are required to wear hats while undertaking outdoor activities during the first term.

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF MIDDLE YEARS

Monday was the first day of Middle School for our Year 7 students. The day is organised to begin the process of building community. A wonderful example of what building community looks like was represented by our College Leaders who selflessly gave up the last day of their holidays to welcome the girls, help them settle in and to assist Clan teachers in the running of an action-packed day.

Amidst learning about locks, lockers, planners, timetables, different subject teachers and classroom formalities, we managed to squeeze in get-to-know you games, Mini Olympics and a House chant competition. The chants involved acrobatics, dancing, dabbing and ear piercing shouting and ‘singing’. I am certain that they will be the feature performances at Beach Day this month.

Throughout the day’s activities I emphasised three points that I want the girls to remember this year. These will help them not only to belong to our college community but to participate in building it:

1. Communicate with others in a respectful and meaningful manner.

2. Have a positive mindset. Challenge themselves to find solutions and succeed. It’s easy to say, "I could never do that." Become a person who says, "I don’t know if I can but I’ll give it a go!"

3. Lastly, to make a positive contribution to their class or school community every day. This could be as simple as asking a classmate, “Do you need some help?” or "Come and join us!"

The day concluded with an afternoon tea and an iPad information session for parents and students.

Robyn Bessell
Director of Middle Years
WHATS IN A NAME?

Mount Carmel is the name of a mountain range in Israel, and is mentioned various times in the Old Testament as a place of refuge and as a sacred place. In particular, it was where the famous prophet Elijah proved the power of God to the priests of the false gods.

About a thousand years ago it was the site of a monastery where the Carmelite order of nuns and priests began. They found themselves in difficult circumstances, but things changed when their leader was visited in a dream by Mary, the mother of Jesus. Mary promised protection, and the Carmelite order flourished, and is still operating today. For the Carmelites and for many Catholics, Mary became known as Our Lady of Mount Carmel.

In 1942 a school was opened in View St, Sandy Bay, for Catholic Primary education for children in the area. It was named Mount Carmel by the man who started it, Parish Priest of Sandy Bay, Fr O’Donnell. An Irishman, Fr O’Donnell attended a school called Mount Carmel in his native land, and wished to continue the name in his adopted town of Hobart. There was a Mount Carmel already, the hill upon which Guilford Young College now stands, but the use of the name for that landmark was fading from the public vernacular. So Mount Carmel School began, and when it became a place for secondary education with the transfer of girls from St Joseph’s College in 1957, it became known as Mount Carmel College. The Sisters of Charity were the group of nuns who ran the school, and we keep the values of the sisters in all that we do. Our Lady of Mount Carmel is now our patron, who we pray to each day at school.

Lord our God,
in your wisdom and love
you surround us with the mysteries of the universe.
Send your spirit upon our students for 2017
and fill them with your wisdom and blessings.
Grant that they may devote themselves to their studies
and draw ever closer to you,
the source of all knowledge.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Our Lady of Mount Carmel, Pray for Us.

In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, Amen.

PARISH SACRAMENTAL PROGRAMS

Each of the local parishes run a Sacramental Program each year for those who wish to receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Confirmation. I know a number of our Catholic students here at the school are yet to receive these sacraments, and I encourage families to consider this opportunity in 2017. You can contact your local parish, or email me at anthony.chapman@mountcarmel.tas.edu.au for more details.

Anthony Chapman
Director of Mission / Head of Religious Education - Secondary
FROM THE COMPLIANCE OFFICER

PARENTAL PERMISSION FOR EXCURSIONS
As part of the College curriculum students will attend off-site excursions throughout the year. College excursions enhance student learning by providing the opportunities for students to participate in curriculum-related activities outside the normal school routine.

‘Minor’ excursions are deemed to be of low risk and are generally located within the local area. Such activities include visits to other schools, parks, theatres, museums, art galleries and sports days.

Parental permission for students to attend minor excursions is obtained via the Mount Carmel College Terms and Conditions of Enrolment form which states:

“I / we give permission for the student to attend minor excursions in accordance with School policy without my further consent. I / we understand that this consent can be withdrawn at any time by notifying the School in writing and that additional consent will be required for major excursions”.

Parents/carers will therefore receive written notification of upcoming minor excursions, but will not be required to sign and return a permission slip for each individual excursion. Please notify the College immediately if you do not wish your child to attend minor excursions without your express permission.

Please note that permission forms will be sent home for each ‘major’ excursion that your child will be attending. Major excursions are defined as overnight and residential excursions and adventure activities and include camps, excursions or activities lasting several hours that have an inherent risk factor, any aquatic activity and intrastate, interstate and international trips.

