Dear St Mary’s Catholic School Community,

We all love a good holiday. Recent trends in schools have seen an escalation in the number of families taking their holidays during school terms. Our school is no different.

A number of reasons are in play, with a prominent one being reduced costs outside of a designated holiday period.

Can I ask this? Would you carefully consider what the impact might be of your child being absent from school for a period of time? If your family did it just once during the 7 year primary school cycle, I see no problem with it. If your family is repeatedly taking chunks of school time for holidays during the primary school years, it will be having a negative impact on your child’s learning.

If your child is in Kinder to Year 2 and misses crucial learning time, then the negative impact will be amplified.

Confirmation

We congratulate the 125 children and 5 adults from our parish who celebrated the Sacrament of Confirmation last Sunday. The children were beautifully dressed. Bishop Peter shared how each of the children had been sealed with the gifts of the Holy Spirit and he now asked them to go out and share those gifts with the people they meet.

P + F Meeting

Please join us for our P+F Meeting which will be held in our staffroom at 7.00pm tonight.

Year 5 Parents Meeting

We thank the parents who were able to join us on Monday afternoon. In what was clearly a difficult topic, we appreciated your willingness to listen and your reasonable and well constructed responses.

Starting Dates for 2017

Teachers return to school on Friday 27 January. Our MAI Day is on Monday 30 January. On this day children will complete a 1 to 1 Mathematics Assessment Interview with their teacher. A letter regarding the MAI is being sent home next Wednesday. All Years 1-6 students will commence school on Tuesday 31 January. Kinder commence on Wednesday 1 February.

Our Choir

Our choir will perform at Norah Head tomorrow as part of the opening for the State Fighting Championships. Best wishes girls and boys.

Classes for 2017

Our teachers have begun creating the class lists for 2017. As is the custom at our school, all classes will be changed significantly. It is important that all children learn to adapt and be flexible in their peer groupings.

Kind Regards,

Kevin Williams
Principal
From Our REC

Catholic Mission
Last Thursday I attended the Mission Mass at Our Lady of the Rosary Cathedral, Waitara. I was joined by two of our Year 6 Mini Vinnies leaders, Penny and Beth. The girls presented Bishop Comensoli with a cheque valued at $702.88. This was then presented to Catholic Mission on behalf of our school. Congratulations St Mary’s on a wonderful effort! I would also like to thank Beth’s mum, Dimity for driving the girls to the Mass.

Confirmation
Congratulations to all the boys and girls in Years 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 who made the Sacrament of Confirmation at St Mary’s on Sunday. It was a beautiful Mass that was celebrated with the Bishop and with many boys and girls from St Brendan’s. Thank you to Kalen, Tiarna, Zara and Marshall who helped out during the Mass.

All Saints’ Day Mass
Our All Saints Mass, led by the Year 5 students will be on Friday November 4th at 9.15am. We warmly invite you all to join us.

Liz Hartge
Acting Religious Education Coordinator

From Our Family Liaison Officer

Just a reminder for parents/carers about our Tuesday morning cuppa and a chat. Everyone is welcome to come along to meet and connect with other parents.

Through our weekly KidsMatter articles, parent education sessions, the parent resource library and our newsletter we try to provide relevant, up to date information for parent/carers to assist in their parenting and education journey. We hope that parents/carers can find something of interest or importance to them each week as we endeavour to assist parents/carers to build resilient, happy families.

As Family Liaison Officer I am here to assist parents/carers if they need support or a listening ear during challenging times. Whether that be family, parenting, financial, emotional or health difficulties, please feel free to contact me at any time. Sometimes just being able to speak to someone can make a big difference to how we feel and see things. Through research and experience here at St Mary’s we know that when families are supported, children do better socially, emotionally and academically.

Donna Falzon
Family Liaison Officer
**KidsMatter**

As a parent/carer how do we know when children’s behaviour and emotions have moved from what is expected and/or age appropriate, to something that is more serious and could be a cause for concern in regards to a potential mental health difficulty?

Some of the more serious mental health difficulties that children may experience include anxiety, depression, trauma and serious behaviour difficulties. Quite often these conditions are not stand alone but two or more may be present in an individual experiencing a problem with their mental health.

It is important to remember that around 45% of people will experience a mental health difficulty during their lifetime. Getting help early for children’s mental health difficulties is important as it can impact on their relationships, physical health and even their education. The earlier in life that mental health difficulties are addressed the better chance a child has of improving their long term mental health and wellbeing. Please see the KidsMatter article [Mental Health Difficulties](#) for more information about how different problems present in children and how to respond to them.

As a KidsMatter school St Mary’s places a high priority on the mental health and wellbeing of all students and in reducing any stigma still attached to topics of mental health. Please feel free to contact your child’s teacher or Family Liaison Officer, Donna Falzon if you have concerns about your child’s mental health and wellbeing.

