Dear Parents, Carers, Staff, Students and Friends,

With many ‘lasts’ over the past week, this is the last newsletter for the year!

The past year has been a whirlwind at times but has also been one where we have seen amazing growth all around us. As a school community we can be proud of the improvements we have seen in every single student! Our expectation is not that every student is the same but that each one is given every opportunity to develop attitudes, skills and knowledge that will support them to be the best learner and best person they can possibly be. In our profession as educators we are blessed to be given the task of working with amazing kids each day! and their amazing parents/carers give us just as much joy.

In the busy schedules of your lives please take the time at Christmas to reflect on the story of Jesus’ birth and the gift that his life and teachings provide for us.

A Christmas Blessing

During this Christmas season, may you be blessed with the spirit of the season, which is peace

the gladness of the season, which is hope

and the heart of the season, which is love.

Important Dates

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<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>December</td>
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<td>Mon 19th</td>
<td>Last day for students</td>
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<td>Normal finish time 3.15pm</td>
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<td>Office closes @ 4.00pm</td>
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<td>Tues 20th</td>
<td>Last day for staff</td>
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<td>2017</td>
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<td>January</td>
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<td>Mon 30th</td>
<td>Staff day</td>
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<td>Tues 31st</td>
<td>Staff PD – pupil free day</td>
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<td>February</td>
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<td>Wed 1st &amp; Thurs 2nd</td>
<td>Literacy testing</td>
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<td>Fri 3rd</td>
<td>First day of classes</td>
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<td>Sun 14th</td>
<td>School mass @ 10.30 – open air mass at school followed by a social picnic. BYO lunch, chairs and water.</td>
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It is easy to get caught up in the media promotions and shopping of this season and lose sight of why the day is respected and kept holy. Mass times in our Parish for Christmas are included in this newsletter. Your presence would be warmly received! If you are going away for Christmas check out the local church – their celebration times are bound to be displayed.

Thanks for a great year!
God bless you! ☺

Jo-Anne

Attachments to this week’s Newsletter:
- OSHClub Summer holiday program

End of Year Mass
Thank you so much for your attendance and participation in our mass to celebrate the wonderful school year we have enjoyed. It was a very special way to give thanks for the opportunities provided to us and the people who make up our community.

Helpers Morning Tea
Thanks to the many parents and friends who came along to our Helpers Morning tea on Thursday. For those who could not make it, thank you so much for your time, energy, support and friendship during 2016. We have truly appreciated all that you have done.

This Week @ St Mary’s!
What a great week we have had! Teachers have been super impressed with the way students have engaged in their numeracy testing... and the growth! Wow!
Meanwhile, classes have enjoyed a great variety of learning activities and participated with great enthusiasm.

Huge thanks to all staff who have planned for and supported this alternative program. A great deal of work is required to make changes to the way we organise things at school and the team approach to this week has been outstanding. At the heart of the planning, and even the debrief, has been consideration regarding getting the best results from the students. Well done everyone!

Planning 2017
- Next year we are very excited to provide further learning opportunities for students as they participate in learning with specialist teachers in the areas of Music/Drama (Mr Healy), Art (Mrs Waters), Library (Miss Stevens), Physical Education (Miss Forrest) and Digital Technologies (Mr Healy).
- Letters to indicate appointment times for Literacy assessments will be included in the envelope with student reports.
- Reminder letters will be posted during January and will also include forms to be returned and additional information.

Ivy’s Army
- Last day for icy poles is Monday – lunch time. $1 for a Zooper Dooper
- Thanks for your generosity with the money line today. Hopefully we will have a figure for you at Monday’s assembly.

Monday 19th December
- Students will participate in some fun whole school and area activities on this day as well as make sure that their learning space is clean and tidy for the end of the year.
- Students may wear casual clothes for a gold coin donation for St Mary’s Parish Christmas lunch.
- Parents and friends are invited to join us for our final assembly (2.30pm) which will include the Grade 6 students presenting the Grade 5s with their leadership badges. We will also have a special farewell to our Grade 6s.
- Classes finish for students at the normal time of 3.15pm
- The school office will close for business at 4.00pm and will re-open again on Monday 30th January.

Reports and Journals
- Reports are being sent home today with students. Reports are a formal way of communicating with you about your children’s learning. They indicate progress and effort made over the last semester in all areas of the curriculum.
- Student journals are also being sent home today. These documents are a wonderful keepsake of the learning achieved by your children throughout the year.

