Coming Events

FEBRUARY
- Tuesday 16 February—Parish School Forum (PSF) Meeting @ 7pm in the Staffroom. All welcome!
- Friday 19 February—Richmond Zone Swimming Carnival at Lismore
- Friday 19 February—Assembly hosted by Stage 3
- Wednesday 24 February—Whole school Mass
- Thursday 25 February—Zone Winter Sports Trials

MARCH
- Wednesday 2 March—Diocesan Swimming Carnival
- Wednesday 16 March: Gardiner Chess Tournament @ Woodlawn
- Tuesday 22 March—School Photo Day
- Friday 25 March—Good Friday
- Monday 28 March—Easter Monday
- Tuesday 29 March—Staff Development Day (Pupil Free)

APRIL
- Monday 4 April to Wednesday 6 April—S3 Camp
- Friday 8 April—Last day of Term 1
- Tuesday 26 April—Staff Development Day—Pupil Free
- Wednesday 27 April—First day of Term 2 for students

JULY
- Friday 1 July—Staff Development Day (Pupil Free)
- Monday 18 July—Staff Development Day (Pupil Free)

AUGUST
- Monday 8 August—Staff Development Day—Pupil Free

In Brief...
- Bishop’s Lenten Penance Message

Messages from the Principal

Dear Parents & Carers,

We would like to thank all the families who joined us last week at the Parent Information Nights. This was a terrific way to start the year. If you did not get a chance to be there we ask that you contact the teachers soon so that you will know what is happening, what is planned and any crucial information for your child’s class.

One conversation that may need to be repeated here for the benefit of all families was my plea at each meeting to not get involved in discussing other students outside school. A bit of this was happening last year and students’ names were being bandied around as students who were badly behaved, disruptive to school or “they should be kicked out”. This causes much anguish all round: for the parents whose child is being talked about, for families that do not really know the true circumstances and for staff caught in the middle. This talk gathers a life of its own and often there is very little truth in the talk.

I asked at each Parent Information Night that parents resist talking about other students and if they do happen to worry about something they hear then it is best to contact the class teachers or myself to sort an issue. Privacy is essential for every one of us.

Unfortunately when this kind of talk gets around not only is a child and their family being judged but so is the school. As we try to build a village here this is not the way to deal with ‘things you hear’. I asked at each meeting, “Would you like to be talked about like that?”

Our Swimmers will represent us at the Zone Swim Carnival in Lismore on Friday under the supervision of Miss Fitness and Mr Coyle. All students must pay the cost of the bus regardless of whether they travel by bus or not. If a child is travelling privately it is essential that Miss Fitness is aware of this PRIOR to Friday morning. There is a cost of $12 for bus and sport levy payable. We wish them the very best of luck.

Winter Sports Trials nominations are due in by tomorrow Wednesday 17 February. The trials will be held on Thursday 25 February. There is a cost of $5 sport levy payable.

You will be aware that the Canteen is only open on Wednesday & Friday, 9.00 till 1.00 pm, only for LUNCH. If you do order Afternoon Tea for your child then this will be delivered as part of the lunch order.

CAR DROP OFF

In the morning there is no direct supervision at car drop off. To manage this area correctly we ask that parents DO NOT get out of their car on the school side of the road when dropping children. If you wish to get out of your car it is best to park at the side of school. The drop off on the school side is a NO parking area at drop off time. Please move to the top of the drop off line as it clears rather than cars needing to leap frog each other. The opposite side of the road can actually have cars parked during this morning time so be aware of this.

COMMUNITY DAY

Thanks to everyone for getting into the spirit of Community Day last Thursday. On this day we try to strengthen across stage friendships and knowledge of other students. It was terrific to see Kinder enjoying the S2 and S1 & S3 having fun together. If we really are a village then we all need to know each other. Staff do a brilliant job of ensuring they know all students. They must be commended on the effort they make in this regard. It is a won-

PSF MEETING tonIGHT AT 7PM IN STAFFROOM
derful thing when all students are known in a community. That way we can all be part of the conversation for their growth.

ANXIETY
Last year we held an Anxiety Panel as we recognised this is a growing issue in school. As part of my professional reading I came across a great article by Lexi Walters Wright.

She created three checklists that consider the physical, emotional and behavioural signs of anxiety in a child. Well worth a look! (A paper copy of the article is available in the office)

ON LEAVE
Mrs Debbie McMahon will be on leave from her clerical position from Tuesday 1 March until Monday 29 August. Mrs Tanya Pagotto will work Tuesday & Friday during this time.

We have been trialling some possible replacements for Monday, Wednesday & Thursday. You may have met one of these ladies on a recent visit to school. We hope to have this finalised before next week.

Maths Assessment Interviews Feedback:
What is EMU (Extending Mathematical Understanding)?

Extending Mathematical Understanding (EMU) is a research-based intervention program developed by Dr Ann Gervasoni of ACU in association with the Early Numeracy Research Project (1999-2002), focusing on the early years of schooling. Through detailed research the EMU Program has shown improvement in children’s learning and confidence with mathematics.

