8 December 2016

Welcome to our new VCSPB newsletter

Welcome to our new look newsletter. We will be sending a newsletter to your school each month during school terms with updates on our work as well as information of value for schools and parents.

We have moved to the new format to enable easy distribution of our newsletter with your parent and teacher community via email. There is also the option to print the newsletter and to change the language viewed on the newsletter so we are able to reach more members of Catholic learning communities across Victoria.

We hope you enjoy reading the articles and would appreciate any feedback you may have and any ideas for further information on specific topics relevant to parents of children in Catholic education.

Message from the Chair

As I write my final message as Chairperson for the VCSPB, I would like to reflect on the past five years with pride in representing the perspective of parents in Catholic schools throughout Victoria.

Since my induction in 2011, as a team of dedicated parent volunteers, we have been working towards developing our body to become the prominent voice at the State level on various issues in education, in particular Catholic education.

Central to our work is building relationships and working in partnership, not only with each other but with various key stakeholders to ensure that parent perspective is not only heard but also acted upon.

As an advocacy body, we explore five key areas in education:

1. Curriculum
2. Parent Engagement
3. Child Safety and Wellbeing
4. Catholic Identity
5. Catholic School Funding

One of our greatest achievements in my time as Chairperson was our involvement in the development of the national parent body, Catholic School Parents Australia (CSPA) as well as the creation and implementation of the VCSPB strategic plan.

I have the privilege of being an Executive member of the CSPA and have seen it grow into a well-established and respected organisation, representing parent perspective across Australia.

VCSPB will continue to represent the parents of children in Catholic schools in Victoria at a national level with two representatives on the CSPA council.

VCSPB Strategic Plan

The VCSPB strategic plan has been fantastic in understanding who we are, who we represent and what we want to achieve. The plan acts as a guide for our members to focus on specific areas of improvement and advocacy. This year we have focussed in various capacities on our four key areas of advocacy, relationships, communications and governance.

Completed Projects

Two major projects we have undertaken this year are the ‘parent connectedness project’ - exploring effective engagement of parent bodies and other organisations with their key stakeholders and organisational capacity building with the development of an online skills audit, an appraisal survey and opportunities for professional learning for our council members. Some of our council members attended professional learning conferences and events to improve their knowledge of education and network with prominent people in education both in Victoria and interstate.

The skills audit will form part of our governance structures when inducting new members to our council and when developing the capacity of our council members in understanding professional learning that is required as well as committee representation opportunities.
Value of Catholic Parent Representative Voice in Victoria

The VCSPB has continued to represent parents at a State level on a number of committees and reference groups and are regularly invited to participate in providing feedback on critical state issues in education.

More recently the VCSPB were invited to contribute to providing opinion on the skills and attributes that teachers require to enter the teaching profession through the VIT (Victorian Institute of Teaching) and DET (Department of Education and Training) consultation group. This was in relation to the Minister for Education, James Merlino’s proposed ‘Excellence in Teacher Education’ changes for entry into Initial Teacher Education courses.

VCSPB were then invited to present a written submission and participate in a video for this project to ensure parent perspective at a State level in what is expected of teachers in contemporary education in our schools.

This cemented the value of our parent body for key stakeholders, who view the perspective of Catholic school parents as highly significant when seeking feedback on critical issues.

Annual Report

Our Annual report was presented at the AGM on Thursday 10th November and will have now been sent out to all of our membership schools. The annual report is available on our website or if you wish to receive an emailed copy of our report, please send your request to secretary@vcspb.catholic.edu.au.

Website

VCSPB is undergoing a scoping process on our current website with the intention of updating the design and function of the site. We are looking forward to launching the new website early in 2017.

Strengthening Relationships – Understanding our role in each diocese

VCSPB Executive continued to engage with each of the Directors of the Archdiocese of Melbourne, Diocese of Sale, Sandhurst and Ballarat with the intention of strengthening relationships and further developing strategies to support and engage with parents in Catholic schools across Victoria.

In order to achieve this, our membership base will need to continue to grow as we move towards improving representation. We are currently in the process of seeking new council members to join VCSPB in 2017. There are still vacancies available in Sale, Ballarat, Melbourne (North), Melbourne (East), Melbourne (West), Melbourne (South East).

