Welcome Back

It’s always a privilege to witness the delight and enthusiasm of both the staff and the students as they embrace the promise that a new school year brings. The excitement of meeting again with old friends, making new friendships and discovering new learning can be felt in every classroom across the school; it’s what gives a school life and we are so pleased that things have started off in such a positive way for 2015.

In particular we welcome the new Year 7’s and all of the other students who are new to Marian College in Years 8 to 12. We know that the hospitality that is extended to you will reflect our Brigidine Core Value of Welcome All as you learn what it means to be a member of this community.

We are also pleased to welcome new and returning staff members – Geoff Welby, Lauren Marett, Kathy Justice, Jessica Cremona, Jessica Schemioneck and Sarah Toto.

We look forward to a great year ahead.

New Facilities

Our Design Education students have returned to a bright and spacious new facility to support their learning in art and technology. With purpose built services such as spray-painting booths, screen printing facilities and a textiles space, we look forward to the innovation and creativity that is a hallmark of the work that is produced on a regular basis by the staff and students in Design Education.

The occupancy of this building marks the completion of Stage One of a three stage building project. Stage Two is well underway with the construction of a new Food Technology room and a new self-service style Canteen connected to the Trade Training Centre, and the completion of landscaping works to connect the two stages of this project. Stage Three, the demolition of the old canteen, will be completed sometime in late May.

Our Year 7 & 8 students also returned to a renovated space with the completion of the refurbishments to the old computer pod spaces. These new “Learning Commons” provide an extension to the traditional classroom spaces and afford students and teachers some choices about how students might utilise different types of learning spaces to suit their learning needs and preferences. We are excited to see how these space are used.

New Resources for Learning

Staff and students have been familiarising themselves with the new software that has been rolled out across the College. Students are able to use ‘Coneqt’ which provides them with access to their courses of study, assessments and homework in an online environment. As we become more familiar with the software we will introduce parents to how this tool can be used to enhance communication between school and home to support student learning.

Rita Grima and Raymond Pisani - Co-Principals
**Faith and Mission**

It is the start of another school year. Students came with eager faces and minds open to the many possibilities that abound in the new school year. There were some anxious faces on that first Friday, not just students but parents as well. As parents, it is hard to see these young people heading off to secondary college for the first time. As a College, it is an important day to help everyone ease into the realities of school life. It becomes the meeting place, a starting point for establishing yourself at school. Finding classrooms, getting to know peers in your class, being met and welcomed by the whole school, it is working out which bus or where you are to be picked up at the end of the day. It is establishing these routines that become part of the educational experience for our students at Marian College.

On that first day we also introduce the students to our theme for 2015, ‘When all the world is silent, even one voice becomes powerful’, Malala Yousafzai. This quote comes from a young girl who was co-awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2014. Malala stands for the rights of all people to have access to education, especially females. For some people in Pakistan this was against what they culturally believed and they wanted to stop Malala. They did so by attempting to kill her. She and her family had to leave their homeland, Pakistan, they reside currently in England. Today, Malala is 17 years of age. We talk about people making a difference, Malala demonstrates that her voice is powerful and her message continues. She doesn’t speak in terms of revenge for the people that hurt her, but rather in terms of opening educational opportunities for all people including the children of the men who attacked her.

People like St Brigid, Bishop Daniel Delaney, Nano Nagle and Mary MacKillop spoke in a similar way, getting people to listen and act in a way that is fair for all people. It is important to bring about change through the education of the young to recognise the right of all people regardless of race, religion or colour.

February the 1st was the Feast Day of St Brigid the founder of the Brigidines. Brigid was a woman who spent a lifetime working to improve the lives of the people she came in contact with. Her life influenced many people in Ireland to work with the aims of: justice, hospitality, compassion, healer, peace, prayer and inspiration. May her life continue to inspire the community at Marian College.

“The future lies in the hands of those strong enough to provide future generations with reasons for living and hoping.”

