Dear Parents and All in the St James Community

Yesterday at a special school gathering and later in St Brigid’s Church, Red Hill, we farewelled the Class of 2016 as they graduated from St James College.

Each year is remarkable in its own way and 2016 has proven to be no different. We have been blessed by a senior year group of young men and women who have been excellent role models for their Houses, who have put themselves forward to support others, participated in social justice work, worked cooperatively with their teachers and peers and brought great credit on the school. And we wish them well as they now step out into the world, hopefully armed with the skills and frame of mind to take on the challenges of an adult world.

In my words to the graduating class last night, I recounted a few lines from a movie that I had seen once. The dialogue centred around the idea that life is not only about making plans and hoping we can achieve them, but more about what we learn along the way. The conversation went something like this: “Things didn’t work out the way I planned”; the response of the other character: “Well, things often don’t – it’s the stuff that happens in between that really matters.”

It is certainly my prayer that all our students, whether they have finished their school career or whether they have just finished their first year of high school, that they value the ‘stuff that happens in between’. It is here in the day-to-day interactions with others, the quality of relationships that are established, the compassion we have for those who need it, the acceptance that each shows for the other regardless of their circumstances or background, our determination to apply ourselves positively to the challenges that face us; these are what really matter.

As this will be our last Newsletter for 2016, I take this opportunity to thank all parents, families and carers for the support you have provided for us all at St James throughout the year in the education of your children. We hope that we as a staff have made a positive difference in their lives and that we have taught them in turn to make even more of a difference in the lives of others.

I pray that the Christmas holiday period will be safe, enjoyable and enriching for all. Thank you for all that has been in the 2016 school year. Let us all look forward in hope to new horizons in 2017.

God bless

Gerry Crooks
Principal
May Joy and Peace fill your Christmas and New Year.

Deputy Principal
Mr Tony McCulkin

Students are currently completing final assessment tasks and teachers are busy compiling data to enable them to report to parents on student progress. Those reports will mailed to parents in the week ending December 9. For many students these reports may provide evidence that subject selections for next year may need to be reconsidered. Subject changes can be organized by contacting the office. Changes will depend upon availability on lines and existing class sizes.

Year 12 results will be posted by the Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority Authority who will post the Queensland Certificate of Education, the Senior Statement and the Tertiary Entrance Statements to eligible students on December 17. Any problems with these documents, or the need to report that they do not arrive should be addressed to the Queensland Curriculum & Assessment Authority. Check their website for contact details www.qcaas.qld.edu.au

Following release of results students will have until January 8 to change tertiary entry preferences. The first major round of offers by QTAC is January 16. There is a second major round of offers on February 2. Further information is available on the QTAC website www.qtac.edu.au

AP Pastoral
Mr Martin Wiseman

Vale Year 12 2016
This week we farewell a very fine group of young people. I have enjoyed working with them and watching them grow into young people of which we can be justifiably proud. Our Rites of Passage process was an appropriate farewell to them and I appreciate the huge amount of work that has gone into their valedictory. Particularly I thank the House Deans and Ms Yolanda Cano for all their attention to detail and the thoughtfulness that has gone into trying to make the Year 12s final moments at St James memorable and fitting.

Congratulations to Ahmad Fahim Hakimi (CA) and Kelly Pham (HO) who were our last editions to our student leaders group this year. Also, I thank Brandon Norman (CA), Nieve Liveri (HO), John Walters (LO), Sarah Urquhart (MR) and Katana Wesley (MR) who were the Senior Buddies of the year. They have set a wonderful example for our Year 11s to follow and hopefully lift higher in 2017. They have left a fantastic legacy.

Year 10 White Shirt Conversation
Next Wednesday we will be taking time out of the Year 10 program for House Deans to have a talk with their Year 10s about the responsibilities of wearing the white shirt next year. It is always a great conversation and I thank the Deans for their efforts here.

Finalisation Forms
It is that time of year again where the Year 7-10 students need to get their assessment and library resources ticked off to conclude the year. There will be some time in House Assemblies which will be dedicated to this process but students should be getting them signed off as they complete tasks. Any student who has a form outstanding will need to front up to school on Friday, November 25.