Grade 6 students for 2017
Each year Grade 6 have their Sports T shirt printed with each student’s name and the teachers of Grade 6 on them. The cost will be $10.00 each. It would be appreciated if the money can be handed in with the clearly named T Shirt. These can be handed to the office by Monday the 19th December or at either the Literacy testing day or first week back of first Term 2017. We will not be able to accept late shirts.

School Mass
Mass to celebrate the start of the school year will be held on Sunday 12th February at 10.30am at the school. An open air celebration will be followed by a BYO picnic lunch for all families and friends. Please note that, in accordance with new child safety standards, only non-alcoholic drinks are permitted.
Thank you to all who have made our year successful in many ways – the time and energy you have contributed, the support you have shown for your school and the commitment to providing the best teaching and learning we can.

Thanks for being partners in education, for valuing and supporting the work of those who work with your child and for instilling in your child a love and passion for learning. Your commitment to your school – your children, your community – is appreciated.

A big thank you to our staff who have worked together to provide a learning environment which is considerate of each child. The commitment demonstrated by teachers, aides and administration staff is commendable and highly valued.

Thank you to the sensational students of St Mary’s for the contribution you have made to your own development and to the spirit of our school community. You are all amazing kids!

Farewell to our Grade 6 students as they head off into the exciting world of secondary education. I hope that the spirit of St Mary’s is carried with you and inspires you. I anticipate hearing great things as you all put your best feet forward next year! Best wishes for all that you commit your effort and enthusiasm to in life!

It is also fitting to farewell families who have seen their youngest child complete their Primary schooling. To these parents – thank you for your valuable contributions to St Mary’s during your time with us.

In particular, we farewell Jamie Ferguson from our staff team after eighteen months. With immense dedication Jamie has demonstrated a passion for his vocation as an educator. To students, Jamie has been a calming and encouraging presence who nudes each one to stretch their limits and take a risk in order to reap the rewards. Whether this is in the classroom environment, on the sporting arena or in personal interests his words and actions are respected and absorbed. Jamie’s connection with students is a wonderful strength and his contribution to our school community is appreciated and valued.

We wish Jamie the very best as he moves to St Mary’s Echuca to continue to influence and support the development of the young people he works with. Thank you Jamie.

Finally, I would like to wish all of our St Mary’s students, parents, staff, families and friends a very holy and peaceful Christmas. Please take the time to enjoy being in each other’s presence and celebrating the real meaning of this beautiful liturgical season. It is a time of year that should bring us new strength and hope in ourselves, each other and all that we hold close – especially our faith. Please keep safe over the holiday period and I very much look forward to seeing you back at school in 2017 refreshed, energised and ready for another year of teaching and learning!!!

Jo-Anne

Assembly

Our final assembly for the year will be on Monday 19th December @ 2.30pm.
This is a special farewell to our Grade 6 students.
All welcome!

Monivae College Open Day dates 2017

Open Days
• 21st Feb at 9.30am – Tuesday
• 2nd March at 7pm – Thursday
• 19th March at 2pm – Sunday

Come Spend the Day at Monivae
• Tuesday 21st March

Parish News

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St Vincent de Paul Christmas Hamper Appeal
Thank you to those people who have donated Christmas foods to the parish appeal at the church. Last year St Vincent de Paul gave out between 30 and 40 Hampers. The need is still great. This Sunday will be the last opportunity for your family to donate Christmas Goodies. Puddings, Lollies, Shortbread, tinned Ham or Gift Cards etc can be left in the baskets at the back of the church or dropped off at the Parish House. Thank you, on behalf of St Vincent de Paul Hamilton.

Noreen McLeish
Farewell for now…

I would like to take this opportunity to whole heartedly thank everyone in the entire St. Mary’s community for their love and support over the past 18 months. I have been incredibly blessed to have had the opportunity to work with such amazing staff and parents alike. I will miss the fun and laughter of being able to teach these beautiful kids on a daily basis. Have a safe and happy holiday break, if you’re ever up around the river come and say hello! :) “I call my students ‘my kids’ because in our year together they aren’t just names on my class list, they become a part of my heart”… Farewell for now.

Jamie Ferguson

Parents and Friends

UNIFORM SHOP

Opening times:
Wednesday 1st February 10 - 12pm
Purchases can be made by attending the Uniform Shop or by placing an order with payment at the front office.

CANTEEN

Please note that Canteen lunches are now finished for the year.
A huge thanks to Jen Taylor and Michelle Ferey who have been outstanding volunteers on our canteen roster throughout the year (and for many years!) Thanks also to the new faces we have welcomed to this activity.