Dear Parents

On the weekend the children celebrated the sacrament of First Holy Communion. Both masses were beautiful celebrations and the children looked fantastic in their special outfits. I have heard from many parents about how excited the children are at now being able to fully participate in the mass. Congratulations to all involved.

On Tuesday night the school held the 2013 AGM. We heard a number of reports from the Parish, Board and P&F and then viewed a presentation of photos from the year whilst enjoying supper and refreshments. It was a great night and fairly well attended. I would encourage parents to attend this important event next year as it is a great way of finding out what has been happening in and around the school community over the year. A copy of the reports tabled and the 2014 staffing list can be found on the school website.

Our swimming lessons held earlier this year were interrupted by works being undertaken at the venue. After speaking with the shire and the Aquajetty I was able to secure a 20% discount on pool entry fees. This amounts to around $5 per student. We discussed how to refund this amount easily at a board meeting and it is quite a complicated process to do so given our accounting systems. A suggestion was made that the surplus amount could be donated to the appeal for the people in the Philippines on behalf of the St Bernadette’s parent community. The board agreed that it would be a great idea. If you would prefer to have the amount refunded please let me or one of the Admin staff know and a refund can be organized otherwise the amount will be donated at the end of the year.

A new uniform list is now available on the school website. There are some items that will be increased as the cost from the supplier has increased. Our uniform is still one of the more affordable uniforms for Catholic schools. http://www.stbernadettes.wa.edu.au/uniform.html

Rebecca Van Der Kwast has resigned from her position in the school and I wish her all the best for the future. Rebecca has worked at the school for a number of years and will be missed. An advertisement has been placed seeking her replacement.

This week’s Parenting Ideas information sheet is about technology. With the amount of time children can spend online and the accessibility of digital devices it can be helpful to reflect on how this may be impacting on their lives. I hope you will find the article helpful.

God Bless
I can’t believe we are already saying ‘thankyou’ to our student leaders for 2013. It seems like last week we presented their badges and started working out our leadership teams. Our leaders have been great to work with and have had some good ideas and positive initiatives for our school community this year.

In particular, the Environmental Team have been instrumental in introducing the School Pride Award where each class has been allocated a designated area of the school to take special responsibility for keeping clean. The Environmental Team then judge the areas each week and present a certificate to the class they believe has the cleanest area or to the class they have noted makes time to check and clean their area.

I know the sports leaders are very involved with assisting Mr O’Dwyer in a range of sporty ways and promoting sport and fitness in the school community.

It has been a pleasure to work with the leaders and I am envious of their excellent public speaking skills and confidence. I hope they have enjoyed their leadership experience and have grown from the opportunities to serve others. We wish them all the best and thank them for their great contributions to the school.

Parents, you are of course very welcome to attend the assembly.

WALKATHON UPDATE:
Next Monday 2nd December, Sr Catherine (OLM) will visit our school with news from the orphanage in Chittagong, Bangladesh and our Student Leader Fundraising Team will present a cheque on behalf of the school. Our final total collected from our walkathon earlier this term is a staggeringly generous amount of $7 605.28. This would be enough to buy 7 cows!! I have personally been very moved by the generosity of the school community and am so

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>OUR 10 TOP FUNDRAISERS</th>
<th>OUR 10 LUCKY RAFFLE PRIZE WINNERS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2. Brett 4B</td>
<td>2. Ben S 5B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Cameron 1R</td>
<td>3. Teegan R 1B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Mia G 2B</td>
<td>5. Victoria 5B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Christelle 3B</td>
<td>7. Teia PPB</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Islay 6R</td>
<td>8. Paige 5R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Ella-Jane 6R</td>
<td>10. Liam 1R</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
BISHOPS’ RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TESTS YR 5

Congratulations to the following Yr 5 students who achieved very high results in the Bishops’ Religious Literacy Assessments this year.

Madison Buffier 78.9%
Jack Cummins 78.9%
Sariese Barker 74.6%
Paige O’Dwyer 74.6%
Tamia Ogle 73.2%
Mark Trainer 71.8%
Peter Foti 70.4%

BOOKLISTS 2014:

Our 2014 Booklists were sent home on Monday. Items have been carefully selected on the basis of class needs and quality versus cost. The instructions for ordering are clearly printed with the booklist. Booklists can be ordered online or you can take the booklist to either of the OfficeMax retail stores. Orders must be received by 31st December to ensure delivery before school commences. Delivery is free and if you are not home, a collection card will be left with instructions on where to collect your booklist items. Each booklist is an individual order and each booklist order is packaged separately.

