

NEWSLETTER

No. 1 Date 05/02/2014 Week 2 Term 1

Dear St Thomas Aquinas Families,

Welcome to the 2014 school year!

I truly hope that each family was able to enjoy the holiday break and take advantage of the opportunity to rest, reflect and spend some time free from the normal routines of life.

The first week of school brings with it the promise of new beginnings. The energy and excitement was palpable last Thursday morning as students reconnected with friends and teachers and shared news of their holidays and experiences. The start of a new school year is really important as new relationships and routines are forged. Teachers are also mindful of the need to get to know each student as an individual learner as well as establishing the sense of the class as a team.

Over the holidays much work was carried out in preparing learning spaces and the grounds for the return of the students. Classrooms were extensively cleaned, re-organised, many were re-carpeted and new teaching resources installed. There is no doubt that positive aesthetics and cleanliness of a school makes a difference to student learning and motivation. We are blessed at STA to have both a beautiful school and a unique natural environment for the children to learn in each day.

I would like to take this opportunity to warmly welcome the many new children (and families) in grades Kindergarten to Year 6. We thank you for your trust as we work in partnership to provide a place of learning that strives to nurture the formation of your child – academically, spiritually and socially and where the living Christ is encountered each day through prayer, ritual and community.

We also extend a warm welcome to the following staff who are new to our community or who are returning:

Paul Ryan, new Principal of St Columba's College.

Joanne Toohey, (1T) who returns after 12 months sabbatical with the Australian Catholic University. Joanne also resumes her leadership role of Religious Education Coordinator.

David Conroy, (5C) who joins us from Corpus Christi Primary School Cranebrook.

Beth Carroll, (4C) who is now appointed as a permanent teacher.

Blanche Hortense, (5H) who takes on a full-time teaching position for 2014.

Jeanette Noonan, (1N) returning as a full-time teacher after maternity leave.

Robert Mullen, (PE) returning from leave initially on Fridays.

Deb Orford, (Learning Support) returning from leave.

Lisa Bartels, (K6A - Aspect) Teacher Assistant (Mon-Fri)

Desiree Fasanella, (K6A - Aspect) Teacher Assistant - Fridays

Magi (CEO IT Trainee) working at STA 2 days per week.

We are grateful for the special gifts of the Spirit that each brings to our community.

Our mission and motto

A new command I give you:

Love one another.

As I have loved you, so you
must love one another.

JOHN 13:34



ST THOMAS AQUINAS
NEWS

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Our shared goal is to form resilient and optimistic young people who have a thirst for faith and knowledge and the skills to navigate their progress with a sense of the greater good.

FROM THE PRINCIPAL – cont'd

At our first school assembly on Monday I spoke with the students about approaching this year with optimism and passion, and also being mindful of the importance of effort in both their learning and in their relationships. It is those who persevere with each of these that will achieve their best - understanding that true learning takes perseverance and that mistakes are opportunities for learning rather than a failing.

As well as reinforcing and modelling the need for everyone to make the most of their opportunities whilst at school, we also want to focus on another important aspect of learning and that is to always demonstrate good manners, respect, hospitality and display personal pride and good grooming. As educators and parents we have a common interest in supporting and encouraging these ideals.

Our shared goal is to form resilient and optimistic young people who have a thirst for faith and knowledge and the skills to navigate their own progress with a sense of the greater good.

As Albert Einstein once wrote, *"It is the supreme art of the teacher to awaken (in students) joy in creative expression and knowledge."*

Let us be mindful that joy is one of God's other names and that this is a sign of His presence in our midst.

Until next time,

Sergio Rosato

Sergio Rosato
Principal



Scan with your smartphone or tablet for more information.

www.staspringwood.catholic.edu.au

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

Storm Birds – Professional Learning/Pupil Free Day - Monday 24 February 2014

The Catholic Education Office Diocese of Parramatta and the Good Grief organisation will facilitate a professional learning day for all teaching staff at our school on Monday 24 February on the Stormbirds Program. This will be a pupil free day.

Stormbirds is a small group program that is based on the belief that change, loss and grief are a normal and natural part of life. It provides the opportunity for children and young people to examine how natural disasters, such as bushfires, floods, cyclones and earthquakes have impacted on their lives.

Stormbirds supports young people in understanding and managing the changes they experience as a result of a natural disaster. The program enables them to develop coping, problem-solving and decision-making skills in an atmosphere of like-to-like peer support. Two levels of the program cater for the different needs of younger and older children.

Teachers, professionals and volunteers undertake one day of training to equip them to facilitate the *Stormbirds* four session program. The training enables adults to learn about children's normal and natural reactions to natural disasters, and prepares them to facilitate the safe and creative processes used in the *Stormbirds* program to explore change, feelings and memories, support networks, and looking toward the future with hope. The one day workshop also allows teachers to process their own experience of the disaster and its impact on both their students and their community.

The program will enable all teachers to facilitate this program with their students as part of the Personal Development Curriculum. Counselling support will be made available for individual students who require supplementary processing. The *Stormbirds* program was developed out of the experience of the Victorian Fires and seeks to build resilience and coping strategies in children.

