February 2015

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<td>Shrove Tuesday - Pancake Day</td>
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**REFLECTION**

We are all a part of the same village. Let’s join our skills and talents, time and will together to help educate all our children. Mark MacKillop said “never see a need without doing something about it.” Let’s do the same in 2015.
Welcome back to another fabulous year of learning at St Joseph’s Primary School. I would like to extend a special welcome to our new kindergarten students and their families. We wish you many happy years of education within the St Joseph’s school community. Welcome to Mollie, Archie, Caitlin, Tilly, Jeremy, Emma, Arlia, Jack, Lula and Alana.

We are very pleased to see everyone’s happy faces here again with a great many exciting holiday adventures and only minor mishaps to report.

We keep in our prayers this week Phillip Nicholls (Gaby’s dad) who is in hospital at present. Times like these bring their own pressures upon family members so we keep Jodie and the girls in our prayers also.

We have had a few very well patronised events on since out last report.

Community Day on the last day of school saw our students singing Christmas carols to the residents at the hospital in Merriwa. They enjoyed this immensely and their singing, bubbly personalities and Christmas attire brought much joy to the audience. The students and teachers then walked down the hill to the Gummun Place Hostel and entertained the residents there as well. This tradition is one that brings so much joy to our older members of the Merriwa community as well as reinforces the Christmas spirit with our own school community.

The long held tradition of bringing in special food for the poor in Merriwa was very well supported by our school community. For the 14th year in a row the members of the St Vincent de Paul group of St Anne’s Catholic Parish were able to combine goods brought from St Joseph’s Merriwa, St Joseph’s Aberdeen, St Anne’s Parishioners and Carolyn’s Café to provide Christmas parcels to many families who are struggling and for whom this kind gesture means so much. Thank you for your contribution.

Christmas Day saw many of our students and their families celebrating the birth of Jesus together at Mass. The students performed a nativity play which was absolutely beautiful.

Fiona and Thomas played the parts of the proud parents, Mary and Joseph. Feba Tomy was our own live baby Jesus! Many other students played the parts of angels and shepherds and sheep. Thank you to all those who participated on the day. Christmas Mass was a wonderful experience for all who attended.

Belonging Day was held again in January. On this day the teachers invited students to come into school to help personalise their new learning spaces. This day provided a wonderful opportunity for students to get to know their new teachers and to reconnect with their classmates after the long break. Thank you to all those who took advantage of this great opportunity.

The new library was painted during the holidays as was the admin block and a feature wall in each classroom. This has freshened up the place quite a bit. A team of cleaners was employed to give a really good post-painting clean before the students returned. As well as that, the teachers have been in at the school for many days moving classrooms and organising learning spaces. We are so lucky to have such a committed staff and I thank them sincerely for their efforts.

Each classroom looks quite a bit different this year with the focus for learning being on collaboration and shared spaces. Your teachers will be speaking about this at the Parent Information evening coming up next week. Talk to your children about the differences now.

We welcome Mrs Sally Hagley to our teaching staff in 2015 on the Infants team for 4 mornings a week and Learning Support Teacher - special project, one afternoon a week. Sally will be focussing her Learning Support attention on assisting with the planning and implementation of learning support strategies for students experiencing difficulties.

Working Bee Wonder!! Last Sunday was our first working bee for the year and what a great rollup. Thank you to the Hopkins, Collins, Wong, Whale, Bates, Constable, Shannon, Hagley, Keegan, Redgate, Luke, Booth, Brazier, Ninness and Martin families for all your hard work and cooperation that was needed to complete all the
jobs on the very long list. Thanks also to Anne Marie, Samantha, Paige and Mark for working together to sort out the resources that have been relocated in the library move. There are still hours of work remaining there. We stuck to our 2 hour time frame and enjoyed a social morning tea afterwards. The grounds again look spectacular and what is even more important is that all hazards identified after the break have been fixed up. THANK YOU one and all!!

We welcome Karin Brazier onto our staff as groundperson. Karin has already proven to be a committed and hardworking asset to our school.

Thank you to Dermot Shannon who gave many hours of time to maintaining the lawns over the holiday period. The rain was beautiful and we won’t complain about the growth of the grass.

Opening School Mass, Parent Information evening and P&F social BBQ will be held Thursday 19th February. We urge all parents to attend this evening and celebrate the new school year and learn all about your child’s learning environment for the 2015 school year. The teachers will explain the course of learning to be embarked upon and explain the ways the classroom will operate this year.

Kind regards

Helen Whale

AWARDS

Congratulations to the following award winners.

K
Jeremy Hopkins, Archie Constable, Lula Peebles - for their fantastic assistance at the School Working Bee.

1/2

3/4
Bobby Keegan, Olivia Collins, Amy Redgate and Jack Shannon - for their fantastic assistance at the School Working Bee.

