Dear St Mary’s Catholic School Community,

Since late in the school holidays, our school’s phone system has been reduced to about 10% capacity. Telstra has been working to fix ‘the outage’ and it was only yesterday that our normal service was restored.

I apologise to the many people who were inconvenienced by the problem. Many people tried calling us only for the phone to ring out. It must have been frustrating for you. I know it was for us.

Homework Learning Links
Yesterday, from our ICT team you should have received a half page note with details about our Homework Optional Learning Links. The note provides a step by step guide about how to access on our website different options that you might like to use with your children. Further sites, apps and activities will be added to the website next week.

Reconciliation Meeting
The Parent Information session for the sacrament of Reconciliation is at 4.00pm in the Church on Thursday.

Staff Development Day
A reminder that our next Staff Development Day (administering Mathematical Assessment Interview) is on Friday.

Congratulations Mrs Brooks and Mrs Lynch
Mrs Tiffany Lynch had a beautiful baby boy, Lenny on Monday night. And for those who hadn’t heard, Mrs Melissa Brooks welcomed a gorgeous baby girl, Ivy into the world about seven weeks ago.

Both mums and babies are very happy and healthy (the dads too).

Please Join Us Tonight
Our P&F AGM is at 7.00pm tonight in the school’s library. You are most welcome to join us.

Sporting Update
Congratulations to the swimmers who qualified for Monday’s CCC Swimming at Mingara. Thank you to Mrs Bain, our staff, St Edward’s and St Peter’s students and the many parent helpers who ensured the carnival was very enjoyable for our children. Our Swimming Carnival Presentation is at 2.30pm on Friday 27th February.

Our school’s Cross Country is on Friday 27th February at Jenny Dixon Reserve. You are most welcome to join us.

Your Thoughts and Prayers
Please keep Tessa H (4 Green) family in your thoughts and prayers. Tessa’s grandfather passed away recently. May our Lord’s strength bring you great courage and comfort during this difficult time.

Kind regards,

Kevin Williams
Ash Wednesday
Ash Wednesday, the start of the liturgical season of Lent, is today. All children attended either Mass (2-6) or a Liturgy (K-1), where they were encouraged to reflect on how we can be good people. They also had ashes placed on their forehead. You might like to talk at your house about the things every family member can do to be compassionate, forgiving and kind people during this season of Lent. A thank you to the parents who were able to join us this morning in the church.

Opening School Mass
Our Opening School Mass last week was a beautiful Mass where we met together as a whole school community for the first time in 2015. We had lots of parents and parishioners in attendance, many commenting on the beautiful singing and amazing behaviour of our children. Well done boys and girls!

Project Compassion - Caritas Australia
Today you will notice that the Project Compassion posters have been put up around the school. Our Year 5 and 6 Mini Vinnies children are at the beginning stages of promoting Project Compassion to our school community. The theme for this year is ‘Food for Life’. It throws a spotlight on global food issues and how Caritas Australia is empowering the world’s poorest people to establish sustainable food sources for life. In class, over this season of Lent, children will be talking about various stories from around the globe and discussing how we can help. There are now Project Compassion donation boxes in every classroom. If you would like more information about Project Compassion or the stories the children will be discussing in class, you might like to visit the website, http://www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion/

Reconciliation
Tomorrow afternoon is the compulsory parent meeting for any students in Year 3-6 who will be making the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The meeting is 4pm in the church. Please take your enrolment forms with you.

Catholic Schools Week
Catholic Schools Week is just a few weeks away (March 9th-14th)! Next week’s newsletter will include times and dates of all events for the week.

Emma Sellars
Religious Education Coordinator

From Our Family Liaison Officer
There are many ways that parents/carers can support their children at school. Just one thing you can do is to keep up to date with what is happening.

Reading the newsletter each week, checking for notes coming home each day, completing and returning permission slips promptly and being aware of special events such as Masses, sports days, etc. means our children don’t have the stress of being unsure of what is happening.