More information can be found at: <https://www.goodgrief.org.au/stormbirds>



School Improvements and Resourcing

During the holidays a series school improvements were carried out or came to completion. These included the following:

- Completion of installation of new high-grade woollen carpet in 17 learning spaces.
- Carpets to the remaining 9 spaces and office professionally cleaned
- 11 short-throw data projectors installed into various classes
- Student chairs professionally washed
- Upholstery in office professionally cleaned
- Windows and glass throughout the school professionally cleaned
- New furniture purchased for various classes and new Library Learning Centre

Relocation of School Library Learning Centre

Due to increased enrolments and the need to accommodate an extra class grouping we have decided to relocate the Library Learning Centre from its previous location to the vacant 'assembly area' space. This relocation is for a one-year trial period. The Library Learning Centre, in its new location, will carry on its important role as both a place of learning and literature.

The large space previously occupied by the library will now host Class 3M.

Our Gratitude for Dedication

We would like to sincerely thank our school maintenance team for their dedication and sheer hard work during the hottest time of the year to make the school shine. Thank you particularly to Helen Hinley, Shelley Slender and Gerry Walsh.

Also, we wish to acknowledge the office staff for the incredible work that they do all year round, but particularly during the holidays and the start of the school year to enable the organisation of the school to proceed so smoothly. Our gratitude to Lee-Anne Brown, Kathryn Wachter and Deborah Lawrence.

ABOUT OUR SCHOOL

Student Awards

Congratulations to the following students, who received Merit Awards at this week's School Assembly. Well done on your efforts everyone - keep up the good work!



Zoe Cini
Isabell Hill

Peter Koulouris
Oliver Neale

Will Peake
Erin Robinson

Lachlan Waters
Sarah Wydmuch



Crunch & Sip

Last year some classes introduced a fruit and drink break at about 10.00am. This year all Kindergarten, Year 1 & Year 2 classes will adopt this initiative.

Crunch & Sip is a set break to eat fruit (or salad/vegetables) and drink water in the classroom. Students 're-fuel' with fruit or vegetables, assisting physical and mental performance and concentration in the classroom.

Grades other than K, 1 & 2 who also schedule this break will inform parents via homework communication

Numeracy & Literacy Interviews

We thank all those who booked online for their children to undertake these interviews with their teachers last week. Students yet to undertake these will do so during school time over the next 4 weeks. These interviews enable teachers to gain valuable information about each child's conceptual understanding in these areas. This data is then used to inform specific future teaching.



Swimming Carnival

This is being held **this Friday, February 7 at Glenbrook Pool for Grades 3-6**. Due to safety reasons, all students must travel to the pool by bus with their class. A reminder that students are required to **return permission notes as soon as possible to attend** and to wear sun safety cover – hat, sunscreen, appropriate clothing. We look forward to fine weather and a great day for students. Families are most welcome to attend the carnival.

**** A number of permission notes did not indicate whether permission was given or not (do/do not). These will come home today to be completed. This aspect of the note is essential. Please note: There will be no hot food available at the pool canteen.**

Staff News

Our thoughts and best wishes are with members of staff who left us at the end of last year – **Colleen Scott** as an official retiree, **Di Hall** who now works with the CEO Vision Team and has gone to St Columba's College, working to support vision-impaired students. **Coley White** who is now the Acting Assistant Principal at Holy Trinity, Granville & **Rebecca Williams** who has taken a full time teaching appointment at another school in the Mountains.

We wish all of them well in their new roles and thank them sincerely for their distinguished service to the students and to our community – God Bless.

Welcome New Students K-6

On Monday our new **Kindergarten** students commenced their first day at 'Big School'. Over the coming days and weeks they will have many new and wonderful experiences both inside their own classrooms and in the playground. They already seem to have taken to their new environment and all the various activities with confidence and enthusiasm. It's been delightful to watch these new students as they embrace school life with a marvellous sense of eagerness and joy.

We also welcome the 42 new students in Years 1-6 and wish them well as they become part of our school family.



Uniform – School Sports Shoes

Thank you to those families who have provided their children with the correct sports shoes, however, there have been a number of children wearing incorrect sports shoes to school. As per our Uniform Policy, sports shoes are to be predominantly white so fluoro or multi coloured shoes are not permitted. We ask parents to insist that their children wear the correct uniform, including sports uniform, at all times. If this is not possible please address a note to the class teacher which will be passed on to the Assistant Principal. If the incorrect uniform, without a note from the parents, is worn a letter from the school will be sent home.

Autumn Fair Craft Group

The St Thomas Aquinas craft group will commence for 2014 on **Friday 14 February**. Over the term the group will be busy making items in preparation for our Autumn Fair in Term 2. They meet **each Friday in Sr Monica's room from 9.05am to 11.05am**. All welcome!



Cuppa & Chat

Parents are invited to our Cuppa & Chat Mornings held each Monday commencing next Monday, 10 February at 9.05am in the hall (NB. change from Tuesday to Mondays for 2014). All welcome!