Those who wish to join our council will currently be sitting on either a school board, parents and friends council or other parent organisation for the school that is endorsed by the school Principal. For other requirements of members, please contact our Executive Officer, secretary@vcspb.catholic.edu.au.

As I complete my time as Chair and member of the VCSPB, I wish to convey my sincere thanks to my fellow council members, past and present.

It has been a wonderful privilege and learning journey to work with the VCSPB, always endeavouring to give a true representation to the perspective of parents across our many wonderful Catholic schools in Victoria.

My thanks also to the Directors in each of Victoria’s four diocese for their unwavering support of me and readiness to collaborate with the parent body to enhance Catholic education, most importantly for our students.

Yours sincerely,
Tracey O’Neill
(Outgoing Chair)

A message from our new Chair

It is with great pleasure that I commence 2017 as Chair of the Victorian Catholic Schools Parent Body. Since joining the parent body in 2014 I have had the pleasure of taking part in collaborating with our key stakeholders and representing parent perspective in the diocese of Sandhurst. Over the past two years I have been a member of the Executive committee for the VCSPB as Deputy Chair and have been able to take part in key decision-making on various issues in education.

I look forward to meeting with members from each diocese in the coming year and in continuing to build the parent body for the benefit of all parents and students in Catholic schools across Victoria.

Yours sincerely,
Morgan Murphy
VCSPB Chair

Student Wellbeing

Physical Activity and Wellbeing for Connection

As you were young and played games in the local neighbourhood where you may have experienced the fun of hide and seek, skipping or playing chasy with friends and family.

Physical activity is fundamental to the development and wellbeing of children and young people and helps us all to learn social skills and build a connection with our community.
Helping children to have fun with friends and learn new physical skills can assist in developing positive attitudes to being active as well as a lifelong interest in sport.

It is important that children have the opportunity to try a range of movement experiences and achieve a level of competence that allows them to join in games at home and school.

Then, if they show interest in a particular sport, there are opportunities in your community for them to compete at a local club.

Your school’s Health and Physical Education programs support children in learning to be physically active. This is made possible through a curriculum that engages students in experiences to develop skills, knowledge and motivation to lead healthy and active lifestyles.

The support of parents is a key factor in motivating children to be active. Talking with your child and sharing ideas about how sport and physical activity can play a greater role in their life and ways you can be active as a family, provides them with the motivation to have a go.

If you’re unsure about the Physical Education lessons and sport that are offered at school, always ask questions to understand opportunities for you to support physical activity at home and explore what is available for children in your local area.

One of the best things you can do as a parent is to ride a bike or walk regularly with your children, and encourage them to walk and talk more often. You may like to start a ‘be active family’ campaign with something as simple as a walk around the neighbourhood. This will help you to connect with your child as you are able to share in conversations without other distractions.

It’s also good for children to be aware of their surroundings and to connect with other people who live in your area. Taking them to the park regularly provides opportunity for them to socialise and connect with other children and families in your area.

If you are exploring sporting clubs or activities in your local area, just like school, most sport associations begin by introducing new and inexperienced players to their sport using modified rules and equipment before moving them into competitive games. If you feel your child is just beginning, there are programs that are available for children who are just starting out.

Finally, ask your Physical Education teacher for advice about a suitable sport or activity for your child and in the great tradition of Australian sport, just have a go.

For more information about being active and tips to achieve better health refer to:

Vicheath for a list of events and resources including, 10 strategies for a healthier life

Victoria Walks can direct you to local and regional walks and ideas for walking together with family

St. Mark’s Kids Staying Active for Wellbeing

St. Mark’s Primary school in Fawkner is proud to be a Kidsmarter school where student wellbeing is central to all learning. The students, teachers and parents of St. Mark’s understand that learning is not only about academic achievement. It is a combination of academic, social and emotional learning. One of the ways this happens at St. Mark’s is through active sport and wellbeing programs which contribute to many different types of learning.

The benefits of physical activity impact health and wellbeing extensively and contribute to the development of social and practical life skills. The children of St. Mark’s, Fawkner recently took part in the launch of a $4 million grant for sport aimed at culturally diverse communities. Sport is available for all children and each and every person should have the opportunity to participate.