You may choose to cross out items that you already have or would prefer to purchase elsewhere but we would ask you to take care to ensure the items are of a good and lasting quality. Your child needs good tools.

Textbooks need to be ordered as you will have trouble purchasing them elsewhere. It is detrimental to your child’s learning if they do not have their textbooks ready for the start of the school year. However, some students are working at a different textbook level to the rest of the class and require an alternative to what is on the booklist. If this applies to your child, you will receive a letter accompanying your child’s booklist with clear instructions to cross off the textbook on the booklist and purchase the alternative from the school (we will order these textbooks in to have them ready for you to purchase). We do this so that you don’t waste money on a textbook that isn’t suited to your child’s learning needs.

Unless otherwise stated on the booklist, items need to be clearly marked with your child’s name. Some students are naturally very good at caring for their equipment and making it last. Others need a lot of encouragement to look after their things so that you don’t need to keep replacing lost or damaged items. At school, we do our best to encourage students to look after their things so they have what they need, when they need it and value the money you have spent to ensure they are well equipped. Your encouragement of your child to achieve a high level of personal organisation and care for their belongings is the most powerful influence.

We hope you find the booklist ordering and delivery process easy and efficient.
THANK YOU P&F FOR THE SCIENCE BOOKS:
Our thanks for the money to purchase a wonderful range of interesting science books for the science room.
Christmas Free Dress Day
Thursday 5th December

Students are invited to wear something ‘Christmassy’ and bring in their hamper donation for St Vinnie’s.
CHRISTMAS BBQ

ALL WELCOME

Sunday 15th December 2013
11am
City Park, Secret Harbour
(Corner Anstey Rd and Bluestone Parkway)

★ BYO Drinks & Picnic Lunch
★ BYO Picnic Blankets/Chairs
★ BBQ Facilities Available
★ Special Guest Appearance by Santa

(Parents may like to purchase a small gift for their child for Santa to hand out. Please wrap the gift and clearly write your child’s name on it to bring on the day)

We Hope to See you There!
Like moths to a flame, 21st-century children gravitate to touchscreen-enabled tablets and mobiles – so much so, that a study across Australia, New Zealand, the US and Britain found more two- to five-year-olds are able to manipulate apps than tie their shoelaces or ride a bike.

However, given the relative infancy of these devices – and hence a dearth of studies into the effects on children of their long-term use – it’s becoming increasingly difficult for parents to decipher which apps stand to actually maximise their children’s learning.

“We are still beginning to understand the possibilities that new technologies like iPads can have on experiences that engender learning for children,” says Dr Denise Chapman, a lecturer at Monash University and an early-childhood specialist for more than a decade in the US and Australia.

Dr Chapman points to research from Dr Jackie Marsh of the University of Sheffield, who said that ‘these virtual worlds are fast becoming a part of the online landscape of play for young children and rather than dismiss them as irrelevant, or deride them as potentially harmful environments, academics and educators need to examine their affordances more closely in order to identify what children gain from their playful engagement in these worlds and how their experiences can be built upon in early years settings and schools’.

It is through play that children learn, Dr Chapman says, and iPads ‘just happen to be a part of, and compatible with, children’s play’.

Still, according to two surveys of US teachers released late last year, there is a widespread belief among teachers that students’ constant use of digital technology is hampering their attention spans and ability to persevere in the face of challenging tasks.

Scholars who study the role of media in society say no long-term studies have been done that adequately show how – and if – student attention span has changed because of the use of digital technology. But, as The New York Times reported, ‘there is mounting indirect evidence that constant use of technology can affect behaviour, particularly in developing brains, because of heavy stimulation and rapid shifts in attention’.

Dr Jordy Kaufman, a senior research fellow at the Swinburne University of Technology, is looking into the effects of tablet use in 140 three- to seven-year-olds. He has found that tablet use has no negative effects on executive function, which is the cognitive ability to exercise control and manage tasks such as planning and problem solving.

He has also found that, for some children, touchscreens appear to motivate and enhance learning rather than hinder it. Dr Kaufman’s results indicate that calm, creative activities on the touchscreen, such as painting, were similar to their ‘real world’ counterparts in that they ‘do not seem to adversely affect children’s behaviour or attention in the short term’.

Kristy Goodwin, director of www.everychancetolearn.com.au and a lecturer at Macquarie University, says her own research into the 150,000+ ‘educational’ apps available on iTunes found 72 per cent are aimed at toddlers and preschoolers, the majority of them promoting rote learning (a memorisation technique based on repetition).