A signed permission form for each major excursion must be returned to the College by the notified due date. Phone and email permission for these types of excursions will not be accepted and students who do not return their permission forms by the due date may be excluded from the excursion and required to remain at the College.

All parents/carers are reminded to please read the information in the Bulletin about upcoming excursions and avoid scheduling appointments when their child is off campus. If you have any queries or questions about this information please contact me at the College.

Rachael Willis
Compliance Officer

FROM THE UNIFORM SHOP COORDINATOR

Welcome to all new and current families at Mount Carmel College. I hope you have all had a pleasant break.

Sincere thanks to all those families who were able to make the time to bring their child in for a fitting for the new winter uniform. This will help immensely with the ordering process. I will keep families posted on the status of arrival dates for the new uniform. It is not too late for your child to have a fitting, so that items can be set aside upon arrival from the manufacturer.

For those students who will still be wearing the brown tunic or skirt, there are limited stocks available of these and the white blouses and fawn tights. Please contact me if you have a query for these items.

Just a reminder:
If wearing brown shoes you MUST wear the fawn tights/brown knee high socks
If wearing black shoes, navy tights/navy knee high socks.
There are many co-curricular Arts activities at Mount Carmel in the Secondary School again this year.

Starting this term...

- There will be a Year 9/10 Choir (The Senior Singers) that will rehearse on Thursday at Lunchtime.
- Also a Year 6/7/8 Choir (Middle Years Voices) will rehearse on Tuesdays at Lunchtime. Both of these choirs are un-auditioned, meaning that anyone can join up as long as they are keen to sing!
- The College Orchestra will rehearse on Wednesday afternoons 3:30-4:30. This groups is for all woodwind, brass, string, and percussion players from Year 5-10 that have some experience on their instrument.
- The Squawkestra is a new group for students who are beginners on the instruments of the Orchestra in Years 5-8. This group will begin rehearsals in Term Two after the Year Sevens have an opportunity in-class to play one of these instruments.
- We will again have a String Quartet rehearsing as an extension to their participation in the Orchestra.

AND...

- With the building of our Dance Studio, Ms Phoebe Wootton will be running a Dance Troupe on Wednesdays at lunchtime.

It would be wonderful to see as many students as possible get involved in some of these groups. There really is an opportunity for students with all levels of experience and it’s a great way for students to attain points towards College Colours, as well as to mix with students from other classes and year levels.

We have some experienced Music Teachers of all instruments, who are excellent musicians in their own right, that take students for lessons at school during school hours. If you’d like to enrol your daughter for Instrumental Music Lessons, go to [http://mountcarmel.tas.edu.au/music-tuition-sign-up/](http://mountcarmel.tas.edu.au/music-tuition-sign-up/) for more info and to sign up.

**Dave McNamara**  
Head of Department (The Arts)
Welcome back to all parents and students, I hope you all had a wonderful break and are refreshed and ready for a full year of sporting pursuits. I administer Primary and Secondary Co-Curricular School Sport at the College, and aim to keep you informed throughout the year regarding sport that is on offer, progress of teams, special achievements and other sporting matters of interest.

**Information and Sports Sign-Up**

Information regarding carnival/roster dates, days and times for most sports, uniform requirements and other guidelines and Sign Up is available online for both Primary and Secondary sports, on the school website, [http://mountcarmel.tas.edu.au/sport-activity-sign-up/](http://mountcarmel.tas.edu.au/sport-activity-sign-up/). If you haven’t already, please visit this page and view the Sports Information Booklet/s. By clicking on the “Sign Up” button you will be taken to an online form to nominate students to play sport. If you are able to help out with coaching, managing or umpiring, please note this on the sign up form or contact me directly. Below is a snapshot of what is on offer in Term 1:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Secondary</th>
<th>Day / Time</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Note</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Swimming Trials for Interschool</td>
<td>Tues 7:15pm – 8:45pm</td>
<td>14 Feb</td>
<td>Training Tues &amp; Thurs 7 – 7:45am at Hobart Aquatic Centre for 3 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cricket</td>
<td>Thurs 4:15pm – 5:30pm</td>
<td>2 Mar – 6 Apr</td>
<td>At Sandy Bay</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sailing Series 1</td>
<td>Tues or Wed 4:15pm</td>
<td>21 Feb – 29 Mar</td>
<td>At various grounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer (Y7-8)</td>
<td>Tues 4:15pm – 5:15pm</td>
<td>28 Feb – 16 May</td>
<td>At various grounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer (Y9-10)</td>
<td>Mon 4:15pm – 5:15pm</td>
<td>27 Feb – 15 May</td>
<td>At various grounds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surfing</td>
<td>Mon 8am – 4pm</td>
<td>3 Apr</td>
<td>Learners and Level 1, 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tennis Mixed (G5-6)</td>
<td>Tuesdays 4pm - 5pm</td>
<td>21 Feb – 28 Mar</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer (G2-6 Girls, P-2 Boys)</td>
<td>Thursdays 4pm - 4:45pm</td>
<td>2 Mar – 13 Apr</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Volunteer Coaches / Managers / Supervisors**