Victorian Minister for Multicultural Affairs, the Honourable Mr Robin Scott, launched the grant at Mutton Reserve, Fawkner on Thursday 17th November, attended by various sports ambassadors as well as Moreland councillors. It provided the St. Mark’s children with the opportunity to participate in cricket drills with Guy Walker from the Victorian Bushrangers cricket team, Hayley Jensen, previously from New Zealand Women’s Cricket team (White Ferns) and Waddington Mwayenga who has previously played as a bowler for Zimbabwe International cricket team.

Ambassadors from Melbourne Victory and Melbourne City Football clubs were also in attendance to encourage the children to stay active and participate in sport to reap the benefits this brings to their health and wellbeing and ultimately their learning.

The St. Mark’s and Kidsmarter philosophy is that a healthy mind means more productive learning in the classroom. The children were thrilled to be able to help launch the funding that will provide further sporting facilities and opportunities for the children and families in the City of Moreland.

National Ride2School Day 2017
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2K9o63z3sic

National Ride2School Day commences in 2017 on Friday 17th March. This is a great way to encourage children to ride or walk and stay active before and after school, particularly while the weather is still fine in Victoria. Schools will need to register if they wish to participate and receive a free resource pack.

This is a great opportunity to encourage parents to be involved and incorporate the day with other health and wellbeing activities with the children in your school. Days like this are a great way to build community and invite parents and friends to participate once they get to school. If children live a distance from the school, encourage parents to drive and park a few streets away and walk with their children to school. Walking and riding with children is also a great opportunity for conversation and for parents to stay connected with their children.


Child Safety

Child Safe Standards – What does it mean for volunteers in schools?

The implementation of the Child Safe Standards in schools across Victoria means that various changes will take place to ensure the safety of all children. Catholic schools have been working towards an improvement model of safety for many years, however the Ministerial Order No. 870 (State of Victoria, Department of Education and Training 2016) has highlighted certain aspects of child safety that can be improved across all schools.

One of the areas we are highlighting that particularly impacts parents and carers is the process of volunteering and how the Child Safe Standards will bring changes to the process of engaging volunteers in school communities.

Volunteers are essential in developing school communities and involvement of parents is important in welcoming other parents, to develop positive relationships with teachers, model positive relationships for children and in supporting students. Volunteer opportunities come in many forms such as fund-raising, organising events, helping teachers in the classroom, attending excursions, being a member of the school board or parents and friends council and performing general maintenance or small jobs for teachers or around the school grounds.

The CECV (Catholic Education Commission of Victoria) recently released some guidelines for schools when requesting volunteers to assist in schools. Over many years Catholic schools have been introducing child safety practices to ensure the safety of all students. In days gone by there perhaps wasn’t really a need to perform any checks as most volunteers are parents themselves. However, there are now further State-wide legal requirements for all schools when managing the people who are present on the school grounds. In recent years, schools have requested that parents have a Working With Children Check (WWCC). This is a simple process that takes 10 or 15 minutes to complete and if you are applying for a WWCC for volunteer work the card is free.


With the implementation of the 7 Child Safe Standards, there are further requirements for all schools across the state to ensure the safety of children whilst in the care and supervision of adults. Whilst we may not think it is necessary at first to have such stringent processes, the environment we create for children is important and change takes time. These changes shouldn’t be too concerning for parents or carers who would like to volunteer.

Each school will develop their own processes for volunteers in their school and we encourage you to ask your school what these involve, bearing in mind that the implementation phase may take some time to develop and may currently be in the planning stages. We always encourage schools to engage in conversation with parents about changes in your learning community either through parent leaders who are on your school board or a select focus group of parents who you can consult with on these changes in your school context to then share the information with your families.

Many of the changes are actually for the benefit of parents in furthering their understanding of their role as volunteers in schools. Some Principals may introduce an induction program for volunteers that may include a short, informal interview to understand who you are and what interests you have in volunteering for the school community. You may then be provided with a description of your volunteer role. The induction process may also include a session or number of sessions to help you become more aware of school procedures, including occupational health and safety, child-safe policies and code of conduct when working with students as well as policies on bullying, expectations when attending an excursion and other information relevant to your involvement at the school. The experience of volunteering can, in fact, contribute to your learning and improve your understanding of how the school operates.