(Gaudium et Spes)

*Mary-Lou Towns - Assistant to the Co-Principal - Faith and Mission*

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**Student Wellbeing**

**WELCOME BACK EVERYONE AND ESPECIALLY OUR NEW YEAR 7'S**

It only seems like yesterday that we were saying good bye to the 2014 school year and after a holiday to relax, rejuvenate and renew ourselves the school year has begun. Now it seems like it has been more than a week since the students returned and our new Year 7’s began their journey into Secondary School.

The new Year 7’s were formally introduced and welcomed to our school community at an Assembly last Friday. They all looked a little overwhelmed although a number of them had their older sisters with them to help a little.

We look forward to the Opening School Year Mass on Thursday 12th February were we will have a celebration of the Eucharist and then welcome back members of our Year 12 class of 2014 to acknowledge their achievements. I am sure the next edition of the Marian will highlight this event.

**YEAR 12 LEADERSHIP RETREAT – NEXT WEEK**

We have invited our Year 12 Student Leadership Group to participate in a two day retreat that is to be held at the Presentation Family Centre at Balnarring. The focus of these two days will include the development of goals for the year, further the development of leadership skills including communication, public speaking and conducting meetings.

This is exciting opportunity for our student leaders’ development and we will update you with the highlights of the retreat and future initiatives in the next Marian News.

The leaders at Year 12 have such great potential and I look forward to working with them to develop their leadership skills and strengths in 2015.

**REMEMBER ABOUT SCHOOL UNIFORM EXPECTATIONS**

Just a reminder to all families about some of our uniform expectations for 2015. Please note that these have not changed from previous years.

These include:
- Lace up shoes
- Hair tied back
- Long white socks
- Blazer should be worn to and from school and be the most outer garment worn
- Sport Uniform should only be worn on the days that the student has a Health or Physical Education practical class and at no other time.

It is very pleasing to see so many students from Years 8-12 having purchased the new navy blue sport polo top – it looks great and while we are in a period of transition it is now expected that students purchase this item if they need to replace their white polo top for whatever reason.

*Kerrie Williams - Assistant to the Co-Principals – Student Wellbeing*
Learning and Teaching

**Academic Excellence Awards**

Next week we will celebrate our VCE high achievers at the Opening School Mass and last Friday, at our first whole school assembly for 2015, we celebrated our present high academic achievers.

Academic Excellence Awards were calculated for students from Years 7 – 10 in 2014. These awards recognize all round academic achievement and were calculated based upon all assessment tasks reported upon in all subjects studied in Semester 2, 2014. Year 11s required 4 or more ‘A’ averages in Year 11 subjects studied or 3 Year 11 subjects, with an above average VCE Unit 3/4 study score.

Of course there are many students who have just missed out on receiving an award and who have displayed excellent work habits. Further recognition of students will take place during the year. At this time, we encourage every student to ensure that they set their individual goals for this semester and year. At Marian College we are firmly focused on success for all students and this is the challenge to every student!

**Parent Information and Meet the Teacher Evenings**

To assist in setting all students up for a successful 2015, we invite all parents and students to attend our forthcoming Parent Information and Meet-the-Teacher Evenings. These will provide an opportunity for you to hear from Year Level Leaders and other speakers, and to meet your daughter’s Homeroom or Mentor Teachers.

The Year 10, 11, 12 evening, on 12 February, will commence at 6.00 pm with a presentation by Sonia Karras and Sasha Kulari.

The Year 7, 8, 9 Parent Evening is on 17 February, also at 6.00 pm. Prior to this, we will host a digital information session for parents, which will provide an opportunity to see SEQTA, our new learning management system and student portal, in action. It will provide the opportunity to learn more about the digital tools that your daughter is using at school and also to maximize the communication opportunities provided by the parent portal and website. This session will commence at 5.00 pm on 17 February in the Resource Centre.

These evenings will enable you to learn more about the year ahead for your daughter so that we can work together to support her. They will also provide an opportunity for parents to ask questions and receive feedback in a small group or individually.

To ensure that we continue to provide the best possible opportunities for all of our students, it is essential to work together with families to support our students. We strongly recommend that all parents and students attend the relevant evening. Details have been mailed to all families. We look forward to meeting you and discussing your daughter’s year ahead.

