

St James Catholic School, Nar Nar Goon

Newsletter



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Principal's Report

Dear Parents,

Happy Easter to everyone. Hopefully the chocolate rush has subsided!

I'm sure many of you have contemplated the idea of one day, years from now, looking back on 2020 as the year that most things around the world closed down – beaches, shops, cinemas, churches. It's very hard to process a lot of this. I don't know about you, but I'm getting a little tired of descriptors like "unprecedented", "uncharted territory" and so on. But it's true - all of this is totally new to us and we're all trying to make sense of it, as best as we can.

On the first day of school for this term, I wondered to myself, how is this day going to go? After being in communication with teachers who are working at home, and parents who are navigating this at home, I am in total awe of how committed everyone is to making sure that the students are taken care of. Teachers have been totally dedicated to provide a balanced set of learning tasks. The key word here is **balance**. There is nothing to be gained in trying to replicate a school day via the current means we have. It just won't work. Let's ensure that we're not striving for perfection. Let's not expect that learning looks same as was last term. It goes against the grain for our teachers to lower expectations, but we are talking about a very different playing field. Give yourself permission to be happy with the learning that is taking place and recognise that other skills are actually coming into play during this time.

I posted something on our St James Facebook page the other day. The author is unknown but the sentiment is positive and it goes like this...

If they cancel the rest of the school year, students would miss approx. 6 months of education. Many people are concerned about students falling behind because of this. Yes, they may fall behind when it comes to classroom education...

BUT WHAT IF

What if instead of falling 'behind', this group of kids are ADVANCED because of this? Hear me out...

What if they have more empathy, they enjoy family connection, they can be more creative and entertain themselves, they love to read, they love to express themselves in writing.

What if they enjoy the simple things, like their own backyard and sitting near a window in the quiet?

What if they notice the birds and the dates the different flowers emerge, and the calming renewal of a gentle rain shower?

What if this generation are the ones to learn to cook, organize their space, do their laundry, and keep a well run home?

What if they learn to stretch a dollar and to live with less?

What if they learn to plan shopping trips and meals at home?

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*"Building Independent and
Responsible Learners"*

Principal's Report Continued

What if they learn the value of eating together as a family and finding the good to share in the small delights of the everyday?

What if they are the ones to place great value on our teachers and educational professionals, librarians, public servants and the previously invisible essential support workers like truck drivers, grocers, cashiers, custodians, logistics, and health care workers and their supporting staff, just to name a few of the millions taking care of us right now while we are sheltered in place?

What if among these children, a great leader emerges who had the benefit of a slower pace and a simpler life to truly learn what really matters in this life?

What if they are AHEAD?

It's too hard to tell what the actual data will be in regard to whether children will be behind or by how much. But I love the 'glass half full' angle that this article takes. There are many other things that we could add to the list of unforeseen advantages during this period. For instance, it's never been more important to get into mindful meditation and prayer – I bet there are many people right now who have discovered self-reflective practices and are becoming more aware of the need for this. If you have encouraged this with your child, I salute you. Don't forget the very easy way to implement mindful meditation is to use the Smiling Mind app. Another beneficial practice that is sorely needed right now is Gratitude. Some like to journal, and some like to tap something away on their device, but basically you recognise a few things (daily) that you are grateful for. If we stop for minute, we can acknowledge that there is always someone in the world who does not have what we have. And yes, even during this time. The Easter message is one of Hope and we can see that there is a light at the end of the tunnel. School will resume as normal at some stage soon. Until then, hang in there.

Reminder: St James 'Home Learning' website – can be accessed [here](#). Check out the Help page, as this also includes notes on what to bring to school if your child needs supervision at school.

Andy McDermott

2021 Foundation Enrolments

We are now taking enrolments for 2021, officially, this closes at the end of June.

Please do not assume that all is organised for your 'budding foundations' for 2021. Be sure to go through the enrolment process by collecting and returning the necessary forms to the office. Due to current circumstances please email office@stjamesnng.catholic.edu.au to advise forms are required and these will be posted out to you. Families sometimes make the mistake of thinking that if they have the first child begin school that the following siblings are automatically 'in the system'.

Enrolment forms will be posted to you, please contact the office, office@stjamesnng.catholic.edu.au or phone 5942 5404.

