To the School Community of St Thomas the Apostle

The year has really started very well as we now come to the end of week 2. There have been a couple of highlights for me as I settle into St Thomas. Firstly, I was so impressed with the respect, reverence and prayerfulness the students showed at Monday Morning Prayer in the church. They truly enter into the prayer celebration and it is such a beautiful and peaceful way to start the week. Secondly, at the end of the week at the Awards Assembly, the children were once again very respectful of the occasion and there was a genuine sense of celebration for the students receiving the awards. It is very gratifying to see this coming from the students.

Tuesday night’s Parent Information Night and Welcome barbeque was a great celebration for our school community. I would on your behalf, like to thank the teachers and members of the Community Council for their efforts on the night. I recall feeling quite daunted as a classroom teacher at the prospect of presenting in front of adults. I know for professionals who train to spend most days speaking to young children, this can be a confronting task, but from all reports, our wonderful teachers did it well. Our tireless workers from the Community Council also did a great job of supplying a tasty sausage sizzle barbeque. I spoke to some of our new parents during the evening and they were so delighted to see and feel how welcoming a community, the parents and staff of St Thomas’ are.

Assembly on Friday

You may have noticed that the weather forecast for Friday is looking very hot! For this reason, we will be having our presentation of Awards first thing in the morning on the stage, rather than at 1:45. You can see further on in the newsletter who our recipients will be on Friday morning.

Community Council Meeting

The next meeting of the School Community Council will be held on Monday February 20th at 6:30 pm. The Council is a vibrant cohesive group of parents who welcome the input of all parents and carers at St Thomas’. Please consider contacting Mr Paul Compton, the Chair of the SCC or any of the SCC members with any ideas or concerns you may have, or alternatively, consider attending this meeting and lending your support (SCC email address).

Our School Community Members are: Paul Compton, Carl Jenkins, Lachlan Cotter, Katherine Hellwig, Kylie Ordanic, Michelle Fraser. The school representative is Rachel Kelly.

Reminders for the week

Friday 10 February
Assembly 9.00am
Parish Mass 9.30am (Yr 3/4 attending)

Saturday 11 February
Sacramental Enrolments Mass 6pm

Sunday 12 February
Sacramental Enrolments Mass 8.30am &10am

Monday 13 February
Monday Prayer (3/4B) 9.00am

Wednesday 15 February
Yr 5/6 Camp (leave 8.00am)

Thursday 16 February
Yr 5/6 Camp

Friday 17 February
Assembly (Yr 6 Leadership) 1.45pm
Yr 5/6 Camp (return 3.30pm)

Notes sent home this week

Sacramental Enrolment Forms
(see following link to school website)
Email Etiquette

Communication via email is an excellent way for parents and teachers to correspond, however it is essential that appropriate email etiquette is observed by all users. The correct use of email enables parents and teachers to give and receive information, arrange appointment times and also resolve small issues quickly. When used in this way it is an effective communication tool between school and home.

Unfortunately, on occasions, the use of email as a form of communication between home and school has been used in a negative manner. Emailing is not an avenue for venting anger or at its worst, abusing teachers. While thankfully, this is not a common occurrence, the effect it has on teachers receiving these emails can be profound.

If you as a parent or carer are concerned or upset about a matter, it is preferable to speak to the teacher face to face. An email to a teacher to organise a meeting time or phone call produces a far better outcome in these sometimes tense situations. Good and effective communication between home and school is of paramount importance to us at St Thomas’. We embrace email as an effective communication tool and we aim to ensure that we all use it in a courteous and respectful way.

Please be aware that teachers are not required to respond to emails at night time or on the weekend. You can however, always expect a response within 2 days.

Setting up for a Great Year

Whilst I was away on holidays over Christmas, I came upon an excellent ‘Back to school’ article in a wellness magazine (The House of Wellness). I thought at the time that there were some excellent tips that I wanted to share with parents at my new school. Over the next few weeks, I will share the best of them.

