

P & F Principal Report – Term 1, 2022

Firstly, my thanks to all parents who were able to attend our Parent Information Nights via Zoom. This was an opportunity to be introduced to your child's teachers and to understand class organisation, communication channels and focus for 2022. All presentations are available the St John's Weebly at [St John the Apostle Narraweena - Home \(weebly.com\)](http://StJohntheApostleNarraweena-Home.weebly.com)

As we arrive at this stage of Term 1 COVID restrictions are easing in NSW and in schools across the state. After two years of fighting to kill it off, we are learning to live with COVID. It is true, however, that we have seen an increase in cases with our students, especially in the past week. As families begin to reconnect with friends; as birthday parties and mixed gatherings re-start and crowds begin to mix more normally, it is not surprising that we will experience an increase in infection rates. However, living with it is different from ignoring it. The latter has the potential to disrupt education even further.

The RAT kits we have sent home have been helpful in identifying new cases. Once identified, isolation procedures for positive cases and close contacts remain in place. We want to continue the Monday, Wednesday testing regime for two more weeks, especially as cases increase. Beyond that we want RA Testing to continue, especially if there are even mild symptoms. We have also decided to continue cohorting at St John's for one more week as the current batch of cases run their course. We especially want to reduce the chance of our teachers becoming ill. Casual staff are harder to find now, and we want to have continuity of learning as much as possible for our children. We need teachers in front of classes to be able to do this. So, teachers continue to mask and to be vigilant in identifying children with symptoms.

The children have returned grateful to be with their friends and teachers. We find that there has been a broad range of effects on their learning. For some, the home-based learning structure has worked well, for others it has caused a sense of disconnection and uncertainty. Attending school provides a stable, positive environment in which learning can thrive. We need to be careful to not pressure our children to 'catch up'. Rather, we need to help them establish good routines then guide them in an encouraging, supportive way to keep learning and making progress from where they are at.

So, where is St John's heading in 2022?

1. Teaching and Learning:

We will continue the great learning in all subject areas as we always do but this year, we will be placing a strong emphasis on improving student achievement in Literacy with a **focus on Spelling**. We want to see a more consistent pattern of achievement in this area. Teachers will work in grade teams to have a continuous focus on these four questions:

- What do we want students to learn?
- How will we know our students are learning?
- How will we respond when students don't learn?
- How will we respond when students are proficient?

To do this we have a coaching approach in place that is funded by Catholic Schools Broken Bay. Our Assistant Principal, Stef Thom, will work with teachers in each grade to focus regularly on these questions, review teaching practice, measure student progress and adjust learning processes and approaches.

In addition to the above we will continue to familiarise ourselves with the new Maths and English syllabuses and contribute as a pilot school to the new RE Curriculum. Maths and English are due to be fully implement from 2023. RE is being introduced into Kindergarten this year

2. Accompanying students, families and staff to know Christ and grow in faith.

We feel our children have experienced a disconnection from their local Church because of not being able to physically attend celebrations during the pandemic. We want to provide experiences that will help reconnect them through prayer practice, liturgy celebration and outreach to the community. As much as possible, connect faith and life. Our new Parish Priest, Fr Resty, is keen to work with us as we re-establish these connections.

The diocese is developing a new RE Curriculum. St John's is part of a pilot program which is working the K-2 experiences. Work on the new Year 3-6 Curriculum begins this year. St John's has established a special prayer room which aims to provide an experience of meeting and coming to know Jesus through story and play. By engaging the children in this way, they are gently led to understand and know the person of Jesus in their lives. We will observe and record their growth as they develop this understanding, just as the disciples did on the Road to Emmaus.

We look forward to being involved in our usual Outreach practices into the community through Project Compassion, Mission Day and other opportunities which enable the children to express and engage their faith.

Approval for a special project:

Catholic Schools Broken Bay has approved funds to improve our existing play equipment area. This does not include the work done three years ago – Finn's Hill; the stream, new plantings and the shop that has been installed.

The project is focused on the synthetic grass area and the play equipment. We are looking to achieve a safe, engaging area that is able to cater for children K-6. I have asked the P&F to contribute \$15 000 toward the purchase of new play equipment in addition to the allocation of \$120 000 to complete the project. Consultation with the community will be required before we proceed.

A number of repair and maintenance projects will be carried out during 2022, also funded by Catholic Schools Broken Bay. These will include repairing leaks to several classrooms and the installation of a petition between the before and after school care facility and the hall.

In closing, I look forward to restrictions easing to the point that we can gather as a community for celebrations, social occasions, and special events. I look forward to working with our P&F Executive, our parent volunteers and our Class Parents during 2022.

Mark Bateman – Principal