Dear St Mary’s Catholic School Community,

Welcome to the 2017 school year. Wasn’t the holiday weather spectacular? We trust that the break from routine enabled your family to be refreshed and looking forward to an exciting year of learning.

We warmly welcome children new to our school: Samuel T (2 Green) and Anthony R (4 Blue). Parents and carers, my hope for your partnership with us is that you feel welcomed and included and that your child(ren) enjoy their considerable learning, deepen their understanding and trust in Jesus and establish wonderful friendships.

Opening School Mass
Please join us for our Opening School Mass at 9.15am on Friday 17th February. Our School Captains, Student Parliament, Sports Captains and Vice Captains will be invested during the Mass.

Reading Parent Workshop
On Monday 13th February we are holding a Parent Education Workshop with a focus on Reading at Home with your Child K-2. This workshop will answer questions such as: How do I read with my child at home? What does reading look like in the classroom? Should I ask questions as they read? What do I do if they don’t know a word?

Please join us. The skills that you will learn will certainly help your child’s ability to read.

Staff Development Days 2017
A Staff Development Day will be held on Friday 31st March. On this day, all staff will be engaged in the Mental Health First Aid Course. The next Staff Development Day is on Monday 24th April. With ANZAC Day on Tuesday 25th, we scheduled the Staff Development Day on the Monday in case families were planning a long weekend get-away.

2017 Calendar
Our Term 1, 2017 Calendar is on our school’s website. Click on News and Events and then Letters, Notes, Timetables.

P+F Meeting
Our P+F Meeting is on Wednesday 15th February at 7.00pm in the school’s library. You are most welcome to join us.

With Today’s Newsletter
Accompanying today’s newsletter is:
(1) Going Home from School form
(2) Term 1 Overview
(3) K-6 Parents and Carers Letter
(4) K-2 Reading Parent Workshop flyer
(5) “About My Child” form

Swimming Carnival
Our school’s Swimming Carnival (Years 2-6) is on Monday 20th February at Mingara. Please complete the form and return it to your child’s class teacher.

Change of Practice
Please read the accompanying letter regarding a change to our usual practice of having a Parent Information Evening early in the term.

Kind Regards,

K Williams
Principal
From Our REC

Welcome to the 2017 School Year! I hope you had a relaxing and joyful Christmas and New Year Season. I am here to support families in their faith development, so if you have any questions regarding Masses, making Sacraments, connecting with the parish or anything else regarding the religious life of our school, please give me a call.

Opening School Mass
Our K-6 Opening School Mass is on Friday 17th February. We welcome parents, grandparents and new families to celebrate our first school mass for 2017 with us in the church. Mass begins at 9.15am.

Sacramental Program
The Sacramental Program includes children in Year 2 (Confirmation), Year 3 (Reconciliation) and Year 4 (Holy Communion), as well as children in older grades who may have previously missed one of the Sacraments. If you have any questions, please contact the school office and I can discuss your individual circumstances.

Confirmation 2017: 16th September 10.00am (Enrolment Forms home 21st July)
Reconciliation 2017: 30th March 4.00pm (Enrolment Forms home 3rd Feb)
Holy Communion 2017: 18th June 9.00am (Enrolment Forms home 28th April)

Ash Wednesday
This year, Ash Wednesday falls on March 1st. The older children will be coming together for Mass while the younger children will participate in a Liturgy. Times will be confirmed at a later date. Parents, we invite you to both of these occasions.

Catholic Schools Week
Catholic Schools Week is Week 6 (March 6th-10th) of this term. Upcoming newsletters will detail times and dates of liturgies and open classrooms. Watch this space!

Sacred Space and Assemblies
Each class performs one Sacred Space Item and one Grade Assembly Item each year. This term, the classes who will have a Sacred Space item to share with the school at assembly time (Fortnightly Thursdays, 1.50pm) are Year 6, 5 Gold & 5 Green, 2 Green, 1 Blue and 4 Gold. Teachers will notify their class in the weeks leading up to their item. We would love for you to join us whenever possible.

