Dear Parents, Carers, Staff, Students and Friends,

Christmas Expo

What an amazing community event our school provides for the people of Hamilton! Despite the forecast of horrid weather, a great crowd lined Gray St for the annual Parade and then wandered through to the PAC. A huge thank you to all who contributed to this year’s Expo and helped our school achieve its goals for the day.

Special thanks to the hardworking committee – Vickie Button, Suzi O’Brien (retiring after many years), Marie McDonald, Erika Murphy, Tamara Milne and Kerry Stevens – who have worked enthusiastically during the year to ensure a great day on Saturday. Your commitment to your school is admired and appreciated.

Second Sunday of Advent

Almighty God, 
I hear it over and over:

you are coming to me.

Help me not to be afraid 
to say out loud, to believe:

Here is God, 
coming into my life.

FRIDAY 8TH DECEMBER, 2017

IMPORTANT DATES

DECEMBER

Mon 11th – Thurs 14th  
Numeracy testing week

Tues 12th
Whole school transition day

Thurs 14th
Reports home

Fri 15th
Swimming carnival – Grades 3 – 6

Sun 17th
End of year mass @ 10.30am

Thurs 21st
Last day for students and staff
Learning Journals home

Final assembly @ 2.30pm

Arrangements for the beginning of 2018:

Monday 29th January
Staff day

Tuesday 30th January
Literacy assessments

Wednesday 31st January
Literacy assessments

Thursday 1st February
First day of classes
Thank you also to the many parents who co-ordinated stalls and activities on behalf of the school community and to those who volunteered their time on the day to support them.
And thanks to the students and teachers who enter into the spirit of Expo with great gusto!
The planning is already underway for Expo 2018! I hope you are eager to be involved!

Thanks for a great week!
God bless you!

Jo-Anne

Attachments:
- OSHClub Summer Holiday Program
- Sparkling Christmas Expo.
- School fees

2018 Planning
A few bits of information for you to be aware of as we continue planning for next year!
- Transition: On Tuesday 12th December all students will experience a taste of 2018 when they work in their learning groups for next year. Our new Prep students will be with us on this day and everyone else moves up a grade for the day. Grade 6 students spend the day at Monivae or their respective secondary college. Slips indicating grades and teachers for 2018 will be sent home on Monday 11th December.
- Literacy Testing
Literacy testing appointments will be scheduled for the start of the 2018 school year. Students will attend at the time allocated and work with their classroom teacher (where possible) to complete individual assessment tasks. This information then allows teachers to plan for the current needs of each student.
A timetable will be placed on the board near the office on Tuesday 12th December for you to choose your preferred day and time. Feel free to write your child’s name in or alternatively ring or e-mail the office with your preferences by Friday 15th December. Appointment slips will be sent home with students with their journals and a reminder will be posted in mid-January.
- Grade 5/6 Transition Experience: On Monday 4th and Tuesday 5th December, grade 5 and 6 students from St Joseph’s Coleraine, St Mary’s Hamilton and St Joseph’s Penshurst spent two days learning at Monivae College. Students have told me how valuable they found this experience – thanks to the hard work of Elise Couchman, Annie Forrest and the teachers from Coleraine and Penshurst who planned and delivered a great program. Thanks also to Tracy Beveridge and Vicki Pierce who supported the program.

MAI Week
Next week students will participate in Numeracy testing with teachers. We have planned a great week of alternative activities mixed in with the normal learning time. Students will need to wear their sports uniform each day next week as they will be involved in activities including cricket clinic, martial arts, first aid for kids and AFL clinic.

Royal Commission
Dear Parents and Carers,
As you may be aware, the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse will sit on 14 December to publicly mark the conclusion of the five-year long inquiry. The Royal Commission’s final report will be delivered to the Governor General on Friday 15 December 2017 and we expect that much of the report will be made public at that time.
In addition to the full report of the Royal Commission, we know that two case studies which focus on Catholic Church Authorities in Ballarat (Case Study 28) and Institutional review of Catholic Church authorities (Case Study 50) will be published. Both reports will rightly criticise the handling of historic child sexual abuse within the Catholic Church and both will contain a great deal of distressing material about how church authorities failed to protect children from harm. The Ballarat report was released earlier this week.
For survivors of sexual abuse and their families, the handing down of the Royal Commission Report will be a bittersweet experience. After five years of inquiry, we hope that the final report will provide an opportunity for our extended Church community to move into the light where we can continue to speak openly about wrongs, ensure justice for victims and survivors of abuse and contribute pro-actively to the future shape of our Church.
We wish to reassure you that child protection remains a serious professional focus for our school community at all times. Catholic schools are deeply committed to child safety and we are vigilant in ensuring that all standards and policies are implemented, monitored and regularly reviewed. Please do not hesitate to contact us should you have any concerns about your child’s safety at St Mary’s.
Over coming days, a candle will burn in our foyer as a sign of solidarity with all those who have suffered abuse. Please keep all those affected in your thoughts and prayers at this time.