1. GET INVOLVED – Keen to improve your child’s social skills and academic results? Several studies show that by getting involved with the school – be it the Community Council or helping out at the school fete – you can not only help your child do that, but you’ll also reduce the risk of them engaging in disruptive behaviour and absenteeism.

2. LOOK AT THEIR DIET- Lunch box contents sure have changed since we were kids, but be sure to pay close attention to how your kids are eating at home, too. Experts recommend eating a diet high in omega-3 fatty acids for optimum brain function, and drinking plenty of water to increase thinking ability.

3. READ TO YOUR KIDS - Bedtime stories are not only a relaxing way to end the day, but research from the Melbourne Institute of Applied Economic and Social Research shows that Kindy kids who are read to nightly are soon almost a year ahead in ability compared, to those who aren’t read to. (This goes for all children in primary school – bedtime stories are brilliant).

There will be more tips next week. I hope you find them as useful as I did.

Enjoy the rest of the week and stay cool! (Especially on Friday and Saturday)

May God bless you and your families.

Ursula Jamieson
Principal

Reminders:

- Assembly Fri 10 Feb 9.00am
- Sacramental Enrolments Weekend Masses 11 & 12 Feb
- Comp Good Times Yr 5/6 Camp Wed 15 Feb - 8.00am Fri 17 Feb - 3.30pm
RE Week 2 - Follow Jesus’ Way

What a beautiful Prayer Celebration we experienced on Monday! Thank you 5/6G for the wonderful example you set with your reverence and preparation. I loved that those speaking did so with clarity and confidence. It takes courage to speak in front of others but speaking about our faith is an important part of what we do here at St Thomas the Apostle.

The theme of the Gospel reading was salt and light. To be salt of the earth and light of the world means to be the one who puts their hand up and steps forward to speak for, work for and act for those who are the least in this world. We may not be asked to perform extraordinary feats, but all disciples of Jesus are called upon to do the ordinary things of life in an extraordinary way. I know that the community of St Thomas the Apostle does this in so many ways. I was thrilled to see the number of students interested in our Mini Vinnies Team. Just a reminder that permission notes for this are due back on Friday 10 February (see page 13). Please don’t hesitate to come and see me if you have any questions.

A reminder that this week is enrolment weekend for all sacraments. Please make sure you attend either Mass this weekend (Saturday 6pm, Sunday 8.30am or 10.00am) to return your form and pay the registration fee. Enrolment forms are available on the School Website. Our lovely staff will be there to help you out.

May God bless you as you travel through your week. I hope you can have some enjoyable family time in a cool location this weekend!

Kind regards
Penny Vanzol (REC)

Welcome to the new school year and the first offering of P.A.L.S. These letters have special meaning- Passionate About Literacy at St Thomas! What does ‘literacy’ mean? A dictionary definition, ‘the state of being literate’, isn’t particularly helpful! In a nutshell, a literate person can read and write and has some formal education. At St Thomas the Apostle, we want more for our children than to be literate. With your support, we want to be able to develop a passion for reading and skills that will encourage life-long learning. As part of PALS in each newsletter, we hope to assist you in nurturing this passion.

If you would like to be part of our support programmes at school, please let Cathy Duffy know via phone, school email or in person. We have Bounce into Books on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. The sessions commence at 9.00am and run for about 20 minutes. You can assist for one or more sessions. We also have the MULTILIT programme for older students. Again, the sessions run for approximately 20 minutes per student and times for implementation can be flexible. Training is provided for both programmes.

Let’s make 2017 a year for becoming PALS!

Best Wishes
The Learning Support Team
PARTNERS

This year we will continue with articles from the redesigned ‘parenting*ideas’ website. We will hopefully add some video resources that are in the pipeline.

This week’s article, ‘Moving beyond asking, “What did you do at school?”’ discusses how to get beyond the mundane and into real discussions about your children’s time at school. It can be found at the end of this Newsletter (see pages 7-8) and is well worth the ten minute read.

Kind Regards
Mark Bazzana

Library News

Just a reminder that students from K-2 need to have a Library bag to be able to borrow books.

