Dear Parents and Carers

Our week began with a magnificent Opening Mass on Tuesday in the Hall with Fr Mark. I was extremely impressed with how the students behaved, they were reverent, reflective and well-mannered during the service. Some of our Year 6 students led a very moving and powerful liturgical movement to the words of ‘Wonderfully Made’. A very apt song choice for our superb students. We concluded our celebration with our Year 6 Leaders receiving their leadership badges. Special thanks to Cath Doig for her coordination of the event and to all the staff and students who supported her. A lovely start to the year.

COMMUNICATION

Effective communication is something we strive for at Holy Spirit. The last year’s parent survey indicated that families agreed that communication between home and school is good, but not perfect. We are certainly not perfect, and we try our best to offer a range of communication options depending on the activity. Our primary sources of communication with our community are via the School Newsletter, online calendar, Skoolbag App, email, notes and letters to parents. Where possible, we give as much notice as possible, but there are times where the busyness of school impacts on this. In moving forward, we aim to:

- Streamline the amount of App alerts;
- Ensure our online calendar is up to date;
- Highlight keys dates in the Newsletter each week;
- Place notes, etc on the website;
- Develop a Facebook Page (see below);
- Ensure information and permission notes are provided in a timely manner.

Communication is a two-way street. It is equally a parent’s responsibility to know what is going on in the school or in their child’s class by reading the newsletter, checking the calendar, reading notes, etc. Parents are always welcome to contact the Front Office or a teacher to clarify something. Furthermore, teachers are always happy to meet with parents at any time during the year. Parents do not have to wait for the formal interviews or learning journeys. Additionally, my door is always open and I am happy to meet with parents over any matter. It is about working together to ensure your child’s success at school.

FACEBOOK

In our efforts to continually improve communication, we have recently established a Holy Spirit Primary School Facebook page, search for @holyspiritnicholls. There are some other Holy Spirit pages out there, but this is the only one managed by the school. It is our intention to use this form of social media to highlight upcoming events and post interesting articles. The articles may not necessarily be the view of the school, but more something for parents and staff to think about.

The online calendar is also available through the Facebook Page and the App. On Facebook it is only available on the desktop version, not the mobile version. (not sure why? It’s a Facebook thing!) I do ask parents to not use our Facebook page as an avenue to vent frustrations or make negative comments about the school or an individual. If parents have a concern or wish to obtain further information, then you are asked to use the usual ways of phoning or sending an email.
DEALING WITH AN ISSUE
Last week I outlined the etiquette to remember when communicating via email with a teacher. I again encourage you to keep in regular contact with your child’s teacher/s throughout the year and inform them promptly of any concerns or positive moments in your child’s year. Teachers are your main contact for learning, pastoral care, student management, great achievements, etc. The class teachers appreciate being informed of all issues well before you consult a specialist teacher or a member of the Leadership Team.
However, if you have met with your child’s class teacher and would like further information or additional support, please follow the protocols and contact the following staff:
- Contact your child’s class teacher/s.
- Consult with your child’s year level coordinator or staff with a specialist role or responsibility:
  - ELC Bronwyn Newth
  - Kinder Anna D’Amico
  - Year 1 Seamus Farrell
  - Year 2 Narelle McFarlane
  - Year 3 Cath Doig/Anna D’Amico
  - Year 4 Cath Doig
  - Year 5 Brad Gaynor
  - Year 6 Julie Jenkins
- Consult with the Assistant Principal or Principal.

Some things to consider:
- Please do not approach a teacher at morning assembly or straight after school for a formal chat. Teachers are often on duty, have meetings or appointments scheduled;
- Teachers may take 24 hours to respond to your email;
- Teachers are always happy to meet with parents. However, appointments will usually be before school or straight after school. Like any specialist appointment, parents may need to rearrange their work schedule to make the appointment;
- Optional interviews are possible after the Interim Report this term. Parents also have the opportunity of an interview at the end of Term 2 and Term 4 following written reports.