Final Day Program
Next Thursday, November 24, is the last day for students and we traditionally celebrate this occasion with a Christmas Liturgy in the morning and then we set off for Splash Chermside for a day of fun. All Year 7-10 students are expected to attend and Year 11 students are invited. Please bring lunch, a hat and sunscreen in addition to togs and towel!!

Orientation Day
All Student Leaders 2017 need to be in attendance for the Orientation of our new students on Friday November 25. The day will commence at normal time and conclude at approximately midday.

Uniform Donations
Student Services is accepting all uniform donations. If you have any uniforms or shoes that can be donated back to the school for student use please bring them in at any time over the next two weeks. All items donated will be most gratefully accepted.

AP Identity
Mrs Tricia Parry

It is difficult to grasp that the year of 2016 has been realised so quickly. There have been so many things achieved across so many areas of College and the formation life of the school is certainly going from strength to strength. This week we have had the very great privilege of farewelling the Year 12 Students from 2016. They have been a delightful group to work with and have fully engaged in the life of the College. Their participation in the many opportunities provided to them has made them really achieve a group identity which has been strong and binding. This group has led the College well and set up traditions for the younger students to employ in their time here at St James. Our Graduation Order of Service which was held at St Brigid’s Church, Red Hill, a very special part of the Jubilee Parish, was a magnificent venue for us to farewell our Year 12 students in a liturgical way which was both fitting and appropriate. It is highly symbolic that the Brigid’s Church, Red Hill, a very special part of the Jubilee Parish, was a magnificent venue for us to farewell our Year 12 students in a liturgical way which was both fitting and appropriate. It is highly symbolic that the Catholic schooling of all of our students concludes at what is one of our local Catholic Churches.

I would like to thank all of the students from 2016 with whom I have had the great pleasure to work with – they bring great purpose and meaning to my life and to the liturgical life of the College. I would especially like to thank all those staff, students and parents who have been such a special part of our ministry program under the wonderful leadership of Miss Jessica Whelan. All helpers in these important programs make such a difference to the way St James College interacts with others who sit on the margins and I am most grateful for all of the help which has been given now and always. I am especially thankful for the helpers of Brekkie Van and other important ministries which we participate throughout the year and thank Mr Trent Cook for his assistance on Brekkie Van in Miss Whelan’s absence. Thank you to all students and families who have contributed to the Annual St Vincent De Paul Christmas Appeal – a number of families in our local area will be most grateful for this assistance. Please ensure that presents are NOT WRAPPED as they are wrapped by Vinnies themselves to check for suitability.
At the end of the year, Mrs Genevieve O’Sullivan, will be leaving us to take up a new position at Ambrose Tracey College. Mrs O’Sullivan has been an amazing member of the Identity and Ministry Teams and her skills will most certainly be missed. She is so patient and kind and has been the backbone of organisation for many events always being the quiet achiever. We wish Mrs O’Sullivan every blessing as she takes on this new position and look forward to hearing from her down the track.

I conclude with a prayer for “The Journey Ahead” by Vicki Clark from Aboriginal Catholic Ministry.

May the knowledge learned, give you strength
To be a strong carrier of much great wisdom
For you and the many generations to come.

It’s time to take the next step and
Carry close to your heart the sacredness
Of that wisdom that has been shared.

Hold the Spirit of the Sacred land always in your heart
And may the Spirits of my Ancestors
Always watch over you and keep you safe.

Middle School
Mrs Karen Lindsey

Accelerated Literacy Learning Program
Throughout the year at St James, teachers of students in Years 7 - 9 studying English, Science, History and Geography have been trained in an Accelerated Literacy Learning program with the assistance of Griffith University. The aim of our College’s involvement in the program now and into the future is to improve the reading comprehension skills of students in their middle years of schooling to enable them to learn and study more effectively across all subjects. The program involved teachers implementing effective reading strategies into all English, Science, History and Geography classes and tracking student progress through a PAT-R testing cycle at three separate times throughout the year. The final round of testing occurred two weeks ago and this week teachers analysed their classes’ results. The upward shift of the majority of students was astonishing, with a great many of our students progressing far beyond our expectations. Such results have affirmed the work we have been doing in our classrooms and this will continue into 2017.

