Dear St Mary’s Catholic School Community,

Next week we celebrate all that is good in being a Catholic school. We invite you to join us for our Catholic Schools Week Liturgy in the Church at 1.50pm on Monday 9th March. Following the liturgy, at 2.40pm you are invited to join us for our Open Classrooms until home time.

The Catholic Schools Week theme is “Educating for Today and Tomorrow.” Please peruse the classroom displays posted around the school. Your child has nominated what they want to be when they grow up. Some of the ones I’ve noticed so far include a police officer, a teacher, a clown, a millionaire, a zoo keeper, a pilot, a psychologist, a soccer player, a marine biologist and an astronaut.

Afternoon Buses

For the past three years I have tried, in vain, to acquire a separate bus for our children who travel to Budgewoi each afternoon. I am acutely aware that a range of problems have occurred on this route. I am also aware that some parents refuse to put their child on that particular bus. Other parents are not in as fortunate a position. Busways Woongarraah understand our angst and have been very supportive but they do not have the influence to do anything about the problem. Last week I spoke and wrote to Transport NSW seeking their intervention. Keep your fingers crossed.

Professional Learning

Central to my role as Principal is helping to build the capacity of teachers to best serve the learning, spiritual and wellbeing development of our students. Some of the recent professional learning that our teachers have been involved in includes: K-2 Reading, Spelling K-6, Religious Education K-6 and today our Kinder teachers were examining how best to use the literacy data gathered from our Kinders late in January.

We are blessed to have the expertise of Mrs Debbie Burns (Literacy Coach and Learning Support), Mrs Rebecca Hughes (Literacy Coach) and Mrs Emma Sellars (REC and Numeracy Coach) to lead such professional learning. You may hear from time to time that Mrs Burns, Mrs Hughes or Mrs Sellars is in your child’s class. Their role is to model exemplary practice, support, advise and encourage quality learning in our classrooms.

Maths Parent Education

We invite you to our Maths Parent Education sessions to be held at 9.15am and 6.30pm on Tuesday 24th March. The sessions are very practical ones that will help upskill you with strategies and ideas of how to help your child in Maths. Free child-minding is available.

Welcome

A number of new children have joined our school community through their partnership with ASPECT. We especially welcome: Ben L, Nicholas L, Logan M and Sean S. We trust that you enjoy the time at your new school.

Your Thoughts and Prayers

Please keep the Brawley family in your thoughts and prayers. Indi’s father passed away very recently. May your treasured memories and Our Lord’s strength bring you considerable courage during this difficult time.

Thank You Highway Patrol

We thank the local Highway Patrol Police who dedicated a number of hours last Friday to ensure all our students crossed Budgewoi Road safely to and from our cross Country. They then, kindly, also kept watch around the vicinity of Jenny Dixon Reserve for us.

Kind Regards,

Kevin Williams
Principal
Catholic Schools Week
Parents and grandparents, next week is Catholic Schools Week, a time to celebrate our great Catholic School. The theme for this year is ‘Educating for today and tomorrow’. Last week you would have received an invitation to various happenings; a whole school liturgy in the church at 1.50pm on Monday 9th and Open Classrooms from 2.40pm-3.10pm on Monday 9th. A coffee van will also arrive during Open Classrooms for parents to purchase a coffee. Grade displays will also be around the school all week. We look forward to seeing you all during Catholic Schools Week.

Project Compassion - Caritas Australia
There are Project Compassion donation boxes in every classroom. Mums and dads, please try to find the time to visit the website for Caritas Australia, http://www.caritas.org.au/projectcompassion/, a website the children will be visiting during class time. It provides information, videos, pictures and stories about the work Caritas Australia do in communities around Australia and around the world. It’s a great starting point for discussion about how we can help others!

Reconciliation
We currently have many children in Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 preparing to make the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Please keep these children and their families in your thoughts and prayers. The Sacrament of Reconciliation will take place on the afternoon of Wednesday March 18.

Stations of the Cross
With Easter fast approaching, it is time to begin preparing for our Good Friday ‘Stations of the Cross’, held Friday 3rd April at St Mary’s church. Please note, this is not a school day. Parents, I ask for your support on this important day of Holy Week. Each year we have many students K-6 who act in the various roles, and I ask for any parents who would like to offer their help on the morning of Good Friday, and in the week prior, to prepare the students in their roles (It’s a team effort. You don’t need to know what to do, I just need parents who are willing to help - no experience necessary!). Please contact me via the school office and leave your details. All help is appreciated. A note asking for children to take part will be sent home in the coming weeks.

