Dear Families,

The last Newsletter for the school year is being sent home today because the school internet service is being stopped from Monday 14th December at 7am. Parents are advised that school email will not be available for the remainder of the school year.

As this is my last Newsletter as Principal of St Martin’s, I am taking the opportunity to acknowledge the efforts of the St Martin’s school community to raise the BEST children in the whole wide world.

Being in the privileged role of Principal, I am privy to witnessing the myriad of actions taken by parents and school staff to support the students to develop in their Spiritual, Emotional, Academic and Physical development.

The benchmark I have used when reflecting on school protocols has been to consider whether this would be in the best interest for my children and/or grandchildren. I have always held high expectations and a belief that every child learns when given the right support, learning environment and realistic expectations. My answer is that I would be more than happy to have my child and/or grandchild as a student at this school.

A school Principal is similar to a football coach. Both need support teams to encourage the players to be their best. St Martin’s school has the best support team of parents, class teachers, specialist teachers, leaders, support staff and admin officers. The teachers and school staff just keep going on and on and on like those ever ready batteries. The parents are there with a smile and a helping hand working tirelessly to do what’s best for the children.

I have been overwhelmed by the support, respect, good wishes and acts of kindness given to me during my time as Principal and especially over the past couple of weeks. Thank you to:

Adriana and her team for the amazing morning tea on Monday morning; the grand hotels in the city would come a second best to the High Tea served in the GECCO;

Heather for her creative breath-taking floral display;

Michelle and her team for organising lunch for the students for the whole school picnic at Parade College, the students loved the lunch and the great activities organised by Mr Ooi;

Jim Seymour from Parade College for coordinating the fantastic venue for the whole school picnic;

Miss West for teaching songs and movements for the Whole School Carols; and

Mrs Cocks who is the BEST at making things happen.

On the 27th of January it is time to pass the baton to Mr Dane Malone. The school community will embrace the change as opportunity to move and be challenged in new directions. Dane’s great
vision with buildings will ensure that the Prep-2 building project will be a wonderful learning structure.

**Parenting**

The aim of parenting is to allow a child to grow into an “independent, autonomous adult capable of living his or her own life” (Goodall, 2013, p.137). Hattie (2012, p.27) has suggested that the goal of education is to help students develop respect for themselves and others so as to “develop into citizens who have challenging minds and the disposition to become active, competent, and thoughtfully critical participants in our complex world”. The aim of schools and parenting is the same, so why not work together for the benefit of the child.

www.parentalengagementforschools.com.au

P arent • Be a parent and not a ‘peerant’ • Know where your kids are and who they are mixing with

A uthoritative • Be authoritative with a balance of rules and love • Set clear guidelines and limits and rules that are age and ability appropriate • Don’t be afraid to say “NO”

R outines • Routines are important in your home - set study times, study areas, meal times, bedtimes. • Limit time for TV and electronic devices • Requires being consistent and persistent

E ngagement • Everyone can make a difference by spending time with your child • Educate yourself about what makes the difference

N ot Authoritarian • When we get tired or stressed it is easy to slip into one of these. • Don’t yell-lean in and talk softly and slower • never get into an argument – they will always wear you down-they are younger

T oweards Autonomy • Family practices that lead the child to being self sufficient and able to exercise self control • Don’t do everything for them you are setting them up for failure • Allow them a say that is appropriate to their age but don’t let it turn into a novel

**Leading Languages**

Catholic Education Melbourne’s 2015-2019 Strategic Plan has outlined *Quality Teaching for all learners* as one of their three themes in this plan. Within this theme *Science and Language capabilities* have been included under objective 2.1 *improved learning, social and well-being outcomes and ongoing spiritual development for every student*.

When evaluating St Martin’s involvement in the Leading Languages Program, Signora Conte proudly showed assessment data which outlined growth in speaking the Italian language. Signora Conte has been immersing the students in Italian language, little English is being spoken in the Italian classroom.

Research shows that learning a second language improves your English grammar and language. Languages on Line is a useful resource for consolidating the Italian language being taught at school.
**Student Reports**
There has been a glitch with printing the student reports. The service provider is yet to give the go ahead to print student reports. It is expected that the system will be fully functioning and ready for each of the 'Trial' schools to print reports on Monday morning. In spite of some technical issues with the 'Trial' reports, we believe that these reports will be well received by the parents because students are marked against specific outcomes for age appropriate standards.

**Building**
The next meeting for the Junior School Refurbishment /Rebuilding is scheduled for March 2016.

Every avenue is being explored to get the best value for money with this project. No on site date has been set yet.

**Start of 2016 School Year**
Staff commence on Wednesday 27th January and Year 1–Year 6 students commence on Friday 29th January. Preps commence on Monday 1st February.

**Staffing for 2016**
Staffing details will be included in the first newsletter for 2016. Please mark diary dates into your personal diaries and calendars.

*My precious memories of my days at St Martin’s school will warm my tomorrows. Keep living our motto of “Non Recuso Laborem” by embracing life’s challenges and expecting surprises. Be open to opportunities and be grateful.*

*Thank you for all the big and little things you have done to make St Martin’s the BEST place to be.*

*Have a wonderful family Christmas and a safe and relaxing holiday break.*

*With appreciation and affection, Trish Stewart, proud and privileged Principal for the final time.*