St James Prayer

Lord our Guiding Light,
Let us follow in the footsteps of St James with shell in hand
May the Spirit guide us to show love, peace and forgiveness
Come follow me
Help us to strive to do our best in all the learning we do
We pray for wisdom with God's creation to care for all living things
Come follow me
Help us to be a friend, like St James was to Jesus
Bless our families, friends and community
Guide our community to nurture and grow in faith
Come follow me
Amen

Advisory Committee

Committee members for 2020 are:

Executive Officials:

Andrew McDermott and Fr Peter Kooloos

Chairperson: Gehan Dedigama

Board Members:

Ryan Lawlor	Tory Parker (Secretary)
Justine Langley	Liz Cunningham
Steph Katta	

Next Advisory Committee Meeting, TBA

Parents and Friends

Committee Members for 2020 are:

President	Meagan Rogers
Secretary	Karen Lawlor
Treasurer	Emma Spoard
Monday Lunches	Donna Reilly
Advisory Committee Representative	Justine Langley

Next P & F Meeting, TBA

Student Absences

To avoid students having UNEXPLAINED ABSENCES, Parents/Guardians are reminded to inform the School by 9.30am via Email –

office@stjamesnng.catholic.edu.au OR Phone – 5942 5404.

Please provide the student's name, date and reason for absence.

Late Arrivals / Early Departures

If you are dropping your child off late (after the bell has gone) or collecting him/her early you must visit the office and fill in the Sign In / Sign Out Register. Office staff will take your child through to their class at an appropriate time to ensure minimal disruption is made to the classrooms.

Playgroup in Isolation

Nar Nar Goon Playgroup will be operating as a toy library for the time being. Parents and carers may request the playgroup toys to be delivered to their house, (social distancing will be observed).

Deliveries will be Thursday mornings 9-11. The following Thursday the items will be collected, cleaned and quarantined for future distribution. There will also be craft activities available to be delivered. These will be shown on Facebook.

Our members can request a delivery through Facebook or leave a message with the school.

How Remote Learning Feels/Looks from a Teachers View

As you are aware, over the last months the staff has been working through developing a Positive Approach to Behaviour for our school. The focus words for this have been Safe, Responsible and Respectful. This week I have seen that these are more than buzz words; they are a real living approach to the way we all relate in our community.

We have had only a handful of students at school this week. These students have observed social distancing inside and outside the classroom, have had to work at a safe distance from the teacher and have completed the same activities as their peers at home. These students have worked diligently on their activities (Responsible), ensured safe social distancing (Safe) and used worked in a manner that did not interrupt the learning of others (Respectful).

Staff have spent many hours over their holiday (what holiday?) to make sure that we can provide the best possible learning for our students at this time. And this week, I know teachers are putting in a huge effort to respond to the student and parent needs. Respectful, Responsible and Safe are words very much in the forefront of our minds.

I have also spoken to many parents this week. Some students initially struggled with working at home. But with guidance, these students are now coping. Parents are supporting each other with advice and seeking assistance from our staff as needed. Most of all, the parents are working very hard to maintain a safe environment for their families in this time. All of this is Respectful, Responsible and Safe in action.

I am very proud to be a member of this school community.

Mr Vermeer

While it has been a strange feeling starting the term away from school I want to start by saying how impressed I have been by the hard work, effort and resilience of the students (and parents) of the 2/3GB team. It has been wonderful to see the pride people are taking in their work and the responsibility students are showing by seeking help when they need it.

While there might be a few hiccups along the way, overall the start to remote learning has been fairly smooth by all accounts. I encourage all families to continue monitoring emails for communication as we continue to get the best for the students.

Mr Balzary

Below is a link to a social story that may be helpful for students to understand the current situation.

<https://littlepuddins.ie/coronavirus-social-story/>

Foundation and Year 1 students have made a great start to term 2. We have had so many emails with pictures and videos of students' work and we are very impressed with the work students are completing. We can't wait to see more of students' wonderful work so please make sure you send it through.

Miss Hodgens & Mrs Bolton

We have started term 2 in a different way. All students have been able to login to their work via Google Classroom. I have been really happy with the work that students have shared with me over the past few days. They are really showing how they are able to adapt to the change and be flexible.

Mrs Kennedy

Fence Update

Over the holidays, we have seen the start to our new fence being installed.

Unfortunately, due to social distancing it is taking longer than normal for the powder coating to be completed.

Hopefully it won't take too long to be fully completed.





TERM 2 SCHOLASTIC BOOK CLUB

When you have looked through the 'virtual catalogue' and chosen your books, please order them through LOOP. Here is the link for families to access Loop ordering, this is where parents go to place their online orders.

All deliveries will be sent to your home address **NOT** to the school. There will be a delivery charge of \$5.99 to cover this cost.

<https://mybookclubs.scholastic.com.au/Parent/Login.aspx>

Below is the link to the "virtual catalogue".

Please sit down and enjoy it with your child. Maybe you could use it as a maths lesson: if they had \$10 how many books could they buy.

https://issuu.com/scholastic_australia/docs/aus_issue_3?fr=sMTQ2ZTEwOTgzNjE



Virtual Catalogue available now.

Book club provides your family with an affordable and convenient way of bringing the best of children's literature into your home.

There are 52 titles in this issue at \$5 or less.

Did you know that 10 minutes of reading a day will change your child's life?

Grow your child's love of reading.

Book club orders also support the school, as 20% of your order spent goes back into valuable Scholastic Rewards.