WORKING WITH VULNERABLE PEOPLE
ANY PARENT who volunteers to assist in classrooms, with sporting teams, uniform shop, etc MUST HAVE A WORKING WITH VULNERABLE PEOPLE CARD on them at all times. As with your driver’s licence renewal, your photo will be taken at Canberra Connect Office, and a card sent to you within two weeks. There is no fee for this. Please ensure you renew your card online and when your new card arrives please bring it in to the school so it can be photocopied and a copy left at the school. Thank you.

SCHOOL UNIFORM
This week I commenced regular ‘uniform inspections’ of year levels in order to maintain a high standard of uniform at Holy Spirit. Another reminder that earrings should be small plain sleepers and that boys wear navy blue socks as part of their uniform, with white socks only worn with sports uniform. This is the policy stated in the School Handbook, and I will be enforcing the policy.

LANDSCAPING
If we have any landscape gardeners in our community, could you please contact the Front Office. I would like a few small jobs completed around the school to improve our grounds.
BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT
Many thanks to the parents who have discussed our new behaviour management steps with their children. We have already received some positive feedback from parents regarding our stronger stance with managing inappropriate behaviour. The students are constantly being reminded of the steps and we have already had some students receiving a Time Out sheet and loss of privileges. I have made it quite clear to students that there will be a loss of privileges such as excursions, school discos, representative sport, play time and award cards, etc for inappropriate behaviour. It is my belief that if a student cannot be trusted at school, then they will not be representing the school at carnivals (eg zone swimming, Boorowa, etc) or attending excursions. Thank you for your continued support.

Have a good week.
Cheers

Brad Gaynor
Principal

Qkr!

Information

Thank you to all the families who have recently downloaded the Qkr! app and have used it to pay for the Y6 Leadership Shirts. Confirmation payments and the Year 6 Camp are now on Qkr! and this is our preferred payment method.

A couple of reminders when using the Qkr! app: -

For those families who downloaded Qkr! last year, please change the year level for each of your children for 2017. To update click on “Student Profiles”, select each student and click on the down arrow next to “Year Level” and select the year level for 2017. After clicking on “Update Profile” you will be prompted to put in your password to update.

Remember to set up all of your children who attend Holy Spirit on Qkr! This is particularly important for sporting events, camps, sacramental payments etc. as you will need to select the name of your child who will be participating. When paying your term school fees using Qkr!, it does not matter which child you select.

Qkr! help notes are attached on the next page.
Our spirit

Your Qkr Help Notes

Forgot Password or Email Address

Tap on Forgot Password

Enter your Email Address and tap on Send Code

Enter code from SMS and continue

Enter new password and Reset Password

Sign in

Did NOT receive SMS

Forgot Email Address

Call (1800 689 563) MasterPass Help Desk
The operator will ask you for your registered phone number and last four digits of your credit card and expiry date.
The operator will tell you your Qkr registered email address. You can now Sign In

If you need to amend your Qkr email address see Editing Personal Details. After you have changed your details Sign In

Enter your Qkr registered email address and password. Sign In to Qkr

Call (1800 689 563) MasterPass Help Desk
The operator will ask you for your registered phone number and require some identification e.g. email and last four digits of your credit card and expiry date.

If your phone number is incorrect the operator cannot amend your account for security purposes. The operator will have to delete your account. After your account has been deleted you will need to Sign Up again.

Sign Up

Get Started Today!

Sign Up

When you have completed your new registration go to the Qkr App and Sign In

Password Tip: When entering your password you can tap the ‘eye’ symbol displayed at the end of the password field to display your password as you enter it. This will enable you to see your password to ensure you have entered it correctly.
Our spirit

Swimming Carnival
Friday 24th February 2017
- Held at Gungahlin Leisure Centre
- For grades 3-6
- Please send outstanding permission notes to school tomorrow

Confirmation News

This week our Year 6 children began their preparations for the Sacrament of Confirmation – the third sacrament of initiation into the church. We ask that everyone keep these children and their families in your prayers during this significant time.

Important Upcoming Dates:

Confirmation Enrolment Masses – Weekend 18th and 19th February
All candidates must attend one of the Masses on this weekend: Saturday 6pm, Sunday 9:30am or Sunday 5:30pm. Enrolments forms and baptism certificates (if your child was baptised in another Parish) need to be brought along to as well.