It is great to have parents, siblings and friends involved in coaching, managing, supervising sports teams and helping out at events and carnivals. All volunteers require a Working with Vulnerable People Registration and be inducted as a volunteer through the College office, prior to volunteering. Please refer to [http://www.justice.tas.gov.au/working_with_children](http://www.justice.tas.gov.au/working_with_children) for more details on how to apply. A copy of your card should be provided to the College office.

**Secondary Swimming Trials**

The Year 7-10 Swimming Trials are on Tuesday February 14 at Hobart Aquatic Centre from 7:15pm to approximately 8:45pm. Students wishing to be eligible for selection in the College Swimming Team must attend this trial event. It is not a requirement to be a current competition swimmer to take part in these trials, and all competent swimmers are encouraged to take part. The team will train on Tuesday and Thursdays at Hobart Aquatic Centre at 7am for 3 weeks in preparation for the two interschool carnivals. Students are transported by bus to the College following.

The Southern SATIS Carnival is on Thursday 16 March and the State SATIS Carnival is on Thursday 30 March, both at the Hobart Aquatic Centre. Please note that the printed College calendar states the SSATIS Carnival in on Tuesday 14 March. This event has been moved to Thursday 16 March. Parents and Carers are more than welcome to attend any of these swimming events.

**Infant and Primary Swimming Carnivals**

On Wednesday 22 February, the Mount Carmel Infant and Primary Swimming Carnivals will be held at the Clarence Aquatic Centre. Students from Prep to Grade 6 will be involved in House events throughout the day. Letters have gone out including the nominations for events, and invitation to parents to assist on the day.
FROM THE SPORTS ADMINISTRATION OFFICER cont.

HOUSE BEACH DAY

On Friday 24 February, all students from Year 6 to 10 will enjoy a day at Seven Mile Beach competing in a range of beach and water based activities, earning points for the house. Students will find out more about the events at House meetings. Parents and carers are welcome to come along and watch on the day or volunteer to assist, if a Working With Vulnerable People Registration is held. Let’s pray for nice weather.

PINK STUMPS DAY

Mount Carmel is participating in a series of McGrath Foundation Pink Stumps Days this term. Cricket Tasmania staff will be running the sessions with students, which will include small games of cricket within year groups. The McGrath Foundation raises money to support families across Australia experiencing breast cancer by placing McGrath Breast Cancer Nurses in our communities. Join our GoFundraise page: https://pinkstumpsday2017.gofundraise.com.au/page/mountcarmelcollege to help us raise money for this great cause, or visit www.pinkstumpsday.com.au for more information.

Rowing

Sporting brand new zooties, Molly Marshall, Imogen Nation, Isabella Albertini and Ella Gartlan competed in the Southern Schools Rowing Regatta at Franklin at the weekend.

All girls rowed in a quad skulls (coxed by old scholar Maddie Black) and double skulls. Molly, Imogen and Isabella also rowed single skulls. They all rowed really well and learnt a lot in some challenging conditions. At one stage the wind was so strong, the boats nearly went backwards. The team won a first place, two third places, and a fourth place in the quad race.

Thank you to old scholars Maddie Black and Anja Bremmers and Year 9 student Mel Bremmers for helping out on the day, and to Bruce and Mike for their coaching.
FROM THE SPORTS ADMINISTRATION OFFICER cont.

Hobart Hurricanes Kid’s Cricket

Hobart Hurricanes are running a Kid’s Cricket free Come n Try Day on Monday 20 February. Programs will then continue on Monday afternoons following. To register for any of these programs, visit playcricket.com.au or just turn up on the day.

**MILO In2CRICKET** (5-8yr olds) 3:30pm – 4:30pm at Lower Queenborough Oval. Teaches kids the fundamental skills of playing cricket.

**MILO T20 Blast** (7-12yr olds) 5pm – 6:30pm at Lower Queenborough Oval. For boys and girls who have basic skills and gives them the opportunity to play Big Bash style high action games of cricket.

