

Principal's Report - Term 4, 2017

Acknowledgements

Congratulations to the P&F Executive Team on their work during 2017:

- Belinda Haroutonian - President
- Caroline Miller - Vice President
- Pip Toohey - Secretary
- Russell Scott - Treasurer

This is an excellent team. I really appreciate the support and cooperation they have provided for the school and the work they do on behalf of our community. Their attitude is first and foremost positive and their energy as a group is constructive. These qualities make for a strong relationship between the school and P&F. I sincerely thank them for their efforts.

Gen Ferris will be stepping down from her role as Class Parent Coordinator. We really appreciate the contribution you have made to St John's over the past three years. You have gone out of your way to help and support those organising various events and as a result have helped to sustain a strong sense of community here at St John's.

Eva Spaliviero is stepping down from her role as coordinator of our Clothing Pool. Eva has worked really hard to support our families. Her work is characterised by excellent organisation; insistence on good quality items at a reasonable price, service with a smile and very much appreciated touches of care and kindness. Eva we really appreciate what you have done for us over the years - thank you.

Cendrine Lambert is stepping down from her role as Canteen Coordinator. Cendrine has done a fantastic job. Cendrine's work has been particularly demanding this year given a range of changes that have been introduced - Qkr!; the movement away from cash; daily receipting; establishment of accounts with new suppliers and the management and organisation of volunteer. Cendrine has shown great creativity and has brought new ideas and a fresh approach to our canteen and I would like to thank her sincerely for her contribution.

While we have experienced significant loss and sadness within our community this year, our thoughts and prayers are firmly with the Marker family, and with Anna Kauffmann's husband, Jake, and with Anna's family. Making a contribution or getting involved in the walk for brain cancer on Sunday November 26th from Manly Beach to South Curl Curl in memory of Finn is one of the ways we are supporting those who helped Finn and the Markers. Donations to Anna Kauffmann's favourite charity, Chris O'Brien's Lifeline, are welcome anytime. Our Mission Day being held this Thursday by the children will raise funds for both of these charities with this year's Talent Quest proceeds going to Catholic Mission.

Building and Playground News:

I was advised via our last Parish Council Meeting that as of late October intended work on our school, the hall and the intended car park has now been placed on hold. The construction of the car park required the installation of a large retention pit in order to deal with drainage issues. This increased costs for the project considerably. When combined with costs associated with improving the hall, our Parish Administrator, Father Reinaldo Vassoler became concerned at the potential extra costs generally and especially to the Parish. He asked for a reassessment of total project costs and in consultation with the Diocese, the Parish Finance Committee and school.

Given that all plans were going ahead up until October, there were concerns that changes to drainage may compromise the work intended on our playground so progress was stopped

until a plan to resolve drainage issues were complete. In late October I received permission from the Catholic Schools Office to resume plans for playground improvements. I have been working with the CSO Facilities Office to organise a builder for the playground as soon as we are able. All money raised by the P&F (\$20 000) will go into the playground work; unfortunately we will need to wait a little longer than expected for it to be completed.

In the meantime, we will continue to use the site as we normally do. I was also able to advise staff and children that the amphitheatre and the area under the box trees behind the Church can be used again by the children. The trees will be staying pending the reassessment plans.

Classroom Arrangements - 2018

We are currently planning for 2018 and recently received our staffing allocation from the Catholic Schools Office. Based on current numbers we will have thirteen classes in place for 2018. As this is two less than our current fifteen classes, it will mean a reconfiguration of our class arrangements. After discussions with staff and the School Advisory Council, our preferred option is for two classes in each grade except for Year 6 where there will be one class.

While our K-2 classes will be smaller in size, we will have large classes in Years 3 and Year 6. On current numbers we anticipate extra staffing via a large class allocation of 5 days per fortnight. This is not allocated until late February after the annual census. We are planning to provide extra support for our larger classes by releasing our Assistant Principal from a class teaching role. She will then be able to work with the teachers in the Year 3 and 6 classes during the week to provide extra teacher support. The large class allocation does rely on us retaining current our projected enrolment of 337.

It was the view of the Advisory Council that straight classes across the school would be most desirable and allow for some growth. We did discuss a more extensive multi-age arrangements with smaller classes, however this was not the preferred option. The group decided that the use of existing experience with part time multi ageing is the most desirable option for St John's.

End of Year

We are holding a Year 4 and Kinder 2018 mass this Saturday evening at 5:00 pm. We would love to see as many families there as possible from across the school. We are also holding a Thank You Afternoon Tea in the school library on December 8th at 1:30 pm and our Christmas Carols will be held later that evening at 6:00 pm. Dates for other major end of year events are in our newsletter and I encourage your attendance if at all possible.

In closing, it has been a very challenging year on many fronts. Despite this, the support received from our local and broader Catholic community has been wonderful. Our children have learned a great deal, especially about life and love and I have been so impressed with their level of care of each other. I am incredibly grateful to be able to work with such a compassionate and caring staff who work incredibly hard for your children and I especially want to acknowledge the efforts of our REC, Christine Dunk and our Assistant Principal Natalie Ingram for their amazing work they do for this community seven days a week. I believe we are a blessed community and that, guided by faith, we can continue to successfully face challenges together.

My sincere thanks for the great work and wonderful support of this P&F; its sub-committees and helpers during 2017. A reminder that the school will be putting on a "Thank You" afternoon tea for all helpers Friday, December 8th from 2:00 pm

Mark Bateman - Principal