Dear parents, friends and Father Simon,

Yesterday (Ash Wednesday) marked the beginning of Lent. This is the period of the church year that is exactly forty days before Easter. During these forty days we are asked to do four things (as Father Simon mentioned in mass yesterday). 1. Pray, 2. Fast, 3. Give Alms (donate) and 4. Penance. Please have a talk with your child about these as there were some great responses yesterday.

Just a reminder, too that Corinne Davis has stepped up to full time work in 3/4 and Monica Rayner is now our Art Teacher.

Tonight, Tony Dalton will be leading the first “Community Conversation” in grade 3/4 with parents and students. The aim of these is to listen and build relationships. Further Community Conversations are scheduled for the P-2 level as well as the 5/6 level. Please mark them in your calendar.

We are looking forward to the Commissioning Mass (27/2). At this Family Mass all in our community are welcome to attend to see staff from both Parish schools commissioned to undertake their duties this year. This will occur in our church at Belgrave at 5pm on Saturday 27th February.

Our assembly format has changed with the year six students being given some public speaking practice (with me) and then have the chance to use this in a real life setting. I am encouraging them to inject some of their own touches to the assembly format. If you can get along, please do so. All feedback welcome to me as well.

Lastly, we take our emergency management requirements very seriously. We are practising drills regularly. These drills are covered by our emergency procedures which in turn are governed by our Emergency Management Plan. This Plan has to be submitted to the CEO Melbourne annually. Finally, we also are expected to have a Critical Incident Management Plan, which govern how we deal with a crisis both during and after the crisis. Members of the School Leadership Team will be undertaking further training around this last document later this term.

School Closure Days
- To be confirmed -
  Friday 18th March 2016
  Thursday & Friday 21st & 22nd April 2016

Home Communication
It is important to us, that families feel informed on what is happening at school.

With today’s technology we are fortunate to utilise media like Schoolstream and Instagram and Facebook, to provide updates quickly.

Schoolstream will be utilised a lot more this year and consequently the security of the site will be amended to be password protected. We will inform you of these changes when they occur and the process involved.

Consequently we will be reducing the Newsletters emailed home to families to once a fortnight. If families have any concerns regarding this, please feel free to let us know your concerns.

Have a great week,

Duncan Arendse
Principal
Each year we run a Classroom Helpers course, which is open to parents and other family members. This course focuses on early reading, writing, speaking & listening and numeracy skills and is a prerequisite if you wish to help in the Prep-2 classrooms during Literacy or Maths.

Many of our Prep parents undertook the course last year during the orientation days (although we haven’t forgotten we still have one session to catch up on) so we would like to gauge whether there is interest in running the course for others who missed out.

We will run the course either during the day or in the evening, depending on demand and to best suit as many as possible.

If you are interested, please indicate which days and times you would be able to attend on via the link by clicking here (or web address in reply slip), filling in the attached slip or email either of us.

The junior grades appreciate parent helpers to help run effective Literacy and Maths lessons, and we would love as many parents as possible to complete the course. Even if you are not able to help in the classroom, you would be most welcome to attend to find out how to help your child with their learning. Some people may also be interested to find out more about how things work at STM. In other words, everyone is most welcome!

There will be 2x2hour sessions or 4x1hour (once again, we’ll decide when we know what suits most people best).
- 9-11am on a Tuesday or Wednesday
- 2-3pm on a Tuesday or Wednesday
- 7-9pm on a Monday or Tuesday or Thursday

Thank you,

Judy Smith
Literacy Leader
judys@smbelgrave.catholic.edu.au.

Monica Rayner
Maths Leader
monica@smbelgrave.catholic.eu.au

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**Classroom Helpers Course Reply Slip**

(or online here or [http://goo.gl/forms/FBElo9mVvj](http://goo.gl/forms/FBElo9mVvj))

I would like to attend the Classroom Helpers course.
I am able to attend at the following times:
- 9-11am: ☐ Tuesday ☐ Wednesday
- 2-3pm: ☐ Tuesday ☐ Wednesday
- 7-9pm: ☐ Monday ☐ Tuesday ☐ Thursday

Your name: ________________________________
Mater Christi fees change

Recently the Board Chair of Mater Christi College wrote to all families to announce that school fees for families will drop significantly. Below is an extract of that letter.

When the Sisters of the Good Samaritan established Mater Christi College in 1963, affordability for local families was paramount. Over the last decade the number of students in our area swelled and our student numbers grew along with it. This growth placed enormous pressure on our facilities and ultimately led to fee increases.

