Dear Families

This is the last Newsletter for first Term. Classes conclude at 1pm on Friday, 4th April. It has been a busy and productive Term filled with many opportunities to live our school motto, “Non Recuso Laborem,” not refusing the task; embracing life’s challenges.

One of the biggest challenges faced by any school community is school camp and I’m thrilled to say that St Martin’s Year 6 students were all delivered home safely after a great out-door camp at the Briars in Mt Martha.

Surviving the nights on a plastic covered vinyl mattress on a single bunk with little sleep, wearing thongs in the shower, washing dishes, standing in cabin doorways waiting for sleep to replace the talking, whispering, toilet stops, laughing, wall-knocking, eating meals quickly, mopping wet shower floors, serving meals, surviving on 4 hours uninterrupted sleep; all showed me what a fabulous team of teachers we had on Year 6 camp. As a mum and grandma I know I’d be thrilled to have teachers from St Martin’s supervising my precious goods on a school camp. I witnessed our school motto “Non Recuso Laborem” in action on Year 6 camp when staff encouraged students to face their fears and give everything a try. Each teacher showed 100 percent plus commitment to their 24 hr responsibility of supervising the Year 6 children. Thank you Margaret, Sandra, Aaron, David, Terry and David (PE) for putting your personal lives on hold for 4 days.

Congratulations to our fabulous Year 6 children for keeping our school reputation ‘untarnished’ at the Briars camp site. Manager, activities supervisors, kitchen staff and teachers all sang the praises of our children.

School camp is one of the many reasons that makes my role the BEST job in the world. Be proud that you belong to our GREAT school community. The following email from one of our Year 6 students says it all!

Dear Mrs Stewart,

I am just e-mailing you to thank you and all of the teachers, Mr Zac, Mr Portelli, Mr Connolly, Mr Witchell, Mrs Cocks and Ms Tieppo for an amazing camp!!

I enjoyed myself very much, and I think everybody else did, too.

I hope you have caught up on some sleep, especially after we were awake for a very long time and didn’t get to sleep until very late!

I liked how all of the activities pushed me beyond my strengths and it made me feel confident that I could do them.
It was a good experience for me to learn and know a bit more about the boys in my cabin, especially those who I didn’t know well at the start of camp.

I enjoyed every activity, especially the ‘Giant Swing’ and the ‘Leap of Faith’. I also enjoyed ‘Tree Surfing’ at the Enchanted Maze.

I hope all the teachers had fun on camp as well as the students.

Thanks again for an awesome camp,

Matteus,

**Stranger Danger in the Community**

Parents are reminded to reinforce stranger danger responses when their child is out walking in the community.

For safety reasons, I ask that written communication is sent to the school office on the days that your child walks home from school at an earlier than normal dismissal time, eg 1pm for the last day of Term.

**New Government Regulations for School Policies:**

There are new Government regulations for the Anaphylaxis and Privacy Policy.

The upgraded Privacy Policy has been reviewed by members of the PAC and is posted on the School Website.

With regard to the Anaphylaxis Policy, it is important that a parent of each child who has an epi-pen meets with me prior to the end of Term. Each child’s plan needs to be reviewed and signed off by the parent/s and the school principal.

**Mental Computation in Maths- Open classrooms**

All parents are invited to open school morning 8:30am– 9:30am to observe the students engaged in mental computation strategies on Friday, 6th June.

**Parent/ Student/ Teacher Interviews**

Many thanks to the teachers and parents for working in partnership to support students with their goal setting for their academic and personal learning.

**Homework/ Home Practice Tasks**

Non-compulsory homework tasks are being trialled at St Martin’s this year. Home practice tasks for reading and mental computation are strongly advised to support your child’s
learning. Optional extra tasks are made available to school families by class room teachers. Positive comments have been made by Year 6 students in relation to their set home practice tasks.

We are reminded that practice is required to gain competence in any skill. One Year 2 student gave feedback, wishing that a child would speak louder, to a child giving their oral presentation to the class. A suggestion made by another member of the class was for the speaker to practise talking to the back fence at home with the goal of raising the volume.

