Dear Parents,

NEW .... SCHOOL, JOBS, MEETINGS, COMMITMENTS

MUCH .... EXCITEMENT, EXPENSE, RUSH AND TEARS

Yet life continues and each child in our family and class experiences the same type of beginnings as do we adults.

How can we face our own reality and still be present to each and all in our family, to share in their joys and fears, to let them experience their life fully and yet to participate with each other in all that makes us human?

As parents and teachers, we are called to participate in the experiences of those we love and with whom we work. We cannot be bystanders who just peer from the sidelines as spectators at a circus. We are called to enter into all that makes life worth living – as a painter enters into the emerging picture on a canvas, as a musician brings life into what may otherwise be an inanimate instrument.

The invitation is there “Come, be part of my life, walk with me and help shape me to be the best person that I can possibly be. Participate in my life by offering me your –

CARE   SUPPORT   LOVE   PRESENCE”

Let us be able to identify with the words of Jesus:

‘I have come that you may have life and have it to the full’.

It is always a huge privilege to witness the enthusiasm, excitement and trepidation our students display on the first day of a new school year. Each year I am struck by the same thought of how it is not only a privilege but it is also a challenge for parents and teachers to maintain the level of enthusiasm and excitement each day of the year ahead. By fully supporting each other in this quest, I am sure we will succeed.

This week we welcomed our new Prep children and students across other year levels. I hope they experienced a very warm and happy welcome from all at our school.

OPENING SCHOOL MASS

Our Opening School Mass will be celebrated at 9.15 a.m. next Thursday, February 12. We warmly invite all parents to join us as we ask God’s blessing on our work at St. Thomas Aquinas School this year. As teachers in a Catholic school we appreciate the importance of prayer and faith in our lives and in our interaction with the children in our care and their families.

SCHOOL NEWSLETTERS

By now St. Thomas Aquinas parents are used to and expect a regular newsletter from the school and I will continue this practice. There will however, be some slight changes, mainly to format and when it will be issued. Our newsletter will be sent home each Thursday (so that’s change number 1). On Thursday, February 12 we will send home just a flyer, which will list coming events and any special requirements/dates (change number 2). We will continue this pattern then for the remainder of the year – newsletter one week, flyer the following week always on a Thursday.
Both the school newsletter and the flyer are often the way we are able to communicate with many parents. The school relies on the child delivering these notices to home and the parents availing themselves of the information it contains.

SCHOOL ASSEMBLIES
School Assemblies will be held every second Friday at 2.30 p.m.
- Friday, February 20 - Year 4/5 – Miss Cartwright
- Friday, March 6 - Year 1/2 – Miss Graham
- Friday, March 20 - Year 5/6 – Mr. Sims

SCHOOL CLOSURE DAYS FOR TERM 1 – MONDAY & TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16 & 17
Firstly, I apologize for the lateness and the fact that the children have just resumed for the year.

At the beginning of Term 2, the school will take part in an external review conducted by the Catholic Education Office. This is a great opportunity for the school/staff to look at our many strengths and areas we can improve. The school has much to prepare in readiness for the “Review”. On February 16 & 17 staff will use these days to prepare for the review.

STUDENT GOAL SETTING MEETING – THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 26
Meetings will be held between 2.00 p.m. and 6.00 p.m. and children will be dismissed at 1.00 p.m. on the Thursday, February 26. Information regarding booking times will be sent home in next week’s flyer.
This term we will be holding Student Led Goal Setting Meeting where parents and child will meet with the classroom teacher to set two academic and one personal goal. We, the staff, see these meetings as an important part of your child’s education this year. With your child, parents and teachers, we will select three goals.

1. Literacy  
   2. Numeracy.  
   3. Personal  

Possible Goals to discuss with your child prior to the meeting.

