Dear St Patrick’s Community

We are in the midst of our enrolment period for 2017. We clearly wish to give the message that we are a school for all.

Since his election as Pope in 2012, Pope Francis has made a difference to the way that the Church ‘does business’.

It is wonderful to witness the pastoral way he is interacting with people and responding to challenges. He has reached out to both Catholics and those of other faiths.

In one of his homilies, he made the following observation: “Catholic education is one of the most important challenges for the Church, currently committed to new evangelisation.”

We have the job of addressing education for young people in a rapidly changing, digitalised and secular world and we need to be aware that we are part of the Church’s mission. As such, we must always have in our vision the provision of a quality education that is grounded in the Gospel’s message of love.

This means that we must make the person of Jesus known and loved in a new and challenging context.

The Gospel story of Jesus is ultimately about hope, faith and love. It offers the context for justice, respect, integrity and compassion.

Pope Francis challenges us with these words: “Effectively, Catholic schools are attended by many students who are not Christian or do not believe. Catholic educational institutions offer to all an approach to education that has as its aim the full development of the person, which responds to the right of every person to access knowledge. However, they are also called upon to offer, with full respect for the freedom of each person and using methods appropriate to the scholastic environment, the Christian belief, that is, to present Jesus Christ as the meaning of life, the cosmos and history. Jesus began to proclaim the good news to the ‘Galilee of the people’, a crossroads of people, diverse in terms of race, culture and religion.”

It is with this in mind, that I invite our whole community to consider St Patrick’s as a worthwhile educational pathway for the young people of Cooma and surrounds.

I am very proud of this school and the gentle and thoughtful way that teachers go about bringing out the best in young people. I am impressed with the desire of our staff to continue to strive to improve. I appreciate the way that parents support the school. And, most of all, I love the positive cheerfulness and kindness of students. Our St Patrick’s is a wonderful place!

Frances Robertson
Principal
From the AP’s Desk

School start times
There are teachers on duty from 8:30am each morning. Some students are being dropped off before this time, so they are left unsupervised. Please note that the gates on Primary will be locked until 8.30am. Unless a special arrangement is made with the school, no student should be dropped off before 8:30am.

Cooler weather
As we come into winter, it is important that parents leave sick children at home rather than sending them to school. Sending a sick child to school often increases the risk of other children and staff picking up the same cold or flu. Keeping a sick child at home also increases the chance of overcoming the illness sooner.

Primary assemblies
The Primary assemblies are an important event in the life of St Patrick’s. They are a showcase of the talents of the class, give an insight into the learning that is taking place in the class and demonstrate that learning can occur in a variety of ways. The assemblies also recognise the achievements and efforts of students in each year group. I would encourage all parents, grandparents and friends to come and see an assembly, even if your child is not in the class presenting.

Congratulations to 4M, Mrs Moser and Mrs Rooney for your assembly last Friday. I want to also acknowledge the rest of the Primary students for sitting so quietly and respectfully throughout the presentation.

Mark van Ommen
Assistant Principal
Reflection on NAPLAN

It's May and in the education calendar that means NAPLAN testing. May also means that for a week preceding this standardised testing period, social media becomes saturated with the usual political debate and personal opinion regarding the value of, or otherwise, of NAPLAN.

At St Patrick’s, the boxes have been packed and posted away again with the efforts of our Year 3, 5, 7 & 9 students. The majority of our Year 5, 7 & 9 students have participated in this testing experience previously and readily engaged in the process. It was a new experience for our Year 3 students and their current teacher, Miss Clear, prepared them well; building their confidence and capacity to engage fully with these compulsory tests.

While I muddled through the mountain of public opinion on social media I stumbled across an article written by Michael Grose, Australia’s leading parent educator, and while his viewpoint is too late for this year’s participants, his message still carries an important message for all families. I have included his article verbatim, keeping the original reference to NAPLAN but this word could easily be interchanged with any challenging activity. I hope you find his article interesting and his advice helpful.

