Dear Parents and Friends of our School Community

Saint Patrick is the patron saint and national apostle of Ireland. He is credited with bringing Christianity to Ireland. St Patrick used the shamrock leaf to explain the Holy Trinity to the pagans. He was a humble, pious, gentle man, whose love and total devotion to and trust in God should be a shining example to each of us. He feared nothing, not even death, so complete was his trust in God and the importance of his mission.

Christ with me,
Christ before me,
Christ behind me,
Christ in me,
Christ beneath me,
Christ above me,
Christ on my right,
Christ on my left,
Christ when I lie down,
Christ when I sit down,
Christ when I arise,
Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of everyone who speaks of me,
Christ in every eye that sees me,
Christ in every ear that hears me.

St Patrick’s Parish School has an eye to the future and has begun planning for a building project on the Secondary site. This is a huge undertaking and consultation with the St Patrick’s Parish Pastoral Council and Finance Committee will take place this Thursday in the Parish Centre at 6.30pm. The school is planning to apply for a grant to cover much of the cost.

The National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence is on Friday 21 March. This annual day provides a focus for our school to say “no way” to bullying and to strengthen our message that bullying and violence at school are not okay at any time. The day helps to start conversations between parents and their children and between teachers and their students. By standing together to say no to bullying and violence we can build a positive school community where healthy relationships flourish.

Parent/Teacher/Student conferences for Years 7 to 10 will be held at the Club from 4.00pm – 7pm on Wednesday 9 April. All teachers will be present until 6pm, when there will be a 15 minute break and those teachers with further appointments will remain until 7pm. In keeping with the changing ways that we use technology, the upcoming Parent/Teacher/Student Conferences will be booked on-line. See the sheet inside with instructions. It is very user-friendly and if there are difficulties, parents can call the Office to make appointment times. The focus for the Parent/Teacher/Student Conferences is on achievements and goals for the term ahead.

We are planning a working bee on Saturday 5 April starting at 9am. This is a small way that students can participate in school service and parents who have other commitments during the week can contribute to the overall appearance of our school.

In many small but significant ways, we are creating a future, together.

Mrs Frances Robertson
Principal
From the AP’s Desk

Dear students and parents

Success
During the week we received some posters from St Gregory’s, at Campbelltown, outlining the HSC achievements of past students Jacob Moon, Tim Green and Harry Roach. Jacob, Harry and Tim left us in 2011 to attend St Gregory’s. As the poster points out “much of their success can be attributed to the time spent at St Patrick’s”. We can all take some responsibility for them achieving the lofty goals they set.

There will be other students who achieve success in many fields. For some it may be to secure an apprenticeship, finish high school, or try harder in a particular year or subject. Success is always relative to the goals you set.

We use S.M.A.R.T goals with students. Goals should be Specific, Measureable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely. For some students, now that term 1 is almost over, it may be timely to have a conversation with your parents or a teacher about the goals you set at the start of the school year. Are you well on the way to realising your goals? Do your goals need to be adjusted? What is stopping you achieving them?

Remember it is not just about achieving great grades, or very good teacher comments. It is about doing your best in everything you do.

Mark van Ommen
Assistant Principal

Second Sunday of Lent

“I hope that all may unite... to enable the people of Sudan and South Sudan to experience at last a period of peace, freedom and development.” Pope Benedict XVI

Money raised this week through Project Compassion will contribute to the rebuilding of the Sudanese communities.

School website: www.stpatscooma.nsw.edu.au
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You can now book interviews at times that suit your family best. Go to [www.schoolinterviews.com.au](http://www.schoolinterviews.com.au) and follow these simple instructions.


Enter THIS school event code.

Then follow the 3 simple steps.

When you click **finish**, your interview timetable will be emailed to you automatically - check your junk mail folder if you do not receive your email immediately.

You can return to [www.schoolinterviews.com.au](http://www.schoolinterviews.com.au) at any time, and change your interviews - until bookings close.

**Other Information**

For parents who don’t have access to the internet at home, at work, at a friend’s house or on their phones, the school office can be contacted on 64521721 for your child’s interviews to be placed within the online booking system.

Interviews are strictly 5 mins and spaces are limited. If you require more time, please contact your teacher directly to make alternative arrangements.

