A SPECIAL EDITION NEWSLETTER

Dear Parents and Friends,

Welcome to our first ever Parent’s Newsletter! This newsletter has been written by Mums and Dads who are working hard to support our school. One of the big focus for our school community this year is to encourage and celebrate parental, parish and community involvement in all aspects of our school. Next term our staff and school board will work with a newly appointed Parent Representative at the Catholic Education Office to further support parent engagement within our school.

Parental involvement is an integral part of any school and one which St Francis embraces wholeheartedly. We are so blessed to have so many parents already sharing their talents, skills and experiences with our children and staff. This opens up opportunities for our children’s education, which may not always be available in our day to day curriculum.

We have parents who generously give their time contributing to many areas of school life including working with the School Board, Parent’s Club, gardening, art, classroom participation, sewing, woodwork and the Care Team to name just a few. This generous work means we can offer many extras to our children as well as being actively engaged in our children’s education.

In today’s newsletter, you will read comments from some of our parents who have been involved in different areas and the pleasure that they receive from participating in our children’s education. As school board chair I was lucky enough to attend a leadership conference with Claire which talked about the happiness and joy we can get from the sense of purpose which volunteering brings. This is obviously true for many of our current parents.

Thanks heaps to everyone who has contributed to our school, you are awesome and we would love to see as many parents as possible continuing to be involved in our school.

Cheers,

Regina Pawlowicz
School Board Chair

Key Dates

Week 6

Thursday, 22 August
Claire at SSEB meeting
Shepparton
Out of Uniform Day
Gold coin donation

Friday, 23 August 2013
Winter Sports
St Francis v Numurkah PS
Nathalia Recreation Reserve
1.30 p.m.
Claire at SSEB Meeting
Held in our School Library

Coming Up Soon

Thursday, 29 August 2013
PSG Meetings

Friday, 30 August 2013
Father’s Day Celebration

Monday, 2 September 2013
PLC – School Closure Day

Tuesday, 3 September 2013
Board Meeting 7 p.m.

Friday, 13 September 2013
School Sports

Thursday, 19 September 2013
Prep/Gr 1 Excursion

Friday, 20 September 2013
Last day of term.

Monday 9 Sept – Fri 20 Sept
Claire & Janice on Study Tour

A Parents’ Prayer

Dear Lord,

As my children leave for school, I pray that you will keep them in your care.
Help them to see the gifts and talents you have given them and to use them well.
Help them to be kind to others. Give their teachers patience and understanding and enfold them in your peace and protection. Hold all within our school community in the palm of your hand as we work together in your name.

Amen.
We acknowledge and thank all of the parents who are continuing to support our children and our school community. We are excited to share some of the ways parents are currently engaging with our school community and look forward to hearing your ideas about how we can continue to support parents to be fully engaged partners in the education process.

SCHOOL BOARD:
I see being on the School Board as an opportunity to support our school structures and provide input regarding the direction of the school. The School Board is involved in making plans for the future for our school but I see it mainly as a support mechanism for Claire and all the staff. Being part of the School Board is a great way to contribute to the school.

Jim Brereton (Ella Grade 4, Kian Grade 2).

PARENTS CLUB:
My boys get a real kick out of seeing me being involved in activities at the school. They are always coming up with different ideas for the Parent Club and we enjoy discussing their suggestions. Being in the Parents Club means that I can bring our family’s ideas to the table. The Parent Club is very social and it is extremely satisfying, particularly when you have a successful event.

Robyn Myers (Jack Grade 3, Henry Grade 1).

CLASSROOM SUPPORT:
I love the opportunity to come in and be part of the Prep room. Ros is such an inspiration and an enthusiastic teacher that it is great to watch her guide the kids as they develop into independent learners. I love working with kids and watching them make new discoveries and making connections in the world around them. I am a huge advocate for the play based learning and find it very rewarding being able to be a part of it. I can’t wait to see how it will grow and develop throughout the school.

Nicole Reynolds (Ned Prep, Max Grade 2).