Emma Sellars
Religious Education Coordinator

From Our Family Liaison Officer

While work and family circumstances can be a barrier to people attending school events, those who can come along to activities such as next week’s Catholic Schools Week events, our Maths Parent Education session, the Healthy Lunchbox presentation and the free Playful Parenting workshops this term will get so much out of them.

I encourage all parents/ carers, where possible, to take advantage of anything and everything that is on offer at school. It is all to benefit the children’s academic outcomes and their social and emotional wellbeing.

Another way to connect, especially with other parents/ carers is to come along to our “Cuppa and a Chat” morning on Tuesday, straight after morning assembly. Whether it’s to get to know other parents/ carers or if you have a question about something regarding school or your children, everyone is very welcome.

Donna Falzon
Family Liaison Officer
**KidsMatter**

A big part of children developing positive friendships is being able to see things from another’s point of view and accepting the differences of others.

It’s not always easy for children to see someone else’s point of view, but learning how to understand others helps children know what to do in social situations and is the basis for developing caring, compassion, acceptance and responsibility.

These skills of caring, compassion, acceptance and responsibility are the foundation of the Catholic life at St Mary’s and are actively encouraged at school. More importantly, parents modelling positive acceptance and recognising the views of others is the most influential way of teaching children.

Showing our own children empathy is the best way for them to learn empathy for others. They learn from what they live, rather than simply what they are told.

Use the link, **Learning to Value Others**, to access the KidsMatter article for more details.

**From Our Librarian**

Have a look at the new books that have been added to our Library Collection. We now have the whole series of Spirit Animals, which has many Year 5 and 6 boys keen to be the first to borrow. We also have a series of factual texts produced by Dr Seuss. Children can learn about deserts, the work of tree doctors or running a dog show.

We have taken delivery of the first books for our classroom libraries. These are being processed as I type!!!! We are still waiting for the rest of our order and these should be in our classrooms and children’s hands very soon. Watch this space for further updates.

**From Our Office**

**Photograph/Video Permission Form**

Could all of these forms please be sent in to school by the end of this week. If a form is not returned for your child/ren their photograph will not be published in any of our newsletters, publications or on the school’s website.

Thank you
Lyn and Jacqui

**Something We’ve Noticed**

It was great to witness the manner in which our children supported each other at the Cross Country last Friday. There was much cheering on others, displaying good sportspersonship and support for each other. Our Year 6 did an amazing job in supporting Mrs Bain during the morning.

**Trivia Question**

At our Cross Country, who was the teacher using stretches for their grade that were outdated in the 1980s? Clinker for the winner.

**From Our Office**

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Thank you
Lyn and Jacqui

**Star Awards**

Shelby M
Violet I
Jaxon C
Edin D
Nicholas L
Mia C
Zoe M
Beckett B
Zane B
Mahlie C
Fletcher M
Rose F
Zane E
Rianna S
Ethan M
Katie G
Nicole Q
Noah D
Hayley G
Jade R

**Recommended Reading**

Our ICT team have Optional Homework Suggestions on our website. Certainly worth browsing.

**We Appreciated**

We certainly appreciated having so many parents/carers join us at our Cross Country. Your presence helps create a fun atmosphere for the children. It is noticed and valued.
From Our PE Teacher

**ST MARY’S CROSS COUNTRY**

Congratulations to all St Mary’s children for your efforts in the Cross Country. I love how all children had a go and ran to the best of their ability and were exhausted and happy at the end of the race. Thank you to the wonderful group of parents who judged and recorded the masses of children at the end of each race, as always it does not happen without you!!!

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Cross Country Training will be Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday school time in preparation for CCC on 1st May – Children who placed 1st – 10th 8yrs - 12yrs will qualify for CCC.

**Easter Raffle**

Ticket sales begin next week (Week 7). Tickets will be on sale at the top playground before school from 8.30am and at recess each day. 50c each or 3 for $1

Donations of Easter eggs and baskets can be made at the raffle ticket table each morning.

**Canteen News**

The canteen still requires volunteers for Wednesday’s and Thursday’s for 12.00-2.00pm. Please leave your name with the office and Donna will contact you. Thank you!

**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.