Dear Parents/Guardians and Current Year 9 students

Since 1998, St Philip's College has offered an exciting Outdoor Education expedition for Year 10 students - an 11-day camp to Mittagundi Outdoor Education Centre in Victoria. This particularly adventurous expedition will again be offered in 2016. Given the increase in numbers attending over recent years, plus the success of this year's Endeavour Camp and the large student population in Year 10 (2016), it is necessary to gauge the number of students who are likely to attend in 2016.

This camp will be entirely within the school holiday time in 2016 normal classroom activities will commence Week 1 of Term 3 (Monday 25 July).

Mittagundi is located on an isolated property adjoining the Bogong High Plains and the township of Omeo, in Eastern Victoria, by the side of the Mitta Mitta River. It has been built and maintained by students over the past 25 years and aims to provide students with opportunities for adventure, combined with a simple "pioneer" lifestyle. Mittagundi has no electricity. Do have a look at the many photos of Mittagundi on the Outdoor Education section of the College's website.

The Mittagundi program is an extension of the Year 9 Endeavour Camp – focusing particularly on inter and intra personal skills. The primary activity will be cross-country skiing, but this will be combined with other activities with an alternate program in the event of poor snow conditions. The time at Mittagundi is usually divided between a 1 day and a 3 day cross-country skiing and snow camping trip to the adjacent Bogong High Plains and at Mittagundi itself, helping to run the property. This includes milking cows, baking bread, building sheds and fences, planting trees, blacksmithing, making furniture and helping tend to the vegetable garden. It is important that students and parents understand that the environment in which the camp is held is meant to be very challenging and that it is particularly cold. Cross country skiing takes place in the backcountry away from resorts. There are no ski lifts. Students walk and ski with packs (see also www.mittagundi.org.au).

Those students who chose not to attend Endeavour Camp in 2015 cannot attend Mittagundi in 2016, as explained to students this year.

The dates for 2016:

- November 2015 - expressions of interest must be emailed to David Atkins david.atkins@portal.stphilips.nt.edu.au
- 16 February 2016 - Compulsory Information Night, 6pm in The Minnamurra Hall
- 19 February 2016 - Deposit required ($600 non-refundable)
- 19 February 2016 - notification of own airfares (the college will only organise a return trip with the group so if you need something else you need to let us know).
- 14 April 2016 – Final payment ($1100) and Medical Forms (Mittagundi and SPC)
- Group 1 - 3 to 13 July 2016 (second and third weeks of Term 2 holidays)
- Group 2 - 13 July to 23 July 2016 (last two weeks of Term 2 holidays)

Keep track of dates on the Outdoor Education section of the College’s website.
The cost of the camp will be $1700 which includes airfares, course fees, all meals, accommodation in Melbourne on the way to Mittagundi, and transport in Victoria. Apart from woollen clothing and thermal underwear, minimal special equipment or clothing is required to be purchased (equipment list is available for viewing on the College website). A non-refundable deposit will be required by 19 February 2016 ($600), with the balance due 14 April ($1100). You are able to set up smaller regular payments through reception to avoid bulk payment on the due date.

Mittagundi is a very popular, exciting and rewarding trip, places will be limited to a max of 80 students (There are over 130 students in Year 10 for 2016). In deciding to go, students and families should consider carefully:

- Mittagundi is a demanding adventure based expedition. It is not a 'ski resort' style trip - there are no ski lifts and there is no snowboarding. Instead, it is a cross country ski touring expedition and pioneer lifestyle experience. In the snow and mountains students will camp in the snow, ski and walk with backpacks. At Mittagundi itself students will prepare for their ski trips, cook, clean, feed animals and maintain Mittagundi.
- Mittagundi is a simple lifestyle. There is no electricity. Food is simple and wholesome - there is not meat every day, and there is porridge for breakfast every morning!
- Students will be cold and uncomfortable at Mittagundi at some stage. This is normal, but challenging - so all should be prepared appropriately, but acknowledge that they will be substantially challenged. This is what is great about Mittagundi!
- Given the time frame, it is not unrealistic for students to commit to raise some (or all) of the cost of trip. Therefore, all students should be able to afford to attend if they have the motivation.
- STUDENTS MUST COMMIT THEMSELVES TO THE PERSONAL ORGANISATION REQUIRED FOR THE TRIP. STUDENTS SHOULD DO THE WORK, NOT PARENTS. STUDENTS SHOULD MANAGE DEADLINES, THE SUBMISSION OF FORMS, COLLECTION OF GEAR AND ALL WORK REQUIRED PREPARING FOR THE TRIP.

If you are particularly keen for your son or daughter to participate, please register by email during November 2015.

Registering by email allows us to have regular and efficient communication with families in planning and organising the program between now and the trip. All news and information is distributed by email. You may register multiple email addresses, but always specify who the message is from. To avoid errors please do not submit email addresses on paper – I will reply to all emails as confirmations. Registration is regarded as a genuine and considered expression of interest. Places are confirmed by payment of deposit and paperwork by specified due dates. There will be an option for students to book their own airfares, utilise Frequent Flyer points or travel to Melbourne (unsupervised) prior to the trip beginning.

Please email expressions of interest to: david.atkins@portal.stphilips.nt.edu.au

An information session will be held on Tuesday 16 February 2016 at 6pm in The Minnamurra Hall. It is COMPULSORY that students attend this meeting to make themselves aware of all the requirements of the trip. Parents are also welcome and encouraged to come to this meeting. In the meantime, please register your interest by email – this will ensure that timely updates can be sent directly by email to families.

Yours sincerely,

David Atkins
Head of Outdoor Education
Email: david.atkins@portal.stphilips.nt.edu.au