Dear Parents and Friends,

Thank you to all the people who were able to make it last night to our Parent Information Night. I very much enjoyed having the opportunity to discuss our goals and expectations for the year.

The major news for this year is the renovation and refurbishment of all our classrooms over the first half of the year. This also entails renovating our walkways, portracks, balestrde and landings.

The draft program for our building programme at this stage will look like the proposed dates below for the end of this term across the holidays and into second term. As we appoint a builder we will work with them on the timetable and ensuring safety for all of students, staff and community. During this build time we will be moving classes for a period of time into the library, our new art and music room. All of these details will be communicated to you as we move closer to the start of the build.

Working Bee - Save the Date

To help with the organisation of the building works we will be having a school working bee on Sunday March 26th from 8-10 am with morning tea provided. If you are able to come along and help with the movement of furniture into storage or into the library on this day it would be very much appreciated. Children are welcome to come along for the morning.

Chess

Chess started this week on Tuesday lunchtime. All levels of ability from prep to 6 are very welcome to attend and there is no prior knowledge required. Notes are available from the office and the cost is $11 per session. In this week’s lesson I saw children listening to stories, learning how to set up the board and move pieces different ways. There is no requirement to book for the term or year.

Barefoot Bowls - Family Social Night

Our Parent and Children Social night is Friday night 3rd March at the Windsor Bowls Club. The school will provide some platters in the beginning of the night however the Club has a full dinner menu available. Barefoot bowling is available on the night from $4 and I will be defending my title from all comers. This social event offers the opportunity to meet new and existing families within the school in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere. An invite and RSVP will come home today.

Active School Travel

Fridays at our school will never be the same. From Friday, 24th February we will be asking everyone to really think about how they travel to and from school as we launch Footloose Friday as part of our Active School Travel program. It’s a great way to increase your family’s activity levels, meet other families and teachers in the school, and spend time with your child on your active journey to school.

All students will receive an Active School Travel Passport. Students who actively travel to schools on Fridays will collect stamps and earn lots of great rewards throughout the year.

Have a good week,
Matthew Beacroft
Principal
Dear Parents and Caregivers,

Opening School Mass

Thank you to our students, staff and families for joining with our parish community to celebrate the Eucharist during our opening school mass. Father Jose reminded us about the importance of living our school motto of ‘One in Christ’ each and every day. We are reminded of this through the life and words of Mary MacKillop. The quote ‘Never see a need without doing something about it’ was recalled by our students during our celebration as being so very important. It was fitting that our final hymn was ‘Never see a need’. A special thank you to Mrs Patty McCourt for organising and leading our school with music and song.

Leadership Commissioning Assembly next Wednesday 22nd February

At assembly next Wednesday afternoon our Year 5 and 6 leaders will be officially commissioned into their role as student leaders at St Mary of the Cross. In addition to the blessing of our leaders and the presentation of leadership badges at Mass this week, the students will sign their leadership contract at the assembly. The Year 6 leaders will also be presented with their special leadership shirts. We invite our school community to this special event.

Have a peaceful week,

Dean Estreich
Assistant Principal Religious Education (APRE)
Sr Anne Cannon

Dear Parents,

Here are the next five steps (edited) from *Generation Next* in helping to keep communication open for your children, especially when they are stressed or anxious. You can find the full article on their blog.

6. **Help them with the words for what they might be feeling.**
   Building their emotional vocabulary will help them to make sense of things. Name what you think they might be feeling in a way that makes it easy for them to correct you. ‘You seem angry/ confused/ sad, right now.’ Then let them know that it’s okay for them to feel what they’re feeling, and that you understand. Let them know they make sense to you. It’s a beautiful thing to feel.

7. **Anxiety and courage exist together. Show them.**
   We can think that brave people do what they do because they are fearless, but anyone who is pushed to the edges will feel fear. Explain that anxiety is actually a sign that they’re about to do something really brave – otherwise they wouldn’t be anxious about it. There will be things that are tough for them that are easy for others, and things that are easy for them (find the things they’re good at) and tough for others. Normalize anxiety by sharing the times you feel anxious and act brave.