SUPPORTING THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PARENT HANDBOOK FOR NEW PREP CHILDREN:
As a mother who already had two students at the school with another child commencing Prep in 2013 it was wonderful being involved in and supporting the development of the Parent Handbook for new Prep Children. I was able to see the wonderful changes that have occurred in our junior primary school in recent times and it provided me with an enormous knowledge of the school facilities and the education system within the school. As a new parent there is so much to learn about how a school runs and the Parent Handbook is a handy reference tool to refer back to.

Regina Pawlowicz. (Catarina Prep; Nikita Grade 3, Maddison, Grade 5).

SUPPORTING THE FAMILY AND LIFE RELATIONSHIPS PROGRAM:
We attended the Family and Life Relationships night, which I thought was delivered in a respectful and careful manner to both adults and students. This has now opened comfortable and confident lines of communication between the members of our family and it has made what can be an awkward subject just that much easier, for which I am grateful.

Kristy Brereton (Ella Grade 4, Kian Grade 2).

ANAPHYLAXIS PARENT SUPPORT TEAM:
From a family’s perspective, St Francis has been fantastic with their attitude, policy and awareness of children with anaphylaxis. Since I enrolled my daughter they have provided open communication and took the time and effort to get to know Natasha, her food allergies, her asthma and her family. Natasha is anaphylactic to eggs, cows milk products and peanuts. Usually when people find out about her being anaphylactic, they begin to treat her differently, but everyone at St Francis treats her as one of the community. Yes she is different but it is also managed extremely well.

Andrea Sutton (Natasha Prep, Erin Grade 3).

JUNIOR SCHOOL LEARNING WALK:
My children are in Grade 1 and Prep respectively and the Junior School Learning Walk gave my husband and I a greater understanding of how development play works and how our children are learning. We can see how positive development play is and how it really encourages children to be independent learners, which in turn allows for more one on one time the teacher has with each child. The walk enabled us to see what our children are doing between the time we drop them off and pick them up and we found the whole experience extremely beneficial.

Sheree Spiteri (Ruby Prep; Mia Grade 1).

COACHING OUR INTERSCHOOL NETBALL TEAM:
I feel very fortunate to have been able to coach this wonderful group of young ladies during their recent competition. It was great to watch their improvement, particularly those girls who have not played much netball. To see them grow in confidence and ability, and to witness their great team spirit made me feel so proud. I enjoyed spending time with the senior members of our school and even though she may not admit it, I think my daughter likes it when her mum is able to participate in school events! I would highly
recommend getting involved in any way you can at school. It is a fantastic school with amazing kids and I feel a real sense of pride being involved with them and knowing that I may have helped out a just a little! Tanya Bell (Mia grade2, Abbey Grade 5).

SENIOR SCHOOL QUILT PROJECT:
The Grade 4/5 children spent a lovely day last week cutting, sewing and piecing together a beautiful quilt for Mrs Jean. It was fantastic to see the patience and care they showed as they sat at sewing machines! They are looking forward to sending it along with their very special get-well wishes. Kerry Conroy (Abbey Grade 5, Darcy Grade 2).

BUS SHELTER PROJECT:
I am proud to be a part of the revamp of the bus shelter. Not only does it benefit the students from rain in the winter but also from the sun in the summer. All for the students! Greg McIver (Ruby, Grade 1).

SUPPORTING PERSONALISED LEARNING PROJECTS:
I have thoroughly enjoyed being involved in Georgia’s PLP’s. Assisting her to bake brownies for her class to share when she presented her PLP on Rachael Ray. On Wednesday I look forward to helping Georgia, Teashia and Abbey bake and decorate cupcakes for Rachael Quinn’s fundraiser. It is wonderful to see the initiative that these girls have shown in sending home the cupcake recipe to the families of anaphylactic children. PLP’s have prompted a lot of idea sharing and discussion around our kitchen table. Nicole Walpole (Georgia Grade 6, Breanne Grade 5, Brady Grade 1).

KINDER VISIT TO SCHOOL:
It was great being able to speak to Ros, the Prep teacher. I really liked that all the parents met as a group with Ros where she explained the Prep year to us and answered any questions that we had. My daughter absolutely loved her visit to St Francis and she really enjoyed the opportunity to meet children from the other kindergartens and also the children who already attend St Francis. Janelle Maynard (Nissa Grade 3, Kaira Grade 2).

