



NEWSLETTER

No. 1 Date: 15/02/2019 Week 3 Term 1

Dear St Thomas Aquinas Families,

Welcome to the 2019 school year!

I truly hope that each family was able to enjoy the Christmas holiday period and take advantage of the chance to rest and spend some precious time with family away from the normal routines of life.

The first days of the new school year brings the promise of new beginnings. The energy, joy and enthusiasm around the school during the last fortnight has been palpable as students reconnect with friends and their new teachers sharing news of their holidays and various experiences. The start of the school year is really important as new relationships are forged and important class routines are established. All teachers are 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 of learners.

Over the holidays work was carried out in preparing learning spaces and the grounds for the return of the students and staff. Classrooms were extensively cleaned including carpets, paths and windows. Mowing of our extensive green areas was undertaken and a number of gardens were re-mulched. It is also pleasing to see the renovations to our administration building now virtually completed, barring the addition of some new furnishings. There is no doubt that a beautiful, ordered and clean environment makes a difference to student learning and motivation. We are blessed at STA to have both a beautiful school in such a unique natural setting for the students in which to learn each day.

I would like to take this opportunity to warmly welcome the many new children and their families who have joined our school community this year. 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, emotionally and socially. This partnership to nurture our young is steeped in the teachings and example of Christ exemplified by His compassion, love and forgiveness.

Bishop Vincent echoes this clarion call to seek those at the fringes. The Kingdom of God belongs to these, making them not simply people we are called to serve - but people who can reveal God to us. Our most powerful lessons can come from the fringes—where Jesus is already hanging out.



I wish to extend a warm welcome to our new Assistant Principal, Genevieve Smith. Genevieve brings many Gifts of the Spirit to our community and we are grateful for her gift of leadership, passion for learning and obvious love for students.

At our first school assembly I encouraged the students to embark on the year ahead with optimism and passion, mindful of the importance of effort in both their learning and relationships. It is through perseverance with each of these that brings them to the understanding that EVERYONE CAN LEARN and that 'mistakes' are often opportunities for further growth.

Our call is to create a school culture where the term 'Growth Mindset' is not simply a cliché but a lived experience. As parents, teachers and students we all have a part to play in helping to encourage and coach the notion that learning is a constant experience of curiosity, expansion, struggle, repetition, correction, mastery and transformation - not a natural endowment.

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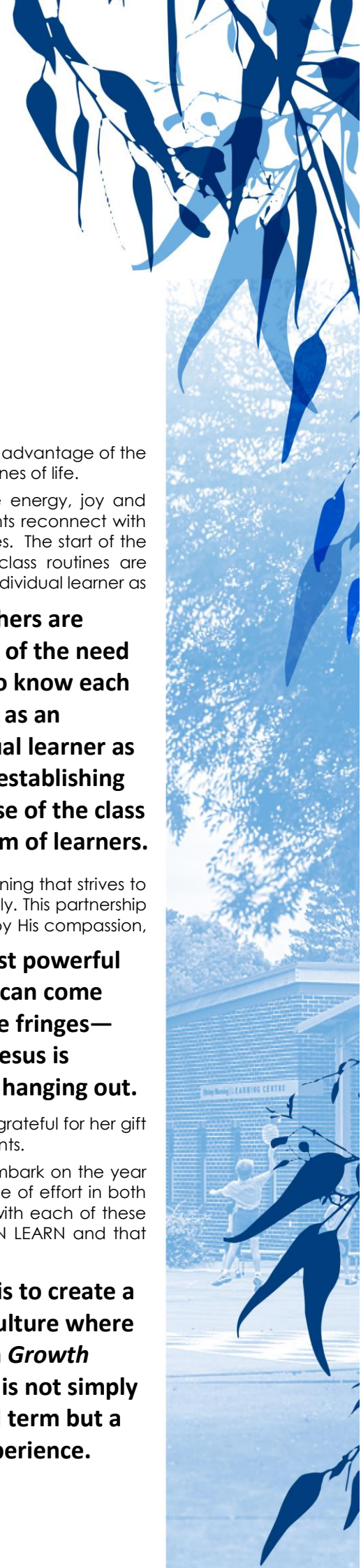
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www.stthomas.parra.catholic.edu.au | Parish Priest: Father Paul Slyney

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FROM THE PRINCIPAL – cont'd

ALL learning requires perseverance within relationships. Christ calls us to develop our relationships with others each day by showing respect through:

- **Treating others the way you want to be treated**
- **Appreciating others for who they are (made in the likeness of God)**
- **Using manners & courtesy.**

Wishing all a blessed year ahead.