**Girls Only MILO T20 Blast** (7-12yr olds) 5pm – 6:30pm at University Oval. For girls who have basic skills and gives them the opportunity to play Big Bash style high action games of cricket.

Contact Information

If parents or carers need to contact me regarding anything related to School Sport, or have any photos, special achievement items or club notices they would like published, please email me at sport@mountcarmel.tas.edu.au, or contact me by phone on 6216 7926.

*Nikki Stuart*

*Sports Administration Officer*

KIDS MATTER

DOING DRUGS WITH PAUL DILLON

WEDNESDAY, 18 JANUARY 2017

Parties and parenting: Start the year as you mean to go on, particularly you Year 9 parents!

It’s not long now until school starts again. I’m sure many of you have had to deal with the party and gathering issue over the holidays but it will really fire up in the weeks ahead. As young people start to socialize in the school environment once again, discussions about what to do and where to go on the weekend, including which parties to attend will dominate schoolyard conversations for many. The invites will start rolling in and parents are going to have to make decisions about whether to let their son or daughter go to wherever on a Saturday night.

Paul Dillon has been working in the area of drug education for the past 25 years. Through his own business, Drug and Alcohol Research and Training Australia (DARTA) he has been contracted by many organisations to give regular updates on current drug trends. He has also worked with many school communities to ensure that they have access to good quality information and best practice drug education. His book ‘Teenagers, Alcohol and Drugs’ was released nationally in February 2009. With a broad knowledge of a range of content areas, Paul regularly appears in the media and is regarded as a key social commentator, with interviews on television programs such as Sunrise, TODAY and The Project.

View my complete profile
If you're one of those parents whose teen has been going to parties each and every weekend and you haven't been policing the situation properly, to be honest, there's very little you can do. It's not only extremely difficult to change your approach 'midstream', it's also unfair and I can guarantee that your son or daughter will let you know that. In the words of my mother, "You've made your bed, now you've got to lie in it!" You can't all of a sudden insist on calling parents hosting a party or tell your child that they can't sleepover at someone's house if you've never done that sort of thing before. You can try, but you'll have problems and life won't be easy at your house ... Of course, if they've done something wrong and you're punishing them, that's a different matter, but suddenly changing your rules around parties is just not going to work. The only time that you possibly have a chance to change the way you do things is when they're making the transition from Year 10 to Year 11 - the move into upper secondary and those looming final exams. This is about the only time you can try a 'reboot'!

As they begin their final years, it is possible to renegotiate rules (or at least your approach to the rules) if you come at it in the right way. Of course you want them to have time to socialize and relax with their friends but partying every weekend, particularly if alcohol is involved, is not going to be helpful if they want to achieve their very best. Having a discussion about your expectations, the rules around parties and gatherings and the final years of high school can be really useful at this time.

But the parents that have the most to gain from getting it right now are those parents of Year 9s (sometimes Year 8s if the child is more socially developed or even Year 10s if they're a little less mature). I've talked about the Year 9 cohort many times, particularly around parenting and parties, but this is a great time to remind any parents going through this stage about some of the key issues they are about to face. This is the year that you start to hear about the party culture building (with a small but influential group starting to drink, some to excess) with some Year 9 girls being asked out by boys a couple of years older than them and subsequently finding themselves invited to Year 10 and 11 events. It's also when you begin to see students bringing cannabis to school and then being either suspended, 'moved on' or expelled. Year 9 certainly appears to be a very difficult time for many families, with parents often confused as to why this is happening.

This is the year they usually turn 14 and enter the time of their life often referred to as 'middle adolescence' - the time when the search for identity becomes a central concern. They start to pull away from their parents and their peer group becomes far more important. They're maturing and growing up, many are physically changing and are beginning to look much older, particularly the girls, and parents find themselves in a really difficult place. On the one hand they want to give their child the opportunity to create their own identity and establish where they fit in the world and start to make more decisions for themselves, but on the other, they want to keep them as safe as possible during this potentially very dangerous time and that involves maintaining rules and boundaries.
This is where these parents get into trouble - they can see that their child is growing up and believe that they need to let them start to make their own decisions and trust them 'to do the right thing'. Year 9 is the year of the 'sleepover', as well as the 'party' or 'gathering', and instead of making the call to parents hosting these events and dropping their teen off at the home and then picking them up, they begin to get increasing pressure (from their child but also friends and family members as well) to loosen the rules a little and let their child fly a little more. They've got to be trusted at some point but really, is Year 9 the time to do it, particularly when it comes to sleepovers and parties? Far from it - this is the time when you see their wings sprouting, you should be getting a great big pair of garden shears and clipping them off as quickly as possible!