Yours sincerely,
Fr Paddy Mugavin and Jo-Anne Bond
Wristbands
Please note that Expo ride wristbands can be presented at the school office for a refund.

**Please do so by Monday 11th December.**

End of Year Mass
Our mass to celebrate the end of the school year is next Sunday 17th December starting at 10.30am at St Mary’s Church.

- All students are expected to attend this special occasion in their correct school uniform.
- Students are to meet their classroom teachers in the Gathering Space no later than 10.20am. They will sit with their class in the church.
- All parents and friends and families are invited to join us.
- Our Grade 6 students will be presented with their Graduation Certificates during the mass.
- As part of our community work at this special time of the year, each student is asked to bring along an item to place in the St Vincent de Paul Christmas appeal baskets.

Immediately following the mass:
- Our Grade 6 students will be farewelled and presented with their graduation certificates.
- Those parents who are leaving St Mary’s will be acknowledged.
- All students are required to remain for this part of our celebration.
- A cuppa will be provided at the conclusion – could all families please bring a plate to share? An open invitation is extended to all families and friends.

See you there!

School Fees
At our School Advisory Council meeting on Wednesday 25th October, 2017 an increase in school fees for 2018 was approved. In order to meet our increasing costs and provide the learning programs that we do it was agreed to raise the fees by 3.1%. This increase is in line with the Education CPI increase of 3.1%.

This calculates to the following:

- **Family fee** $1139 (increase of $34)
- **Capital fee** $180 (increase of $5)
- **Student fee** $253 (increase of $7)

Please note that our fees only make up the difference between the Government (Federal and State) funding we receive and the amount the Government determines as the cost of educating a Primary student. Fees do not mean that we have extra money in our budget to expend on additional resources.

If you have any queries regarding school fees or funding, please do not hesitate to contact me.

School fees have been sent home with this week’s newsletter.

As the end of the school year is fast approaching, can all accounts be settled as soon as possible. Accounts were due and payable by 30th September, 2017. If you are experiencing difficulties with paying your fees, please contact Helen or Jo-Anne. If you have a current payment plan for your fees there is no need to contact the school.

As Advent once again approaches, the children in all grades will participate in Kris Kindle within their own class group.

Each child will be given a Kris Kindle name who he/she will be treating in a special way during the Advent season. It is a fitting way for us all to be preparing for Christmas.

On Thursday 21st December each class will have a Kris Kindle time when all the children will bring a small gift and card to give to their Kris Kindle. If you have any queries regarding this tradition, please let us know.

If your child is not going to be at school for the exchange of gifts please contact their homeroom teacher.

We look forward to the Christmas spirit that Kris Kindle creates!

Parish News

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<th>Mass Times – 2017</th>
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<td><strong>Hamilton:</strong></td>
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<td>Dunkeld:</td>
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Canteen Roster
Please note that Canteen is finished for the year so there will be no more lunch orders. A big thanks to Jen Taylor and Cass Young who have volunteered consistently to ensure that our students have access to lunch orders each Wednesday.

Jen has been a massive contributor to the roster for many years. We thank her for her support of this aspect of our school life – her time on a very regular
Family members involved in after-lunch activities (such as cricket on the back lawn) are less likely to get into arguments. Plan for something to do as a group after lunch if necessary.

- Use relaxation techniques, distraction and group activities to help steer around stressful situations.
- Avoid overindulging in alcohol – the reduced inhibitions could contribute to (or cause) an unnecessary argument.

**Christmas after separation or divorce**

It can be hard for a family that has recently experienced a separation or divorce to face its first Christmas. It can also be hard when a family member is absent for the first time because they have moved away – for example, if they are overseas and unable to attend the traditional celebrations. Suggestions include:

- Allow yourself to feel your emotions. If you prefer to put on a brave face for others, give yourself enough time alone to help deal with your feelings.
- Talk about it as a family. Sharing your thoughts and feelings (and tears) can help you feel closer.
- If children are involved, the separated couple should try hard to be civil during the festive season or at least limit their disagreements to times when their children are out of earshot.
- Arrange, if necessary, to stagger the Christmas celebrations so that the children can spend (for example) Christmas Day with one parent and Boxing Day with the other. To keep it fair, you can swap arrangements the year after.
- Avoid the Christmas rush and send presents, cards or letters to loved ones overseas at the start of December. Appreciate that phone calls may be difficult to make at Christmas because of high demand. Until next week have a good week.

Kind regards Lisa Gonnet
Schools pastoral care worker
0400994032

**THE SPORT CATCH UP**

Congratulations to all who participated in our Mini Athletics today, fun was had by all. A huge thank you goes out to Miss Couchman and the grade 6 students for their organisation.