Please keep up the reading and maths activities over the holidays. Counting, playing with money, cooking, patterns in space and in numbers and telling the time on digital and analogue clocks are all everyday maths tasks that support children with their understanding. Playing card games, dice and dominoes support the children with their number facts. Check out the teachers’ on-line spaces to find suitable interactive activities that will support and consolidate your child’s mathematical understanding.

Maybe the Easter Bunny will deliver a book and a pack of playing cards with an egg. Public libraries are open over the holidays and have an abundance of suitable reading material for your child/children.

Research shows a link between reading and academic achievement.

Extract from Researched based School Homework Policy –

ROLE OF PARENTS

The aim of the parent is to support each child in their endeavour to:

- be an independent learner
- encourage homework completion and performance
- enhance a positive attitude towards homework
- engage in positive communication
- provision of social support

Parents can assist a student in planning homework and is more important than contributing to its completion.

This could include the creation of a homework routine that assists students achieve independent learning skills. A homework routine should include factors such as providing a designated homework location that facilitates student focus and is in the parent’s line of vision and setting aside specified time for homework.
• support and encourage students when facing difficulties, providing emotional scaffolding to promote resilience and perseverance
• reframing potentially negative communication strategies such as ‘have you done your homework yet?’ to ‘how are you going to do your assignment?’
• focus on certain parts of the task
• help students allocating time to the task
• assist students understanding of the purpose and skills of the task
• help promote ‘mastery’
• give children opportunities to evaluate their own accomplishments- this can be a powerful tool
• provide scaffolding opportunities for learners
• parental behaviours that foster collaborative learning

Parents are strongly encouraged to contact the teacher if there are any concerns regarding the homework task, in particular if stress and anxiety is experienced by students.

Parents are also encouraged to foster a home environment that views reading for pleasure as a major priority, it should be seen as a form of daily entertainment. Student choice in reading is vital and parents should continue to read to, and be read to, throughout all primary school years.

**Start to Term 2**

Tuesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> April teachers return for whole school Professional Development (PD) day on Writing. Outside facilitators are presenting ideas and activities that will assist teachers to support children with their writing. This day will build on the PD attended on Saturday, last year, by many teachers, to manage the writing workshop. Oral Language and thinking out aloud enable the children to write. Spelling and Grammar come later when they edit their work. Spelling and Grammar should never block creativity.

Mem Fox, *‘English Essential, The wouldn’t be without it guide to writing well.’* is a great reference for writing.

**Children’s Choir**

Please contact Sister Maria if your Year 2-6 child is interested in being a member of the Children’s Choir. Rehearsals will be held each Tuesday afternoon, commencing 29<sup>th</sup> of April from 3pm in the Church. Children are welcome to go straight to the Church from school. Sister Maria will be supervising the students.

**Fundraising**

Last week I received an email from Aussie Farmers Direct Fundraising Team advising the school had raised $339.93. Thanks to all the families who support the school through this business.
Holy Week and Easter Ceremonies
Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday mark the Catholic triduum for Easter celebration. Even though these days are at the end of the school holidays, it is hoped that families make an effort to celebrate the significance of these days.

School Holy Week Tableau - Thursday 3rd April, 12:30-1:30pm in the Church.

Times for celebrations at St Martin’s:
Holy Thursday 7:30pm
Good Friday 10:00am, Stations 3pm Service, 4:30pm Viacrucis (Italian)
Easter Vigil (Sat. night) 7pm
Easter Sunday 7:30am, 8:30am (Italian), 10:00am

For a reflection on Easter click on this heading

School Planned Sponsorship:
Reminder that the children wear coloured clothes on the last day of Term, Friday 4th April, and bring 50 cents donation. This money is sent to sponsor the education of 2 students in Africa. Many thanks to PFA for coordinating this outreach service that shows we care for the needy and value education.

Earth Hour
Saturday 29th March

Many thanks to all the families who “embraced life’s changes “by being a supportive and active member of St Martin’s school and Parish community in First Term.

When we carry our cross we look to the joy of the Risen Lord being with us to live full and joyful lives where mercy, compassion and hope gives us strength to face life’s challenges.

Have a great holiday with your beautiful children.

Happy and Holy Easter. Trish Stewart Principal.