From the Principal

Dear Parents and All in the St James Community

A deeply moving event occurred this morning at the EREA National Principals Conference which I am attending in very chilly Canberra this week.

In the presence of over 80 delegates from EREA Colleges and schools across Australia and members of the Leadership Teams of both EREA and the Oceania Province of the Christian Brothers, EREA Executive Director, Dr Wayne Tinsey, delivered a formal Apology of behalf of all our schools to the victims of physical and sexual abuse experienced in our schools over many years to the present.

Below is an extract from the Apology Statement:

• Today we directly acknowledge the fact that young people in our schools were betrayed in their adolescence where they had every expectation of, and needed, nurturing and protection.
• Today we directly acknowledge the helplessness, powerlessness, fear, guilt and shame that has been, and remains part of a victim's life when, as a child, they recall feeling no control over their lives and even blamed themselves for what had been done to them.
• Today we directly acknowledge the unimaginable pain endured by families, friends and loved ones who have been broken by the ingrained lasting trauma, often hidden, of each and every criminal indignity and personal violation.
• Today we directly acknowledge the anger which our young students have felt, have shown and may still harbour against their abusers and others who they feel failed to protect them.

To each of these and the other statements, the assembled delegates answered in solidarity: “For this we apologize.”

Dr Tinsey concluded with these words: “We offer this sincerely in the hope that it is seen as a significant and necessary step towards healing, reconciliation and ongoing redress.....and we pray that Edmund Rice Education Australia has found a new voice in laying stronger foundations for support, re-connection, inclusion and ongoing care for all who have suffered in this way.”

What made this important event even more poignant was that sitting among the delegates this morning were several past students of former Christian Brothers schools, themselves survivors of sexual abuse experienced when they were at school.

A beautiful poem entitled ‘New Voices’ by Ray Paxton, which concluded the ceremony, contained these words:

Blest are the eyes seeking light in the darkness...Blest are the ears who respond to the cry....
Blest are the prophets who question God's presence...Blest are the answers that generate life....
Blest are the minds which inspire us to justice...Blest are the arms giving comforting grace....
Blest are the hearts fighting structures that silence...Blest are the voices rebounding in space....

Let us all commit to a liberated future for all our students - past, present and to come - steeped in trust, compassion, support and love.

Live Jesus in our Hearts.

Gerry Crooks
Principal
Examination techniques

Deputy Principal Mr Tony McCulkin

With examinations starting in just over a week here is some last minute advice for preparation from Andrew Fuller www.andrewfuller.com.au:

Getting better marks has a lot to do with how you approach studying. The seven most powerful ways to increase your marks don’t involve you working harder but they do involve you working smarter.

1. Study in silence.
This is the single most powerful way to increase your marks. Spend at least 20 minutes of your study time in silence. No texting, music or computer screens. Outcomes improve when you practice in the same conditions you want to perform in. In the exam room there won’t be music, mobile phones or computer screens.

2. Organise & transform the information you want to learn.
Just reading your notes over and over again doesn’t really work. Your memory stores information best when you organise or transform it. This means organising your notes so that the main idea is highlighted on each page. Then take your notes and turn them into a flow chart or a mind map or see if you can fit them to a song you know well or make it into a sound recording. The more times you can transform and reorganise the information the more firmly it is remembered.

3. Put off pleasurable activities until work is done.
This is a painful one but if you play computer games before you get down to studying, the levels of dopamine in your brain lessen and you will lose the drive and motivation you need to study effectively. Work first, play later.

4. Talk yourself through the steps involved.
One of the things that highly successful students do is to explain out loud to themselves the steps involved in completing a task. This applies to every subject area. By saying out loud, “First I have to do…. Then I have to do….” and so on, any part that you are uncertain about becomes clear and you can then use this to guide where you need to do more.

5. Ask for help.
Teachers want their students to be interested and to do well. You will be amazed if you ask a question how many other people don’t understand it either. If you are really scared about asking questions in class, have a private talk to your teacher about this.