8. **Get the information you need when they’re calm.**
   When things are calm and happy, talk about what you can do to make things better when their anxiety is high. Ask them what helps and what you (or others) do that doesn’t help. Listen and try not to take it personally.

9. **Notice every little step.**
   Children who struggle with school anxiety are generally really well-behaved and want to do the right thing. Your approval means everything to them. When they do something that would be difficult in the face of anxiety, notice – even if it’s just finishing breakfast or putting their hair in ponytail. Their anxiety feels big. Let them know when you notice.

10. **Understand why being tough won’t help.**
    It’s likely that you’ve tried the tough love thing. It’s also likely that it didn’t work. Anxiety is driven by a brain that thinks it’s under threat. It’s physiological. Their body is being surged with neurochemicals that are readying them for fight or flight. When there’s no need for fight or flight, the neurochemicals build up and it feels awful. That’s anxiety. It’s not bad behaviour and it’s not from soft parenting. They don’t want to feel the way they do, so being tough or telling them to ‘get over it’ will be as useful as telling them to catch falling stars in a thimble.
    When the brain is in survival mode, it’s in lockdown and completely focused on staying alive. There’s no human instinct that’s stronger. The brain won’t sideline its need to stay safe – even if it’s just finishing breakfast or putting their hair in ponytail. Their anxiety feels big. Let them know when you notice.
    And finally... Don’t underestimate the difference you’re making by being there, believing in them, and seeing them for the amazing humans they are, not just despite their anxiety but also because of it.
    Mary MacKillop would say: “Be eager in your desires, but humbly patient in their accomplishment”. Have a good week, stepping patiently with your children.

God bless,

Sr Anne

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**TUNA, CORN & CHEESE PIEs (Makes 12)**

- 12 slices multigrain bread
- 425g tuna in springwater, drained
- Large handful baby spinach leaves, roughly chopped
- 125g corn kernels, drained
- 8 eggs
- ½ cup reduced fat cheese

1. Preheat oven to 180 degrees Celsius. Grease a 12 holes 1/3-cup capacity muffin pan. Using a rolling pin, flatten bread and line muffin pan with bread slices.
2. Whisk eggs in a large jug. Mix tuna, spinach, corn & cheese. Divide amongst bread cases. Pour egg mixture into bread moulds.
SUPPORT A READER (SAR) is a very successful program which aims to support and develop the literacy skills of our young students. It is easy, fun and very satisfying. We are calling for volunteers to help us with this program in 2017.

If you are interested we will be holding a training session at the school on Wednesday February 22. (1.45-3.00 pm)

This session will be informative but very relaxed!

We will then ask you to nominate a 1 hour time slot each week when you can support young readers 1:1, following the SAR process.

If you feel you are able to support the school in this way please contact Maureen Walsh on mvwalsh@bne.catholic.edu.au or 3857 4803. Thank you in anticipation!

ACTIVE SCHOOL TRAVEL

We know that everyone is different, so there are lots of ways you can actively travel to school. How will you actively travel to school?

Walk

Leave the car at home and walk your kids to school. If you live too far away, drive part of the way and walk the rest. We call that “Park and Stride”.

Cycle

Ride with your children to school. It’s legal to ride on the footpath and remember to always have your helmet secured.

Public Transport

Public transport is easy once you know how. For bus, train and ferry timetables, visit www.translink.com.au, or phone 13 12 30.

Carpool

Find a friend and carpool to school. It’s an easy way to save money and time. Talk to other parents in your child’s class or at music and sport to see who is going your way.

Come to our school assembly on Wednesday 22nd February to learn more, get started on 24th February and remember that EVERY Friday is now Footloose Friday.

The Windsor Park Sports Club down the road on Grafton Street is the meeting place.

Parents, friends and staff members are very welcome to meet at the park every Friday from Friday 24th February at 8:15am and walk to school.

What a great way to start your day.