Dear Families,

Over the past weeks, many parents have reported the abuse of the 2 minute drop off zone.

ALL parents and care givers are reminded to adhere to the 2 minute parking in Silk St. The purpose of this 2 minute drop off zone is to drop off and pick up children. It is not a parking zone where parents/care givers have time to park and leave their vehicle.

Traffic Infringement Officers often patrol Silk Street and issue fines. Another issue that is causing concern is the way that access to the school is cut off each afternoon when cars line up in Silk Street. The main driveway to the school in Silk Street needs to be clear at all times so that emergency vehicles are able to access the school.

Trees and Power-lines:
Programmed works to prune trees near power-lines are scheduled to be carried out between 1st October and 19th January. This may cause disruption to parking in streets near the front and rear of the school. Trees are pruned on a two year cycle.

End of School Year Formal Assessment:
Class teachers are being released to conduct testing with their students. Teacher observation, online assessment, moderation of students’ work samples and one to one interview are used to provide data to map each child’s performance. Results are compared to standards. This information is invaluable for deciding future teaching and to ensure that every child is learning and being challenged at their level. The core element of all assessment is student learning.

Raised National Terrorist Alert Status:
Recent correspondence from the Director of Catholic Education reminded us

“of four main pillars that hold Catholic education to such a high standard: Respect, Acceptance, Inclusion and Community.

Australian Catholic Bishops Conference President, Archbishop Denis Hart, explained it well while addressing a growing suspicion of the Muslim community recently in The Australian Newspaper Reach Out: We’re in this together.

‘Our challenge is to reach out to each other to build the community we need for lasting peace in Australia. Don’t let the terrorists change our open hearts to suspicion and fear.’

Catholic schools have long led the way in social engagement, interfaith and intercultural understanding through curriculum content and Restorative Practices. I encourage our school leaders to broaden those horizons even further.

In testing times be vigilant, yes. Exercise care, absolutely. But also understand that ignorance presents its own challenges.
More than ever, we must teach that rather than fear those in our community who hold differing cultural and religious beliefs, we must embrace them as fellow Australians, fellow students and fellow parents.

Facilitating a better understanding of Islam is a state-wide community strategy Catholic education fully supports.

Developing a basic knowledge and understanding of the Islamic faith and its history through personal relationships is the best way to prevent misunderstanding and prejudice, and also plays a role in avoiding radicalisation of students.

On the direct issue of security, providing safe, supportive and respectful teaching and learning environments is always a priority, so I ask that any school that hasn’t recently completed routine safety procedures and practices, please find time to do so. The difficulty when addressing an issue as delicate and potentially damaging as an increased alert status is to ensure a safe environment while avoiding unnecessary alarm.

I know all our principals will not only find the right balance, but enhance the Pastoral Care and Wellbeing practices of Catholic education in Victoria.”

Safety at St Martin’s School:

Gates at St Martin’s are opened each morning from 8:30am and locked at 3:45pm. All visitors to our school enter via the office.

Recently Mrs Cocks, Deputy Principal, investigated an electronic form of recording visitors to our school.

This method is being ordered as free trial for the remainder of the year. While there may be costs involved for future use, it is worth offsetting these costs against time of producing and storing paper records. Currently the school is paying for off-site storage of archives. Having paperless records for visitor attendance is one step forward to limiting paper record storage.

Labyrinth:

At the staff professional development day on the first day of term, we were introduced to a Labyrinth, a path to be walked. It has been cut into the grass on the grassed area at school.

“The labyrinth is a spiritual tool serving as a walk/cantering activity for the human heart, mind and soul. It has a single, purposeful path that winds from the edge to the centre. The same path leads back to the edge again.”

Parents and family members are welcome to walk the labyrinth when they come for weekend masses. It is an opportunity to leave your concerns/worries at the centre of the labyrinth. Please allow one minute between people as you enter the labyrinth.
PFA Trivia Night:
On behalf of the school community, I offer thanks to the committee of parents who organised this great social night and to the parents who found time to attend. Parents are reminded that any money raised by the PFA and donated to the school is used to improve the grounds, buildings and resources. Currently investigations are being undertaken to assess the best method of installing an industrial dishwasher into the canteen. An industrial dishwasher would eliminate the need for hand washing dishes.

Prep 2015 Parent Welcome Dinner:
Thank you to all the parents who have offered to contribute food and service for the Prep 2015 Welcome Dinner. It is always a wonderful way to welcome families into the school community.

Year 6 Fundraising:
Next week, Year 6 students will be hosting different fundraising activities. Please send along silver coins to support their initiatives. Part of their action is to investigate worthy causes. A list of these organisations will be published in following newsletter. These activities show evidence of awareness of the needy in our world; they support the Social Justice component of Religious Education teachings.

Languages and Literacy:
On completion of a four day Leading Languages Professional Development Program by the Italian teacher and the Principal, it is important to reflect on the reasons why teaching Italian is offered to all students at St Martin’s school. Follow this link to reflect on the importance of language learning to support English Literacy.


Working With Children Check:
Changes to this legislation issued by Department of Justice, Victoria, shows that the new meaning of child related work “is work involved in one of the occupational fields listed in the Act, where the contact with a child is unsupervised, direct and part of a person’s duties. For example a plumber attending to a burst pipe at junior sports clubrooms does not need to have contact with children to fix the burst pipe. Any contact they may have with children is incidental to their work, so the plumber does not need to get a WWC check.”

School Closure:
Parents are reminded that school will be closed over the Melbourne Cup weekend. There is no school on Monday, 3rd November and Tuesday 4th November. Many families are able to use this time for a family break away.
First Reconciliation:
The three separate celebrations of Year 3 class Reconciliation ceremonies conclude on Tuesday, 28th October. Thank you to the teachers for preparing the children, the parents for supporting the children and Fr Michael for his “shepherd” leadership and creative ways to assist the children to make meaning of the Scripture readings and Church traditions.

Enjoy the changeable Melbourne Spring weather.

Regards  
Trish Stewart  
Principal
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