Dear Families,

Congratulations and thank you to all the Prep families for supporting your child/children to smooth transition to school; each Prep child has made a comment about school. These comments are included in this newsletter. Special thank you to Ourania, Friday night dinner coordinator and Michelle, PFA President, for coordinating tea and tissues for parents and grandparents. Prep year is an amazing time of growth and development for every child. Hopefully each Prep parent will take time each week to ponder and celebrate special milestones and achievements.

Student assessment continues this week. Every child in the school undertakes or has undertaken assessment for English and Maths.

Prep children are set appointment times for Wednesdays from 11th February to 4th March.

Assessment data is used to inform teachers of students’ current knowledge and ability. Planning and teaching is based on data from student testing and from teacher observations. Assessment data is based on what students make, say and do.

Specialist teaching classes for ICT, Italian, Library, Music and PE commenced last week.

**Top Yard Supervision Before and After School**

Parents are reminded teachers are on duty from 8.30am each morning to supervise children. This is a time for gathering, not for ball games or running. Top yard is not supervised for play after school. Children are in the care of their parents and need constant monitoring to ensure they are safe. We understand parents like to gather and allow their children to play, however children’s safety comes first and it is not possible for them to be playing in this small space while adults and other family members are on this yard.

**Shrove Tuesday Picnic 17th February, from 5pm on Bottom Yard**

All families are invited to attend the traditional Shrove Tuesday picnic. This is an opportunity for all families to reconnect in an informal setting. Thank you to the parents who have volunteered to help at the picnic. Sausages, pancakes, snow cones and soft drinks are available for purchase. BYO picnic rugs and chairs.

**Ash Wednesday 18th February**

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of the forty days of preparation for Easter. It mirrors Jesus’ preparation for his ministry, while in the desert, he spent 40 days in prayer and fasting.
We do this through enacting the traditional triad of Lenten observances of **prayer, fasting** and **almsgiving**. These are all ways in which we prepare ourselves for the remembrance of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

So, in preparation for the feast of Easter we ask:

*What can I do this Lent to be more like Jesus, so that I can bring life to others?*

**Prayer:** Time each day to sit with God for both spontaneous and formal prayer.

**Fasting:** Instead of focusing on ‘giving up’ a vice or a favourite food as the form of fasting for Lent, we can encourage those around us to think about what they can ignite within them to enact change for the better or self-improvement. For example, what characteristics would we like to embody – such as compassion, humility or forgiveness? We can reflect on what actions are needed to do this.

**Almsgiving:** During Lent in Australian Catholic schools and parishes we are invited to give alms through Caritas Australia’s Project Compassion. We are also encouraged to learn more about how to be together in solidarity with the world’s poor to help end poverty, promote justice and uphold dignity. As well as this, it can be helpful to think about almsgiving in other ways. For instance, every day we could give someone a compliment, spend time with someone different during lunch or perform an act of charity every day.

*As Catholics, we are called to experience our own desert, in which we also enter into a period of prayer and fasting while we reflect on how we can be more Christ-like.*

*Kathryn Bowden, Catholic Education Office Melbourne.*

**Parish Lenten Reflection Sessions:** 3rd, 12th and 16th March, 7:30pm in the Community Centre

All parents are invited to attend reflection sessions facilitated by a Spiritual Director from Heart of Life Spirituality Centre in Box Hill. The focus of these sessions is for each of us to deepen our relationship with God.

**School Uniform**

Many thanks to the parents who support school community by ensuring their child/children wear/s correct school uniform. This includes sport uniform on the scheduled day.

St Martin’s school is judged by all members of the wider community by the students’ behaviour, including the way the uniform is worn. School pride is fostered through the correct uniform.

Parents are reminded that they are the adults and have taken on responsibility of ensuring their child/children wear the correct school uniform. It is not a choice but a requirement.

During first term:
Girls wear the summer dress with plain white socks with full covering over the ankles, bloomers for adventure playground, black leather shoes, school hat and school jumper if needed.

Boys wear blue embroidered school shirt, grey shorts, grey school socks with school coloured stripes, black leather shoes, school hat and school jumper if needed.

For safety reasons, Jewellery is restricted to a watch and studs or sleepers for ear-rings. Other jewellery can be a safety issue.

In general, most parents ensure their child/children wear/s the correct school uniform.

Any parent wanting to make a suggestion about the school uniform needs to send communication to the Parent Advisory Council, via the school office.

Year 6 Commitments

- Thursday 12th February, 7pm Confirmation Information Evening for parent and child in the GECCO.
- Saturday 14th February 6pm or Sunday 15th February 10am Confirmation Commitment Mass.
- Year 6 Camp Monday, 16th February to Wednesday, 18th February at The Briars in Mt Martha.

Catholic Church Insurance (CCI)
Late last year CCI achieved a large surplus after excellent investment performance. From the surplus the school received a payment of $1,590.02 as Second Tier Entity Distribution.

Happy Chinese New Year, 2015 — a Goat Year
The date of Chinese New Year is calculated according to the Chinese lunar calendar, hence the date is different each year on the Gregorian (internationally used) calendar, but always in the period January 21 to February 20. In 2015 it's Thursday, February 19.


"Goats" are said to like to be in groups. They are honest, intimate, and can be easily moved by the misfortune of others...


The sheep (goat, or ram) is among the animals that people like most. It is gentle and calm. Since ancient times, people have learned to use its fleece to make writing brushes and skin to keep warm. As it is white, people describe delicate and precious white jade to be 'suet jade'. Thus it is close to the meaning of good things.
Thank you to all the parents who found time to visit their child’s classroom and to attend Prep Information Session.

Research shows that Parent involvement and attendance at school meetings has a positive impact on children’s learning and is the most effective way in building a home/school partnership.

Say one for a safe and rewarding Year 6 camp next week.

Hopefully most families have made arrangements to come to the annual Shrove Tuesday Picnic on 17th February from 5pm on Bottom Yard.

Regards Trish Stewart Principal