5/6
John Magner, Jonathan Keegan, Nicole Martin, Lauren Redgate, Charles Brazier, Tia Magner, Patrick Magner, Rebecca Keegan – for their fantastic assistance at the School Working Bee.

Principal’s Awards:
Levi Houm – for his enthusiastic and sensible approach to school.

Best wishes to the following members of our school community who will be celebrating their birthday in the coming weeks .....
Throughout the year there are a number of opportunities for the students of St Joseph’s to be actively involved in their faith development. Parents are encouraged to be part of this process. Here are some of the ways you can be part of your child’s faith education.

♦ Attend the Monday liturgy and assembly held in the Old Library at 2:40pm. The liturgy focusses on the Sunday reading and allows the message of the Gospel to be discussed and interpreted so it becomes relevant in the student’s life and to the adults present as well. We also sing a song which reflects this message. This liturgical celebration is then concluded with an award giving ceremony which acknowledges a variety of good things that happen at St Joseph’s. You are very welcome to attend.

♦ Be aware of any special celebrations which are coming up and attend where possible. Some days to look out for are - Opening School Mass, Mothers’ Day, Fathers’ Day, Grandparents’ Day, Commissioning Mass for our school leaders, Vinnies Day, Mission Day plus occasions where classes attend Friday 12pm Mass.

♦ Ask your child what they are learning about in Religion lessons. If you have something to share please bring it in. For example if your child is looking at the bible and your family has a very special bible please bring it in.

♦ Each class has a sacred space or prayer table. This is a space which should be alive and reflect the learning which is occurring in the classroom. Students are encouraged to bring in things to place on these special places.

Anne Marie Peebles
Religious Education Coordinator

LENTEN GROUP

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and as is normally the tradition, we will be running a weekly Lenten discussion group helping us to prepare spiritually for Easter. Sessions will go for approximately one hour each Wednesday of Lent beginning on the 25th February. Please contact the school if you would like to join this group.
it's **not** ok to be away !!!

Compulsory School Attendance: Information For Parents

**Why must I send my child to school?**

Education in New South Wales is compulsory. This means all children from six years of age and under the minimum school leaving age of 17 are legally required to attend school.

**Why is regular attendance at school important?**

Regular school attendance will help your child to succeed in later life. Attending school every day makes learning easier for your child and helps children to build and maintain friendships with other children. If your child doesn’t learn the basic skills in the early years of school, they may develop learning problems in later years.

**Must my child attend all activities, including daily fitness and sport?**

Sport and other physical activities help to keep your children healthy. Children are expected to attend all regular school activities, including sport. Do not keep your child away from school for the following:
- birthdays
- shopping
- minding other children
- routine checkups or care such as hair cuts
- minor family events
- sleeping in.

Medical and other health appointments for your child should be made either before or after school or during the school holidays.

- helps your child to learn the importance of punctuality and routine
- gives your child time to greet their friends before class and therefore reduces the opportunity for classroom disruption.

Late is recorded as a partial absence and must be explained to the school the same way as other forms of absence.

**Did you know?**

If students miss as little as eight days in a school term, by the end of primary school they will have missed a year of education.

**Must I send my child every day?**

It is a condition of enrolment that you send your child to school every day. A small number of absences may be justified if your child has to:
- go to a special religious ceremony
- is required to attend a serious and/or urgent family situation (eg a funeral)
- is too sick to go to school or has an infectious illness.

**Why is arriving at school on time important?**

Arriving at school and class on time:
- ensures that your child doesn’t miss out on the important learning activities scheduled early in the day when they are most alert

**What should I do if my child has to stay away from school?**

If your child has to be absent from school, it is important to tell the school and provide a reason for your child’s absence. To explain an absence parents and carers may:
- send a note, fax or email to the school
- telephone the school, or
- visit the school.

Principals are legally responsible for keeping accurate records of student attendance.

The Principal of the school has the right to question parents’ or carers’ requests for their child to be absent from school. Principals
are also responsible for deciding if the reason given for an absence is justified. For this reason, Principals may request medical certificates or other documentation for long or frequent absences explained by parents as being due to illness. If Principals don’t consider an explanation to be satisfactory, they will record the absence as unjustified.

What should I do if our family is going on holiday in school time?

Parents and carers are encouraged not to withdraw their children from school for family holidays. Families should try to arrange holidays during school vacations. If your family holiday is during school time, inform the school Principal in advance and request leave and/or an exemption from school. Depending on the circumstances and how long the leave will be, you may ask the school to provide tasks that can be completed while your child is absent.

My child won’t go to school. What should I do?

Here are some suggestions to help:
• Have a set time to be out of bed.
• Have a set time to go to bed.
• Have uniform and school bag ready the night before.
• Make lunches the night before.
• Have a set time for starting / ending breakfast. A routine is important.
• Set time for daily homework activities.