Parents can change their interview bookings, any time prior to the closing date, by re-visiting the [www.schoolinterviews.com.au](http://www.schoolinterviews.com.au) website, and using the event code. Remember to use the same name and email address you used when you made your original booking. Parents wishing to change their interview times after the closing date, should contact the school directly on: 64521721.

We would love to hear what you think about online booking. If you get time, click on the “contact us” button on the [www.schoolinterviews.com.au](http://www.schoolinterviews.com.au) website, and leave some feedback - anonymously if you wish, but please include the school’s name and town.

School website: [www.stpatscooma.nsw.edu.au](http://www.stpatscooma.nsw.edu.au)
Celebration of St Patrick’s Day
Thank you to the P&F and Coles for supplying the ice blocks for the afternoon.
Thank you to Mr Mackay, all the musicians, choir, readers and dancers who made our Liturgy such a special and moving occasion.
We are Covenant people in Year 7!!
The 21st of March is the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence - a great opportunity to speak with young people about these issues.

It is important to understand how we can empower children and young people to become ethical and active bystanders. However, in this article, we're going to reverse this and see how we as adults can become more ethical and active bystanders to cyberbullying. We all have a role to play in educating children and young people and helping them to grow into informed and ethical adults. This isn't restricted to what we teach young people, but also in the way we live our lives as an example to them.

Parents as bystanders

Many parents want to protect their children from harm, and it can often seem as though cyberbullying is an omnipresent risk. Rather than focussing on eliminating this risk, it is more beneficial to help children and young people develop coping strategies and skills to help them overcome the challenges that they may face.

It may also be useful to change our approach to cyberbullying – instead of looking for early warning signs, developing and nurturing a positive relationship with your child can protect them from a number of issues and they are more likely to come to you if something is going wrong.

Teachers as bystanders

Schools are often the environments where cyberbullying is expected to be addressed and rectified. Many teachers are to be commended for the efforts they put into addressing these issues, yet in other cases, the response by teachers can make the situation worse and lower confidence in reporting. It's important to look beyond the surface issues (cyberbullying and bullying are often the most visible of a range of current issues) and see what’s really going on.

Community members as bystanders

The response of the community to cyberbullying can also impact the actions of children and young people. Often, well-intentioned community members will post reports of cyberbullying on social media and encourage their friends and followers to “do something” to address this issue. This is often in the form of liking, sharing and reposting these reports, usually as a way of “naming and shaming”. It’s nice to know that the community wants to help, but there are better ways of doing this.

Naming and shaming sounds like a good approach, but it isn’t backed up by research. It usually results in the person who has been bullying becoming the person being bullied, without any attempt to address the underlying issues. What the research does show is that people who bully and are bullied suffer more harm than those who only take one role. Circulating this (mis)information about an incident on the internet could also jeopardise any criminal investigation.

The media as bystanders

We also need to address the role of traditional media (newspaper, radio and TV) in incidents related to cyberbullying. The broadcasting of filmed fights, reproducing harassing social media posts in newspapers and the labelling of children and young people in media discussions may be detrimental to all involved. The media has a role in informing the community of what is occurring around them, but where this impacts upon the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people, there needs to be appropriate safeguards and procedures in place. This also includes coverage of suicide linked with cyberbullying.

More on this topic can be found on the ThinkUKnow e-Newsletter.

Katie Hedgcock
Student and Family Counsellor

School website: www.stpatscooma.nsw.edu.au
Success at the Cooma Show

Every year, two Food Technology students have the opportunity to be Junior Stewards in the Food section at the Cooma Show.

This year, Jazmin Fely and Nicola Pearce from Year 10 went and had a great day. They helped the judges, assisted with the presentation of the various sections and learnt many inside tips on how to be a successful competitor.

Archdiocesan Swimming Trials

Congratulations to Isabelle Adams who came 2nd in 50 metre breaststroke and will now compete at Homebush.

