Welcome to the 2016 School Year

A big welcome to all our new students, families and staff and a fantastic welcome back to all our returning students and families. It’s great to see so many smiling faces in the learning communities and the playground. A special welcome for all our Prep students who are starting their school life with us.

You will have noticed some new staff members in our school and I’d like to extend a warm welcome to Kristian Manche (Senior Learning Community), Shannon Curtis (Senior Learning Community), Christine McGivern (Music) and Sandra Wall (Indonesian). I am sure you will make them feel welcome. Overleaf, there is a list of staff and the areas they will be working in.

There has been some changes in the school since last December. It’s exciting to watch the grass grow, the asphalt being painted and the library shelves being filled with books. I know everyone is itching to run on the grass but we just need some patience for a week or so. I can’t speak highly enough of the professionalism of the builders, architects and all involved in the new learning areas. A special mention to the many hours of work put in by Michael Manganelli over the last two years in bringing the project to this point.

Meeting with parents
I am always happy to talk with parents about their concerns, suggestions and ideas for our school. I am hoping to teach in the Senior Learning Community on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings (9 to 11) and won’t be available at talk at these times. I am available at other times during the week. Just see Carol or myself to make an appointment.

Thanks
Rod Sims
Principal

Help please!

We are trying to find an environmentally sustainable way to let you know what’s happening. What’s the best way to communicate with you?

- Closed group on Facebook?
- Emailed newsletters?
- School App?
- Printed newsletters?
- Any other ideas?

Send me your suggestions:
rsims@stanorlane.catholic.edu.au

Important! Have you updated your contact details?

It’s really important that we have your correct contact details for phone calls, correspondence, emergency contacts. So, if you have changed phone numbers or any other details, please let us know. You may email or see Carol at the office.
Carol’s email is:
cwebber@stanorlane.catholic.edu.au
Dear Parents, Carers and Students

Another new year has begun. And there are so many good things happening for us – a lot to thank God for. The record number of preps commencing their journey with us, the new learning space for the older students, and the offering of Indonesian and Music for our students are but some of God’s many blessings for us.

Then there is the selfless dedication of our staff – under the capable leadership of Mr Sims as Principal and Mr Manganelli as Deputy Principal. They exemplify how our students are the main focus at all times. This, too, is another of God’s blessings.

How do we “cope” with God’s blessings? Surely, we are invited to enjoy them and to feel spoilt by so much love. And it is right to feel that way. But, love has a magic kind of quality: it inspires more love. God’s love is both gift and task. That is why it is our call to mission. There are still many challenges before us. We need to continue building on our sense of community both within and outside it. No effort can be spared: our identity is spelt out by our mission which is our end-response to God’s blessings.

So, as we begin our year, let us commit ourselves to more openness to loving service. We know the sky is the limit when we focus on our vision lived out by the four Gospel values we profess. That is how we continue to be a living life-giving community.

Beginning of the Year Mass

Our Beginning of the Year Mass will be held on Sunday February 21st at 10am in the Church. This will be a special Mass for our school staff, student leaders and all students new to our school. We would love to see the church full with our school community. The Mass will be followed by our annual Parish Picnic. You are welcome to stay and enjoy some good food together. We will hold the picnic at the school and make great use of the new oval.

PFA Information Meeting

We are holding an information meeting for all parents and friends who would like to support our PFA this year. Nothing is more accurate than the saying, “Many hands make light work”. Come along on Friday Feb 12 at 9am to find out more. We will meet in the Hall.
School Fees
Accounts for this year will be sent home soon. Collecting fees supports the learning resources and programs we are able to run at St Thomas Aquinas.

We have several ways you can pay fees, from Centrepay, Direct Debit, EFTPOS....please see Carol for all the alternatives. Please see me if you are having difficulties paying this or last year’s account.

Playlinks - Learning together through music and art
Today (Wednesday February 3rd) is the first day of our new Playlinks program. This is a great hour of stories, music, art and dancing for 0 - 5 year olds and their parents/carers. There are limited places available for this free program. Bookings are essential. Please see the attached flyer.

Breakfast Club
Breakfast Club starts on Monday February 8th. Breakfast will be available from 8:15am to 8:45am in the Hall. We are hoping to run Breakfast Club for five days a week. Stay tuned for more news.

Camp, Sports and Excursion Fund Applications
You may be eligible for financial assistance from the Victorian Government to cover the costs of camps, sports and excursions at school. To be eligible, you need to be the holder of a Health Care Card on January 27 who has a child in primary or secondary school. Forms need to be submitted soon. You can download a form from http://www.education.vic.gov.au/about/programs/health/Pages/csef.aspx?&Redirect=1 or pick one up at the office. Funds are paid directly to the school and cover some of the swimming, excursion and camp costs.

The Importance of Oral Language and how you can help your child.

Speaking and listening is the basis of all language and is the important foundation for reading, writing, spelling and grammar. Here’s some great ideas to help your child’s development at all ages.

- Encourage your child to talk about different topics. If you are unfamiliar with the topic, let your child know that they will need to give you more information. • Don’t talk down to children. Talk at a normal pace and volume and use ordinary language. Pay the compliment of expecting them to understand your conversation with them.
- Encourage your child to tell you about events which did not involve you. This helps students work out what a listener needs to know and prepares them for writing.
- Try not to ask too many yes/no questions. Ask your child questions that require more lengthy use of language.
- Encourage your child to listen to and share their ideas with people from various backgrounds and age groups. This will give them more experience in communicating. Children can sometimes be disadvantaged by interacting only with people who share their views.
- Encourage your child to explain their reasoning to you when they are making decisions. Listen and respond in ways that promote further thinking aloud rather than ending the conversation with your opinion.
- Where possible and appropriate, give your child opportunities to make appointments and use the telephone.
- Talk with your child about the things you do together such as reading, using the computer, watching videos and socialising. Younger children may sometimes take a few hours to respond to some topics you have started.
- Use any available opportunities to encourage purposeful talking and active listening. Show by your behaviour that you are listening, not just hearing. Build on your child’s responses.