Other schools may request further background information about you such as a description of your current work/employment and other information relevant to understand you better.

Some of the guidelines provided by CECV for volunteers in schools include:

Volunteer Responsibilities:

- make an informed decision to work as a volunteer in a school/college
- undertake a work induction and training as required
- comply with the school/college’s child safe policy and code of conduct
- work on tasks suitable to their skills and experience
- behave in an ethical manner
- keep school/college matters confidential, including those related to students
- be committed to the school/college’s aims and objectives
- inform the supervisor when unable to undertake or complete a task
• use appropriate information channels within the school/college when needing information, support, backup, supervision or review
• be aware of limits in the role within the school/college
• be aware of duty of care to students
• comply with occupational, health and safety policies and practices
• act as a member of a team
• maintain a Working With Children Check (WWCC)
• be aware of protocol when representing the school/college.

These recommendations will be adapted to your school context and may include other expectations of volunteers.

The important thing to remember is that all of these changes are focussed around the importance of safety of all children in your learning community. The last thing schools want is for parents to stop volunteering and they will endeavour to ensure the process of becoming a volunteer is as simple as possible whilst also following proper and legal requirements.

If you have any questions about the process of volunteering in your school please speak with your school Principal. If you have any further questions about the Child Safe Standards you may go to:


School Boards Update

Child Safe Standards Awareness

VCSPB members believe that all members of a school are responsible for the safety of children in a learning community. We are all leaders in committing to developing a culture of safety and an environment where our children feel safe to learn and feel confident in themselves as they journey through their education.

The Catholic Education Commission of Victoria Ltd (CECV) holds the care, safety and wellbeing of children and young people as a central and fundamental responsibility of Catholic education. This commitment is drawn from and inherent to the teaching and mission of Jesus Christ, with love, justice and the sanctity of each human person at the heart of the Gospel (CECV 2016).

In accordance with Ministerial Order No. 870 (State of Victoria, Department of Education and Training 2016) all Victorian schools are required to comply with Child Safety Standards.

Within their own contexts and circumstances, schools continue to work on developing and implementing child safety strategies. Every person involved in Catholic education has a responsibility to understand the important and specific role he/she plays individually and collectively to ensure the safety and wellbeing of all children and young people (CECV 2016).

This means that child safety remains at the forefront of what a school does and the decisions that are made. School advisory boards work in partnership and in support of the role of the Parish Priest/Canonical Administrator and Principal to improve student outcomes.

They also play an important role as community leaders in championing the work of the Principal and Parish Priest/Canonical Administrator in the ongoing development of a culture of child safety.

An open and transparent commitment to embedding a culture of child safety is enriched through shared insights and understanding amongst each school community.

As a member of an educational advisory body, parent leaders can promote a child safe culture through:

• being aware of the child safety standards
• becoming familiar with the school Child Safety Code of Conduct
• becoming familiar with the Child Safety Policy of the school
• being aware of the school community child safety strategies
• building a child safe community via the school communication strategies

Resources

Catholic Schools in Australia Catholic Schools are committed to creating safe environments for all students, teachers and families.


School board development workshops are offered to members of Catholic school boards.

For school board queries, contact Sara Scungio on 03 9267 0228, or via email schoolboards@cem.edu.au.

Sara Scungio
Manager School Boards
Catholic School Boards
Catholic Leadership Centre, East Melbourne

Supporting Teachers

Initial Teacher Education Review

In response to the discussion paper released in August 2016 by Minister for Education James Merlino, ‘Working Together To Shape Teacher Education in Victoria’, members of the VCSPB reflected on and expressed the experiences of parents with regards to teachers and teaching standards in Victorian schools.

VCSPB participated in a collaborative focus group and welcomed the opportunity to contribute to this discussion and, along with parent and student bodies from each education sector, emphasised that ATAR scores alone don’t necessarily produce quality teachers. VCSPB believes that there are many attributes that contribute to a person becoming a great teacher
and to develop in the profession, much like many other professions, takes time, passion and a commitment to improvement not only for the students’ benefit, but also for teachers themselves. The relationship between teachers and students is a critical component and just as important, is the building of relationships and engagement with parents.