Snowy Mountains Interschool’s Equestrian Competition

If anyone is interested in entering the Interschool’s Equestrian Competition please contact either co-ordinator by email;

Kylie Douch kdouch@bigpond.net.au
Kim Kleven Kleven.k@bigpond.com.au
Rehearsals were marching on apace last week, with the arrival of the official librettos and the halls ringing with the sound of ‘Food Glorious Food’. Forty orphans are beginning the transformation into Victorian Workhouse kids and learning the rigours of being a stage ‘triple threat’ – singing, acting and dancing. For some this is easy, for others it is more of a challenge but it has been very reassuring to see the gusto with which all cast members have taken on this task.

This week we are putting the final touches to the blocking of the opening scenes of the musical and I am already excited, if not a little terrified, looking towards opening night on August 22. It seems like months away, yet I know for all of us concerned it is going to be here sooner than we imagine.

If your son or daughter is in Year 5 to Year 10 and they are now wishing that they had stepped forward to take part on stage in the musical it is not too late! Those in Year 5 or 6 should in the first instance see their class teacher and those in Years 7 to 10 should speak to Mrs Stacey.

Mrs Stacey

Combatting bullying in 5 steps

Leading up to the National Day of Action Against Bullying and Violence on Friday the 21 March, Damian Kennedy from the NRL, came to talk to all the students about bullying. He talked to all the secondary students at assembly, and then to Year 10 students, Infants and Primary students and finally after lunch he talked to the Year 9 students.

He told us about how to be resilient to bullying and used the hand strategy as a guide. Each finger represented a strategy to use:

- **The thumb** - stand tall
- **The pointer finger** - keep calm
- **The middle finger** - speak up
- **The ring finger** - walk away
- **The little finger** - tell someone

Our thanks go to Mr Kennedy for giving his time to us and being with us.

Written by Andy Bartell and Tyler Pielli.
**Little Boxes of Hope**

Year 10 Student Leadership Team has launched their Little Boxes of Hope. Each Homeroom is invited to fill these boxes with items that could be helpful to those who are either homeless or ‘down on their luck’. The students have done some research and given each Homeroom a list of suitable items to include; usually things that can be easily carried in a pocket are best. These include socks, gloves, beanies, small stationery items, little toys, small hand sanitizers, deodorant, small tissues, scarves, toothbrush, comb, gift cards, a watch, small containers... the list is endless.

Recently, all of the Principals of the Diocesan schools made small contributions of toiletries and money to kick-start this project for us. We appreciate their support. Others in the St Patrick's community are welcome to also contribute if you wish.

Claire
School Captain

**Understanding Homelessness**

Emma Green from The Hub and Cathy and Kate from Monaro Crisis Accommodation visited Years 8 and 9 this week to talk about youth homelessness. We learned that on any given night in Australia, 50,000 young people are homeless. Much of this is ‘invisible’ homelessness where there may be a couch or a floor to sleep on but where there is no permanency, safety or sense of belonging.

Students’ entries for the Youth Homelessness Matters Day art and writing competition are to be handed to their English teachers by Monday.

Mrs Stubbs

**Work done at home**

All students now have assessment tasks that they should be working on. I am impressed by what I have seen in my own classes, as well as what other teachers have told me in regards to the effort and commitment most students are putting into their work.

You can help by having a discussion over the dinner table about what your child is currently working on and how they are going with it. Stress appears when we are unprepared. Encourage your child to have a regular pattern of study time. This would vary, based on many factors such as after school commitments and the time they arrive home. Once a study time is agreed on, encourage your child to stick with it and hopefully those stressful occasions are minimised in your house.

Pam Fletcher
Secondary Coordinator
Kinder Support Evening

Last week we held the first Kindergarten Support Evening. The purpose was to share some of the happenings within the classroom and to demonstrate useful strategies for supporting Literacy and Numeracy skill development.

Kinder capers

As we creep slowly towards the end of March, it is difficult to believe Kindergarten students have nearly completed their first term of school.

Among the 'busyness' of our days we have been learning to follow routines, identify letters, words and numbers. We have loved learning more about ourselves and our new friends and becoming scientists investigating things that move.

Self portraits by Molly, Colby, Declan and Alinta
Community Chest – Community Annual Garage Sale

Saturday 29 March 2014

Members of the community are asked to join us and hold their own garage sale on the above day. You retain all your earnings – all you need to do is pay $20 registration fee and the Community Chest Inc will promote and distribute information about your garage sale.