Until next time,

Sergio Rosato

Sergio Rosato
Principal

Opening School Mass – Thursday 28 February at 12.00pm

All families are invited to join our STA community for our Opening School Mass on **Thursday 28 February at 12.00pm** in our **Parish Church**. We hope that you will be able to be part of this important celebration for the commencement of our 2019 school year. Please note, **all students should wear school uniform (not sport) on this day.**

Mathematical Assessment Interviews

We thank all those who booked online recently for your children to undertake these interviews with their teachers. All teachers are currently undertaking MAIs with remaining students during school time. These interviews enable teachers to gain valuable information about each child's conceptual understanding in Mathematics. This data is then used to inform teaching in this area.

Student Guidelines for the Responsible Use of ICT

As we commence the school year Stage 2 and Stage 3 students will be receiving instructions on the responsible use of technology including Do's and Don'ts. All students in Grades 3-6 will receive an agreement to sign by both students and parents to say that they agree with these guidelines and rules to keep them safe and responsible whilst online. These Guidelines provide us with a valuable opportunity as teachers and parents to discuss cyber safety and how to be responsible and ethical online.

What can I do as a parent? Some ways you can help your child as a parent include:

- Stay INVOLVED and MONITOR your child's use of technology.
- Talk to your child to THINK before they put anything online and be respectful of others. Information posted online can be difficult or impossible to remove. An inappropriate image or comment posted today may have a long-term impact on their reputation.
- Remind children to be careful when making new friends online. They should NEVER arrange to meet an online friend unless a trusted adult is with them.
- REPORT any cyberbullying or inappropriate content to a parent.

More information for children and parents can be obtained at: esafety.gov.au

National Day Against Bullying and Violence

Our school will once again be participating in this national day of focus as we have for the past four years. This year the NDAB is on **Friday 15 March, 2019**. All schools across Australia are encouraged to take part in what will be the ninth National Day of Action against Bullying and Violence (NDA).

Our school is registered for this event and will gain access to valuable teaching resources that can be located through the Bully No Way Website - <https://bullynoway.gov.au>. The website also has excellent resources to inform and assist parents in supporting their children, particularly with helpful strategies and appropriate language when speaking to children about this issue. Official NDA schools have access to a range of new and thought-provoking classroom resources and materials to make the day a great success.

The theme for the 2019 NDA is Bullying. No Way! Take action every day.

The NDA gives schools the chance to take action and empower young people to be part of the solution when addressing bullying in their school community and also in other contexts. It provides an opportunity for all of us to focus on bullying and the changes we can make to create safer communities for everyone that are based on respectful relationships.

Meet the Teacher

All parents/carers have an opportunity to meet with your child's teacher on **Monday 18 & 19 February for Grades 1-6**. **Kindergarten Meet the Teacher** will take place on **Monday 25 February and Monday 4 March**. Booking for these meetings will be done online. Go to <http://www.schoolinterviews.com.au>. Enter the **Event Code: 6r4me** and follow the prompts. A letter was sent home this week for Grades 1-6 meetings which included a parent/carer questionnaire which needs to be returned to the class teacher prior to the meeting. The questionnaire provides a structure to this initial parent-teacher discussion about your child's learning needs and to share insights and information relating to your child. **Bookings close 6pm on Sunday 17 February.**

School Fees

The **First Instalment invoices** are due to be issued on 18 February. **Fees will be due on or before 20 March**. Families will be offered the Flexible Payment Plan again this year. Please complete forms and return them to the Catholic Education Office at your earliest convenience. Alternatively, if you wish to put in an arrangement outside of the Flexible Payment Plan, you will need to contact me on 4723 3800.

Please be advised that unless alternative arrangements have been made regarding the payment of your school fee account it will be assumed that full payment will be made by the due date. Outstanding accounts will be forwarded to the Catholic Education Office for collection. If you are having difficulties with the payment of your school fees, you are encouraged to contact the school office to arrange an appointment with either myself or the Principal to discuss your options.

Band fees: have been added to the school fees for all families of band students. A note has been sent home with students this week regarding instrument collection and arrangements. **Cheree Brown, School Finance Secretary**

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2019 School Swimming Carnival

Our 2019 Swimming Carnival was held last Friday, 8 February, at Lawson Pool. The Carnival was a wonderful day of community and fun. We were blessed with wonderful weather and great support from parents and families making the day a really enjoyable occasion. We are most grateful to our carnival organisers, James Costigan and Karen Bousfield ably assisted by Michelle Nightingale and Deb Breytenbach. Our carnival is reliant as always on the volunteer spirit of parents and family members who carried out many important tasks on the day such as marshalling, starters, timekeepers and recorders. We thank all who so generously supported our carnival this year. **Swimming Awards were presented at today's assembly.**

Our 2019 School Swimming Champions:

Boys

Senior Champion: Mavrick Konstantinoff
Senior Runner Up: Harry Ghata
11 Years Champion: Sam Moore
11 Years Runner Up: Edward Carr & Kayden Jeffers (equal)
Junior Champion: Lachlan McAlpine
Junior Runner Up: William Ghata

Girls

Montana Barry
Makayla Mercieca
Ruby Roberts
Lucy Brown
Ella Holdsworth
Sophia Cantwell

School Attendance

Consistent attendance is vital in maintaining continuity in a child's education. If a child has to be absent from school due to sickness or pressing family circumstances, parents/carers are required to inform the school and state the reason for your child's absence. Families should send a note to the school on the child's return to school from leave. The teacher then records this note in the electronic roll.