**Staff Professional Learning**

This year we have rolled out an exciting new learning management system called SEQTA. We will provide more details about this system and its advantages in the next edition of Marian News. In order to facilitate the effective implementation of this system, staff will be involved in a full afternoon of professional learning on 9 February, so classes will conclude at 1.00 pm.

**Paul Familiar & Jane Goddard - Assistants to the Co-Principals - Learning and Teaching**

**Science Club**

Science Club has now been running for nearly ten years! Members meet on a fortnightly basis. The philosophy behind the Club is to further enhance the inquiring minds of our students.

Students from across all year levels come together to enjoy Science. Over the years, students have had the opportunity to explore various aspects of Science, such as the phenomenon of polymers (slime), investigate the nature of electricity (making their own moving carousels), chemical reactions (making ice cream) and biological sciences.

Last year nine teams were entered in the Royal Australian Chemical Institute - Victorian Crystal Growing Competition. One of our teams made it through to the National Finals, which was held in Sydney. Unfortunately in this region we did not make a place, but our students were given a ‘Highly Commended’ award for their crystal. We look forward to entering this competition again and making it to the National Finals again.

Through Science Club, the girls were also given the opportunity to explore what university life is like and courses that are on offer. This was done via the three day program, ‘Engineers Without Borders’ Innovation Challenge’, program, run by The University of Melbourne.

We look forward to providing the girls with further opportunities in the field of Science this year!

Finally, the Science Club members thoroughly enjoy the hands on approach to exploring the world of Science. The friendly atmosphere has not only broadened their knowledge of the Sciences, it has also encouraged new friendships across year levels. New members are always welcome!

**Mrs Carfora and Mrs Matejin**
HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILDREN BE BETTER STUDENTS

Here are some ways you help your child do better at school this year.

1. Let your child see you making mistakes.
   Parents are their child's first teacher and their lifetime teacher. Part of being a teacher is teaching your child how to deal with making mistakes. Let them see that you can make mistakes and deal with it so they will understand it's not a big deal and they can cope when they trip up.

2. Use e-mail to keep in touch.
   E-mail is a great way to reach your child’s teacher without having to play phone tag. Teachers then have a record of a conversation or can print information out to put in a student's file as a reminder. If you hear what your children are struggling in, please feel comfortable talking to the teacher about it. We want to know that they need help. Communication needn’t be limited to when there’s a problem.

3. Don’t tell your child that you weren’t good at maths.
   Some parents might feel intimidated by the thought of helping children with their maths homework, especially in the upper grades but maths is here to serve you, not to trip you up.
   Maths should make life easier, and mastery can start at home with parents showing that they're not frightened by numbers. One way to make math more accessible is to relate it to daily activities. Capitalise on examples where maths is useful, especially the kinds of calculations adults do daily like measuring ingredients, managing sums of money, working out distances.
   This way, children see how what they're learning matters in life.

4. Get organised with a colour-coded system and a checklist.
   Older students are expected to be more independent and manage their assignments themselves, but as they transition from primary school to middle school, they might find it hard to keep track of everything. Try using colour-coordinated folders and notebooks to help children keep their material for different subjects organised. Keep a written checklist by their school bags so they can make sure they have packed everything they need.

5. Check their homework, and then have them explain it to you.
   It’s not enough to just get the answers right. To make sure your children aren’t guessing, sometimes ask them to explain what they did and why. This lets you know that the child has completed the task and for the child to actually explain their work helps their learning.

6. Don’t compare your child with others.
   Don’t put pressure on children to be just like others. There’s no such thing as the child that’s like every other child. They are all different. They all have strengths and weaknesses, they all have talents and challenges.

7. Help your child make connections to literature.
   To help your child get the most out of books, focus on problem-solving, social skills and life experience. Take your child to the zoo (life experience). Teach them to ask an adult for help if they lose something (problem-solving) or to hold the door or others (social skills). With skills like these, children will be able to relate their own life experiences to those of book characters, improving their comprehension. If they don’t have these life experiences, when they are asked to make deeper connections to reading material, it’s hard for them.