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**Canberra Report**

Year 6 had a fantastic trip to Canberra in Week 1. Their behaviour and attitude were outstanding. Some of the highlights of the trip included:

- Visiting Parliament House and seeing Malcolm Turnbull and Derryn Hinch, whilst learning about the roles in Parliament
- Learning about past Prime Ministers and sitting in the House of Representatives in the Old Parliament House
- Visiting the tomb of the unknown soldier, exploring the D-Zone and watching the light shows at the War Memorial Museum
- Exploring the quirky gadgets and going down the free fall at Questacon
- Playing games in the Sportex room and getting a tour of the AIS
- Learning about the history of Dinosaurs and exploring various artefacts at the Dinosaur Museum
- Making our own Robots at the National Museum of Australia
- Eating the delicious food provided by Gold Creek Resort
- Socialising on the bus and in the rooms at night

A special thanks to Michelle, Andrew, Kane, Trish and Leesa for helping us throughout the trip to ensure the children were kept safe.

Also, we would like to thank the Australian Government for their support of this program. The Australian Government recognises the importance of all young Australians being able to visit their National Capital as part of civics and citizenship education. To assist parents/guardians in meeting the cost of the excursion the Australian Government has contributed funding, under the Parliament and Civics Education Rebate (PACER) programme, toward the travel expenses incurred.

Mrs Perry, Mr Whiteford and Miss Baker

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**Star Awards**

Mitchell W  
Cleo C  
Connor V  
Tiernan B  
Eyli P  
Jackson J  
Chelsea F  
Mia M  
Gemma S  
Lily T  
Zoe J  
Ava E  
Isabella C  
Cooper J  
Kiera Lee D  
Eva L  
Brooke E  
Noah S  
Grace H  
Isabella B

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**School Opal Cards**

[Important Information from Transport NSW](#)

**Travel Pass 2017**

From Monday 10 October, parents, guardians and students over 16 years will be able to apply for a 2017 SSTS travel pass by visiting [www.transport.info/school-students](http://www.transport.info/school-students). Most students will not need to submit a new application for 2017, although they will be deactivated for the school holidays.

**Students entering Kindergarten and Year 7 and all students progressing from Year 2 to Year 3 will need to apply for travel pass.**

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**Mackenzie, Maddie & Ellie - Canberra**

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**Jack & Alexi - Canberra**
Canteen News
Due to work and family commitments some canteen volunteers are no longer able to fulfill their rostered days.
If you are able to spare just a couple of hours once a month in Term 4, particularly on a Wed, Thurs or Fri, please let me know either directly or through the school office.
Please remember a copy of the canteen roster is on our school’s website.
Thank you.
Donna Falzon

School Banking News
Exciting new Term 4 rewards with an Outback Savers theme are now available, while stocks last!

For every deposit made at school students will receive a silver Dollarmites token. Once students have individually collected 10 tokens they can redeem them for exclusive School Banking reward items in recognition of their regular savings habits. There are two new items released each term so be sure to keep an eye out for them!

The next day they woke up early, And the sky had just awoke, Clouds hung low, the air was cold And breath turned into smoke, “All aboard” the drivers called.
In the War Memorial they had to remember, The soldiers who fought and died, And in the Parliament houses, They watched the politicians debate, And learnt of about the past “Can this trip NEVER EVER END?”

It was the last day of their trip, And really began to set in, They had to leave really soon. Which they really did regret Their time in Canberra was coming to an end.

More hours passed And the bus arrived at their school by six, And all the families went to give Their children a hug and a kiss, They hoped off the bus with bulging bags “I guess the trip had to end”

By Lucy H
6 Green

From Our PE Teacher

NSW all schools Athletics Carnival Homebush
An amazing achievement to qualify for this prestigious event.
Keegan F competed in the High Jump. He jumped his personal best of 1m 25cm and came 11th in NSW. Great effort Keegan and what we most love about you is your exceptional talent, humble attitude and the way you treat your competitors.
Joey F and Zander F competed in 100m, 200m, Long Jump and Shotput. These boys have had a fabulous year competing at such a high level in all sports. They came between 8th and 11th in all of their events.

CCC Touch Football Gala Day
Thursday 3rd November
Division 1, 2 and 3 Boys are at EDSAC North.
Division 1, 2, 3 Girls and the Mixed Division are at Pat Morley.
Any outstanding notes need to be returned by tomorrow please.
Thank you to all parents who have volunteered to help with teams - I will send draws home by the end of this week.
Liz Bain
Sports Coordinator

“Can this trip NEVER end?”
Every child in Year 6 woke up to pitch black darkness, A ringing alarm and the cold morning air, And every child looked up at the night sky, And gasped at the stunning array of glistening jewels.
A warm feeling entered their hearts, And their minds began to fill with possibilities Dreams, hopes, wishes.
And the sun rose up from behind a tall shadowy hill, “Can this feeling NEVER end?”

After a long, lazy drive past sheets of long, green grass, Of tall, wind farms and the time that passed. Each teacher, child and driver stopped to gaze
At the National Museum of Australia.
For never had they seen such designs So strange, yet so mind blowing!

Beep Beep! It was time to leave, But one stop left to go to conclude this day, They had to proceed to the Australian Institute of Sport.
Here they learned of famous gymnasts, And played a game or two in the virtual sport simulator.

The next day they woke up early, And the sky had just awoke, Clouds hung low, the air was cold And breath turned into smoke, “All aboard” the drivers called.
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By Lucy H
6 Green

Charlotte, Jasmine, Lucy & Laura