... after a careful analysis of demographic projections, it was clear that the decade long 'bubble' of local students had worked its way through the education system and our projected student numbers would return to our long term average of about 800 girls. This means the need for building new infrastructure will no longer create such a significant pressure on our finance.

... We believe that these positive changes reflect the vision of our founders just over 50 years ago. Mater Christi will continue to offer an affordable and valuable all-girls education in Melbourne’s East for generations to come.”

Families are invited to visit the College website for tour dates or contact the College to arrange a Personal Tour 9754 6611.

Julie Feeney
Deputy Principal - Learning and Mission

Witness the energy and ‘can-do’ spirit of girls’ education. Click on the link below to see our College Tour Dates.

http://www.materchristi.edu.au/enquiries/open-days-and-tours/

Does your family have a current Health Care Card (HCC)?

You may be eligible for the Camps, Sports and Excursions Fund (CSEF)

Provide payments for eligible students to attend camps, sports and excursions.

Families holding a valid means-tested concession card or temporary foster parents are eligible to apply.

$125 per year is paid for eligible primary school students, with $225 per year paid for eligible secondary school students. A special consideration eligibility category also exists. Payments are made directly to the school and are tied to the student.

CSEF applications open from term one 2016. The program will again be promoted to families via school newsletters and websites.

Parents or legal guardians are required to submit a new CSEF application form each year.

Victorian government Year 7 students (in 2016) who are CSEF recipients are also automatically eligible for a uniform package. For more information regarding this initiative please see State Schools’ Relief.

Applications for Parents or legal guardians

Parents or legal guardians are required to complete a CSEF application form and lodge it with their child’s school for processing.

Application forms should be completed and lodged with schools by 29th February 2016, as payments are made from March. However schools will be able to accept and process applications up until the end of term two each year.

Application forms are available from the office or click on this link.


Shared custody

The CSEF system only allows one application per student. Parents in shared custody situations are encouraged to make decisions as to who applies for the CSEF. Schools should not be put into the position of arbitrating in decisions such as this.

If the parents cannot decide between themselves who should apply, they should be encouraged to resolve the dispute through the Family Court, or contact the Department's CSEF Helpdesk for more information on 1800 060 970.

What Happens on a School Closure Day?

Staff attend four meetings and professional development days each year, called School Closure Days in the calendar.

There are no classes for students on a School Closure day. Extend out of school care, offers families who are registered with them, a program on these days at a set cost. Families will need to contact Extend if they wish to register for care. In our experience, the minimum number required for the program to run is not usually met. We suggest that families seek alternative arrangements to avoid disappointment should the Extend program not proceed.

We appreciate that closure days can cause an inconvenience to families and we thank you for your understanding and acknowledgement of the importance of these days.
Weekly recap

CONGRATULATIONS TO: Will Pinder for winning the Extend superstar for doing a great job to help pack up!

Last week the children loved watching the tie-dyed milk experiment. The movement/pulling of the surface colours was a great attraction, and Quinn was able to explain to me that it was due to surface tension! This week we played ‘Minute to Win it’ and the kids loved it! Everyone joined in to enjoy the four challenges set for them. It was great to see the intense thoughts of how they were going to be approached (see pictures below). We also talked about and enjoyed Shrove Tuesday with some colourful pancakes, wacky fruit faces and look forward to making fruit smoothies! And most importantly we enjoyed the vitamin D this fabulous weather is providing us as much as we can. :) 

We are in desperate need of recycles for our creative hands if you want to get them off your hands. Boxes, plastic, egg cartons,... We would love ANYTHING!

**Something from the kids!**

**Ella. A:** I like the milk experiment because it was fun watching it move.

**Olive P:** I would like to do more craft activities at OSHC.

**Josh. S:** I want to do more team soccer games please.

**Next week**

Monday: Raffle ticket draw/ monitor selection and movie, comfort and popcorn.

Tuesday: Soccer on the oval and lemonade scones. YUM!

Wednesday: Cat and mouse game and some yummy salad wraps. :)

Thursday: Team tunnel ball and Balloon rockets!