8. Middle school and high school are not the time to take a more hands-off approach.
   Just because your children are getting older doesn’t mean it’s time to put them on auto-pilot. This is the point in their lives when they’re trying to sort out who they are. Peer pressure is intense and their connectedness to school can wane. High school students have this air about them that they don’t need their parents anymore, but they really do.

9. Don’t do everything for your child.
   Sometimes it’s faster to do things yourself than wait for your children to complete a task. But having everything done for them means they don’t learn take care of themselves. Empower your children to think for themselves and be more responsible for themselves.

10. Ask about your child’s day.
    Stay involved in your child’s education, beyond helping with homework. Even small things, like asking a child what happened at school, can be the difference between a child who unplugs at the end of the day and one who continues thinking about what they learned. Give them the kind of feedback that acknowledges and respects their feelings so they know you are really hearing them.

Acknowledgement: Mari-Jane Williams.
Welcome to 2015!

Be prepared for an Asthma Spike

What is the February asthma spike?

'Spikes' are significant increases in asthma presentations to hospitals and emergency departments.

For children and adolescents with asthma these 'spikes' occur soon after the return to school and other education settings following the long holiday break.

Therefore, a significant 'spike' in asthma presentations and admissions to hospital for children and adolescents, experiencing severe asthma exacerbations, occurs throughout the first few weeks of February.

Triggers that can be encountered are:

- Respiratory viruses, such as cold and flu viruses.
- Anxiety and stress due to returning to school.
- Cleaning products that leave behind strong smells, aerosols or airborne dust.
- Dust and mould spores from poorly ventilated, or insufficiently cleaned school rooms.

What can we do to avoid asthma exacerbations in our school?

- Ensure your school has a sufficient amount of Asthma Emergency Kits. A minimum of 2 and at least one per every 300 Students.

  - Ensure that each kit contains in-date reliever medication (e.g. Ventolin, Asmol or Airomir), 2 spacers, reliever record sheet and instructions detailing the emergency procedure.
  - Ensure student Asthma Care Plans are updated on an annual basis and returned to school.
  - Ensure staff education and training is up to date.
  - Ensure your school's Asthma Policy is current.
  - Ensure staff are aware of which students in their class have asthma, and know where Asthma Emergency Kits are stored.
  - Ensure all classrooms are opened, cleaned and aired out in the weeks before students return to school.

Why does the spike occur?

While there have not been direct links established, the February 'asthma spike' is believed to be largely due to children and adolescents coming back into contact with asthma triggers in and around their school environment, that they have had time away from during the holidays. Forgetting to take their medication, (because their asthma feels better during the summer) and poor medication adherence, also places students at an increased risk of asthma attacks when exposed to triggers.
National Young People and Asthma Survey

On 20 January, Asthma Australia launched the findings of our National Young People and Asthma survey at the Sydney Trapeze School. The survey was conducted in May-July 2014 in conjunction with researchers at Young and Well CRC in Melbourne. 533 young people aged 12-25 years across Australia completed the survey.

86% are using their reliever medication to treat symptoms, while less than 60% are using their preventer medication daily (as prescribed) to help control their asthma.

Another aspect of the survey was to ask what young people want to help support them with their management of asthma,
- 59% want an asthma app
- 52% want a website specific to young people with asthma
- 40% want resources that help friends to understand about asthma
- 27% want an online forum

Initiatives resulting from the survey findings will be provided to Secondary Schools as they become available.

Asthma Kids

A new resource for primary aged students will be available in Term 1. Asthma Kids takes children on a trail with the character Chester. They collect blue balloons as they answer questions and complete tasks. The 2 videos in the package are aimed at children under 9 and those 9 and over.

Asthma Kids is aimed at all children, with key messages for children with asthma and for others who may have family or friends with asthma or just want to know more about this common condition (1 in 10 children in Australia).

Check out the Asthma Australia website for the release of Asthma Kids in March.