Monday 23 January 2017

Dear Parents and Families,

Welcome to Marian College for 2017. We look forward to welcoming back all students on Thursday 2nd February for a very productive year. This will be a normal school day. Students are expected to be at school at 8.35am and will be dismissed at the usual time at 3.00pm. School photos will also be taken on this day.

There are a number of important matters which we would like to draw to your attention prior to the beginning of the 2017 school year to ensure that this is a positive year for all at Marian College.

Communication
We consider ourselves to be in partnership with families in delivering a quality education for your daughter. This requires ongoing and open communication between home and school. Please do not hesitate to contact your daughter’s homeroom or mentor teacher should you have any concerns or queries regarding your daughter. On the first day of the year we will issue a Family Updates Form. Please check this carefully to ensure that we have all your contact details accurately listed on our system. If your details change throughout the year we ask that you notify the front reception as soon as possible. In keeping with current modes of communication we require a current parent/guardian email address and mobile phone number.

Parent Portal – SEQTA Engage
The Marian College SEQTA Engage Parent Portal will once again provide ongoing information to families regarding courses of study, assessment tasks, homework, unexplained absences and assessment feedback and grades. The Portal also provides a means of communication via Direct Message for you to be in contact with your daughter’s teachers. For new families we will provide access and login details for SEQTA Engage in the first week of the academic school year. There is a letter enclosed in this mailout providing more details regarding the Parent Portal.

Newsletter
The Marian News is published once a fortnight and is posted to the College website. You will receive an SMS once the newsletter is ready to access. The Newsletter, as well as other important information for families, will also be accessible via the Skoolbag app (see below) and SEQTA Engage. The Marian News captures our dynamic school at work and it’s a great way to keep up with what is happening. If you require a hardcopy newsletter to be sent home with your daughter each fortnight please contact our Publications Officer, Ms Natalie Micallef, who will organise this for your family.

College Calendar
The School Calendar will also be available via the school website. Please take the time to check the calendar for important dates. We will also be further utilising the SMS service to alert parents regarding upcoming events.

Smart Phone App - Skoolbag
Skoolbag is a smart phone “app” which allows you to access up-to-date school information, for example, calendar events, school newsletters, key contact details, via your smartphone (Android and iOS).

You can download the official Marian College “App” from the either the App Store, for those with iphones, or from the Play Store, for those with Android Phones. You can then set-up your App to receive customised push notifications from the College. That is, each time we update the app with new information this will be indicated with a number on the App on your homescreen, so that you are aware of when we have added new information for you. To set up your app follow these instructions:
1. For iPhone: Go to the App Store and search: marian college.
   For Android: Go to Play Store and search : marian college.
2. Once installed, open the App on your phone or device and click on “more” in the bottom right corner,
   then click “Setup” and select the year levels you wish to receive notifications for. Ensure you click “allow”
   when this appears on your screen to enable push notifications.

Permission Letters
From the start of 2017 the College will be using Signmee to gain parent/guardian permission for students to
participate in school events, such as excursions or sporting activities that require them to leave the school
grounds. The Signmee system relies on the College having access to active parent/guardian email addresses
so that “permission letters” can be approved electronically.

If you have not provided the College with a current and active email address, please do so as soon as
possible, as this will be the only way that you can give permission for your daughter to attend school
activities off-site. **An alternative note or a phone call will not be accepted and your daughter will not be
allowed to attend that excursion and will remain at school, under supervision.**

Punctuality
Students can begin arriving to school from 8.15am, at which time there will be onsite supervision by Marian
College staff. Homeroom begins at 8.35am at which time students are expected to be at school and ready
to commence their program for the day. All students are expected to be punctual to school each day.
Students who arrive after 8.35am are considered to be late and must report to student reception to obtain
a late pass. Students are required to have their Student ID cards with them at all times when at school. **We
will send an SMS to a parent on the nominated mobile phone number when a student arrives at school
after 8.35am.** The SMS will indicate the time that the student arrived at school. We would ask that you
follow this up with the student receptionist via a phone-call or a note to the homeroom teacher the next
day.

Student Absence
If your daughter is to be away from school parents/guardians are asked to phone the College on the day of
the absence. As in previous years, if a student is absent on any particular day an SMS text will be sent to the
nominated mobile phone number of a parent or guardian before 10.00am to alert them to their daughter’s
absence. We believe that this service will support both the school and families in ensuring that students are
making the most of the opportunities presented to them in classes to extend their learning.

If you call in the morning to indicate that your daughter will not be attending school you will still receive a
text message to confirm your daughter’s absence. It will not be necessary to call the school if you have
already done so.

The text message will read:
“Marian College attendance: Your daughter is absent from school today. If you have not already called the
school, please phone 9363 1711 to confirm her absence.”

We ask that you send a note explaining your daughter’s absence upon her return to the College. A medical
certificate may be required in some instances for students completing VCE/VCAL.

Where Student Absences are of Concern
Where absences are of concern due to their nature or frequency, the College will involve families and the
student, as appropriate, in developing strategies to improve attendance.

Where attendance patterns do not improve, parents and guardians should be aware that if a student has
repeated absences without a reasonable excuse or explanation, **the College is required by law** to inform
School Attendance Officers, a Department of Education and Early Childhood Development Regional
Director who has authority to follow up attendance issues. Attendance issues that are escalated to this
level can lead to an Infringement Notice being served to the responsible parent/guardian. New laws came
into force in 2014 which will mean that parents can be fined for not sending students to school without an
acceptable reason.
Uniform
It is an expectation that students wear their uniform correctly and with pride. We will continue to provide reminders about expected uniform requirements across the course of the year. In particular we remind parents and students about inappropriate body and facial piercings. Students who have unacceptable piercings and/or are not in full school uniform will be sent home.

Electronic Devices
Students are discouraged from bringing mobile phones, cameras, ipods or MP3 players to school. The College has a Student Digital Citizenship Policy which is attached with this letter. Please take the time to read this policy with your daughter. Students are expected to adhere to this policy or they will have their devices confiscated.

Some important dates
We would like to provide some advance notice of the Parent Teacher Evenings for 2017:
• 13 February: Year Level Information & Meet the Teacher Evening, Year 10, 11 & 12, 6.00pm to 8.00pm.
• 15 February: Year Level Information & Meet the Teacher Evening, Year 7, 8 & 9, 6.00pm to 8.00pm.
• 20 and 21 April: Please note that on 20 April interviews will be held between 4.00pm and 7.45pm. This will be a normal school day for students. On 21 April interviews will be held between 10.00am and 3.15pm. This will be a student free day.
• 9 and 10 August: Times and arrangements for the interviews will be communicated to families closer to these dates.

We look forward to seeing you around the school over the course of the year.

We hope that this reminder about College expectations will assist in ensuring a smooth start to the year and provide clarity to parents about College requirements.

We are very enthusiastic for a great year ahead and we thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely

Rita Grima
Co-Principal

Raymond Pisani
Co-Principal

A Kildare Education Ministries Catholic school for girls in the Brigidine tradition