Library days:
Yr K-2 - Tuesdays
Yr 3-6 - Wednesdays.

Best wishes,
Hayley Douglas

Canteen News

A warm welcome to the Hospitality Team of 2017
Ashlee Ordanik
Rachel Jacobs
Anisa Wilson
Ariana Exharos
Sarah Tyhuis
Bella Hawke
Nicole Johnson

The Hospitality Team had the opportunity to come in for their Health and Safety induction last week and were extremely excited and eager to be here.

As of this week, their smiling faces will be here to help serve you.

I know our customers will be patient as the team learn the ropes and will be grateful for the assistance, as am I.

This week our Healthier Choices award will begin. Watch this space next week, YOU MAY BE THE WINNER!

Paula Papandrea
Canteen Manager
0402 366 755

Merit Awards

2017
Week 2

Congratulations to these students who will receive Merit Awards at assembly on Friday 10 February at 9.00am

Jared Earl
Daniel Glynn
Olivia Marcelja
Isaac Johnson
Maily Ngo
Lily Darcy
Ethan Laughton
Curtis Britten
Jade Tesolin
Liam Kneeshaw
Sophie Cameron
Ethan Ryan
Caity Barter
Lachlan Byfield
Kailah Longani
Neo Krutsky-Martin
Joey Lipscombe
Alana Horsfall
Bella Hawke
James Mitchell
Ethan Arranz
Harry Angus
Erin Burt
Josh Martin
Leo Carberry

GUITAR TUITION

Is your child interested in learning guitar? Guitar tuition is available here at St Thomas the Apostle Primary School. Please fill in the expression of interest form below and I will contact you as soon as possible in regards to lessons. You can email this information to denhanrahanmusic@gmail.com.

Den HANRAHAN
Guitar Tutor

My son/daughter

______________________________
Parent name

______________________________
in class

Parent contact number
### Swimming Carnival

Permission forms for the carnival are due back by Friday 10 February. Please ensure your child returns the permission form and, where relevant, the race nomination form (see pages 9-12). We are looking for parent helpers on the day. If you are able to assist or are eager to be in the pool as a guide for students in the 25m races, please let me know your availability via email. We are looking forward to another great carnival!

### Volunteers Needed for Swimming Carnival

If you can spare anytime during the day please email office.sttapkambah@cg.catholic.edu.au or rachel.kelly@cg.catholic.edu.au

Go Swannies!
Rachel Kelly
Information Night & Welcome BBQ

Kinder - Artwork on Community & Belonging in School

Yr 2P - Holiday Dioramas
Ever found yourself asking your child the same bland question about school?

“So, how was your day? What did you do at school today? What did you learn?”

If these are your default questions the chances are that you’ll get a one or two word reply along the lines, “Fine!” “Good!” “Okay” “Nothing much.”

These answers don’t really tell you a lot. On the other hand, these types of questions don’t ask a great deal.

So how can you move beyond the mundane when you talk with kids about their school days?

Set the atmosphere
It helps to create the right atmosphere for conversations. A quick “How was your day?” as you pick a child up from after-school is a rapport-builder or mood checker, but little more.

If you drive you may learn a bit on the trip home, particularly if you keep the radio off and are able to keep some distance between kids and mobile devices. Alternatively, walking home together may loosen up your child’s tongue and put them in the mood for talking.

Give kids a chance
Most kids need some time and space to unwind before expecting them to talk about their day, particularly if you are going to launch and ask them questions. This makes sense as most adults would feel annoyed if they were assaulted as soon as they walked in the door about their day, “How was your day? What did you do? Who did you see?” Ahh! Stop!

Create conversations rather than ask questions
The dinner table makes a great place to talk, if all televisions are off, mobile devices are left behind and you take the time to make it more than a pit stop. One way to kick off a conversation is to ask kids if they’d like to hear about your day. From my experience kids are often interested in the most mundane things that go on in an adult’s day so don’t think you have to make it sound grander than what it is. This gives kids permission to talk about their own days; your story can stimulate conversations which provides openings for kids to ask questions and share a little or in some cases a lot about their own day at school.