The Maths Assessment Interview (MAI) is a tool for assessing each student’s numeracy development. It has been developed through years of research (the Early Numeracy Research Project) and is constructed to provide greater insights into what each student knows and most importantly the strategies they use in mathematics. This is difficult to obtain in a paper and pencil assessment or with a number of children working together.

This is why we asked for the staggered start to 2016 to complete these interviews with the classroom teacher and the student individually. The areas investigated were Counting, Place Value, Addition & Subtraction and Multiplication & Division.

What do teachers do with the interview information? During each interview the teacher recorded the student’s answers AND the strategies they use to answer. This then provides the teacher with a clear picture of what the children can do. This information is then used to create learning experiences that will target each student’s needs. We also map the children according their growth points.

Research shows that most children need 200 experiences to gain a skill. If the children are playing the games at school AND at home they will develop their mathematics skills much faster – which is the purpose of EMU! So we need to share this information with parents so that they too can work with their children to improve their results. Our Maths Games Night in 2015 was the start of this collaboration. There will be more this year.

Teachers in Victorian schools have been using the MAI since 2001, following its development in the Early Numeracy Research Project. This has led to great improvement in Maths results in Victoria. We were fortunate to be able to join the schools in our Diocese using EMU last year.

When completing the MAIs we identify where a student’s growth point lies. This allows us to plan experiences to improve their knowledge and understanding. This does not involve rote learning or teaching methods to solve problems; rather, it is about developing understanding of the concept.

After completing and analysing the MAIs we have set a whole school focus on Place Value. This focus looks at the student’s ability to recognise, say successfully and identify numbers of increasing value. We found generally across the school results that students in Year 2 should be able to successfully say and order numbers in the hundreds eg 569,965, 659. What is the smallest number? Order them from smallest to largest.

There were a number of students who struggled with tens eg 18 or 81, 16 or 61.

There were students in Year 3 who could not identify and order numbers in the thousands.

As a school we will begin our lessons with warm up activities to develop these skills.

In addition we have identified students who are ‘vulnerable’ in the counting domain. These students will receive more individualised intervention to support them.

If you require further information your child’s teacher can give you this. Kinder parents have been invited to book in for an interview to discuss the results of their child’s BestStart interviews, which includes MAI results.

For Kinder parents only: Go to www.schoolinterviews.com.au and use the code: L4Y8D to book a time. If you need help the office staff can assist you.

HOMEWORK OR NOT TO HOMEWORK?

Several years ago the staff here at school realised the need to investigate Homework. It was a source of many conversations with parents. Some wanted it, others didn’t. Some wanted school to regulate and insist on it, others wanted the choice to opt in or opt out. It undoubtedly was causing real problems for families who all live in a busy world.

It became clear in this investigation that the greatest problems were students not knowing how to complete activities, understand the maths concept or having difficulty with the expectation of the Homework. Teachers realised

Student Verification Report & Updating Information Sheet.
Please return these documents to the school office as soon as possible.
Why a Jubilee of Mercy today?

In the sermon or homily in St Peter’s Basilica on Saturday, 11 April 2015, Pope Francis said:

“Simply because the Church, in this time of great historical change, is called to offer more evident signs of God’s presence and closeness. This is not the time to be distracted; on the contrary, we need to be vigilant and to reawaken in ourselves the capacity to see what is essential. This is a time for the Church to rediscover the meaning of the mission entrusted to her by the Lord on the day of Easter: to be a sign and an instrument of the Father’s mercy (cf. Jn 20:21-23). For this reason, the Holy Year must keep alive the desire to know how to welcome the numerous signs of the tenderness which God offers to the whole world and, above all, to those who suffer, who are alone and abandoned, without hope of being pardoned or feeling the Father’s love. …Here, then, is the reason for the Jubilee: because this is the time for mercy.”

Why is Mercy so important to Pope Francis?

In his first year Francis repeated time and time again that God does not get tired of forgiving us, that we are the ones who get tired of asking for forgiveness. He has compared the Church to a field hospital that must welcome and tend to the wounded and the dying in the daily battlefield of life. 

(Commentary on the importance of Mercy in Pope Francis was written by Mar Munoz-Visoso, on 20 March, 2014)

Next week: What can I do?

they needed Homework that could provide different levels for the variety of abilities. They also realised it should only be practice at what they had already learned -no new learning for Homework.

In our investigating we came across the research of Ian Lillico, a boys focused educator from Western Australia. We adopted, and modified, his Homework grid. We called ours the Home Activity Grid or HAG. This became our “Homework”.

In recent years the same conversations keep coming up… do we make children do this? Are they punished if they don’t?

Staff asked about the number actually completing the HAG. After all, they spend a lot of time preparing the HAG each week and then checking on it when it returns. Staff all agree that unless there is a majority completing the work then it is not a good use of their time.

Each stage has varying difficulties. In Kinder the difficulty is more about ensuring there is sufficient reading material going home of an appropriate level. This is again evident in S1. S2 have addressed this for 2016 by rethinking how they borrow these Readers to children.