We understand that teachers need the support of parents, which is why we advocate for parent engagement to encourage teachers and parents to work as a support team. The value of parent engagement is in building a consistent approach between school and the home to support children and provide opportunities throughout their education that prepare them for their future, not only academically but as a whole person.

Following the focus group discussion with the Department of Education and Training and Victorian Institute of Teaching, VCSPB put forward a written submission and participated in a video.

We were pleased with the release of the new standards from Minister James Merlino in the past couple of weeks when he announced that along with increasing the ATAR, the DET will implement a standards framework that includes a test for non-cognitive skills for entry into Initial Teacher Education courses.

We were also encouraged by the announcement of various pathway opportunities for under-graduate and post-graduate students with a new VET course to be launched in 2018. We will be monitoring the progress of these changes, particularly in reviewing the framework and pathways as more information becomes available in 2017.

Check out the latest video from DET!! – Our outgoing Chair, Tracey O’Neill features in this video from the Department of Education and Training discussing the importance of teachers communicating and learning from parents and students.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MZUP5b69qC8

Department of Education and Training featuring outgoing VCSPB Chair, Tracey O’Neill.

ACU Lecture

In August 2016 the VCSPB had the opportunity to deliver a full day session to pre-service teachers on the development of communities and parent engagement in schools.

The lecture, delivered by VCSPB Executive Officer Rachel Saliba, centred around the work of catholic education in developing Family, School and Community Partnerships. During the first session many of the resources developed by CEM were shared and discussions were had around teachers as enablers of community building and engagement. These discussions were met with plenty of enthusiasm and interest by the student teachers.

The students explored examples of primary and secondary schools who have successfully engaged with parents through building social capital and who have achieved tangible results from their students.

The second session involved the exploration of the concept of leaders as hosts, rather than heroes. Exploring the text: Leadership in the Age of Complexity (The Berkana Institute), Rachel explored the student’s perceptions of leaders in schools and of themselves as leaders in the classroom and leaders/ enablers of engagement with parents as partners.

The feedback received from the students was very positive.

The VCSPB hopes to explore further opportunities with ACU in developing further content for future lectures based around community building (family involvement) and partnerships in learning (parent engagement), particularly relationships between parents and teachers.

Parent Engagement

Australian Parent Engagement Conference 2017

The Australian Parent Engagement Conference, jointly hosted by ARACY and The Smith Family and proudly supported by the Australian Government Department of Education and Training will be held in Melbourne from 6th to 8th June 2017 and promises to be a huge event in the school calendar, particularly for schools and parents alike who are interested in learning about and improving parent engagement in their schools.

Dr Debbie Pushor is a Professor in the Department of Curriculum Studies at the University of Saskatchewan in Canada. Dr Pushor will be a keynote speaker at the Parent Engagement Conference in Melbourne where there will be many opportunities to hear from both international and local experts in parent engagement.


Diocese Update

VCSPB represent parent perspective from all four diocese in Victoria, including the Diocese of Ballarat, Archdiocese of Melbourne, Diocese of Sale and Diocese of Sandhurst. In 2017 and beyond we will be endeavouring to bring you updates on our advocacy areas relating to schools in each diocese in future newsletters. If your school would like to contribute an article to showcase the wonderful things that are happening in your diocese please forward your suggestions to secretary@vcspb.catholic.edu.au. Our advocacy areas include parent engagement, child safety and wellbeing, curriculum, catholic identity and funding.

We would love to hear your stories!

Curriculum

STEAMED

A new acronym has arrived in education. STEAMED stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, Mathematics, Entrepreneurship and Design. These are viewed by a recent
study by Regional Australia Institute titled: The Future of Work: Setting Kids Up For Success, as essential skills required for 21st century learners and future workers of Australia and the world.

The skills needed also require flexibility and an open mind as job locations change and work place arrangements differ from what we currently experience.

The video links are suitable for Foundation (Prep) to Year 12 children to encourage their curiosity for careers in science and engineering and in becoming the designers of change, entrepreneurs, inventors and problem solvers of the future.