Help Needed
We are looking for a number of volunteers to help sew the Confirmation stoles for our Year 6 students. If you are able to help please email catherine.guthrie@cg.catholic.edu.au or phone the school on 62418640 and leave me a message.

Working with you in faith,
Catherine Doig
Religious Education Coordinator
Commencing **Monday 21 February** there will be a change to School Route **427**. **Commencing Monday 21 February 2017** **Change to route:** Route improvements have been made to avoid traffic and delays.
Mental Health Difficulties

This year in Kidsmatter Primary we are investigating Component 4: Helping Students Experiencing Mental Health Difficulties.

In Australia, it is estimated that approximately one in seven children experience mental health difficulties and about half of all serious mental health problems in adulthood begin before the age of 14 years. One of the best ways parents, carers, early childhood educators and school staff can help children who may be experiencing a mental health difficulty is to learn about and understand how different problems present in children. As a parent, carer or educator you are not expected to have the knowledge of a trained mental health clinician, however it can be helpful to understand the difference between normal displays of emotion and challenging behaviours and more unhelpful feelings and behaviours which may be representative of a mental health difficulty.

It’s important to know that most people, including children, will experience mental health difficulties at some point in their life. Getting help early for children’s mental health difficulties is important, as it can affect their relationships, physical health and even their school work.

The earlier in life mental health difficulties are addressed, the better chance a child has at improving their long-term mental health and wellbeing.

I will regularly place further information and resources, that can help parents and carers understand more about children’s mental health and wellbeing, here in the newsletter. School staff, including our Counsellor Kate Cumming, can also help you find out what children’s mental health services are available in our local area.

Mental health professionals have developed a number of very successful ways for helping children with mental health difficulties and their families. Just like taking your child to the doctor with physical health problems, it is important to get help and advice for mental health difficulties.

MINI VINNIES NEWS

This term Mini Vinnies will be establishing our new group, consisting of a large number of very keen children from Year 4 and some past members from Years 5 and 6. We will be planning our year’s activities, starting with some Happy Day Cards for the homeless in our community and a Pyjama Day sometime soon, to raise funds for our work throughout the year.

SEASONS FOR GROWTH

Last year’s Seasons for Growth groups have reconnected and will continue to support each other throughout their time at Holy Spirit. This year we are very lucky to have three of our wonderful and very experienced Classroom Support Assistants – Maryellen Bakker, Angela Laria and Rosemary Vecchi, signed up for training to be Companions. We will run Seasons’ late in Term 2 or early Term 3 but I will put out more information about it through this newsletter well in advance. It is a terrific program and we are very happy to be able to offer it again this year.

SAFE SCHOOLS HUB

The Safe Schools Hub for Parents provides you with information and resources that you may find useful in helping to make your child’s school experience a positive and happy one. Get ideas on how to stay cyber safe, and how to deal positively with bullying and harassment. You’ll also find out about encouraging self-respect and protective behaviours in your child. The following is a link to the Safe Schools Hub website which is funded by the Australian Government Department of Education. http://safeschoolshub.edu.au/for-parents

PLAY GROUPS

Holy Spirit Play Group

We are pleased to be able to continue our play group this year and we invite parents and carers to join us in our new Play Group Room (which is the classroom closest to the sandpit and covered playground) from 9.00am – 11.00am on Thursday mornings. please feel free to come along during term time. Cheeky Cherubs Playgroup is held in the same room on Wednesday mornings from 9.00-11.00; it is run through ACT Playgroups. There are limited places and a small fee does apply to this group so if you would like further information please contact the front office.

Always feel free to contact me if I can be of any assistance, at Sharonmarie.harrison@cg.catholic.edu.au
2017 St Vincent de Paul Doorknock Appeal will be held throughout February.

To support the work of the St Vincent de Paul, Gungahlin Branch, Holy Spirit School has volunteered to collect money in different allocated areas of Ngunnawal, Nicholls and Casey.

We are hoping to get both our families and staff involved and make it a community event.

More details will be sent home next week, but please take some time to think seriously about giving up an hour of your time to support this an important charity.

If you would like to be involved or have questions please feel free to contact Catherine.Guthrie@cg.catholic.edu.au

Keep an eye out for more information to be sent home next week.