The aim is to have as many sales being held in Cooma and surrounding areas on the one day and we encourage the whole town to join us.

To register, drop in to ‘The Fabric Salon’ in Vale Street, Cooma; or phone Kirsty on 0423 186 962.

Students Who Achieve Greatness

Congratulations to Nicholas O’Donnell, Declan George, Sienna Davies, Ben Smith, Mitchell Reid (absent), Natalie Revelant, Olivia Bottom, Nowell Utrush, Harrison Knowles, Lilly Janota and Georgia Nowland.

Antarctica Talk

On Thursday 13 March, Mr Davies spoke to the Year 5 and 6 students about Antarctica. Mr Davies spent 4 months in Antarctica. The students are currently studying Antarctica as part of their HSIE unit.

Thank you Mr Davies!
P&F News

**K-6 Disco on Friday 28 March** at the Uniting Church Hall – Soho Street from 6.00 pm – 7.30 pm. Food will be available for children to purchase and the cost is $5.00 per child or $8.00 per family. Parent helpers are needed for this event, Friday afternoon with the food shopping and set up, then at the disco with the canteen. If you can assist contact Marjorie Relevant on 0418 485229.

Please ensure you complete the disco note which will be sent home this week and return it to school, as we need to know numbers for catering.

**P&F meeting will be held on Tuesday 1 April** in the Primary Library at 7.00 pm. We welcome your attendance at these meeting, so you become more aware of the activities of the P&F and your input and ideas are very much appreciated.

We look forward to seeing you at these events.

Karen McGufficke  
President P&F

Canteen News

**Volunteers**  
Thursday 20 March  Melinda Barrett  
Friday 21 March  Catherine Pearce  
Wednesday 26 March  Anna Holgate

**MEAL DEAL FRIDAY**

- Large homemade nachos with a frozen fruit cup for $5.00. (This does not include a drink - please add $2.00 extra if a drink is required.)
- Sushi will also be available - tuna or vegetable sushi only with a drink and fruit cup for $5.00. These are the only choices for primary and infants on Friday. Thank you!

If secondary students would like NACHOS, please pre-order by THURSDAY.

Thank you for your ongoing support.

Carolyn Hely  
Canteen Manager

and coming events....

Have you looked at the calendar on the school’s website?

**Friday 21 March**  
Yr 9 - 10 Art Express Excursion

**Monday 24 March**  
Yr 5 - 10 Leadership Day

**Tuesday 25 March**  
Yr 3 - 6 Auskick Gala Day  
Archdiocesan Soccer Trials  
K-6 Life Education

**Wednesday 26 March**  
K - 6 Life Education

**Thursday 27 March**  
K - 6 Life Education

**Friday 28 March**  
K - 2 Environmentors Workshop  
NSWCPS Swimming Homebush  
K - 6 Disco

**Sunday 30 March**  
Catholic Schools Soccer Carnival

**Monday 31 March**  
Primary Winter Trials

**Tuesday 1 April**  
Yr 8 Surf Safety  
P&F Meeting Primary Library

School website: www.stpatscooma.nsw.edu.au
**School Board News**

Last week I wrote about the new Catholic Schools Parents Forum being established within the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn (CSPCG), including the importance of parental engagement within our Catholic Schools. The establishment of this new forum (CSPCG) within our own Archdiocese will have direct input into these two forums (CSPA) and (CCSP).

Our two guest speakers who presented at our original gathering a month ago in Canberra have a wealth of expertise, as highlighted below.

**Mr Tony O'Byrne, Chair of Catholic Schools Australia (CSPA)**

This forum represents parents and students of around 73,000 plus. They have two counsellors per state and territory and meet four times a year.

ACT representatives are: Tim Smith (CEO) and Darryl Smeaton from (CEC) in Canberra.

They influence Catholic education, they advocate, provoke parental engagement, provide a clear and public parent’s voice and assist the work of the Bishop in Catholic Education today.

Key principles are: Strengthen curriculum, being informed at a school level, values and behaviours are an important engagement, reading habits of our students, assist teachers learning for children in the class, set high expectations and good work habits. Catholic parents form the second highest group in Australia in education today.

