From Paul’s Desk

Dear Parents and Friends of St Paul’s,

We have all been really impressed with the cooperation and thoughtfulness of the children, especially the Seniors. On Tuesday I made a point of going around to every Senior Grade to thank them for their efforts thus far in modelling the correct behaviours to the younger children and assisting wherever they could. The responsibility they have shown thus far is a credit to each individual and their families.

Start of School Year Mass – Our annual beginning of the school year Mass will be celebrated tomorrow at 12noon. All welcome.

Ash Wednesday – The children will attend another whole school Mass next Wednesday at 12 noon to mark the start of Lent. The Season of Lent is an important time in the Church’s Liturgical Year when all of us are called to prepare for the Death and Resurrection of Christ at Easter. We do this through prayer, penance and charity. Our charity is Project Compassion. Project Compassion is Caritas Australia’s annual humanitarian fundraising appeal that occurs throughout the six weeks of Lent each year. Some families may already have a Project Compassion box at home and we will have one in each classroom. We ask that small donations of loose change are placed in the box. Throughout Lent the children will pray together in the classroom, remembering those acts they can do for others that make our homes and school better places and the children from Grade Four up will go to Confession in the week before Holy Week to prepare themselves for the most important time of the Year for our Church.

Class Programs – The first three to four weeks of each year are spent establishing routines in the classrooms, testing and easing the children back into school life. From next Monday, specialist programs begin and by Monday February 18th we should nearly have all structures up and running.

Parent/Teacher Interviews/Information Sharing Tuesday Feb 19th/Thursday Feb 21st – A letter will be sent home tomorrow inviting all parents to attend a fifteen minute meeting with your child’s teacher. The purpose of the meeting is not to discuss the children’s progress but rather it is a chance for you to meet the teacher and pass on information that you believe is important. These meetings are not compulsory. Many parents already have a good relationship with their children’s teachers and so may not feel the interview as necessary. Parents of Prep children will not need to attend these meetings as they will meet with their individual teacher when their child is assessed on a Wednesday during first term.

Fete Sunday March 24th – On Wednesday evening we held a most productive meeting. The ideas are all starting to become reality and from now on we will be calling on the community to pitch in and help make the Fete a real success. A number of committee members will be contacting the people that last year volunteered to assist as team leaders of different stalls. Also we will be asking for donations of small items from each family. The first item we would ask for is a bag of lollies to make up lolly bags and small prizes for the lucky dip. All we need is a bag of Allens or maybe the Natural or any of the Coles/Woolworths home brands. A Fete newsletter will be sent home next Tuesday. Make sure you read it and keep yourself informed. Also don’t be afraid to put your hand up to volunteer – it’s a real good way to get to know different people!

New School Garden – Last Friday Mr Cananzi and Mr Fimiani refurbished the garden just outside the reception area and they have done a fantastic job. Our school is certainly looking very smart these days.

AEU Strike Thursday February 14th – The Union representing some Catholic School teachers, Principals and administration staff (IEU Vic Tas) has asked members to attend a protest rally on the same day as the Australian Education Union’s Strike in support of the current AEU industrial issues. A number of teachers have agreed to attend the Protest Rally on this day in support of the AEU. The school will operate all programs as normal with emergency teachers supporting classrooms and specialist areas.

All the best, Paul

2013 Teacher Inservice Dates

No classes for children these days

Tuesday March 12th.
Friday April 26th.
Monday May 20th.
Friday August 16th.
Thursday and Friday November 28th and 29th.
**Prayer for the beginning of the school year.**

Lord, we thank you for this new school year, for all the ways we will learn and grow. We ask you to fill us with the wisdom and joy of your Spirit. May everything we do be a sign of your Holy Spirit’s presence among us. We make this prayer to you through Christ our Lord.

Amen

Dear Paul and the Community of St Paul’s Primary School,

Funky Monkey Disco apologizes for the conduct of our staff on the night of your annual disco. Unfortunately I had to return to overseas suddenly to be with my father and had contacted Paul to say I was sending a member of my staff who has been on my team for 4 years as a replacement.

The staff member, whose employment contract has since been terminated, decided to go and work elsewhere for the evening making no effort to contact myself or my family. I had confirmed the details of your disco with him the day prior and the first we knew of his absence was from Paul’s frantic calls.

