Dear Parents,

Last Sunday at our Parish Mass we burnt the palms from last year. During our Ash Wednesday celebration today the ashes from those palms were distributed to all those assembled.

Ash Wednesday signals the commencement of the season of Lent and by the use of ashes, symbolically expresses our repentance and desire to, “Turn away from sin and to be faithful to the Gospel”. Lent is a season of forty days leading to the death and resurrection of Jesus during Holy Week and Easter.

During Lent, we can deepen our relationship with God and the Church and prepare ourselves to celebrate Easter by living out the Good News of God’s love and His promise of salvation. The staff will continue to support parents by helping the children focus on ways they can embrace the season of Lent and Easter in the coming weeks.

PREP NEWS
I suspect our prep parents will have some very tired prep students at the end of this week given they are now attending full days. They are still having the rest day on the Wednesday for a few weeks while the prep teachers complete their individual student assessments.

Prep Welcome Mass
I do hope that all our prep families are able to join us at the Prep Welcome Mass this coming Saturday evening at 6pm.

SHROVE TUESDAY PICNIC
We had a fantastic evening to gather for our Shrove Tuesday picnic. It was pleasing to see so many families join us. I would like to express my thanks to the Parents and Friends Association for their support catering for the evening.

CONFIRMATION EVENING
It is time to get ourselves ready for the upcoming Sacrament of Confirmation. Next Monday evening I encourage all Year 6 parents to join us for our Confirmation Information Evening which will take place in the GECCO from 7pm. On the evening we will explain some practicalities as well as provide some input on the Sacrament itself.

Family Prayer for the Week
Prayer for Lent

God, Father of us all, we thank you for sending Jesus to us.
By his life, death and resurrection he redeemed the world. Help us to remember all that you have done for us out of your unending love. We pray today not only for our own needs but for the needs of other people in our world.
During this holy season of Lent we ask your forgiveness for the wrong we have done to others and the good we have not done. May we make up for any harm that we have caused and may we live in your love and mercy. Help us to give praise to you by the way we live our lives now and always.

Amen
PARENT/STUDENT/TEACHER INTERVIEWS
TUESDAY, 1ST MARCH—STUDENTS YEARS 1-6.
WHOLE SCHOOL DISMISSED AT 1PM.
On Tuesday, 1st March interviews will be held for parents, students and teachers to meet to discuss students' progress. The focus of the March interview is to set goals for your child/children in line with their testing results. Children are encouraged to attend these interviews. Details on how to complete your online booking have been included in this newsletter.

SCHOOL CLOSURE DAY
Please note that there will be a Pupil Free day on Friday 11th March. Staff on this day will be organising framework for the new Semester 1 student report.

RETURN OF FORMS
The beginning of any new school year requires us to seek information from parents in many areas. Numerous notes are circulated to parents. I realise it can be very difficult to keep up with them all. It would be appreciated if all current forms be returned ASAP. PLEASE PERUSE THE FOLLOWING NOTES THAT NEED TO BE RETURNED:
Change of Information Form
CASEA Study Years 1-3

YEAR 6 CAMP
The Year 6 students are gearing up for camp next week. We head off on Wednesday 17th February to The Briars Camp in Mt Martha. Camp is always one of the highlights of the year and I know staff look forward to it as much as the students. Personally I am looking forward to joining the Year 6 students on camp as it will be a great way for me to get to know them.

HEALTH CARE CARD / CAMPING
If you hold a valid means tested health care card or are a temporary foster parent, you may be eligible for Camps, Sports & Excursions Fund (CSEF). The annual CSEF amount for primary school students is $125.00. The CSEF is paid directly to your child’s school to be used towards camps, sports and excursion expenses for the benefit of eligible students. Parents are encouraged to lodge the application by 29 February 2016 so that payments can be made from March 2016. The school can accept parent applications up to 3 June 2016. We are unable to accept late applications. Applications are available from the school office. The school also requires a copy of your current health care card.

PARENT HELPERS / WORKING WITH CHILDREN CHECK
All parents assisting in the school are required to complete a working with children check. Those who have already placed an application will have received a receipt or a WWC Card. If you have either of these you are eligible to assist in classes. We do want our parents to be involved in the classes so please complete the necessary application online or at the post office as soon as possible. If you have any queries please contact the school office.
BAND NEWS

Today our Band students started their sessions with our new band teachers, Chris McLeod and Gareth Voigt. Below is a message from our previous Band teacher Melissa Knowles.

Hello SMOT Parents and Students,

It has been a pleasure to teach your children over the past couple of years and to be involved in the music program at SMOT. The program has gone from strength to strength over the past few years, with the help of the dedicated music committee, the teachers, and with the support of the school.

I will not be teaching at SMOT this year. An opportunity in secondary education presented itself late last year, and although it is an exciting opportunity, it means that I will not be able to continue my role at SMOT.

Gareth Voigt will be taking over my position as woodwind teacher. Gareth currently works at Rosanna Golf Links Primary School, so he is familiar with the area and with our school. I have spoken with Gareth and I am confident that I leave you all in very good hands. It has been a pleasure teaching at SMOT, and I wish you all the very best.

Kind regards, Melissa Knowles

God bless,

Dane Malone
Principal