The children are encouraged to be responsible and aware of what is happening at school, but they still rely on you to also know what is happening and ensure they have what they need.

Our school website is a great asset for parents. Here you can find newsletters, the term calendar, permission slips, dates of upcoming events, canteen and uniform shop pricelists, etc. Getting into the habit of regularly checking the website is a great way to keep up to date.

Donna Falzon
Family Liaison Officer
**KidsMatter**

Children’s friendships have a positive impact on their wellbeing, confidence and helps makes school an inviting place for children to be.

Things don’t always go perfectly though. Everyone, adults and children alike, experience the ups and downs of friendship.

Children’s developing social and emotional skills help them deal with the normal challenges associated with friendships. Children develop these skills at different times and some find friendship challenges very difficult to deal with.

Every child, even those thought of as “the popular kids”, experience rejection at some time. How they deal with it though can sometimes be what makes the difference between moving on emotionally or becoming stuck in negative ways of thinking. Parents/carers are so important to help children maintain perspective and provide support and examples of how to deal with challenges.

The following KidsMatter article for parents/carers deals with Bouncing back from rejection and is a very interesting read.

**Something We’ve Noticed**

The children’s sense of reverence and behavior at our Opening School Mass was outstanding. We also loved their singing.

“I like to go to school and write, but yesterday I was just too busy at school. I had to write so much! I was tired.”

Harry H

**Star Awards**


**From Our Librarian**

Reading must always be a pleasure not a chore. Sometimes we worry when a book is too easy for our children but these easy books help our children develop fluent reading. Reading must flow so that children comprehend the storyline. It should not sound jerky because we hit tricky words. Help your child choose a book with just the right amount of challenge. Here is the five-finger test that children use in the library. Open the book to a page and have your child read.

**From Our Office**

A reminder that your first instalment for your school fees is due shortly, depending on your payment schedule, the due dates are as follows;

- **Weekly**  13th February
- **Fortnightly**  13th February
- **Monthly**  15th February
- **Per Term**  23rd February
- **Annual**  23rd February

If at any time you wish to change your instalment plan please let us know and we will make the necessary adjustments.

Thank you
Lyn and Jacqui
Parent Education
Our next Parent Education session is on Tuesday 24th March. Mrs Sellars will focus on how you can help your child at home with Maths.

Student Behaviour
The teachers were proud of the children’s behavior, effort and level of participation at Monday’s Swimming Carnival. It was our largest number of children entering 50m events. Well done girls and boys.

Uniform Shop News
Swimming caps are available in the Uniform Shop. They are $10.00

Canteen News
Please visit our school website for the canteen roster.

From Our PE Teacher

St Mary’s Swimming Carnival blue reigns supreme yet again
What a spectacular day we had on Monday! The weather was beautiful just like the behaviour, effort and sportsmanship of every child at St Mary’s School. Every child gave their best whether it was 10m, 20m, 50m or novelty races.

Congratulations to the House Captains and Vice Captains – you led your Colour House with pride and I loved the preparation you put into your House Cheers!!!
We have the most amazing parents at St Mary’s, such a big Carnival would have no chance of running without you! Most schools struggle to get one set of helpers – we had 3 sets of workers with 10m, 20m and 50m events simultaneously running to have children all occupied. We then had another great band of parents who spent an hour and a half in the water giving the kids such a fun experience in the novelty events.

My special thanks to the wonderful 50m helpers – you worked so hard to get through our ever increasing number of heats. It was a huge effort by everyone to continue from 9am until 2pm with almost no break in order that all children could finish their events. I really appreciate what you did for all of our swimmers.

AGE CHAMPION PRESENTATION – CCC Swimming will be next Monday 23rd February. Children participating have received notes and should have them back at school by Friday. Good Luck to all participants

St Mary’s Cross Country is on Friday 27th February – permission notes will distributed this week.

Tom W and Nick S