Liz Hartge
Acting Religious Education Coordinator

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From Our Family Liaison Officer

Welcome back to the new school year. As Family Liaison Officer it is my role to support families who may be experiencing difficulties by offering a listening ear, offering practical support when needed, providing referrals to outside agencies and information regarding school, parenting, childhood development, etc. to parents/carers.

Sometimes just having someone to chat to confidentially about concerns you may have regarding things such as children starting school, children’s behaviour, family breakdown and how it affects children can help ease a persons mind. I am here to provide reassurance about some of the practicalities of school routine and offer strategies on how to be engaged with your children’s learning to maximise their achievements and wellbeing.

At St Mary’s we know that the wellbeing of students has a huge impact on their learning potential and recognise the influence the important adults in children’s lives have on their mental health and wellbeing. Please feel free to contact me at school, Monday to Friday, either in person or by phone.

Donna Falzon
KidsMatter

St Mary’s is proud to be a KidsMatter School since 2007. For those families new to St Mary’s, KidsMatter is an Australian mental health and wellbeing initiative set in primary schools and early childhood centres.

Funded by the Australian Government and beyondblue it is a partnership between education and the health sector bringing together all of the most important people in children’s lives, particularly families.

Each week we will have links to KidsMatter articles relevant to school and family life. You can also visit the website at any time, using this link, KidsMatter. From here you can also register for regular eletronic newsletters.

Just some of the topics we will be looking at over the year include resilience, friendship skills, positive thinking, understanding feelings and emotions, relationships and social and emotional learning.

Social and Emotional Learning, or SEL, is all about learning how to manage feelings, manage friendships and solve problems. Developing positive social and emotional skills to deal with life’s ups and downs is a critical factor in children’s wellbeing.

From Our Librarian

Welcome back to another year of learning and fun in the library. I hope everyone enjoyed their holidays and had time to read a few good books.

This week in the library we will be reviewing our care for books and more importantly how to choose a book that is just right for us. We use the five finger test. We choose a page from the book and read. If we come to one or two tricky words then that book will be easy to read. If we read three tricky words then that book will have just the right amount of challenge we need in our reading. But if we read four or five tricky words then that book is not ready for us to read just yet.

Why not try this at home. It is important to always choose the right books that we will enjoy reading.

Have reading everyone.

Miss Gray
Librarian

Something We’ve Noticed

It is obvious how great our parents, grandparents and carers are at our school. The manner in which you made time to have your child present for their Maths Assessment or Kinder Assessment was commendable. You were punctual and we also appreciate that it takes some organization on your part to make it happen. Our teachers appreciate your efforts. Thank you.

Piano Tuition

There are currently vacancies for piano tuition during school hours. Please contact Chris Hochkins for further details.

Ph. 0414 186 044

Canteen News

Canteen is CLOSED on Tuesday’s.
Please remember to check the 2017 pricelist which went home yesterday for updates prices.
From Our PE Teacher

**St Mary’s Swimming Carnival**

Our Swimming Carnival is on Monday 20th February at Mingara for all children in Year 2-6. Swimming permission and nomination notes have gone home with children and need to be returned by **next Monday**.

This gives parents time to go to the pool or ask swimming coaches about appropriate races. Please enter children in 10m or 20m or 50m races. They cannot do a combination of distances due to safety concerns – with water we must know exactly where children are at all times.

As always we have the best crew of helpers and we look forward to your help again this year. Once again we especially need parents who don’t mind getting wet for the games – our children have a fabulous day ahead with all of the races, games and activities planned.

REMEMBER REGISTRATION FOR WINTER SPORTS AND ACTIVITIES SUCH AS DANCE, GYMNASTICS AND MARTIAL ARTS IS HAPPENING NOW – GO ONLINE OR ASK FRIENDS AS TO WHICH CLUB OR ACTIVITY SUITS YOUR NEEDS.

Liz Bain  
Sports Coordinator