CARE TEAM:
The St Francis Care Team is a group of ladies who gather to brainstorm ways that might be able to help families or individuals from our school community. We are all faced with challenging situations at different times in our lives, where we may feel stressed, lonely or in need of some basic T.L.C. I feel privileged to be able to be apart of the Care Team as I strongly believe that everyone needs to feel cared about. A small token gesture of a meal or a card can help when life becomes challenging in some way. The Care Team is lead by our gorgeous Wellbeing Officer – Tam. Tam is an absolute gem and her incredibly intuitive nature to the needs of our St Francis families is beautiful. Awesome job Tam and thankyou!! Michelle Sheehan (Charlie and Oliver Grade 2, Will Grade 4, Bella Grade 5).

SENIOR SCHOOL ENRICHMENT:
Throughout this school year I have been involved in assisting the development of various Senior School Enrichment activities. This has included introducing Textiles, Woodwork and Food & Technology skills to small student groups. It has been a rewarding experience for all involved – each student has been able to extend their learning into a practical, ‘hands-on’ experience, which they quite enjoyed. It has also been personally rewarding to witness the kids confidence grow through them achieving success in activities outside of the normal curriculum. Alison Dietrich (Charlie Grade 1, Harry Grade 3, Annie Grade 5, Emily Grade 6).

HEAD LICE PROGRAM
It was great to be involved in helping the school and the students by participating in the School Head Lice Program. It was great that the volunteer Mum’s could all work together as a team and even though Veronica is a teacher, she was just one of the Mum’s that day and we felt comfortable working together. Kay Cobbledick (Lauren Prep).

We acknowledge that the above list is not exhaustive, and we thank all parents for their continued support of our fabulous school. We do intend to “take over” the newsletter at regular intervals to share more……we would love to share your ideas about future possibilities!
SCHOOL NOTICES:

SSEB Meeting
On Thursday, 22 August 2013, Claire will be attending the first day of the SSEB meeting, which is being held in Shepparton. On Friday, 23 August 2013 we are hosting the second day of the SSEB meeting in our school library.

Thank you
A big thank you to Andrea Sutton for loaning the school her sewing machine. We are blessed to have such a generous school community.

Fundraiser
A reminder that students are invited, for a gold coin donation, to come in "out of uniform" clothes this Thursday. At recess students will be able to purchase cupcakes for $1.50 (these cupcakes are safe for those who have a nut allergy), lollipops for 50 cents and a bag of mixed lollies for $1.00. There will be a competition to see which class raises the most funds and to find the most colourfully dressed person.

Nathalia Show
The Nathalia Show is taking place on Saturday, 5 October 2013 and you will find flyers in this week’s newsletter about the Junior Art Section, The Scarecrow competition, the Rural Ambassador and Junior Ambassador Awards and the Nathalia Show Quest. Pop this date in your diary, a fun day for all the family.

Cookbooks
Cookbooks for sale! Flyer enclosed in newsletter.

Funtastic Disco
Funtastic Disco coming to Nathalia Community Centre, Robertson Street, Nathalia, Friday 30 August 2013. Flyer enclosed.

Winter Sports
This Friday our Grade 4, 5 and 6 will participate in the final winter sports game which is to be held at the Nathalia Recreation Reserve commencing at 1.30 p.m. and finishing at 2.30 p.m., St Francis v Numurkah Primary School. We hope to see as many parents as possible there cheering our softball, netball and football teams.

POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR AT ST FRANCIS SCHOOL

Last week our Social Skills Blitz was around Tolerance. The following students were nominated by their peers as displaying positive behaviour this week:
Matthew Jorgensen, Mia Spiteri, Hayley Wigmore, Erin Hassell, Jessica Legge and Brayden Summerville.
Congratulations Everyone!!

This week, our Positive Behaviour Blitz is Tolerance
Tolerance is a skill, which can reduce conflict. It is an ongoing process. Tolerance encourages us to respect opinions and practices, which differ from our own, and to be free of bigotry. Tolerance encourages understanding and appreciation of individual differences, minimises generalisations and helps combat prejudice and discrimination.