Interesting questions lead to interesting conversations
The questions you ask to prompt a conversation will often say a great deal about you and what you value. If you focus only on academic or learning questions then it indicates that’s what you value.
It helps to take conversations and your questions in different directions to get a multi-faceted window into your child’s school life but also an indication of your child’s interests, social skills and welfare. Here are some examples of question starters that may prompt different responses from kids about their time at school:

1. Tell me what made you laugh today?
2. Who did you play with at recess today?
3. Did you do anything that was brave?
4. If I spoke to your teacher, what would she tell me about you?
5. What did your teacher talk about today?
6. Is there anyone in your class who needs to be in time out?
7. Where’s the best place to hang out/play at school?
8. Tell me one good thing that happened to you today?
9. Who were you nice/kind/friendly to today?
10. Did anyone push your buttons today?
11. What did you do that you were proud of/happy with today?
12. What’s something you learned with a friend today?
13. What’s your teacher’s most important rule?
14. If today was a musical instrument what would it be? Why?
15. If you were a teacher tomorrow, what would you teach the class?

Next time you ask a clichéd and dull question about your child’s day stop yourself before you utter the words. Instead think outside the square and ask questions that may stimulate a response beyond “Fine” or “Nothing.” And remember they may not feel like talking, which is fine too. Like adults, kids need to be in the right mood and the right environment if they are going to share a meaningful conversation about their day.
1st February 2017

SWIMMING CARNIVAL - 2017

FRIDAY, 24TH FEBRUARY   TERM 1   WEEK 4   YEARS K-6

Dear Parents,

Our School Swimming Carnival is to be held at Phillip Pool for all children in Years K-6. The carnival will commence at 9.30am with the assessing of the swimming competency of students in Years 2-6. The carnival will start directly after grading.

All students who wish to enter any of the pools must be assessed prior to swimming. Please ensure the attached permission slip is completed in respect of your child’s swimming ability to the best of your knowledge. Please err on the side of caution.

Students in Years 2-6 will depart from school at 9:15am and students in K-1 will depart at 10:30am. K-1 will leave the pool at 12.45pm and Years 2-6 children at 2.15pm.

Essentially there will be two separate carnivals running at the same time: K-1 in the middle and small pool and Years 2-6 in the Olympic Pool.

Capable swimmers, who were born between 2004 - 2009, can compete in championship events (50m) which gives them the opportunity to represent the school at the regional carnival. For those swimmers that are unable to swim 50m with confidence, we run 25m races. Please let your child know that these races commence at the starting blocks at the deep end of the pool.

We will also have novelty events that will be open to non-swimmers only. These will be conducted in the shallower pool. Children in championship races cannot enter the 25 metre events, while novelty events are open to NON-SWIMMERS ONLY. This is to ensure that all children are able to participate equitably.

ALL CHILDREN ARE EXPECTED TO ATTEND AND PARTICIPATE TO THEIR LEVEL OF ABILITY

Children in Year 2 who are very capable swimmers, who were born in 2009 and who wish to swim in championship races need to indicate this on the nomination form.

Please supply your child with sunscreen, a hat, a towel, morning tea and lunch and a drink in a disposable container. Canteen facilities will also be available for purchases on the day. Children can wear their swimwear under their sports uniform.
Pool admittance and return bus fares are covered by the Activities Levy. For the purposes of accountability, we prefer that all children return to school from the carnival on the bus.

Please note that parents and siblings entering the pool have to pay an entrance fee. Some long stay pay voucher parking is available opposite the pool. NO FREE PARKING IS AVAILABLE.

A separate nomination form must be completed for each child in your family (Years 2-6). These need to be returned to the classroom teacher by Friday 10th February 2017.

