News from the Principal

Dear Parents and Families,

Welcome to our first official newsletter of the year. I hope that you all enjoyed the holidays and are rested and rejuvenated ready for Term One!

I would like to thank the school community for their support as I undertake my new role. It has been a wonderful first week back, catching up with many of you during the testing and preparation days.

I look forward to working with your children and know our staff have been working hard in preparation for the students’ return.

At our first Assembly this morning, we welcomed new children and families to our school community and we look forward to them having an enjoyable and rewarding time at St. Patrick’s.

We welcome the following Foundation Students, Jez Barnes, Eva Pamic, Dylan Van Egmond, and Jobe Blazko and we welcome back our returning students, Elijah, Layla and Sienna Muir. We also welcome Sienna Denman, who previously attended St Michael’s, Springbank.

Please read the newsletter thoroughly as you will see exciting events happening over the coming weeks!

I hope everyone has a great week!

Kind regards, Bambi Afford
Beginning of the Year Mass  The Beginning of the Year St. Patrick’s School Mass will be celebrated in the St. Patrick’s Parish Church this Wednesday 8th February at 10:00am, with celebrant Fr. Gary Jones. We look forward to seeing you all there and we extend a warm invitation to join us back at school for morning tea after our celebration, where we will celebrate the Golden Jubilee of Sr. Kathleen Moran.

Staffing for 2017  This year we welcome back Mrs. Kathy Ludbrook to our school who will be teaching our Year Three and Four students. We also welcome back Anna Stott, who is once again excited to be teaching the Arts at St. Patrick’s and will also work in partnership with Mrs. Ludbrook, teaching our Year Three and Four students each Friday.

St. Patrick’s School Vision and Mission  Our shared school vision is set out below and outlines the major focus of our School as we start the new school year.

Our School Vision  St. Patrick’s is a Catholic Primary School that strives to educate the whole person. It is our faith and traditions that bind us, as we foster caring relationships between staff, students, school, home and the wider community.

Our School Mission  As a Christian centred educating community, St. Patrick’s School;

  Celebrates – Catholic beliefs, values, practices and traditions  
  Shares – In the mission of the church, modeled on the leadership of Jesus Christ  
  Works – In partnership with all stakeholders in the education of our students  
  Provides – A contemporary curriculum which is stimulating, creative and challenging  
  Nurtures – Each individuals intellectual, spiritual, physical and social development, in an environment that is safe for us all  
  Respects – The dignity and integrity of each person, promoting self-esteem, hope and a positive vision for the future  
  Inspires & empowers – Our students to make a difference in the world  
  Educates – And will support all, regardless of race, religion, social background or status

St. Patrick’s School places a high priority on child safety and has implemented Child Safety Policies and Procedures covering all learning environments (within and outside the school), online and outside of school hours care.

Bulldogs Read Literacy Program 2017  This year we are excited to announce our School’s involvement in the Bulldogs Read Literacy Pilot Program. The program is aimed at giving middle primary students an opportunity to participate in reading and writing workshops, activities and events in conjunction with the Western Bulldogs Football Club, the City of Ballarat and primary schools in the Ballarat region.

Bulldogs Read aims to increase student’s connection with literacy and sport and encourage them to read and exercise. 11 participants will be randomly selected from Years Three – Six. Parents will be notified if their child has been selected.

More information will be available in the next few weeks regarding our school’s involvement in the program.

Parent’s Car Park – Safety reminders for 2017  We often remind parents of the importance of car park safety when dropping off and picking up their children at our school. We ask that all children are dropped off and picked up in the school carpark and not at the front of the school, as there are a large number of trucks travelling at speed on the Old Melbourne Road. We thank parents for following the directional signs in the school carpark, which is making it safer for children crossing the road at the crossing. ALL SIBLINGS MUST BE DIRECTLY SUPERVISED BY PARENTS AT ALL TIMES IN THE CAR PARK.

This includes staying inside cars when parents stay in the car park, or being supervised to cross at crossing points if coming to the shed or to the school with parents. Under no circumstances should siblings be allowed out of cars to simply amuse themselves whilst waiting for their older brother or sisters. This is very dangerous and we have had a number of near misses over the years when this has occurred.

We thank you for your support and assistance in making our school safe for all.
**2017 Camps, Sports & Excursions Fund (CSEF)**

Dear Parent / Guardian

In 2017 the Victorian Government will continue the $148 million initiative to ensure all Victorian students can take part in school trips and sporting activities. The Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF) will run over four years from 2015 and provide payments for eligible students to attend camps, sports and excursions.

Families holding a valid means-tested concession card or temporary foster parents are eligible to apply. $125 per year will be paid for eligible primary school students, with $225 per year paid for eligible secondary school students.

Payments will go directly to the school and be tied to the student. Applications to the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund are now open. Please read the attached information carefully in regards to eligibility.

Parents or legal guardians

Parents or legal guardians are required to complete a CSEF application form and lodge it with the school for processing.

Application forms should be completed and lodged with the school before 30th June 2017 as payments are made each year during term three.

Shared custody

The CSEF system only allows one application per student. Parents in shared custody situations are encouraged to make decisions as to who applies for the CSEF.

If you have any questions please contact Julie at the school office on 5368 9495 or email jtoohey@spgordon.catholic.edu.au

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**Conveyance Allowance in 2017**

In 2017, families from our school may be eligible for financial assistance to help them meet the cost of transporting children to and from school.