6. Take notes.
Just writing down the ideas that you have makes a powerful contribution to your marks. Don’t just write down what the teacher writes. Make notes of any ideas you have as well. Never rely only on the worksheets given out by teachers or your own capacity to remember information later.

7. Write & re-write key points.
Writing the main points of the area you are learning helps you to remember them. If you can add in re-organising and transforming them into different formats (drawings, flow chats, podcasts etc.) that makes it even more powerful.

Hospitality Training Restaurants

Mr Martin Wiseman

I had the very great pleasure of attending one of the Hospitality Training Restaurant nights this week. I have always said that the Formal and Semi Formal were occasions where we see our students at their very best. This night really has to be added to these occasions. All of the students there were indeed at their best. The food was magnificent and the service was first rate. All these combined for a wonderful evening and I thank the students and staff (Ms Sparks, Mrs Blackman and Ms Riddle) for all their work in preparing these students for this lovely evening.

Lateness and Absenteeism

With the colder weather we are seeing more students come late to school. Please look at this week’s insert from Parenting Ideas about why missing school is not OK. For us, Homeroom is a vital time of the day where the famous Jimmies Pastoral Care takes place. It is important for students to start the day positively, be informed and connected with the place and Homeroom is where this happens.

Positive Relationships

Last week I was fortunate to attend and Relationships Workshop at All Hallows’ School with a group of our Year 11 students and some staff, led by Miss Whelan. The workshop was a great distillation of ideas around domestic violence and how students can deal with this scourge. We are working with these students to present to the rest of the student body the key messages from this afternoon so stay tuned. This week I met with the Year 7s and 11s to commence an initial conversation about this important topic. The Year 11s were given a booklet Relationships: The Good, The Bad and The Ugly to help them negotiate their way through the minefield that sometimes adolescence can be. If you would like a copy of the booklet, please let me know.
This week, I look at the notion of mission, and in doing so acknowledge the newsletter written by Father Peter Brannelly, Parish Priest of the Jubilee Catholic Parish recently. Father Peter Brannelly, as you will remember is the priest who says so many of our Inaugural Masses and Graduation Order of Services each year for which we are most grateful. We are lucky also that Father has worked with us at St James College on a number of joint projects for which we are most grateful.

In the newsletter a little while ago, Father explored the notion of mission statements and how in every company or organisation there was a trend to complete a mission statement - an easy to remember sentence that points out their goals and purpose. Technically their mission statement should also guide an organisation in making critical decisions that affect their directions and their employees.

Did you know that Starbucks Coffee Mission Statement is "To inspire and nurture the human spirit- one person, one cup and one neighbourhood at a time." Sounds pretty profound for a coffee shop, doesn't it? In fact, all that you need to do is slightly modify the statement to make it suspiciously like a church mission statement: "To inspire and nurture the human soul- one person, one baptism and one neighbourhood at a time."

If only Jesus left us a simple one sentence statement as a mission statement that covered everything and we could all agree on! After all, he healed the sick, fed the thousands, gave sight to the blind, raised the dead, washed the feet of the disciples, commanded them, saying "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I commanded you." Whilst his mission was clear, capturing his mission in one simple sentence is elusive.

In the Gospels, Jesus talks about the importance of keeping "my commandments by saying "If you love me, you will keep my commandments" and "They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will reveal myself to them. "Whatever scaffolding we build around our faith, and everyone is different, Jesus always renewes his invitation to keep his commandments as a sign of our love. This is the foundation on which all our relationships are measured and all our actions and motivations are based. Not necessarily easy, but potentially life giving!

So, next time you are ordering your skinny flat white with one sugar, or an Espresso Macchiato, remember Jesus' commandment which enables us to inspire and nurture the human soul. We especially remember those students within our St James College Community who commenced their tradition of prayer and fasting called Ramadan and wish them every blessing across this sacred time.

Every blessing for a joyous and mission focused week.