The class roll is a legal register of student attendance for the year. If your child is unwell for a number of days (2 or more) please notify the school by phone or email to inform of this situation. The student school attendance legislation permits Principals to grant leave for short periods relating to family travel. Families are required to make requests for such leave by writing to the Principal.

It is worth recognising that if a child is absent from school for just 8 days each term for the extent of their 7 years of Primary school they would have missed an ENTIRE YEAR of school! The Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta sets student attendance goals for all schools in the Diocese. This goal encourages each school to meet a 90% student attendance threshold for the year.

Our school attendance rates per grade and for the school in 2018 are displayed in the adjacent table.

Kindergarten	88.14%
Year 1	91.25%
Year 2	90.00%
Year 3	91.03%
Year 4	92.77%
Year 5	96.55%
Year 6	84.62%
School Attendance	90.98%

Sickness and Absenteeism

Whilst it is important for students to be at school consistently families should use common sense in not sending students to school if they are feeling unwell or infectious where cross infection is a risk.

Reading Recovery & Numeracy Intervention at STA

This year our school will be training a second teacher, Kylie Williamson, through CEDP. Reading Recovery is designed as an intensive intervention program to assist specifically identified vulnerable students in reading. The training also equips classroom teachers to implement high yield literacy strategies in their own classrooms with their own students. The school currently has two teachers working in the area of Reading Recovery (Kylie Williamson and Keryne Rosato) as well as a Numeracy intervention teacher (Kathryn Cefai).

School Band

Catholic Education Diocese of Parramatta, through its creative arts initiative called *Captivate*, resources our school with weekly tuition in wind, brass, percussion and bass guitar. This small group tuition program enables the school to form two band ensembles – 'beginners' band and a more proficient band. There are approximately 100 students currently enrolled in the program. This year we will have 5 tutors from CEDP working with students over 3 days (Wednesday-Friday). If you are interested in enrolling your child for the band program please contact the school. The band program commenced this week.

Music Lessons

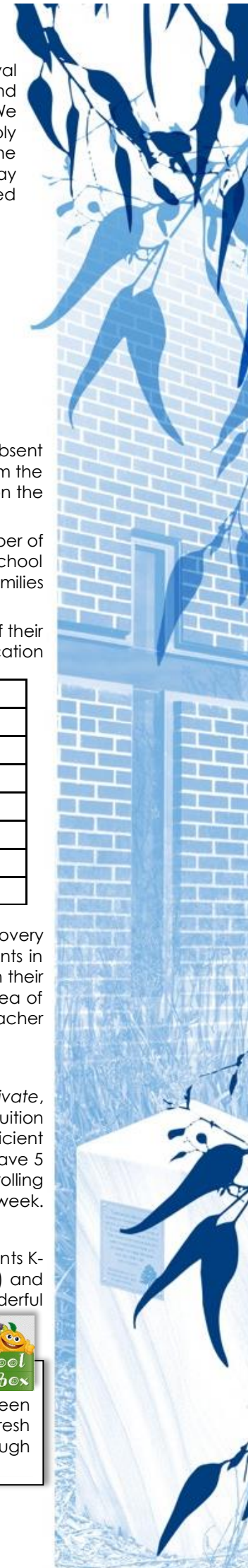
The Band program through *Captivate* is separate to the school music program taught to all students K-6 by our specialist music teacher, Leigha Wills. Mrs Wills also coordinates our Junior (Year 2 & 3) and Senior Choirs (Year 4-6). Students are encouraged to join these choirs which provides a wonderful opportunity for students to engage in choral singing and performance.

School Dental Program – Week 8

The Dental Clinic, provided by Future Care Mobile Dental Services, will visit STA from **18-22 March (Week 8 of Term 1)**. A note was sent home to all families last Monday. Parents who wish to register their child to visit the dental clinic are reminded that **blue slips are now due** to be returned so your child can receive an enrolment form. Copies of the note are available at the office.