However, she says iPads are not an ideal tool for rote learning and young children are better off using apps that stimulate creative expression, language development and problem solving.
'In an ideal world, parents should be using iPads to enhance their children’s communication skills and opportunities for creativity,’ Dr Goodwin says. ‘When they are not being used as a digital babysitter or a digital pacifier, there is a lot of upside to using them in the right way.’

In her book Screen Time, journalist Lisa Guernsey lays out a framework – which she calls the three Cs – for thinking about media consumption: content, context, and your child. She poses a series of questions such as ‘Do you think the content is appropriate?’ and ‘Is screen time a relatively small part of your child’s interaction with you and the real world?’, and she suggests tailoring your rules to the answers, child by child.

Dr Joanne Orlando, a lecturer in education at the University of Western Sydney, is researching how apps contribute to children’s learning. She wrote in The Sydney Morning Herald that giving a child a mobile phone every time you want them to be quiet can be ‘as detrimental to their development as giving them a lolly each time they throw a tantrum’. ‘Consistently demanding children disengage with the world around them and expecting them to be quiet all the time limits their opportunities to learn how to engage confidently with society,’ Dr Orlando wrote.

‘We should develop the skills of children to use mobile technologies as valuable learning tools. They are fast becoming a way of life for young people, and it’s our responsibility to ensure that children use them in a way that helps them reach their potential.’

---

**All apps are not created equal**

‘So many apps have been designed not by educators but by 20-somethings app developers and there is no real scrutiny (as to their educational benefits) before they are put in the educational category. All iTunes does is check for inappropriate language or links to inappropriate websites,’ says Kristy Goodwin, director of www.everychancetolearn.com.au.

‘That said, there are some fantastic apps and they can be the most amazing tools when used in developmentally appropriate ways.’

Here, Kristy lists her top five apps (as of August 2013):

1. **Toontastic** – ‘This app comes highly recommended. It is a creative app that allows users to draw, animate and share their own cartoons through imaginative play. Press the record button, move characters onscreen, and record your narration! Toontastic will play back the animation and voice as a cartoon for users to share on ToonTube. Suitable for children aged 3+ years.’

2. **My Story-Book Maker** – ‘This app allows young children the opportunity to create their own digital stories with ease. Students can draw their own pictures, take photos with the built-in camera and record their voice. The finished story can be emailed or uploaded online. This is a wonderful app to develop children’s capacity to reflect. For example, it can be used to annotate and describe digital photos after a visit to the zoo or after a holiday. Suitable for 3- to 12-year-olds.’

3. **Play School Art Maker** – ‘This free app is ideal for Australian children familiar with Play School. Using this app, students can create movies and drawings using Play School characters. This app supports creative play, social interaction and language development. Suitable for children aged 3 to 5 years.’

4. **Draw and Tell HD** – by Duck Duck Moose – ‘This app allows children to create a digital artwork and simultaneously records their voice as they draw. Then it saves both the artwork as well as their verbal narration to your device’s photo album. All of the on-screen movement is captured as a short video with your child’s voice narrating. Suitable for 3 to 8 year olds. An excellent app for developing creative expression and language skills.’

5. **Kids Flash Card Maker** – ‘This creative app allows children (and parents) to make their own interactive flashcards. Insert your own photographs using your camera roll or camera app, record your own voice and videos as well. Suitable for children aged 3+ years. A great way to use this app is to create a ‘morning routine’ chart using the app and take photos and videos of children performing their daily tasks to get ready in the morning.’

---

**Beware the ‘pass-back effect’**

You see it in cafes and shopping malls everywhere and now it has a name – the ‘pass-back effect’. It’s where parents hand their mobile device to their child to pacify, placate or simply please them.

Dr Joanne Orlando, a lecturer in education at the University of Western Sydney, is researching how apps contribute to children’s learning. She wrote in The Sydney Morning Herald that giving a child a mobile phone every time you want them to be quiet can be ‘as detrimental to their development as giving them a lolly each time they throw a tantrum’.

‘Consistently demanding children disengage with the world around them and expecting them to be quiet all the time limits their opportunities to learn how to engage confidently with society,’ Dr Orlando wrote. ‘It teaches them that they are not important. They may be having fun using a device, but the message is subliminal. We should develop the skills of children to use mobile technologies as valuable learning tools. They are fast becoming a way of life for young people, and it’s our responsibility to ensure that children use them in a way that helps them reach their potential.’