Over the course of the past week many Year 11 and 12 Hospitality and Catering students have participated in practical assessment by providing food and beverage service or production at two restaurant evenings. These events were held in the college hall, and were attended by parents, friends, staff and students. For the majority of our students this is the first time they have engaged in an industry standard function and therefore this can prove quite a challenge for staff and trainers alike! Many positive comments were received from our guests, and I would like to thank all who supported us with their attendance. A huge amount of preparation goes into these events and we are grateful for the help received from a number of staff members to ensure the evenings ran smoothly. The students themselves are to be congratulated for the hours of hard work which they put in, whether in the kitchen or in the dining area.

With the assessment period in full swing, it’s a timely reminder that students need to schedule their time effectively to ensure their assignments and exams are completed on the due date. There are processes that need to be followed for late submission of assessment for students in Years 7 to 10. In cases where students are absent on a due date, it is an expectation that assignments are emailed to the classroom teacher and an explanation for the absence provided via the student diary. If an exam has been missed, parents should notify the school by phone call or a signed note in the diary. In the senior school, a medical certificate must be provided. Please be aware, that without proper notification from parents, students who fail to submit assessment on the due date will be put on a Thursday afternoon academic detention. Any queries or concerns about the assessment process, can be directed to the relevant classroom teacher or to me at karen.lindsey@stjamescollege.qld.edu.au.

Students entering the competitions are asked to bring your drafts to the Writers’ Club meeting every Tuesday afternoon in the Library from 3.15pm to 4pm.
Library Competition Winners

Azaria Taulia, Fancymina Gower and Pauline Braddock-Parth. (L-R)

Sports News

The Basketball program has changed uniforms. There are a number of old uniforms for sale.
- Singlet—Maroon & White $20
- Shorts—Maroon and White $20
- Singlet & Short Combo—Maroon & White $30

If you would like to purchase any of these items please pay for your item/s first at Reception, then bring your receipt to Mr Prickett to collect your goods.

Library News

We had a large number of entries for our ‘Book in a Jar’ and ‘Match-Up’ competitions that we were running to celebrate Library and Information Week. The winners are Fancymina Gower and Azaria Taulia for ‘Book in a Jar’ and Pauline Braddock-Parth for ‘Match-Up’. Congratulations to all winners!

MISUSE OF COLLEGE LAPTOPS

This week we have continued our ‘blitz’ on College Laptops and it is very disappointing to note that a large number of students are in breach of the Student User Agreement that was signed by both students and their parents upon enrolment. Students are reminded that they are not allowed to download anything on to their College issued laptop. This includes movies, games, images or software. While at home, students may use their laptop to legally stream movies/television shows or play online games at the discretion of their parents/carers. These activities are not permitted at school, where the device is to be used for educational purposes only.

Parents and carers, please have a discussion with your student to ensure that they are not in breach of either their Student User Agreement or Australian Pirating and Copyright Laws. If you require further clarification or any further information, please contact me (Nikki.Carpenter@stjamescollege.qld.edu.au) or visit the Smart Copying website www.smartcopying.edu.au.

Work Experience

Year 10 students have now received their contracts outlining where they will be attending work experience for the week of the June 12-16. This year we are fortunate that a diverse range of employers will welcome our students. At St James significant emphasis is placed on the importance of being familiar with workplace practice and as such, students have been attending weekly work skills preparation lessons on a Wednesday afternoon. Parents and carers can support their child by ensuring that contracts are returned by Wednesday 8 June (for the attention and signature of the Principal); appropriate clothing attire is on hand; and any absences arising from illness are communicated to the employer in advance.

Encourage your Year 10 student to be involved in the workplace and explore opportunities. We wish our Year 10 cohort the best of luck as they venture into the world of work.