Another website with useful resources for parents is ABC Splash. This Australian based website is updated regularly with interesting topics and ideas to explore together with your child in both primary and secondary levels.

http://splash.abc.net.au/

**Victorian Curriculum Begins in 2017**

The Victorian Curriculum F-10 is the new curriculum for Victorian schools. It incorporates the Australian Curriculum and reflects Victorian standards and priorities and will be implemented in 2017.

So what does this mean? The curriculum is the common set of knowledge and skills required by students for life-long learning, social development and active and informed citizenship. Some aspects of the curriculum remain the same but some new learning areas have been included.

**The curriculum incorporates eight learning areas:**

- **The Arts** – Dance, Drama, Media Arts, Music, Visual Arts, Visual Communication Design
- **English**
- **Health and Physical Education**
- **The Humanities** – Civics and Citizenship, Economics and Business, Geography, History
- **Languages**
- **Science**
- **Technologies** – Design and Technologies, Digital Technologies

Each of the learning areas require the students to learn the capabilities of:

- critical and creative thinking
- ethical skills
- intercultural skills
- personal and social skills

**Some changes to the previous curriculum include:**

- New languages added: Arabic, German, Japanese, Modern Greek, Hindi, Korean, Spanish, Turkish, Vietnamese.

For further information about the curriculum and how it is being implemented, contact your school Principal and visit the VCAA website.


**Source:** http://victoriancurriculum.vcaa.vic.edu.au/overview/curriculum-design/learning-areas-and-capabilities

**VCE and VCAL Graduates**

The VCSPB would like to congratulate all students on the completion of VCE or VCAL in 2016. We would also like to...
congratulate all the parents, carers and teachers who have guided and supported the students on their learning journey and who have provided opportunities for our students to continue on their chosen path.

We wish all students well in the next few weeks in determining which path to take and hope the experiences ahead of you are rewarding and positive.

**Curriculum in Catholic schools**

Whilst the Victorian curriculum is consistent across all schools, what makes Catholic schools unique is in how the curriculum incorporates faith-based teaching and learning where the child is at the centre.

Religious Education is central to both the formal and informal Catholic school curriculum.

As a parent of children in a Catholic school you may be wondering how religious education is taught in your school. No doubt there is information on your school website and in your school newsletter but in case you are seeking further information, we have summarised the curriculum for your reference.

There are three integrated areas of formal teaching of the religious education curriculum;

1. **Prayer**
2. **Sacrament and liturgy**
3. **Living within the Catholic tradition and understanding Catholic identity**

It is important to remember that, while school is a significant time and experience in the education of faith of the students, it is parents who hold the primary responsibility for education in faith.

The Primary religious education curriculum is designed around the text, ‘To Know, Worship and Love’. There are various learning focuses that are taught through a faith-based understanding and approach through inquiry.

In the primary RE curriculum framework each level has a learning focus that broadly outlines religious learning and key practices and beliefs students need to engage with at each level.

The learning focuses include:

- **Knowledge and Understanding**
- **Reasoning and Responding**
- **Personal and Communal Engagement based around the learning and understanding of:**
  - Faith Concepts and Scripture
  - Church as Family
  - Morality and Justice
  - Prayer, Liturgy and Sacraments
  - Scripture and Jesus
  - God, Religion and Life

Ask your child what they are learning in Religious Education and how you can spend time together exploring what their learning means. Sometimes children need encouragement to pray and spend quiet time to express their gratitude for what they have in their lives.

You are able to help by encouraging this and providing them with a quiet space or saying a prayer together. The prayer may be a poem or one of the prayers the children have learned at school. Encouraging them to pray provides them with the opportunity to be in the moment and to find a place of calm, quiet self-reflection.

If you would like more information about how Religious Education is taught at your school, please contact your school Principal or RE Leader.

We’ll explore the secondary level Religious Education curriculum in the next newsletter.

**Resources to support learning at home – linked with curriculum**

Are you wondering how you can support learning at home that is linked with what your child is learning at school? There are a number of resources available that can help you to reinforce learning at home or to simply understand what your child is learning and enable you to have conversations at home with your child about what they are learning. This provides you with opportunity to engage and be a part of their learning journey. The following websites and apps are available now:


**VCAA Update – Naplan Online**

By now you will have heard that Naplan will soon be delivered to students throughout Australia in an online format.

