Dear St Mary’s Catholic School Community,

Last week, after a battle with prostate cancer, Mr Stephen Aitken lost his fight for life. Mr Aitken was the Foundation Principal of MacKillop Catholic College, Warnervale. He was instrumental in establishing the college as an excellent school for the learning, spiritual and wellbeing growth of its students.

Recently, the Australian Catholic University presented Stephen with an Honorary Doctorate recognising and celebrating his long and illustrious career in Catholic school education. Having been Principal in four Catholic high schools, Mr Aitken’s leadership and genuine interest for his students positively touched the lives of thousands of people. He was previously a Patrician brother and an avid Wests Tigers fan.

During his tenure as Foundation Principal at MacKillop (2002-2010), Mr Aitken was a great supporter and advocate for the local feeder schools, including St Mary’s. He continually sought ways to build a connection between St Mary’s and MacKillop, even employing a Transition Coordinator, whose role it was to liaise with both St Brendan’s and our school.

He was a great leader and a tremendous man. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife Kerry, daughter Natalie Lea, their two granddaughters and his many family and friends.

Cambodia Mufti Day

On Friday we have a Mufti Day to raise funds for Cambodia. Our PE teacher, Mrs Bain is travelling to Cambodia in mid-December. She is joining a small team of people who are generously giving their time to help build shelters for the local population. To support her, for a gold coin donation, the children are welcome to wear casual clothes on Friday (no thongs). Any raised money will help purchase some bicycles and rice for the locals.

We appreciate your support for this worthy cause.

Thank You

We thank Catherine Hay (Tessa 5 Blue) for generously organising our World Teachers’ Day Liturgy for last Friday. Catherine devoted many hours ensuring that the liturgy was a fitting celebration of the work of the teachers in our school. We also appreciate the parents who provided such a lovely morning tea: Alison O’Brien, Lisa Wrightson and all of the class parents. We appreciate your thoughtfulness.

Volunteers’ Morning Tea

As a simple sign of expressing our thanks to the many parent volunteers who have helped our school during the school year, we invite you to our Thank You Morning Tea. It will be held in the staffroom immediately after our Thanksgiving Mass on Friday 9 December.

Reports and 2017 Classes

On Friday 9 December, your child’s Report will be sent home. Together with their Report, a note detailing your child’s 2017 class and teacher(s) will be included.

Kind Regards,

Kevin Williams
Principal
From Our REC

World Teachers’ Day
Last Friday 25th November, we celebrated World Teachers Day. A huge thank you to Catherine Hay who coordinated the liturgy, along with Angie Hahn and Karen Henderson who helped out with practices and on the day. Thank you to the class parents and other parent volunteers who also organised a lovely morning tea.

Thanksgiving Mass
Year 6 are currently preparing for our final school mass for 2016, our Thanksgiving Mass. This will be held on Friday December 9th (Week 9) at 9.15am. This is a particularly special mass and I encourage all members of our school community to attend. It’s at this mass we wish the class of 2016 well, as we celebrate the Eucharist together one final time as a St Mary’s community. Please add this date to your diary.

Christmas Carols
Our annual Christmas Carols evening is here once again. An invitation went home last week inviting all parents and grandparents to come along on Monday December 12th and join in as we sing some of our favourite Christmas carols. Each grade will sing two carols and choir will also feature. Please bring some picnic chairs, a rug and some snacks (there will not be a BBQ available this year) to share with your family. We look forward to seeing you all there for a fantastic evening.

Christmas Eve Mass
With the Season of Advent here, soon it will be Christmas. Each year parents help to prepare parts of our parish’s Christmas Eve Mass. This is held at 6.00pm at St Mary’s. I am currently looking for some parents to volunteer their time to work in a team to help prepare the mass, practice the children once or twice and attend Mass on Christmas Eve to help. If you are interested in helping, please fill in the slip below. Alternatively, if your family will be attending Christmas Eve Mass here at St Mary’s Parish and your child would like a part in the mass (there are both reading and non-reading parts available) please also fill in the slip below (children K-6 welcome).

My child _______________________ of class _______________ would love to have a part in the parish’s Christmas Eve Mass.