Guidance Counsellor

Mr Jim Bartlett

- Year 10 Trade Taster Course, Term 3. One day per week for 9 weeks in Term 3; Courses at Acacia Ridge, Bracken Ridge and Alexandra Hills Training Centres. The Course opens on 5 June 2017. Apply online tafeapply.com (Application Code TQST17T).
- Create a USI (Unique Student Identifier) number at www.usi.gov.au

Basketball

At the half way point of the year I would like to give a huge thankyou to everyone involved in the Jimmies basketball program. The enthusiasm, inclusion and support provided by teachers, parents, ground staff and administration has built a foundation to promote opportunities for student success. At the higher end of performance Chol Guet will leave for China for an NBA development camp, Moses Majok is heading to Canberra for an Australian development camp and Jana Taufua will be heading to Guam to play at the Under 17 World Championship Oceania qualifiers. This success however is built around the work of the entire Jimmies team as they push to improve the quality of our program allowing for greater heights to be reached. This is best expressed with the unprecedented numbers of students making Regional, Representative and State teams this year as well as the numerous younger students training consistently and learning the self-discipline and teamwork required to achieve their best.

Again, I would like to thank the entire Jimmies community for making all of this happen It is inspiring to be involved in and I look forward to the future.

Rock Climbing Club

Miss Casey Francis

Secondary School Orienteering Series

This Term has seen St James Students going hard at the Secondary School Orienteering Series. With two events under our belts St James is looking strong in the field. Event #1 held on Wednesday 17 May at Beryl Roberts Park was the first event for many students. Event #2 held on Thursday 25 May at Whites Hill saw students running on three course levels, dodging snakes and running against 190 competitors. Ethan Sullivan, Kynan O’Malley-Jones and Shotaro Goto each received a letter of invitation from Reid Moran, Chair of Queensland Schools Orienteering Committee! A fantastic achievement for these boys. Event #3 will be held on Wednesday 7 June at Bunyaville, Albany Creek. Coach and National competitor, Lachlan Howard, will be setting the courses with appropriate challenges! See OrienteeringQld.oq.asn.au@OrienteeringQld for more information.
2 June 2017

Dear Parents

Re: Commonwealth Funding Issues for Catholic Schools

I am writing to clear up some of the confusion generated in the media about funding for Catholic schools and to explain how the funding changes will impact our school as best I can at the present time.

While some news articles suggest all Catholic school will receive a significant funding boost under the Federal Government’s proposed new model, others suggest there will be cuts and fee increases.

As a whole, the Catholic system in Queensland will see some funding growth from the Federal Government’s package but the impacts vary considerably from school to school. The precise impact on our school is still being determined and when I have more information on this I will be communicating that to our school community.

What I can say with certainty is that funding growth for all Catholic schools will not be at the rate that would have flowed from years five and six of the original Gonski recommendations.

Even as I write, more than three weeks after the funding announcement, the Federal Government has not been able to allay several of the Catholic sector’s concerns about the package. The main points of concern are that:

- Funding for students with disabilities will change in a way which adversely impacts Catholic Schools. The new NCCD methodology used to calculate this funding has serious flaws and on 16 December 2016, even the Minster went on record as saying the NCCD “fails a basic credibility test.”

- Funding for Catholic schools will not grow at the same pace as other sectors over the next 10 years even though our wages and operating costs will rise at the same rate.

- The new funding model relies on the use of the SES (Socio-economic status) methodology. The original Gonski Review called for a review of the SES formula because of its inadequacies and we want the Government to commit to this. We say this system has flaws. The tool previously used by the Catholic sector to correct some of these flaws (the ‘System Weighted Average’) has now been abandoned by the Government despite the Gonski Review supporting such an approach.

You have probably seen or heard about the Commonwealth’s School Funding Estimator website. I can say with certainty that the numbers shown on the site for our school are notional figures based on what would happen if the new funding model was already in place, when it is not. They do not accurately state our funding position in 2017 or beyond and parents should not rely on it. This is because Catholic schools (as a sector) allocate funding within their system as supported and approved under the current legislation.
The package proposed by the Federal Government is a 10-year funding model, which will see significant changes to how Catholic schools are funded in the future. Like the majority of Catholic schools, our school aims to be open and accessible to all families seeking a Catholic education. That means we aim to be affordable as well. I want to reassure you that fee increases as result of these changes are only a possibility at this stage – not a certainty.

