Dear St Mary’s Catholic School Community,

We are blessed with great kids here at St Mary’s. We have noticed their welcoming smiles, polite manners and enthusiasm for our new school year. Our teachers have been thrilled with the children’s attitude to both their learning and behaviour.

Thank you parents for sending your child in the correct school uniform, with appropriate food supplies and ensuring that they arrive at school on time. Such seemingly little things make a huge difference. It means your child is settled and ready to learn.

**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.

**Kinder Parents’ Meeting**
Our Kinder Parent Meeting commences at 6.00pm on Monday 13th February. The Kinder Meeting will be held in our school’s Library and will precede the Parent Reading Workshop.

**Parent Reading 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**
The next two Staff Development Days are on Friday 31st March and Monday 24th April.

**Wanted: Book Club Coordinator(s)**
Our school has a strong reading culture. An important part of that culture is our Book Club. We need a new person(s) to organise our Book Club for 2017. If you are an organised person willing to help out our school, please leave your name at our school’s office.

**Homework**
With today’s Newsletter is a copy of our current Homework practices.

**Thank You**
Thank you to the many parents who have already returned the following notes:
1. Going Home from School form
2. “About My Child” form
3. Swimming Carnival form (K-2)

**Your Prayers and Thoughts**
Please keep the Starkey families (Haylee 6 Green, Jayden 3 Blue, Brock 3 Gold and Jaime Lee 2 Green) in your thoughts and prayers. The children’s grandfather passed away recently. May your memories and Our Lord’s strength give you great courage during your time of loss.

Kind Regards,

Kevin Williams
Principal

Marshall S 3 Green

Mia M 3 Green
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)

The enrolment form for reconciliation went home last Friday. There are copies available in the school office or on our website. The parent information evening for Reconciliation will be on Thursday 23rd February, 4pm in the Church.

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
Please join us this Thursday at 1.50pm for our first Sacred Space run by Year 6.

From Our REC

From Our Family Liaison Officer

It has been great to see our new Kinder students and families settling in so well. While some have been ready for big school for a while now, making that transition from preschool to Kinder can still be quite daunting and cause some anxiety, for parents/carers as well as children.

It’s quite normal to be a bit nervous about starting something new but the way in which parents/carers deal with children’s concerns has a big impact on how successfully children manage their fears and worries. Parents/carers modelling a positive response to their own worries and by being deliberate and calm in their reaction to their children’s concerns, helps to foster resilience in children, no matter what their age.

It is important for parents/carers to respond to children’s concerns by acknowledging how their child feels without getting caught up in the emotion of the situation themselves and helping children find ways to learn to deal with their worries. Resilience and positive mental health go hand in hand and developing coping skills to deal with life’s ups and downs is vital for their future wellbeing.

Donna Falzon - Family Liaison Officer
**KidsMatter**

*The Need to Belong* is the focus of this week’s KidsMatter article. Belonging is very important for children’s mental health and wellbeing. Children who feel they belong to their school are more relaxed, happy, confident and generally have fewer behavioural problems.

When the adults who are responsible for children take a positive interest in what happens at school it helps children feel that school is valued and considered important in their family. If they know that you are supportive of the school and happy for them to be there, children feel safe and confident in their school environment.

**From Our Librarian**

This week in the library Kindy will read the text of Twinkle Twinkle Little Star. We will focus on the title, where we start reading and the direction in which we read. Kindy will be making beautiful stars in response to the text.

Years 1 and 2 will be viewing the text *The Runaway Hug* by Nick Bland. We will be talking about who is in our family and the things we like to do especially with our brothers and sisters.

Years 3 - 6 are viewing the text *The Fabulous Friend Machine* by Nick Bland. We celebrate Safer Internet Day this Week and this book highlights the importance of knowing who we are communicating with across the internet through our mobile devices. *As Popcorn the chicken discovered there are a lot of wolves out there!*

By the way have you read?.... *Candle Vaulting* by Jack B. Nimble

Happy reading everyone!

Ms Gray
Librarian

**From Our Office**

Invoices for the 2017 school year were e-mailed to our families at the end of January. If you have any questions or you didn’t receive your invoice please contact the office.

A reminder to call or email the office if your child is going to be absent from school.

Office: ph. 4396 5100
E-mail: smt@dbb.catholic.edu.au

Thank you
Julie, Jacqui & Leesa

**Something We’ve Noticed**

Yesterday was Safer Internet Day. Please talk to your child about the need to be safe online. Periodically, we hear stories of children sharing details online that expose them to unnecessary risks. Educating your child about the pros and cons of the internet is the key.

**Parent Teacher Meetings**

If you wish to have a short meeting with your child’s teacher (Years 1-6) in the first few weeks of school, please access the Parent Meetings Letter, located on our school’s website, for further information.

**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 Tuesdays. Please remember to check the 2017 pricelist for updated prices.
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 should have all been returned by now. I have been overwhelmed by how many notes are back already – Thank you! I was able to make a great start on the programs. Could any notes outstanding please be returned by tomorrow – This will enable teachers to check that everyone is included.
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 always have a fabulous day 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