Literacy (1)
Reading  Predicting; Connecting; Inferring; Creating Images; Reading on; Rereading;
Spelling Using resources e.g. dictionaries; Looking if the word looks right (visual);
Stretching it out; Chunking; Initial sounds etc.;
Writing Planning; Thinking before I write; Proofreading; Editing; Taking my time;
Re-reading to check if it makes sense; Changing the writing to try and make it better;

Numeracy (1)
Place Value Read the Problem; Underline the main points; Work out what they exactly want you to answer; Check my answers; Improve my timetables/quick maths; Thinking time;
Specific maths processing – trading/borrowing;

Personal (1)
Makes positive decisions regarding behaviours; Accepts the consequences for actions;
Think before acting; Considers how actions affect others; Starts work immediately;
Works consistently; Completes homework; Show respect to others at all times;
Complete tasks to the best of ability; Organise self and belongings;

Ready to start work when required; Possess a positive attitude to work; Take pride in work; Willing to ‘have-a-go’ at challenging work and persist; Return to class on time; Work quietly; Present work neatly and logically; Co-operate with others in a group situation. Use good manners and is courteous;

THANK-YOU
We have enjoyed a smooth start to the school year, due mainly to the fact that all staff spent part of their holidays at the school, preparing for the children’s return. On all occasions when I was here four or five teachers and the school secretary were present and hard at work, which of course, was great to see. A special thanks also to Debbie Dabkowski, our school cleaner who had the school and grounds looking great for the children’s return to school.

PLEASE REMIND ALL CHILDREN THAT THEY ARE NOT TO USE THE FRONT DOOR AS AN ENTRY/EXIT TO OR FROM THE SCHOOL

WHAT’S COMING UP

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Thursday, February 12</td>
<td>Opening School Mass at 9.15 a.m.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sunday, February 15</td>
<td>Staff Commissioning Mass at 9.15 a.m.</td>
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<td>Monday, February 16</td>
<td>School Closure Day – No School for children</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, February 17</td>
<td>School Closure Day – No School for children</td>
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<td>Wednesday, February 18</td>
<td>Ash Wednesday</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday, February 26</td>
<td>Goal Setting Meetings</td>
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<td>Friday, February 20</td>
<td>2.30 p.m. Assembly – Year 4/5 – Mr. Sims</td>
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FOR A LAUGH
Paddy rings up his mate Mick and says “I have just bought this huge sandwich and it has a piece of string hanging out of it – do you think it could be a bomb?” Mick says “is it ticking?” “No” says Paddy – “it’s ham!”

Looking forward to meeting many parents at our Opening School Mass next Thursday, February 12.

Yours sincerely,

Michael O’Riley

MICHAEL O’RILEY
Principal
Message from Father Ray

Dear Parents, Carers and Students

We are at the beginning of yet another year. With gratitude to God, we can rejoice that we have grown that little bit more. Every time we begin something afresh, we are gifted by God and challenged to go beyond our boundaries. As we look ahead, can we do the same again? Can we go that little step further?

To achieve yet another successful year, we are called to work together. Yes, a big year is ahead of us, that is true. Are we ready for it, individually and as a School Community? All of us have a part to play – that is how it becomes a huge success.

The list of how we can help is endless ... assistance in the classroom, the School Board, STAMPS, Breakfast Club, the canteen, Parents & Friends, Aldi Sausage Sizzles, the Fete, some odd jobs, and so many other opportunities ...

Being graced by God is a call to serve: this is our mission. It happens wherever we are: at home, in the workplace, at School, in the streets ... The more we give of ourselves, the more we grow as persons. This is love in action – the core value that motivates us all.

We all have our own personal gifts, given us by our loving God, so that we can serve one another. Which gifts are we ready and willing to give to others? In the end, we go back to our very purpose for existing at all as a School Community: it is our students who will benefit.

STUDENT WELLBEING – BRAVEHEARTS

On Thursday, February 19, the Prep 1 and 2’s will be having an incursion – it is Bravehearts. This is an interactive show presented in a non-confronting and engaging way to teach children personal safety. It encourages children to speak out about any unsafe situation such as child sexual assault, bullying or domestic violence. Parents are very welcome to attend this session at 9.30 a.m.

Clare Green – Student Welbeing Co-Ordinator

SCHOOL BANKING: Just a reminder that school banking will start next week on Wednesday.

Canteen:

As of next week the canteen will be open on Wednesday and Fridays. A menu will be sent home to families today.

The Fridge Pocket Project

One strategy to assist in building resilient kids is to be well organised for school and community activities.

We would like to thank the BATForce and the School Focused Youth Service for designing and distributing a magnetic “Fridge Pocket” to our students for Term 1 2015 with support from Geelong Connected Communities.

The purpose of the “Fridge Pocket” is to assist in connecting families to school and community events by collecting all notes, notices and permission slips for the various activities young people wish to be a part of.