A key component of the success of this program lies in presenting students with frequent opportunities to read aloud in small groups. With the holidays swiftly approaching, the College is keen to support students to continue to read throughout the Summer break by borrowing from our Library. Ms Nikki Carpenter and Ms Lee Bess have arranged a collection of ‘Summer Reads’ from which students can borrow for the holidays. Don’t forget your local Council library is also an excellent source of a wide variety of different types of books that can be borrowed for free for four weeks at a time. Parents can help by modelling reading habits by reading themselves, and having their students read aloud to them, talking about the events and characters in the novel and predicting what may happen next. Encouraging students to read the same book as their friends is another way to engage students in reading. Sharing and valuing books in this way is paramount in improving fluency and reading comprehension – skills which are needed not only for study in the Senior School but also in the post-school “real” world.

I’d like to take this opportunity to wish everyone a safe and relaxing Christmas holiday season and I look forward to 2017.

Library
Ms Nikki Carpenter

Jimmie’s Pick
‘Summer Reads Collection’

Jimmie suggests that you come and borrow from our ‘Summer Reads Collection’ for the Christmas Holidays. There is lots to choose from for varying ability levels and interests, and there’s nothing better than curling up in bed with a book when you don’t have to get up for school!

Science
Miss Elizabeth Schaefer

Each year the Year 7’s complete a Science assessment item that requires them to construct a diorama using a shoe box. As we are looking towards the 2017 school year and the purchasing of new shoes, I am requesting that if you have no use for the box the shoes come in that you send them to school with your child at the start of next year. When bringing the empty shoe box to school, the students will need to give the box to the office staff at Reception. Thank you in anticipation of your support of our Year 7 Science students.

Guidance Counsellor
Mr Jim Bartlett

Defence Information Sessions

QUT Real Decisions event
After you receive your Year 12 results, you may have questions about courses, ordering preferences, upgrading, offers and what uni will be like. QUT’s Real Decisions event on Tuesday, 20 December 2016 from 9.00am – 1.00pm at the Gardens Point campus, and from 2.00pm – 5.00pm at the Caboolture campus, will provide answers to these questions.

School leavers Adult Tertiary Preparation Information Sessions
These sessions will be held from 5.30pm – 7.00pm on Monday, 28 November 2016 and Monday, 16 January 2017 at the Southbank, Loganlea and Caboolture campuses. The Certificate IV in Adult Tertiary Preparation could be an option for school leavers who need to upgrade (i.e. gain a better tertiary entry score). To register to attend one of these sessions, ring 13 72 48.
2017 will see St James sports kick off early in the Term. Preparation for the SEQ Futsal Championship will take place in the first two weeks of Term 1. Preparation for Confraternity Rugby League, Basketball, Netball and Soccer will also be underway in Term 1. The Inter-House Swimming Carnival will be held on March 3 at Spring Hill Centenary Pool and the Inter-House Cross Country Carnival will be held on March 31 at Victoria Park, Spring Hill.

I look forward to seeing the rise in commitment by students to their respective sports. Training schedules will be given to all students at the beginning of Term 1. It is essential that students attend their scheduled training so that our teams are fully prepared for their upcoming tournaments.

South District sports’ trials will commence at the beginning of the year with all cluster dates and venues shown in their newsletter and website. Students will need to receive paperwork required for the trials from Mr Prickett and also find transportation to their trial if they wish to be considered for selection.

Wednesday Inter-school sport will see a change in the process of team selection. Tier 2 will be holding an A and B Division in their competitions. Schools are able to enter teams which will be competitive and have possible opportunities to represent at Met Finals after each season. The B teams will be considered for students who love to play the sport and have fun.

A new collection of sporting teams’ uniforms will feature in 2017. Also on offer to all in our College Community, will be the Jimmies Supporters’ T-shirt which will be available for purchase at the beginning of Term 1.

I would like to close by congratulating all our students who played sport in 2016. A number of sports have grown in size this year and I look forward to seeing a further increase in sports participation in 2017. Thank you to all staff and parents who helped manage and assist with teams throughout the year, your support was greatly appreciated. I would again welcome your support and assistance in 2017.

To our newly graduated Year 12 students, your efforts at sports carnivals and your commitment to our sporting teams were incredible. Your House leadership and encouragement to the younger students to actively participate in the carnivals did not go unnoticed. Best wishes for your future endeavours.