Dear Parents and Friends of our School Community

This last week we remembered several significant anniversaries: the release of Nelson Mandela from prison in 1990, the commencement of the Freedom Ride to highlight the injustices for indigenous people in 1965, and in 2008, the apology to the Stolen Generation by the Australian Government. These anniversaries highlight the continual thirst for justice.

In our prayers for justice, we ask God to give us strength and wisdom to act for change, and we ask him to bless, comfort and give hope to people who feel powerless and invisible. We pray for a fairer, more equitable society, so that “justice and fairness flow like a river that never runs dry.” (Amos 5:24). May there be a dawning of a truly human society built on love and peace. We ask this in the name of Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

Newsletters are a very important part of community building and I want to expand the ‘voice’ of the Coordinators and other staff, include more photos and share some of the important things we now know about research into learning, as well as relay the events that are happening.

In two weeks time, the school will begin emailing a link to the parents that will connect to the school’s webpage and allow the newsletter to appear in living colour on your screens. There are several reasons for the decision to go electronic, the significant cost of printing being only one of them. In addition, there are issues relating to greater accessibility for those who are in shared custody households, for those who have children absent from school or for those who have squashed bananas in the bottom of their bags which make the newsletter difficult to read.

Another reason that I am mindful of is the interruption to learning, however short, each time the newsletters are delivered to classrooms and counted out. I really want to minimise any interruptions to learning.

I am also aware that some people have difficulty in accessing the internet, especially in more remote areas. Therefore, there will be a limited number of printed newsletters available from the office each week and there will be one newsletter that will go to the classrooms in the Primary and Homerooms in the Secondary for the students to see.

As with all things in a school, a process like this is evolutionary and we will make changes according to how it best works for our community. I hope that you enjoy accessing the coloured photographs of your children. Please ensure that you don’t miss out by returning the Medical forms for your children with the most recent email address on it.

The very first Principal’s Morning Tea was held last week with the Indigenous students as we commemorated the anniversary of the Australian Government’s apology to the Stolen Generations. Dominic’s music on the ‘didge’ was a real highlight. Thank you to Mrs Knott for helping to organise this important event.

Kind regards

Mrs Frances Robertson
Principal
A man named Valentinus was martyred on February 14 late in the third century A.D - this much we know. But when it comes to details about the life of St Valentine, legend often supersedes fact.

The Latin word, Valentinus, means worthy, strong and powerful. We all recognise the power of love to transform people. At St Pat’s, Valentine’s Day was a very happy occasion for the many students who received flowers. This is an annual event organised by the Student Executive and the SRC. Thank you to Mrs Fletcher for supporting this project.
Protecting children with allergies to nuts

St Patrick's School has a small number of students who suffer from severe nut allergies. In order to provide a safe environment for these children the School is promoting a nut-free environment.

Anaphylaxis

Anaphylaxis is the most severe form of allergic reaction. The symptoms of anaphylactic shock may include hives, swelling, watery eyes, runny nose, vomiting, diarrhoea, stomach cramps, coughing, wheezing, throat tightness/closing, difficulty swallowing, difficulty breathing, dizziness, fainting, loss of consciousness or a change of skin colour. The most dangerous symptoms are breathing difficulties or a drop in blood pressure, which can be potentially fatal. These allergic reactions are normally very quick, symptoms usually becoming apparent immediately as the person comes in contact with the allergen, and can threaten the allergic person’s life within minutes.

At present, there is no cure for anaphylaxis and very few people with nut anaphylaxis will ever grow out of it. A tiny amount of the allergen, a trace amount, is enough to cause a reaction that will threaten the life of these allergic children.

Therefore....

In order to protect students with allergies to peanuts and similar nut products, St Patrick's School has a policy that no food containing nuts should be brought to school. The canteen does not sell any nut products and nut products are not used in Food Technology or any other faculty.

Products that contain nuts include Peanut Butter, Nutella, fruit and nut bars, chocolate and any other products that have nuts listed in their ingredients. This does not include products that contain the warning "may contain traces of nuts".

Whilst it is not possible to guarantee that nut products will not be in the school, we request all members of the St Patrick's community make every effort to support this policy so as to ensure the safety and well being of all students.

Because quite a few children experience allergies or intolerances to a variety of food products, students are to ensure they do not swap or share food and drinks. Parents of students with an allergic reaction to nuts or other foods are to inform the School prior to commencement and play a key part in the development of an action plan for their child.

School uniforms boost school spirit!

Helping to build a sense of community within the school, uniforms create an atmosphere of belonging. This essence of unity can positively effect a child's attitude toward school and can lead to better learning and improved attendance. Through simplicity, uniforms promote time efficiency, organisation, and neatness. School uniforms encourage individual self-expression because with uniforms, students find ways to express themselves creatively, rather than through their clothes - through the arts, music, sports, personality and academic achievement.

Thank you to all families who have complied with requests to adhere to the uniform guidelines. The school has agreed on certain standards and these are outlined in the Student Planner on page 13 &14.