Springwood School of Music

Small group tuition for students in guitar and keyboard have now commenced for 2014. Lessons are conducted at the school throughout the year during school terms. All enrolment enquiries for these lessons can be made by contacting the Springwood School of Music on 4751 3845 after 2pm.

Love one another

School Fees for 2014

The statements for the Term 1 Fees are due to go out on Friday 7 February. The Term 1 Fees are due on 7 March 2014.

If a family wishes to enter a payment arrangement for 2014 which differs from the flexible payment plans on offer via the Catholic Education Office, they need to contact me to make a formal arrangement. All payments done via instalments i.e. when full fees are not paid by the due date, but paid off throughout the year, can only be recognised by entering into a formal arrangement agreement. If the fees are not received by the due date, reminder letters will be issued and I will be contacting families to follow up late payments.

Any families who are genuinely experiencing hardship can contact the Principal to discuss their situation.

Deborah Lawrence, School Finance Secretary

After-School Drama Classes for Years 4 & 5

Let's Play! Blue Mountains Drama provides a creative and joyful place where children can build confidence, celebrate spontaneity and revel in their sense of play. Drama is a wonderful way for all children to develop their communication skills and physical connection. The classes are strongly based in improvisation and storytelling and at least once a year we put together a show for friends and families. Classes will be held each Wednesday at the school from 3.45pm-4.45pm in the hall. Supervision will be provided from 3.20pm so that children can have an afternoon snack before class. Cost is \$108 for 9 weeks (sibling discount available). All bookings and enquiries to Georgia Adamson on 0419 287 478 or georgia.adamson@netspace.net.au

Meet the Teacher

All parents will have an opportunity to meet the teacher on Monday 17 or Tuesday 18 February. Booking for these meetings will be done online. There will be a note sent home early next week.

The New Working With Children Check

The Office for Children's Guardian will be phasing in a *New Working with Children Check* for volunteers and students. This new process will immediately affect those wishing to newly register this year in our school as a volunteer and those who registered under the previous system in 2012.

The new process is free of charge for volunteers and lasts 5 years. All wishing to assist in any capacity at school e.g. groups, excursions, reading tutors etc need to register by accessing the following link:

<http://www.kids.nsw.gov.au/Working-with-children/New-Working-With-Children-Check/Volunteers-and-students>

Volunteers who are also required to complete the Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta online module via the following link: <http://ceo-web.parra.catholic.edu.au/asp/volunteerscpmodule/index.asp>

DIARY DATES

2014 TERM 1 Week 3	Monday 10 February	9.05am Cuppa & Chat commences for 2014 – Please note change of day 12.30pm Assembly – Swimming Awards 3.40pm Leadership Meeting
	11	3.40pm Staff Meeting
	12	8.30am Staff Briefing
	13	8.30am Staff Prayer Greg Whitby, Executive Director of Schools, CEDP, visiting
	14	
Week 4	Monday 17 February	9.05am Cuppa & Chat 12.30pm Assembly 3.00pm-8.00pm Meet the Teacher Meetings
	18	3.45pm-6.30pm Meet the Teacher Meetings
	19	12.00pm Opening School Mass in Parish Church
	20	8.30am Staff Prayer
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COMMUNITY NEWS

Springwood (Blue Mountains) Netball Club Registration Days 2014: Wednesday 5 February from 6.00pm-8.00pm at St Thomas Aquinas School, Hawkesbury Road Springwood. New club members are required to provide proof of age. Please note – there is no resource levy. Payment by cash or cheque only, no EFTPOS facilities available. **Fees:** Senior (18+) \$185, Junior (11-17) \$160, Netta (8-10) \$135, Net Set Go \$55, Non-player \$45. \$10 discount applies to total registration for family of 3 or more. **Enquiries:** Tracey Arnold (President) 0417 463 739, Gary Toft (Registrar) 0411 416 672 or visit the website: www.springwoodbluemountainsnetball.com.au

St Thomas Aquinas Playgroup: Join us on **Thursdays during the school term from 9.15am to 11.15am in the Parish Office.** All welcome with children aged 0-6years. A gold coin donation helps towards costs. For any further information please phone Natalie on 0403 267 146.

Springwood-Winnalee District Girl Guides: New members are invited to join our units for 2014. We have vacancies in our Explorer Pre Junior Guides for girls 5 – 7, Quest Junior Guides 7 – 10 and Adventure Guides 10 -14 and Odyssey Rangers Senior Guides. If you would like to come along and try Guides please contact our District Leader, Dianne Strahan on 0414 406 239 or Email: dianne_strahan@hotmail.com and check us out on www.swgirlguides.org and our state web site <http://girlguides-nswact.org.au>

Sent Home Recently:

- Swimming Carnival Permission note – Students in Years 3-6 only
- Diocesan Team Sports Trials note to Years 5 & 6
- After School Drama Classes note to Years 4 & 5
- Kindergarten Information note
- Year 1 Information note (*lilac*)

love one another