I am horrified at this situation and devastated your students were let down. Unfortunately with the time difference and me having no mobile phone it was out of my control.

Funky Monkey has had great a 10-year relationship with St Paul’s and its students both past and present. I have enjoyed providing entertainment to both the school and family events outside of the school.

I can not personally apologize enough for the situation and can understand how let down you must all feel. I hope we can rebuild our friendship.

As a gesture I would like to offer a free disco to your community. This could be a family night or maybe something to do with your annual fete.

Yours sincerely

Julie Cassie

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**Poppy**

Through World Vision we continue to sponsor Poppy. Poppy is a 13 year old girl who lives in Bangladesh. Over the holidays Poppy celebrated Christmas and recently sent us a letter informing us of what she has been up to

*Usually in November and the first week of December, children finish their Annual Examination following a long winter vacation. It is a great time for Christian children to get ready for Christmas carols, practicing for almost a month. On Christmas eve, when the mothers are busy preparing different types of cakes (Pitha) and other delicious food for Christmas day, children decorate the houses with colour paper. They also make home made Christmas stars and hang the star in a bamboo or at the top of the house as a majestic symbol of Christmas. Also, most of the families make a symbolic birth place of Baby Jesus which is called ‘GoShala’. It is very nicely decorated with colourful papers while some families also have Christmas trees.*

**Craft Group**

The Craft Group will gather in the Multi-purpose room on a Thursday from 9am-11am. All crafty or non-crafty people are welcome to attend, toddlers welcome.

**Cert III in Education Support (Teacher’s Aide)**

Gain the skills and knowledge to provide assistance and support to teachers and students in a range of educational settings.

Starts: 22nd April 2013 for 7 weeks on Mondays and Wednesdays, 9.30 –2.30pm

For more details ring PRACE on 9462 6077
BoxFit is a new and exciting group fitness class that will be held in the school on a Tuesday morning from 9.15—10.15am. BoxFit is a mixture of boxing and circuit class and is guaranteed to kick start your morning and burn off all that unwanted weight you’ve gained over the Christmas break!

For enquiries contact Raluca: 0414 144 971
Email: ralucalazarescu20@gmail.com

Cost: $10
Education Maintenance Allowance - information for parents currently receiving EMA

Changes to the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) for 2013:

The EMA continues to help families on lower incomes with financial assistance to cover the cost of educational expenses including textbooks, stationery, uniforms and excursions for their child up until the age of 16.

From 2013, the Victorian Government is restructuring the EMA to better target financial support to families on lower incomes. Payments made direct to parents will be increased for eligible recipients at all year levels up to age 16, with an additional increase for parents with students in Years Prep and 7 in recognition of the additional costs at these transition points.

In 2013 the annual EMA payment for families with children in primary school (years 1-6) will receive a payment of $150. Families with children in secondary school (Year 8 up until the age of 16) will receive an annual payment of $250.

The School Start Bonus which was previously received by EMA families has been discontinued as a separate payment from 2013. However, additional funding has been incorporated into the EMA meaning that parents of children in Prep and Year 7 will receive boosted EMA payments of $200 and $300 respectively in those years.

From 2013, the EMA will no longer be paid 50/50 between the parent and the school. The 50% school portion of the EMA will no longer be paid to schools on behalf of parents. However, $62 million over four years will be redirected to the State’s most needy schools to assist families on lower incomes. These funds will form part of the school Student Resource Packages to be allocated at the local level.

New EMA payment option

From 2013, on the EMA application form you can choose to have your EMA payment;

- Paid by direct deposit (Electronic Funds Transfer) into your nominated bank account or

- Paid by cheque which will be posted to the school for collection or

- Paid to the school to be held as credit which you can use towards education expenses

The introduction of the new payment option to have the EMA payment directed to the school provides parents with extra flexibility to assist with budgeting towards education expenses.

Eligibility:

To be eligible for the EMA in 2013, you must:

- be either a parent or guardian of a primary or secondary school student up to the age of sixteen; and

- be an eligible beneficiary of a Centrlink pension, allowance or benefit within the meaning of the State Concessions Act 2004* or be a Veterans Affairs (TPI) pensioner or be a temporary foster parent.

* i.e – the parent/guardian must be the holder of a valid Health Care Card or valid Pension Card.

The eligibility criteria must be met as at 29 January 2013 (Instalment One) and 15 July 2013 (Instalment Two).