Finally, we also ask that if you are able to spend some time on the day, volunteering as a timekeeper, judge or starter that you email Miss Kelly at Rachel.Kelly@cg.catholic.edu.au and indicate your availability. In order to volunteer on the day, you will need to hold a valid WWVP Card. Please provide a copy of your card to our Front Office or let Miss Kelly know in your email if this has already been done.

Please return all forms by Friday 10th February 2017 (Week 2)

Kind regards,

Rachel Kelly

Sports Co-ordinator
SWIMMING CARNIVAL – Friday, 24th February 2017 - PERMISSION SLIP

I give permission for my child ________________________________________________ in class__________ to travel by bus to and from Phillip Pool on Friday 24th February 2017 and to participate in the Swimming Carnival.

Please tick one of the following statements:

☐ My child can enter and exit the pool, swim 25 metres unaided and tread water for 1 minute.

☐ My child is unable to enter and exit the pool, or swim 25 metres or tread water for 1 minute.

SIGNED___________________________________________ PARENT/CARER  DATE _________________

BEST CONTACT NUMBER FOR THE DAY _____________________________________________________
St Thomas the Apostle Swimming Carnival
2017 Race Nomination Form

Name: …………………………………………………………………………………………………….

Date of Birth: …………../…………../……………

Class: ………………..

Sports House: ……………………..

****Only for children born 2004 - 2009****

Please nominate events by ticking either the 25m OR the 50m for each particular stroke. Please remember that only 50m and 100m events are eligible for district carnivals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Championship/Qualifying Events</th>
<th>House Spirit Events</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>□ 100m Freestyle</td>
<td>□ 25m Freestyle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ 50m Freestyle</td>
<td>□ 25m Breaststroke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ 50m Breaststroke</td>
<td>□ 25m Backstroke</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ 50m Backstroke</td>
<td>□ 25m Butterfly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>□ 50m Butterfly</td>
<td>□ Novelty Events (non-swimmers only)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please return this form by Friday 10th February 2017.
Dear Families,

This year we will be forming a Mini Vinnies Team at St Thomas the Apostle. Students from years 3-6 are invited to be a part of the team. Participation in the Mini Vinnies team brings both commitment and responsibility. The Youth Liaison Officer for St Vincent de Paul, Jaime Lee Walker will visit the school and help us to establish the team. We will also be working closely with the St Vincent de Paul Kambah team.

Mini Vinnies is a program designed for groups of primary school students who are interested in social justice. Mini Vinnies students get together within their school to help those in need within their school, local or international community. Mini Vinnies introduces children to social justice issues. The St Vincent de Paul Society and to living faith through action. The group is supported by teachers and parents within the school, by the local St Vincent de Paul parish conference and St Vincent de Paul staff. There are approximately 20 Mini Vinnies groups in primary schools across the Canberra/Goulburn Archdiocese.

Mini Vinnies is about doing good works in the community that benefit people facing social injustice. It is also about young people meeting to talk, share ideas and concerns, to have fun and support each other. The Mini Vinnies model of “See, Think, Do” is a great way to get young people thinking and talking about their spirituality and to connect their faith with issues affecting their community through volunteering, advocacy and fundraising.

A commitment to the St Thomas the Apostle Mini Vinnies Team will involve:

- Attendance at weekly meetings. Meetings will run for 20 minutes during an assigned lunch break.
- Commitment to working collaboratively within the team to facilitate fundraising activities and to support the local Kambah SVDP branch in their fundraising efforts.
- Promotion of weekly food donations from the school community. Food collected will be taken to the parish pantry and distributed to families in need in our community.
- Collaboration with students from Mini Vinnies Teams in nearby schools.
- Planning and facilitating appropriate ways to help members of our community.
- Working as part of a team to See, think, Do in alignment with the SVDP vision.

If your child is interested in joining the Mini Vinnies Team for 2017, please return the form below to Mrs Vanzwol by Friday 10th February.

Kind regards

Penny Vanzwol

MINI VINNIES RETURN SLIP

I fully support my child _______________________________ of class ________

in his/her application to join the Mini Vinnies Team for 2017.

Parent/Carer signature ________________________________

Student signature ________________________________