My School Lunch Box

Our school does not have a canteen however families can order healthy, fresh lunches in a convenient way online through <http://www.myschoollunchbox.com.au>



Clothing Pool - Helper Wanted

Our Clothing Pool currently operates on Tuesday and Friday mornings from 9.00-9.30am and on Wednesday afternoons from 3.00-3.30pm thanks to the generosity of two parent volunteers. **We are seeking another volunteer helper for the Friday morning timeslot of 9.00-9.30am.** If you are able to assist at this time your help would be very much appreciated. Operating the Clothing Pool involves assisting parents with their selections, dealing with clothing donations and tidying and arranging the stock in the Clothing Pool cupboard ready for sale. All sales are dealt with at the Office.

If you would like to help on Fridays or on another day for half an hour please contact the **school Office on 4723 3800**. If you are not able to help on a regular basis perhaps you may consider being on a back-up list to relieve when others are not available. If so, please contact the Office. We thank you for your consideration.

St Columba's Catholic College – Year 7 2020 Information Evening

Wednesday 27 February, 2019. Bookings not required. Please register at the College Library upon arrival.

Session 1: 3.15pm	Register for tour	Session 2: 5.15pm	Register for tour
3.30pm	Tour of the facilities	5.30pm	Tour of the facilities
4.30-5.00pm	Address by the Principal	6.30-7.00pm	Address by the Principal

- Tours will begin at 3.30 and 5.30pm *sharp* to enable visitors to view all of the College facilities.
- Prospectus and enrolment application forms will be available on the night.

Enquiries: Sandra O'Brien, Enrolment Secretary - **Phone 4754 8907**

PARISH NEWS

Sacramental Program 2019

The **Parish Reconciliation Program Information Meeting** will be held on **Tuesday 19 February at 7.00pm in the Church**. The Reconciliation Program is open to **students from Year 3 onwards** and is supported through the Religious Education Program at school.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation will be held on the evening of **Tuesday 2 April**. Children wishing to make their First Holy Communion this year **MUST** complete their Sacrament of Reconciliation first. This meeting is compulsory if your family would like to participate in the Sacramental programs this year. For more information phone the **Parish Office on 4754 1052**.

Public Forum (Plenary) – Sunday 24 February, 2.00-3.45pm

What is your experience of the Catholic church today? This public plenary is being conducted by Catholic Parishes in the Blue Mountains to gather thoughts and opinions on our experiences of the Australian Catholic Church today. The process will involve reflection, small group sharing, whole group plenary and afternoon tea. **On Sunday 24 February, 2019 from 2.00-3.45pm at Mavis Wood Hall, Mid Mountains Centre, 3-7 New Street Lawson.** For more information go to www.plenarycouncil.catholic.org.au/ All welcome!

DIARY DATES

2019	Monday 18 February	3.30pm-8.00pm Meet-the-Teacher Grades 1-6
	19	Nepean Zone Swimming Carnival – selected students 3.30pm-6.00pm Meet-the-Teacher Grades 1-6 7.00pm Parish Reconciliation Program Meeting in STA Church
TERM 1	20	8.30am Staff Briefing 9.20am Parish Mass – Years 1 & 2 attending
	21	8.30am Staff Prayer 10.00am-2.00pm Fiat Lifted Live at Rooty Hill RSL – selected students
Week 4	22	12.35pm Assembly
	Monday 25 February	3.40pm Leadership Meeting
Week 5	26	3.40pm Staff Meeting
	27	7.00pm St Columba's Year 7 2020 Information Evening
	28	12.00pm Opening School Mass & SRC Induction Ceremony in Church
	29	12.35pm Assembly

COMMUNITY NOTICES

Rainbow Pre-school – Vacancies: Located at 53 Singles Ridge Road, Winmalee, Rainbow Pre-school currently has vacancies for 2019. WE OFFER TOP QUALITY PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION IN A NATURAL BUSHLAND SETTING. Opening hours: 8:00 m – 4:00pm, Monday to Friday. **Phone: (02) 4754 4910.** Visit www.rainbowpreschoolwinmalee.com or our Facebook page: Rainbow Pre-school Winmalee.

Springwood Winmalee Girl Guides Come and Try Event: On **Sunday 24 February from 10am – 12pm** at the **Girl Guide Hall, 233-243 Singles Ridge Road, Yellow Rock**. For girls aged 5-17 years. **Cost: Gold coin donation.** Bring a water bottle and hat. Guides wear uniform. Make new friends, learn new skills whilst having fun. **Contact Dianne Strahan**, District Manager, on **0414 406 239** or swdistrictmanager@gmail.com for more information and to confirm attendance.

Sent Home Recently: • Year 1 Information Note (green) • Weekly Activities Schedule (orange) • Library Day Correction Notes to Year 2, 4W & 5N • School Dental Program Note (blue) • Years 1-6 Meet the Teacher Note (pink) • Parish Reconciliation Program Note for Year 3 (lemon) • Lifted Live Jnr Note – selected students • Band Clarinet Note • Band Instrument Agreement • Hand, Foot & Mouth Alert (pink/white)

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