The legislation to make these changes is still before Federal Parliament. I assure you that our school is joining with other Catholic schools and the leaders of our sector to make sure our politicians in Canberra are aware of our concerns.

I will keep you updated of any further developments on this important issue.

Yours sincerely

Gerry Crooks
Principal

Notes for parents to use

Dear [MP]

As a parent of children at [school name] within the Catholic education system I am concerned about changes recently announced to school funding by the Federal Government.

I have been made aware that the changes mean:

- Funding for students with disabilities will change in a way which adversely impacts Catholic Schools.
- Funding for Catholic schools will not grow at the same pace as other sectors over the next 10 years.
- Key parts of the new funding model will change in a way that adversely impacts the Catholic school system and we believe this should be reviewed by the Federal Government.

While our school has advised us that fee increases are only a possibility (not a certainty) the prospect of further cost of living pressures on families because of these changes worries me.

I am seeking your support as our local MP by asking you to raise these issues with the PM and Minister for Education. Can you please explain to me why changes are being proposed that will impact negatively on Catholic schools over the proposed ten-year implementation of the new model?

[Parent]
When kids miss school, not only is their academic progress impeded, forcing them to catch up on missed work (which some never do), they often miss important interactions with their peers which can compound issues of social isolation and low self-esteem.

Of course, most people know this intuitively, yet school absenteeism is a huge problem in Australian schools—and much of it is parent-condoned.

It’s hard to get an accurate picture across the country but it would appear that Australian students miss an average of between 12 and 15 days per school year, with parent-condoned absenteeism highest among young primary-aged children.

That adds up to a year’s lost schooling over the school-life of a child. In today’s highly competitive world, this rate of absenteeism is alarming, putting our kids at a distinct disadvantage.

That’s not a reason to be away!
It’s now commonplace for children to stay away from school for reasons that would have been unheard of just twenty years ago. These include staying away to celebrate their own or a sibling’s birthday; being absent because they stayed up too late watching television; going shopping for clothes; an extended long weekend; and kids not wanting to take part in a sports day or special school event.

This type of absenteeism sends a strong message to kids that parents don’t really value learning or their children’s school experiences.

Australian kids only spend 15% of their total time at school. They spend more time asleep than they do at school. So we need to maximise every day to get full value. That means turning up to school every day, on time.

Being late is not okay either
Missing a few minutes each day may not seem like a big deal but your child may be missing more than you realise if he or she is continually late.

Current research shows that mornings for most children are the most productive time of the day, with 10.00am the peak period for productivity. When children arrive late and take time to settle as they inevitably do, valuable learning time is lost.

more on page 2
It’s not okay to be away ... nor to be late to school...

It takes strong parenting...
As a parent myself I know how persuasive children of all ages can be when it comes to taking a day off school. It takes a strong will to resist the persistent pressure that kids can bring to bear, particularly if they play the guilt card with comments such as “It’s not fair that I have to go school today because Aunty is coming to visit!” Nice try. But the answer should be “No!”.

As parents we need to make a commitment that our kids make the most of their precious time at school. That means that we send them to school every day, on time and ready to make the most of the school day.

Of course, there will be times, such as illness or genuinely extenuating family circumstances, when kids should be away. But these need to be a rarity rather than the norm.

It’s reassuring to know that you increase their chances of future success just by making sure they turn up to school every day. And of course regular school attendance also helps kids prepare for the workforce, where it will be expected that they turn up each day work-ready. The real world is unforgiving of those who stay away with NO EXCUSE.

AS A PARENT:

✔ Commit to sending kids to school every day.
✔ Make sure kids arrive at school and class on time.
✔ Inform the school when they are away, sending medical certificates and other evidence of genuine absence.
✔ Consider catching-up on missed work.
✔ Make kids who are away stay in their bedroom – that is where ill kids should be.