Whether your child stresses or takes them in his stride here are some tips to help prepare for the NAPLAN tests:

1 Take your cues from your child: If your child doesn’t worry about them then neither should you. Be careful not to create a problem that doesn’t exist by incessantly talking about, or worse, worrying about the test.

2 Focus on doing their best and trying hard: Choose your words carefully when you speak with your kids. As with all their learning activities place your focus squarely on effort rather than results. The only pressure on kids should be to try hard rather than to do well.

3 Listen to any concerns they have: If your child confesses to some nerves then validate their feelings, rather than shut them down with a ‘get over it’ response. “Yes, sometimes tests can be a little scary, but they get easier every time you take them.” Use this as an opportunity to develop some emotional smarts, which starts with recognising how kids feel.

4 Give them some relaxation ideas: Anxious or nervous kids will benefit from some simple relaxation strategies. Taking some deep breaths, changing their thinking and exercising the morning of the test are some simple ways to help kids get some feeling of control.

5 Help them retain their perspective: One way to help children who become excessively anxious about an event is to ask what’s the worst thing that could happen? Okay, they may not do as well as they would like but the sun will still rise tomorrow, regardless of how well they do. Keeping perspective is a life skill that we all need to practise.

A positive, caring parent attitude is one of the best gifts you can give a child when they are apprehensive or nervous about approaching any different situation whether it’s going on school camp, joining a new club or sitting a NAPLAN test.

Stephanie Lovat
Curriculum Coordinator
National Simultaneous Storytime is an annual campaign that aims to encourage more young Australians to read and enjoy books. Now in its 16th successful year, it is a colourful, vibrant, fun event that aims to promote the value of reading and literacy, using an Australian children’s book that explores age-appropriate themes.

We enjoyed the National Simultaneous Story Time yesterday morning. The book that was being read all round Australia was ‘I Got This Hat’. There is a copy in our library. Thank you to students who participated by wearing their favourite hat.

Life Education is back!

In Life Education we had a warm-up activity that allowed us to organise our own excursion, based on some important information. When new information was given, you could decide to change groups. This was a lot of fun!

We then looked at cyber safety to know what we could and shouldn't post on social media.

Lastly, we were placed into groups to decide what substances were good and bad. We also looked at what were illegal and legal drugs and how they can effect the body. We discovered that food, water or oxygen were not classed as a drug.

Year 6
School Community Council

The transition to Community Council

As we indicated in last week's newsletter, we now announce all positions vacant on both the P&F Association and School Board as we transition to form the Community Council. The School Community Council provides the opportunity for members of the school, parish and Archdiocesan communities to support the mission of Catholic education in our school. Working with the Parish, Principal and staff, Council members provide leadership to the school community.

In general, the responsibilities of the Community Council are to:

- Contribute to, and support the educational programs and practices at work in the school
- Provide financial policy approval which focuses on effective budgeting and financial planning,
- Contribute to maintaining and developing buildings and grounds to provide a suitable environment for the learning process to flourish,
- Take suitable steps to build up support for the school among the community it serves, which may involve the promotion of the school and developing a community spirit through genuine pastoral care of members of the school and community.

We call for nominations to fill the positions on the executive of the Community Council. These can be dropped in the school office or forwarded to St Patrick's Parish Cooma (coomaparish@bigpond.com).

Formal nominations should simply indicate a willingness to be part of the Community Council Executive and include your contact details and a brief biography (for publication, if it is necessary to go to an election). There is more information on the school’s website under the Parent Partnerships tab.

Nominations close 27 May. An election will be held after that if necessary.

You are welcome to contact me if you have more questions. I look forward to your involvement in our school.

Fr Mick
National Sorry Day– 26 May

National Sorry Day is a very significant day for Australia’s Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, and particularly for Stolen Generation survivors.

The idea of holding a ‘Sorry Day’ was first mentioned as one of the 54 recommendations of the Bringing Them Home Report, which was tabled in Parliament on 26 May 1997. This report was the result of a two year National Inquiry into the forcible removal of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from their families, communities and cultural identity. This removal and separation was carried out under Federal, State and Territory laws and policies from the 1800s to the 1970s.