In S2 there has always been a 50/ 50 result for Homework. 50% complete it regularly while 50% ignore it or find it does not fit their routine. By ensuring the activities are not worksheets that require marking teachers learn to live with this result. Reading is still the essential. This year’s S2 teachers are still investigating the HAG dilemma. (Evidence does suggest that nightly reading of appropriate levelled books is the one factor in ensuring ongoing school success)

In S3 there is always a worry from parents that the students need to get ready for High School. In Year 7 they will receive lots of Homework so they need to learn how to manage that.

At St Joseph’s we all agree that students do need to have certain skills for any level of their education -critical thinking, creative thinking, organisation, good reading skills, high level of interest in topics, general knowledge and a wonder about the world.

We believe these can be better addressed. So S3 are trialing an online form of HAG they are calling The Loop. This will still seek regular reading, will keep parents informed of what is happening in the key learning areas in class but will also allow the teachers to offer some of the necessary skill development eg a link to the Maths topic we are completing at school so parents might supervise, discuss or investigate together with their children. Another option- a link to a relevant document for them to read for their English topic. It is still the same as HAG, it still delivers the same thinking but in an online version - more pertinent to the world these students will live in. Reading is still required. Activities completed out of school that enhance the whole child- Guitar, Dance, Sport training, etc are all acknowledged.

Homework will still exist but in a form that is relevant (& possibly a bit more exciting).

As we delve into this during Term 1 we will welcome suggestions, any worthwhile websites you might find and feedback.

But as you can see it is a time of review- a good exercise to undertake. I have placed below Ian Lillico’s review for your added information.

“The issue of homework is finally being reassessed in our modern society. Too much repetitive needless homework is given and the wrong type. This has mainly been the result of parents wanting to prepare their children for future study. The reality is, however, that homework has now been a major contributor to childhood obesity and is an impediment to quality family life. At all levels of the education system, homework is being reconsidered.

In this booklet Ian outlines the need for some practice of concepts learnt at school, but the need to broaden the definition of Homework. Any work that children do at home needs to be counted and he gives a rationale for teachers and parents to work together to ensure that children do some work at home, but not a lot of sedentary work. This booklet is a solution to the problem of getting kids to do something at home and not opt out of family life. It will enable parents to get children to do their share of work in the home including housework, shopping, physical activity such as sport training and engaging in family outings such as walking, fishing and exploring their world – activities which enhance family life. It also covers areas such as reading, being read to, playing a game with parents, research on the computer, music practice and many others.” An excerpt from Ian Lillico’s book review.

Therese Seymour
Trying to Limit Screen time to Two hours? Help is at Hand!

eSafety for parents - Too much time online

Trying to drag your children away from online games, apps, YouTube videos or social networking? Want to know what is normal and when they are spending too much time online?

Child development experts, including psychologist Dr Helen Street, answer questions about how much time children should spend online.

Search online for “Esafty for parents too much time on line” and follow the links or click on: https://esafety.gov.au/education-resources/parent-resources/esafety-for-parents-too-much-time-online

STUDENT BANKING

In order to participate in the School Banking program your child will need a Commonwealth Bank Youthsaver account which can be opened at any branch of the Commonwealth Bank - your nearest branch is Alstonville. If you are an existing customer with NetBank access you can open an account online. Simply logon as usual, click ‘offers and apply’ tab, then select ‘accounts’ and ‘Youthsaver’. For either option you will need to have your child’s birth certificate and your driver’s licence for identification purposes.

Our banking day is every WEDNESDAY. Everyone is welcome to join – the sooner the better!

Application forms are also available from the school office.

Lismore & District Netball invites you to our NetSetGo and Junior COME & TRY DAY!

We extend an open invitation to parents and children to join us, and find out more about netball and all the fun that can be had playing one of the worlds most popular sports in an inclusive, safe and friendly environment.

Saturday 13th February 2016 Marie Mackney Netball Courts, Ballina Road, Lismore.

9am – 9.45am – Children aged 5 – 7 years in 2016

NET is an introductory platform program designed to build the fundamental skills that young netballers need to succeed!

ALSTONVILLE TENNIS CLUB

Coaching by qualified Tennis Australia Coaches

We Offer - ANZ Hotshots - Private Lessons - School Sports - Junior & Adult social comps - Tournament Squads - Holiday Clinics

Free court, racquet & ball hire

Between 3:30 to 5:30pm Mon-Fri Lumley Park Phone Paul Denning 0419 146 190

prostyletennis@gmail.com

NEW ADDITION TO THE LLOYD FAMILY: Harper, a sister for Hannah (S2)

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You will be supported in becoming a Leader of Guides: training, mentoring, resources and friendship. Challenge yourself as you enable girls and young women grow into confident, self-respecting, responsible community members.

Call Jacki on 0427728269 or email: jackiscutt@bigpond.com

Or to find out more about Guides visit our website: www.girlguides-nswact.org.au

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