Priorities of CSPA are that parents have a voice for lobbying with governments. Governments seeing this as ‘synergy’ between all stakeholders. In addition, students have a voice in terms of ‘views on education’. Parents need to be aware of this.

**Ms Danielle Cronin, Executive Director Catholic Schools Parents in NSW (CCSP)**

This is a young organisation. The mission is to provide leadership, advocates of parents of catholic schools and support.

It’s been recognised that parents can provide, bring wisdom and qualities to the education table. Parents bring a real world perspective. This was witnessed that parents have the power to mobilise a parental body, with letters, phone calls in changing government’s minds.

Archbishop Christopher spoke about the relevance of establishing Parents Australia parental body within our Archdiocese (CSPCG), the pressures that teachers are faced with today in education and how education is constantly changing.

We need to unlock the ‘language of learning’ and give parents the professional ‘tools of learning’. Parents need to engage in their child's learning. Read and talk to your children. All parents may not understand the impact they have in their child’s learning and difference they can make. It is never too late to start.

**Erika Statham**

Chairperson School Board

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**Thursday 20 March is the United Nations International Day of Happiness.** Let’s use this as an opportunity to recognise and celebrate our good fortune (however small or big), consider the benefits of promoting well-being and actively invest in people, rather than things. Let’s savour and share good memories. As we go to sleep, let’s count our blessings (rather than sheep!)
**INSIGHTS**

by Michael Grose - Australia’s No 1 parenting educator

**Improve your child’s concentration at home**

**Like any skill, concentration can be improved and made automatic.**

To accomplish any task you need to be able to concentrate your attention for a time. It is a requirement for learning. Kids not only need to be able to focus on tasks but to stay in the one place long enough so they can listen to and follow instructions.

Most kids, from time to time, will experience some concentration or focusing difficulties. This is particularly true when they are over-tired, over-stimulated or over-loaded. However some children due to either their physiology or psychology have greater difficulty focusing on tasks and on people than others. Either they find settling into or starting a task a problem or they lose focus easily and leave tasks half done.

There are many things you can do at home to impact on children’ concentration levels. Like any skill, concentration can be enhanced and made automatic. The trick to effective concentration is to know what to concentrate on and what to filter out.

Here are five ideas you can use to help kids to concentrate better:

1. **Attend to their physiological needs:**
   Most children and teenagers concentrate best after nine hours sleep so make sure they get sufficient sleep. Reduce sugar intake and increase protein levels with lean meat, almonds and eggs. This stimulates their dopamine levels which make concentration easier, particularly for lethargic kids. Frequent breaks for exercise have a similar effect.

2. **Remove distractions at home:**
   List the distractions at home that may prevent your child from concentrating. These include: noise, people, lighting, fighting, fatigue and hunger. List ways to eliminate or reduce, and work at them systematically.

3. **Create the mood for concentration:**
   Calming background music, placing a fish tank (with fish) in a place of work and removal of fluorescent lights are some simple ways to make the environment more amenable for concentration. These strategies have been used successfully in overcoming concentration problems in many ‘boy-friendly’ schools.

4. **Introduce sequencing and organisation activities:**
   The link between sequencing and concentration is a strong one. Following recipes, setting the table and putting things in alphabetical order are great activities for kids who have concentration difficulties. Board and card games promote children’s ability to focus on tasks as well.

5. **Figure out what activities your child focuses on best:**
   Some kids concentrate better when they are involved in hands-on activities, while others focus better when there are plenty of visual cues to help them. That’s why teachers use hand signals such as ‘hands on heads’, and ‘fingers on lips’ to indicate quiet. Look for activities that your child gets ‘lost’ in; and those activities they can literally spend hours in. These activities enhance children’s concentration levels.

Like any skill, concentration can be improved and made automatic. Anyone who has learnt to drive a car will have had the experience of thinking, “How will I concentrate on all these things?” Extensive practice allows for the pathways of concentration.

It helps before you begin to assist kids to concentrate better if you pay close attention to their pattern of concentration and see if there are links between diet, their energy pattern, sleep and your own behaviour.

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For more ideas, support and advice for all your parenting challenges visit: www.parentingideas.com.au

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School website: www.stpatscooma.nsw.edu.au