The first Sorry Day was held on 26 May 1998—exactly one year after the Bringing Them Home Report was presented to the Parliament.

28 May 2000: The Corroboree 2000 Bridge Walk across Sydney Harbour Bridge shut down traffic and made national headlines as hundreds of thousands of people walked in support of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Australians.

13 February 2008: Prime Minister Kevin Rudd apologises to Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, for the policies which ‘inflicted profound grief, suffering and loss on these, our fellow Australians’.

“In true reconciliation, through the remembering, the grieving and the healing, we can come to terms with our conscience and become as one in the dreaming of this land.”


ASX Share Market Game

Would you like to have $50,000 to invest on the Australian Stock Exchange? That’s exactly what eleven boys from Years 7-9 did over the past 12 weeks. Congratulations to the students who participated in the first ASX Share Market Game for this year: Damon Fanning, Bailey Rogers, Sam Sergo, Sean Dixon, Rhys Freebody Nick West, Jackson Dyball, Ben Milford, Harrison Linton, Eli Wilkinson and Declan Girling.

Three quarters of the syndicates finished with a profit with Damon Fanning really excelling at this real-life simulation. Had we been considered as part of the ACT rather than NSW, he would have topped the rankings by a considerable margin.

The next game starts on the 18 August and it’s free. Please see Mrs Stubbs if you are interested.
On Wednesday 18 May 2016, selected students represented Southern Region in the Archdiocesan Cross Country in Canberra, to compete with other Catholic schools. The 8s, 9s, and 10s ran 2 kilometres and the 11s, 12s, and 13s ran 3 kilometres. Our school showed great sportsmanship and all of us completed the race proudly. Eight St. Patrick’s primary students made it on to Sydney, which was an outstanding result.


It was good to see the smiles on the children’s faces when they finished their races. Over all it was a very successful day and a great experience.

Clara Thornton and Jack Buckley

Another view on Technology

Alan Ibbett, Joint Chief Information Officer, Communication & Learning Technologies from Catholic Education showed Year 9 students coding and circuitry with an Arduino Kit. These kits form the basis of robots and help to understand electronics and coding.
Archdiocesan Cross Country Carnival

Last Wednesday a large number of students from both Secondary and Primary campuses travelled to Stromlo Forest Park in Canberra for the Archdiocesan Cross Country Championships.

The students ran distances ranging from 2km to 6km, depending on their age, with their effort, enthusiasm and sportsmanship outstanding over the course of the event.

A special congratulations goes to Jack Buckley and Jessica Norris who were crowned Archdiocesan Age Champions. Well done!

Thank you to the parents, carers and grandparents who transported and supported our students on they day. Your continued support is appreciated. Thank you also to Mrs Glenyce Moxon for her help on the day as well.

Mr Lawley - Organiser
Photographic and Digital Media Photo Shoot

The elective Photographic and Digital Media class is a new addition to the electives offered at St Patrick’s in 2016.

As part of standard practice, they need to be experimental. The class walked to the Cooma railway station for a photo shoot on Friday.

With the spectacular weather and the creative opportunities the backdrop of the railway location presented, the students were in their element and produced lots of inspired images. They are using a variety of devices to capture images, which form the basis of their portfolio.

What a great afternoon!

Rashida Nuridin
Class Teacher
Canteen News

Thank you to my wonderful volunteers and helpers last week. The primary Athletics Carnival was a great day.

As the weather is getting colder, I look forward to offering some great warm options and would greatly appreciate feedback from parents and students as to what they might like to see available.

The canteen door is always open so please drop in. We also need volunteers, even if it’s just an hour once a month. The parent community is an integral part to the running of your school canteen and without you we cannot do it. Again, drop in and see me or call the school office.

Next Week’s Volunteers are:
Tuesday 31 May    G Haley
Friday 3 June      Elsa Wagner

Thank you!

Rebecca Croke
Canteen Manager