In particular, parents are asked to monitor their child's presentation, ensuring that the details are followed. This includes, dresses to at least knee length, no visible make-up or nail polish, plain black or grey belts, correct shoes and hat wear for all PE and outdoors activities.

As it gets cooler and we plan for the purchase of the winter uniform, all families need to check the guidelines about the wearing of black coats, scarves, gloves and beanies. These must not have visible brand names.

When there are difficulties in wearing the correct uniform, all students are required to have an explanatory note from the parents.
Preparations for our 2014 school production ‘Oliver!’ are well under way with all but a few parts allocated this week. The cast will involve over 70 children as performers and many more besides for backstage, front of house, prop making and so on. As is the case with any such venture, there are many jobs to be done and much help needed to do them.

One of the major tasks with a cast of this size is of course costuming and this notice is to see if there are any parents who might be ready to coordinate costume design and making.

We anticipate that many of the clothes worn by the orphan boys, Fagin’s lads and so on will be easily found with old jeans, T and flannel shirts being suitable. That leaves us to focus on items for the major roles, where we will need to be mindful of the period in which the show is set - Victorian England.

If you would like to help with the task of bringing the wardrobe together, could you email me please via the school email system on alyson.hulley@cg.catholic.edu.au

Come and join in the fun!
Alyson Hulley - Producer

and coming events…. Have you looked at the calendar on the school’s website?
Secondary Campus News...

Assessment Information

Assessment is one way teachers collect information on how the students in their classes are performing. Last Friday each student was given an assessment booklet which has general information on assessment, as well as detailed information for each subject area. One of the most useful parts of this booklet is the information from teachers regarding due dates for assessment tasks. I would encourage you and your child to go through the booklet marking due dates on a calendar or on a piece of paper which is then put above the student’s work area. This way it becomes a easy to see guide of when work is due. The office has copies of the booklets for any student who may have been absent last week.

Pam Fletcher Secondary Coordinator

Canteen News...

Thank you to all who have responded by sending in a canteen volunteers’ availability form. It is not too late to get your form in; the more the merrier! Thank you to Grant Pascoe for helping on Friday at such short notice.

Thursday 20 February
Volunteer needed please!

Friday 21 February
Marjorie Revelant

Wednesday 26 February
Catherine Pearce

Many healthy food changes are being put into place in ALL NSW CANTEENS. This will mean that under the Fresh Tastes @ School Healthy School Canteen Guidelines Policy, many items will be faded out of our menu. Lollies of any type are no longer available and Freddo chocolates will be unavailable when my stock runs out (in approximately 2 weeks). I will be replacing full cream flavoured milk to lite, and also replacing icy poles with Quelch frozen fruit sticks. Thank you for your support as we offer healthier alternatives for our children.

MEAL DEAL FRIDAY-This week's meal deal is HOMEMADE PIZZA AND GARLIC BREAD WITH A FROZEN FRUIT CUP FOR $5.00. This DOES NOT INCLUDE A DRINK. If required, please include an extra $2.00 in your order. Thank you. THIS IS THE ONLY CHOICE AVAILABLE TO BOTH PRIMARY AND INFANTS.

Carolyn Hely
Canteen Manager

Pastoral Care matters...

Each year we are able to support our students with different programs of Pastoral Care. Programs include Life Education, Motivational Media, Drumbeat, Police visits, Crossroads, Seasons for Growth, to name a few. This term, our Year 9 girls will begin small group sessions with a program called - 'Girls with a Purpose' (developed by Life House Project Inc). It will be run by our Youth Connections worker, Karen Lonergan, supported by a teacher. Sessions include: problem solving, conflict resolution, self esteem, valuing health, social skills, developing personal goals and many other topics.

Lou Mackay Pastoral Care Coordinator

Homework Support ...

Homework and assessments can build up and sometimes, a little bit of support and a regular routine can make all the difference. Every Thursday afternoon, from 3.30pm - 4.30pm, a homework support group is offered in the Secondary Library. Afternoon tea is provided. Karen Lonergan (from Youth Connections) and Lou Mackay will be in attendance. Access to computers is available. Parents are required to collect their children at 4.30pm. All are welcome.

Lou Mackay Pastoral Care Coordinator
Dragon boating at Jindy...
A word from the School Counsellor...

To the students and families of St Patrick’s,

I am Katie, the new Student and Family Counsellor. I visit Catholic Schools around the South Eastern regions of NSW for counselling services. The service I provide is confidential, free and available to all students and their families at St Pats. I aim to assist students with emotional, behavioural and social issues with a goal of improving ‘quality of life’. Whilst I will be working with students and families in the school setting, issues may be related to school, home and/or other personal struggles.

**If you would like to make an appointment or if you have any questions about the counselling service please contact me at St Patrick’s Parish School on Wednesdays.**

I am looking forward to working with staff, students and families in a holistic approach within the St Patrick’s Parish School and Cooma community.

Katie Hedgcock
Student and Family Counsellor
Catholic Care