So to all you parents who are just about to begin that rollercoaster year, whatever age your teen may be (depending on their maturity level) - but I'll say it again, it's usually those dastardly Year 9s - here are just a few tips around the issue of sleepovers and parties:

- **Don't be bullied into making a decision about whether they can attend or not.** Gather the information you need to make an informed decision and if they tell you they need an answer now - the answer is 'no'. Take your time and get it right. If both parents are on the scene, make it clear right from the very start that both of you make decisions around sleepovers and parties. Adolescents are extremely clever at setting up one parent against the other and it is vital that they understand that there is a 'united front' on this issue. Make it clear to them by telling them - "Don't come to me, don't go to them – come to us!"

- **Know where your child is and who they're with** – at this age, they're likely to start lying to you about where they're planning on going. If you want to let it slide, that's up to you, but I can guarantee you'll never forgive yourself if something terrible happens. To make absolutely sure, always take them to where they're going and pick them up. Don't leave it up to someone else to do if you can possibly help it!

- **Always call the parents who are hosting the sleepover, party or gathering.** Speak to them and find out some basic information about supervision and whether alcohol will be provided or tolerated. Your teen is not going to like this and they'll most probably tell you that you're ruining their life - but that's your job! If they tell you that they hate you - respond with "But I love you ..."

- **Create rules and consequences around sleepovers and parties and stick to them.** The beginning of the school year is a great time to have a family discussion about the rules you have in this area. The consequences of breaking those rules should also be clearly laid out and agreed to by your child. They can't say they're unfair later if they've agreed to them. Most importantly, if you don't follow-through should a rule be broken, you may as well throw in the towel straight away - the first time you buckle and let something slip, you will lose your credibility and your rules will become totally ineffective.
• **If kids don't like the rules, then they're most probably perfect.** But remember, reward good behaviour and modify the rules as they get older to make sure they're age appropriate.

• **If things start to get out of control, get help.** Too often parents leave it too long to seek help should things be going wrong in this area. If your teen is climbing out of the window on a Saturday night and not coming home, that is not normal behaviour. You can always start with the school counsellor, or even your GP, but make sure you talk to someone and get professional advice if things start to get too difficult!

With teens of this age, it's also incredibly important to 'choose your battles'. You and your partner need to identify what your 'non-negotiables' are (i.e., those things you won't compromise on) and spell them out clearly to your teen. Fight with them about everything and your life will be very difficult. If you let the ones that really don't matter (i.e., they have nothing to do with personal safety and more to do with your personal disappointment, e.g., "You're not going out dressed like that!") slide once in a while you'll find yourself having a much easier time. Letting a Year 9 have a win occasionally can make family life so much more pleasant. If your 14-year-old wants to sleepover at someone's house or go to a party and you don't think that it will be safe, however, this is where you do stick to your guns and the rules and boundaries do come into play.

And remember, it's not all about saying 'no' to everything. If you want a warm and positive relationship with your teen always look for opportunities to allow your child to do something. If it looks safe and you feel comfortable - say 'yes'! Wrapping them up in cotton wool and saying 'no' all the time is not healthy. But when you have made the decision that you're not going to give your permission, say 'no', make it clear why you're saying it and don't back down!

Posted by **Paul** at 13:26
1. ASTHMA ACTION PLAN
See a doctor for a signed Asthma Action Plan or Care Plan. Schools require an up-to-date plan for each student with asthma at the start of the new school year.
Evidence tells us that using an Asthma Action Plan can help to reduce hospitalisations, improve lung function and reduce the number of days off school.
While with the doctor, why not combine this with a check-up for your child’s asthma, including a check on their device technique.

2. RELIEVER MEDICATION
Check with the school about their medication policy and work with the staff to find the best way to manage your child’s asthma medication, including before physical activity (where applicable).
- Medication and devices are clearly labelled with your child’s name
- Medication is in date and with sufficient medication remaining

3. TALK TO SCHOOL STAFF
Make time to talk with the class teacher and the school nurse (where applicable) about your child’s asthma, their Asthma Action Plan and their usual triggers, symptoms and medication.
Also talk to your child’s sport coaches and supervisors of other school activities. Don’t forget to keep staff up-to-date with any change to your child’s asthma management.

Use this valuable time to:
- Go over your child’s Asthma Action Plan
- Discuss your child’s signs of asthma
- Show them your child’s asthma medication and demonstrate how to use it
- Talk about the extent to which your child can self-manage their asthma
- Provide details of how to contact you when:
  - They have asthma symptoms
  - They use a reliever medication at school