**According to ACARA (Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority) “moving NAPLAN online brings many new opportunities for students and teachers that are often limited or not possible with paper-based tests.”**

**The benefits of online assessments**

Some of the main benefits of students taking part in NAPLAN Online include:

- Assessments will use a tailored test design. Students will answer an initial set of questions and then be directed to subsequent sets of questions based on the accuracy of their responses. Students with a high number of questions correct will be directed to more challenging questions. Students who have a lower level of questions correct will be directed to questions that are less challenging.
- Tailored testing will provide teachers and schools with more targeted and detailed information on their students’ performance on the tests.
- Use of a computer-based environment provides the opportunity to broaden the scope of the assessments.
- Delivery of assessments online will significantly reduce the time it takes to provide feedback to schools, students and parents.
ACARA research into online assessment has shown that students have engaged well with computer-based tests.”

ACARA have also stated that “Significant planning, development, research and trialling have been going on behind the scenes to make sure we are all ready to move NAPLAN online from 2017 over a two–three year period.”

The new online test will be more personalised to suit each student as an individual depending on how they answer each set of questions. This tailored testing should encourage all students to participate in future as the test will be more engaging and focussed on each individual student’s ability.

A public demonstration site with sample tests is now available. http://www.nap.edu.au/online-assessment/naplan-online/naplan-online-public-demonstration-site


We always encourage parents not to be too concerned about the Naplan test but to view the test as another learning experience for their children on their school learning journey.

The Naplan test is not an overall reflection of your child’s progress. Your school provides progress reports, term reports and you are always encouraged to meet with your child’s teacher to discuss their progress in person. Catholic schools promote the development of the whole child and testing is a small part of their learning and assessment at school.

http://www.nap.edu.au/online-assessment/naplan-online

If you have any questions about the new online format click here:
http://www.nap.edu.au/online-assessment/naplan-online/frequently-asked-questions

Career Pathways

Guiding Children Towards Future Careers

As parents of secondary school students it can be a challenge to know how to guide and support children as they embark on choosing their future careers.

As we know many people now take multiple career paths and are not restricted to one particular area of focus. This means that workers of the future need to be multi-skilled and have the necessary mindset to adapt to various job opportunities.

Traditional workplaces are changing and the jobs that exist now are gradually moving into new territory or being phased out. As parents, the challenge is in understanding how to help your children choose subjects at school that are going to help them well into the future, not only to enter further studies but in providing other essential skills they will need to manage various career choices.

Good Education Group provides resources and information to assist both students and parents in working through career options through their Good Careers Guide. Good Education Group are currently exploring new opportunities to produce material and guides that reflect contemporary and future career paths for our children.

They would love to hear your feedback on their resources and invite you to complete the survey below to contribute to the development of the next guide.

Everyone who completes the survey will receive a 15% discount on all purchases made via the Good Education Bookshop. http://goodeducationbookshop.com/products/the-good-careers-guide

If you haven’t already explored The Good Careers Guide, click here to view the e-book and online version before completing the survey.

Choosing Pathways

Another great resource that may be helpful in understanding the subjects and pathways available for year 10-12 students is a publication produced by VCAA titled, ‘Where To Now? Guide to the VCE, VCAL and Apprenticeships and Traineeships’.

This publication is available in different languages and is distributed each year to year 10 students to prepare them in choosing which subjects and pathways to take through to VCE and VCAL.


Christmas Message

Let’s Celebrate Christmas

As we celebrate the year with our learning communities and attend the many events and activities that fill our calendars at this time, we also need to pause and remember the celebration of the birth of Jesus and the many wonderful lessons we learn from Him.

This Christmas, we hope you enjoy special times with your children and families and that you spare the time to reflect on the year that was, whilst also remembering to be in the moment to capture each and every experience you have with your children on their learning journey.

We wish you a Merry Christmas and a safe holiday season and look forward to representing you in the new year.

Rachel Saliba
Executive Officer
VCSPB