• Turn the television on for a set time and only if appropriate.
• Be firm. Children must go to school.
• Provide lots of positive encouragement.
• Be firm. A birthday is not a holiday.
• Time arrival at school to coincide with bell time and leave quickly. If arranged with the teacher beforehand, place your child’s hand into that of the teacher and then leave.

If you are still having problems after trying some strategies you should contact the Principal as soon as possible to discuss the issue and ask for help.

What if my child continues to have unsatisfactory attendance?

It is important to understand that the Catholic Schools Office may take further action in cases where children of compulsory school age have recurring numbers of unjustified absences from school. This can include requesting that parents and sometimes their child go to a compulsory attendance conference to help identify the barriers to the child’s attendance and implement strategies with parents, the school and other agencies who might be able to assist. If all attempts by schools and systems to improve attendance have been unsuccessful, fines imposed by the Local Court can reach a maximum of 100 penalty points.

This is equivalent to a maximum of $11,000.00.

At what age can my child leave school?

All New South Wales students must complete Year 10. After Year 10 and until they turn 17 years of age students must be:
• in school or registered for home schooling, or
• in approved education or training (e.g. TAFE, traineeship, apprenticeship)
• in full-time, paid employment (average 25 hours per week) or in a combination of work, education and/or training.

Further information regarding school attendance
info@mn.catholic.edu.au
St Joseph’s P&F Merriwa
Junior Campdraft and Fete Day
Saturday 27th June 2015

Meeting: Thursday 12th February 2015
Merriwa RSL Club 6:00pm
Children are welcome, however must be actively supervised by parents.

The purpose of the meeting is to form the 2015 committee. The following positions are needed (roles are outlined, however are not limited to the following):

**Overall co-ordinator**
- Main role is to coordinate all the sections and ensure everyone is doing their job
- Call meetings and keep minutes
- Liaise with different sections
- Organise Marquees
- Organise helper roster

**Campdraft**
- Campdraft Coordinator- organise cattle, judges, transport, silent stallion auction, run event on the day, set up, pack away
- ABCRA Secretary- book ABCRA, liaise with ABCRA, attend to ABCRA requirements, entries, program, risk assessment, book medical, book ground, book panels, run office on the day
- Ring 2 Coordinator- run ring 2 on the day, set up, pack away

**Treasurer**
- Manage Campdraft finances and keep records
- Floats
- Prizemoney

**Publicity**
- Publicize event- magazines, newspapers, posters, flyers
- School Newsletter- provide information in the school newsletter each fortnight providing information for the school community
- Follow up articles in magazines, newsletter and newspapers

**Sponsorship**
- Canvas for sponsors
- Send sponsorship letters and thankyou letters
- Liaise with sponsors
- Sponsorships signage- collect, set up, return

**Canteen Coordinator**
- Organise and run the canteen
- Ordering
- Setup/pack away

**Raffle Coordinator**
- Organise prizes, raffle books
- Send and monitor raffle tickets home to school community
- Sell tickets
- Organise collection of prizes to winners

**Fete Coordinator**
- Organise activities, helpers, equipment
- Coordinate set up and pack up on the day

**Market Stall Coordinator**
- Canvas for market stalls
- Ensure appropriate insurance etc.
- Organise market stalls on the day

**Coffee Stall**
- Book coffee machine
- Organise and run the coffee stall
- Ordering
- Setup/pack away

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**PUPIL FREE DAYS**

We have two pupil free days scheduled for this term to allow all staff to attend professional development:

- Tuesday 10th February (next week!)
- Tuesday 17th March

The Merriwa Activity Centre has kindly offered to open all day on these days to assist our working parents.

Please contact MAC on 6548 2082 if you would like to book your children in on either or both of these days.
P&F meetings for 2015 will be held on the second Monday of each month at 4.30pm in the MacKillop Room.

Next meeting - Monday 9th March 2015

Please remember to return your canteen roster form for Term 1.

Thank you to all those students who participated in the Summer Book Blitz by blogging. Hopefully lots of other students have participated by keeping their log sheet on the books they have been reading over the summer.

It was interesting and inspiring to read and respond to the comments the children had posted about the books they had been reading in the holidays. Many of the posts made you want to start reading the books they were commenting on!

It is important to encourage children to read every day! The more reading practice they get, the better their comprehension! The only way to improve reading and comprehension skills is to practise! This is why we provide students of St Joseph’s with the opportunity to participate in the annual St Joseph’s Merriwa Summer Book Blitz!

Students have until the end of February to keep filling out their log sheets. They will then hand them into their teachers so we can see who has been reading over the summer!

Thanks
Tanya Ninness
Learning Support Teacher