

NEWSLETTER

Week 10 Term 4 – 06/12/2021

Farewell and Welcome

At the end of this year we say farewell to the following STA staff members and sincerely thank them for their tremendous contributions to our school community. We wish them every blessing and success in their future endeavours.

As recently announced, **Mrs Elizabeth Bamford** and **Mrs Jennifer Robson** will be retiring at the end of the year after 40 years of teaching. Mrs Bamford and Mrs Robson are outstanding and passionate educators who have made significant contributions to our school community and the Diocese of Parramatta. They have all been a part of a team who have continued to build a faith and learning community at St Thomas Aquinas. Their professionalism and compassionate work has been highly valued.

Mr David Conroy has announced that, after 8 years teaching at St Thomas Aquinas, he will continue teaching in a position that he has taken up at Bethany Primary School. **Mrs Vicki McGrath** will continue her teaching in a new school community in 2022. We wish her all the very best.

We thank and farewell **Mrs Lee-Anne Brown**, who has worked at STA for many years. In her role in the Administration Office Mrs Brown has supported numerous students, staff and parents. We have been blessed to have had Mrs Brown as part of the St Thomas Aquinas community and wish her every happiness.

To those who are leaving we pray:

*May the road rise up to meet you.
May the wind be always at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face;
the rains fall soft upon your fields and until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of His hand*

In 2022 we welcome some new members to our school community:

Miss Chelsea Galea (class teacher), **Mr Paddy Smith** (class teacher), **Mrs Heidi Weilguny** (class teacher) and **Mrs Brooke Hudson** and **Mrs Megan Ferguson** who will be joining our Diversity team. We look forward to these dedicated educators joining our school community in 2022.

We welcome back **Mrs Sarah Dignam** who is returning from maternity leave.

Next STAFF DEVELOPMENT DAY (Pupil Free)

Wednesday 15 December, 2021

Students last day will be Tuesday 14 December.

Christmas Concert

Our Christmas Concert this year will tell the story of Wombat Divine by Mem Fox. It will be a combination of live storytelling and video segments. The Concert will be Tuesday 7th December, 7pm via zoom.

Semester 2 Reports

The students' Semester 2 reports will be available on the Compass Parental Portal on Tuesday 7 December at midday. In response to changes to the learning and teaching environment during COVID-19, all schools have needed to adjust their assessment and reporting processes. The Semester report will look different, while complying with government requirements. This 2021 second semester report recognises and reflects three key areas: English, Mathematics and Religious Education. The 2022 first semester report will return to documenting progress in all Key Learning Areas.

Executive Director's Summer Reading Challenge

The Executive Director's Reading Challenge is now open. Students can read anything they like to enter, whether it's a comic, play, a piece of poetry, book, e-book or animated novel. Students are encouraged to read as many books as they can and explain why they love them. There are two \$500 JB Hi-Fi vouchers to be won or one of thirty gift vouchers valued at \$30 each.



For more information and to enter the challenge visit [Director's Reading Challenge](#)

Change of School for 2022

To estimate enrolments for 2022, it would be appreciated if the school could be notified **in writing** of any children who may be leaving St Thomas Aquinas at the end of the year from grades other than Year 6 as soon as possible. Thank you.

2022 Mathematical Assessment Interviews

In 2022 we have been granted permission to commence the year with an additional Staff Development Day on Monday 31 January 2022, so that teachers can administer the Mathematical Assessment Interview (MAI) to our students. The Mathematical Assessment Interviews enable teachers to tailor their mathematics teaching program to effectively meet the needs of their students. Being able to perform the assessment at this earlier time will mean that teachers will have valuable information about each child's learning in mathematics from the very beginning of the year. To have a large number of assessments completed before the children formally return to school will enable teachers to perform the remaining assessments in a timely fashion once the term commences and with the least disruption to class learning time.

Parents will be asked to use the online booking system that we have previously used for parent teacher interviews to make an appointment for your children on either Friday 28 January 2022 or Monday 31 January 2022. Please note that there are additional days for 2022 Kindergarten students to have an interview. Information about bookings for these sessions was given to families at our recent Kinder Orientation.

This means that **school will resume for Years 1 - 6 on Tuesday 1 February 2022 and on Thursday 3 February for Kindergarten.**

Drink Bottles

A reminder that all children are strongly encouraged to bring their own labelled drink bottle to school each day. The children are able to refill their bottles from our filling stations.

Air Filters

We have just received a delivery of Air Filters for our classrooms to improve the air quality in each of our rooms. These will be installed across the school. As part of our COVID Safety Plan, class windows and doors are left open throughout the day and at recess and lunch times, while the children are out of the rooms, air conditioners are used with the windows and doors open to bring fresh air into the rooms

Building Projects

Acoustic Pinboards

This year we have been fortunate to have all our learning spaces upgraded with acoustic pinboards installed. The new acoustic pinboards that are floor to ceiling not only allow resources and work to be more accessible to the students throughout the day but also reduce the noise level.

Covered Open Learning Space

Outside our Year 1 and Year 2 learning spaces we have a new undercover area, with artificial grass and hard cover roof to allow the students to learn and play outside their classroom. The roof will be installed over the next few weeks, ready for 2022.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

2021 TERM 4	Week 10	Tuesday 7 December	Zoom Christmas Concert 7:00pm
		Friday 10 December	Zoom Awards Ceremonies (details to come)
	Week 11	Monday 13 December	Meet the Teacher for 2022 Year 6 Graduation Liturgy
		Tuesday 14 December	Year 6 Picnic Day Last Day of Term 4 for students
		Wednesday 15 December	STAFF DEVELOPMENT DAY (Pupil Free Day)
--- CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS ---			
2022 TERM 1	Week 1	Friday 28 January	STAFF ONLY COMMENCE – No Classes Mathematical Assessment Interviews (MAI) Years K-6
	Week 2	Monday 31 January	No Classes Mathematical Assessment Interviews (MAI) Years K-6
		Tuesday 1 February	Years 1-6 Students Commence for Term 1 Maths Assessment Interviews (MAI) for Kindergarten
		Thursday 3 February	Kindergarten Commence Term 1 (Full Days)

COMMUNITY NOTICES

Blue Mountains Epiphany Pilgrimage + Fiesta 2022

Celebrate the Christmas season with a two-day pilgrimage and fiesta! Choose from a classic pilgrimage experience or family adventure pilgrimage on Sunday January 2, then join the festivities at St Finbars Church, Glenbrook including Mass, a festive meal, jumping castle and children’s movie night as well as praise, worship and Adoration. Stay overnight at Finbars, then continue the celebrations on Monday January 3 with a morning pilgrimage and Mass in the bush. For more information and to register visit www.epiphanypilgrimage.org.



Wishing you all a safe & peace filled Christmas and holidays!