The financial assistance – known as a conveyance allowance – is designed for students who can't access free school buses, and helps cover the cost of public transport, private car and private bus. To be eligible for a conveyance allowance, students must be of school age and:

- attend their nearest government or non-government school appropriate to their year level at which admission is permissible;
- reside 4.8km or more by the shortest practicable route from the school;

The conveyance allowance is paid by the Department of Education and Training to families via the school. If you think your child may qualify for a conveyance allowance, please contact the school to discuss eligibility, and for further information on the application process and payment amounts.
SCHOOL FEE STATEMENTS  Annual school fee statements are attached to today’s newsletter. Payments can be made via fortnightly or monthly direct debits, Credit Card payments, direct deposit, cash or cheque.
Fortnightly direct debits for 2017 & Monthly direct debits for 2017 can be arranged at the school office.
Please note that the Swimming/Gym program is on your statement and school camps are yet to be booked and costed.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

♦ Wednesday 8th February - Beginning of the Year School Mass at 10:00am, followed by morning tea at St Patrick’s School to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of Sr. Kathleen. Please join us if you can.
♦ SCHOLASTIC BOOK CLUB ORDERS DUE BACK TO SCHOOL OR TO BE ORDERED ONLINE BY 16TH FEBRUARY.
♦ Wednesday 1st March - Ash Wednesday Mass at St Patrick’s Church. Time to be confirmed.
♦ Friday 10th March - District School Sports at Mason’s Reserve, Bacchus Marsh.
♦ Friday 17th March - St. Patrick’s Day Mass and combined schools celebrations at St. Patrick’s in Gordon. Mass 10:00am followed by Fun Day at School.
♦ Sunday 19th March - BALLAN AUTUMN FESTIVAL - (SAVE THE DATE) Theme - “Our pioneering days”
♦ Friday 31st March - School Photos for all children and staff.
♦ The Foundation Students will have all Wednesday’s at home in Term 1.
♦ TERM 1 DATES - Thursday 2nd February to Friday 31st March.
♦ ICY POLES AVAILABLE IN TERM 1 ON A FRIDAY FOR 50 cents

Weekend Mass Times

Saturday
Springbank 6.30pm

Sunday
Bungaree 8.45am

Sunday
Ballan 10.30am

Sr Kathleen is celebrating her Golden Jubilee for her Profession in February. To acknowledge this wonderful achievement, a morning tea will be held after 10:30 am Mass at Ballan on Sunday, 19th February. All welcome. Please bring a plate to share.

A PRAYER FOR OUR STUDENTS

DEAR GOD,
THANK YOU FOR THE GIFT OF EDUCATION IN EVERY FORM.
AS OUR CHILDREN PREPARE TO START A NEW YEAR
MAY CONFIDENCE BE THEIR FOUNDATION,
MAY GRACE BE THEIR GUIDE AND
MAY HOPE BE THEIR COMPASS TOWARD A BRIGHT FUTURE.
I PRAY THEY WOULD HAVE EYES TO SEE
THE NEEDS OF THOSE AROUND THEM
AND A HEART TO LOVE WELL.
MAY THEY FACE EACH DAY WITH POSITIVITY
KNOWING THAT NO MATTER
WHAT COMES THEIR WAY,
THEY DO NOT HAVE TO FACE IT ALONE.

AMEN
For Term 1, the Year 5/6 class will be selling ICY POLES for 50 cents on a Friday. This will commence this Friday, 10th February.

Please note that Hot Dogs WILL NOT BE AVAILABLE in Term 1.

We wish the following students our very best wishes on their recent birthday celebrations -

Elijah Muir, Jez Barnes
Jobe Blazko, Alex Turner, Emily Murphy, Mia Fitchie and Jess Van Egmond.

INTRODUCING OUR 2017 FOUNDATION CLASS
Eva Pamic, Dylan Van Egmond, Jobe Blazko and Jez Barnes.

Piano, Keyboard & Guitar Lessons at School.
Tim is a very experienced, patient and qualified instrumental teacher and has been teaching for more than 20 years! Contact Tim on 0450 904 464.
School banking will resume on Thursday 9th February and will continue to be Thursday’s in the school term.

Please drop your bank books in to the school office first thing on a Thursday morning.

What bank account is needed for School Banking?

Youthsaver accounts for School Banking

Opening a Youthsaver account to participate in School Banking is easy. To get started the parent/guardian can open an account:

Online by visiting [commbank.com.au/schoolbanking](http://commbank.com.au/schoolbanking) and clicking on the link to open a Youthsaver account; or

- In person at any Commonwealth Bank branch.

Existing Youthsaver accounts

Children who have an existing Youthsaver account can use their Dollarmites deposit book and deposit wallet to participate in the School Banking program. If the child has misplaced their Dollarmites deposit book or deposit wallet they can either request a new one from their local branch or contact their School Banking Co-ordinator.

Identification requirements

Both the parent/guardian and the child must have their identification verified. The Bank is required by law to verify identification before a new account can be fully operational (i.e. able to deposit and withdraw). If the parent/guardian is an existing Commonwealth Bank customer they only need to provide their existing account number as identification.
Parents enjoy a catch up and morning tea on the first day of school classes

Damascus College Open Mornings

Damascus College warmly invites all families to attend our upcoming Open Mornings. The Open Morning will include a tour of the College, guided by current Damascus students during school hours.

OPEN MORNINGS:
- Thursday 9th February at 9am – 10.30am
- Thursday 16th February at 9am – 10.30am

Enrolments for Year 7 2018 close on Friday 17th February 2017