Friday: Group balloon games and paddle pop stick aeroplane designs

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STM OSHC mobile: 0405 268 318 or email: stmextend@gmail.com

EXTEND head office on 1300 366 437 or email: enquiries@extend.com.au
An important notice for grade 4–6 families from Apple

Apple charger recall – this has been taken from the ‘Apple’ website:
We have been advised that you are able to swap these over at the Apple Genius Bar or exchange by post. Please see the link below for instructions on how to do this, and also on how to identify if your charger is affected. The closest Genius Bar to Belgrave is at Fountain Gate Shopping Centre.


Regards, Michelle Turpin (ICT Leader)

Forms to be returned — ASAP
Thank you to the parents who have already returned the following forms. There are a few that we are still waiting to be returned. Please contact the office if you require a second copy—it is essential that our records are up to date.

Medical Report / Authorisation Form
All students have been sent home with a ‘green copy’ of their Medical Report and over the page a Parental Authorisation Form. Families, please make any necessary changes to this document, sign on both sides (circle I DO / DO NOT) and return ASAP.

Photograph/Video Permission Forms
Some students would have received a bright yellow form that needs to be returned, signed by parents. This document provides authorisation for your child for the duration of Primary School at St Thomas More—to have photograph/video and name published in various media.

Asthma Action Plan
All students who have a purple Asthma Action Plan, will have received a request to complete and return an updated form for 2016.

Communication Methods
1. Newsletter emailed every Thursday
2. Classroom newsletter
3. Schoolstream App (download from the app store)
4. Instagram (download from the App Store & request to join “stmps16”). Contact the office if we do not accept your request. Usually it is because your username does not identify you by a name we recognise.
5. P&F Facebook Page (befriend Communications P&F Member Toni Brockliss. To be added to STMPANDF

Casserole Bank
If you have already volunteered: If you have already put your name forward to cook (either via Facebook or directly to me), I will pass your phone number on to Jacinta. If you do not want your phone number passed on or would prefer email contact, please use the link below to supply your preferred email address.

Casserole Bank Volunteers (or http://goo.gl/forms/DRSLK8vaQ0)

Still want to volunteer?? If you haven’t already volunteered, it’s not too late! Please use the same link above to add your name and contact details to the list.

More information about the running of the Casserole Bank is also available on the above link (which you can read before deciding to volunteer or not).

Many thanks
Judy Smith

BELL REAL ESTATE
think big think bell
Supporting our community for over 40 years
9754 6888 1689 Bunwood Hwy, Belgrave bellrealestate.com.au
Welcome to our first newsletter for 2016!

We hope you all had a wonderful Christmas break and are excited to be back at school!

Do you like all the beautiful colour in our school yard? Thanks to you and your amazing fundraising donations throughout the year, we were able to gift money to the school to get the paving revamped and outlined with all your favourite games!

We had quite the downpour of rain and the colour didn’t have time to settle and some children were slip sliding on the new pavement, but rest assured that you will no longer be skidding on the bright colours as it has all been fixed.

Welcome back free ICY POLE from the P&F this FRIDAY 12th

Enjoy your free icy-pole kids!!

REMINDER!! The next P&F meeting is Monday 15th February at 7pm. Light Refreshments provided. Children welcome.

Class Representatives 2016

3/4PC VACANT!! 5/6N VACANT!! 5/6TC VACANT!!

Can you help and volunteer to be a Class Rep?

“Toni, what does a class rep do?”

Well, a class rep is a link between the teacher and the parents for the P&F. They send out an email of upcoming events and fundraisers. We also hope to assign each class a fundraising event. So say 3/4D get the Father’s Day Stall, the rep organizes parent helpers from the class and they take ownership of that event, from sourcing the things right up to running the function. The rep won’t ever be alone. There are enough of us to help out anybody, it’s just a way to get different people involved and for that class to feel proud of their efforts.

More information for all the above topics is on our FACEBOOK group – STM Parents and Friends. Please tell your fellow school friends about this group and invite them to join. Everyone involved are really fantastic and friendly and it’s a wonderful place to swap ideas and keep up to date with school happenings.
2016 School Tours

- Thursday 11 February, 9.30am
- Tuesday 23 February, 6.00pm
- Tuesday 15 March, 9.30am
- Thursday 5 May, 9.30am
- Tuesday 19 July, 9.30am
- Wednesday 24 August, 6.00pm
- Sunday 23 October, 9.30am
- Tuesday 15 November, 6.00pm

St Joseph’s College focuses on academic excellence without losing sight of the importance of values, justice, and the development of life skills.

St Josephs College

A school that prepares for life

www.stjosephs.com.au
5 Brennock Park Drive, Ferntree Gully. Telephone 03 9758 2000