My best contact number is ________________

Signed _____________________ My best contact number is _____________

Liz Hartge
Acting Religious Education Coordinator

From Our Family Liaison Officer

The last couple of weeks of school are jam packed full of activities for both students and families. Today was the last of our Kinder Transition days and it has been exciting for not only our new kinder students, but their parents/carers and buddies for next year. Thank you to our current Kinder parents for their time to work in a team to help prepare the lovely morning tea to welcome our 2017 Kinder families to our school.

The parent/carer Spirituality Day is on next Tuesday at Catherine Hill Bay Surf Club and will be a wonderful opportunity for parents/carers to take some time for themselves, relax, unwind and just enjoy the day with morning tea and lunch being provided. I know that a number of St Mary’s parents/carers are attending and will have a great day. You can still RSVP at the link, Spirituality Day, if you would like to attend.

We also have our Advent Liturgies on Thursday afternoons, our Thanksgiving Mass on Friday the 9th followed by our Volunteers Morning Tea to thank all of those parents/carers who have contributed so much to the running of our school this year. The Christmas Carols and Awards ceremony in our last week round off a very busy term. Hopefully you can find time to attend at some stage.
**Star Awards**
Elijah P  
Marcella H  
Tiernan B  
Kyeden B  
Vasiliki P  
Maverick E  
Mikayla M  
Taj P  
Scarlett O  
Isabella D  
Nate R  
Max H  
Owen H  
Mikaela M  
Laura E  
Zachariah W  
Alyssa R  

**Year 6 Parents**
The date for purchase of tickets for the Year 6 Graduation Dinner has now passed. If you haven’t yet RSVP to the invitation please do so by the end of this week.

**Year 5 Parents**
Orders for 2017 Sports Shirts are due this Friday 2nd December. We are unable to accept late orders. If you didn’t receive an order form, there is a copy on the school’s website, **Year 6 Shirt Link** or call the office & we will send one home with your child.

**Year 2 Parents**
Year 3 2017 – You will need to apply for a new travel pass for children progressing from Year 2 2016 to Year 3 2017. To apply for a SSTS travel pass visit **Travel Pass 2017**

**From Our Office**
All 2016 school fees should now be paid in full. If you have any overdue fees please attend to payment immediately or contact the office to discuss finalising your payments.

**Reminder:** Family Registration Forms are now overdue. **Both parents** must sign the back of the form for it to be valid. The information on this form is used to apply sibling discounts for 2017. No discounts will be applied unless a completed form is received.

Thank you  
Julie, Jacqui & Leesa

Kyeden, Hudson & Jessica - Year 1

Blake, Jye & Layla - Year 4 Advent Art

Indianna, Josephine & Cooper - Year 4 Advent Art

World Teachers’ Day Liturgy
Canteen News
Please note that due to industrial action at the manufacturing facility Cheese & Bacon Pizza Singles are temporarily out of stock. Ham & Pineapple are still available at the moment. Thank you.
Donna Falzon

St Brigid's
We would like to invite you to a ‘Come and See’ morning this Friday 2nd December. This is an opportunity for you to come and see our college in action. There will be two sessions; one beginning at 8.30am and another at 9.30am. If you are interested please RSVP to the college, stbrigid@dbb.catholic.edu.au

Kind Regards,
Julie Terry
College Principal
St Brigid’s Catholic College

Donna Falzon

Keegan, Max & Seth - Year 4

Will - Year 1

Dear Parents and Caregivers
you’re invited to a parent spirituality day on……
Date: Tuesday 6th of December
Time: 9am coffee 9.30 start -2pm
Location: Catherine Hill Bay Surf Club

Together in this time of Advent we will share mindfulness, meditative prayer, good food & great company. It will also be an opportunity for the Catholic Schools Office Mission Team to share with parents the exciting new possibilities for families in 2017.

Please R.S.V.P: sallyanne.butel@dbb.catholic.edu.au

We have a number of parents/ carers attending the Spirituality Day and if enough people are interested I am looking to organise a car pool. Please let me know if you would be willing to drive others or are in need of transport to attend.
If you are interested in attending the Spirituality Day you can RSVP via the following link, Spirituality Day by Friday Nov 25th.
Donna Falzon