Dear Friends of the St Joseph’s Community

It was a warm welcome back to Father Mick at our Parish Mass yesterday morning and we are looking forward to his involvement in the spiritual life of St Joseph's in the years ahead. His readiness to be involved in school matters is also greatly appreciated, as evidenced by his attendance at the Parent Information Meeting last night followed by the first meeting for 2015 of the School Community Council. There was a range of procedural and curriculum issues covered last night at the parent meeting with the overall aims being to introduce new and current staff, to explain the key features of the curriculum in each of the 3 classes and to give the reasoning behind changes to some school procedures. I will mention some of the main points raised so that the wider school community and those who were unable to attend the meeting can be brought up to date.

As of today the Infants and Primary students will place their bags along the outside western wall of the library when they arrive at school, rather than place them in the classroom; they can then move up to the playground and will then collect their bags when brought to class by their teacher after the morning assembly. On wet days all students will be in the classrooms anyway so they will come into the classroom with their bags on arrival and stay there until the indoor assembly. The reasoning behind this is to allow teachers to complete essential admin before school starts, to respond to any organisational changes and/or to schedule interviews with parents in a more confidential classroom environment. If you wish to speak with your child’s teacher please arrange a mutually convenient time at the end of the day. We will be having scheduled parent-teacher interviews in Week 7 of this term.

Other topics discussed at the parent meeting included the requirement for actual fruit or vegetables at the 10am fruit break rather than processed or packaged foods, the request to ensure that you sign in/out in the school office if you have to take your child from school for appointments, etc., during the school day and also to highlight the legal requirement that we have to be provided with a note from a parent/carer to explain a child’s absence from school. We are currently piloting an electronic roll-marking process but in the meantime could you please ensure that a note is provided to the classroom teacher on your child’s day of return to school.

Student safety is uppermost in our mind throughout the day of course but this is particularly so with the afternoon dismissal from school. With buses, pedestrians, parents and students and the occasional family pets in front of the school at that congested time we ask that you please ensure that you come across to the front gate to collect your child and if they are on bikes or scooters that they are under your direct supervision. Our new flashing school zone lights are currently being installed but they cannot replace constant vigilance on the part of teachers and parents as they are still under your direct supervision. We are currently piloting an electronic roll-marking process but in the meantime could you please ensure that a note is provided to the classroom teacher on your child’s day of return to school.

In last week’s newsletter I mentioned the article on St Joseph’s in the current edition of the Catholic Voice. While the headline of ‘Bombala’s Incredible Transformation’ was catchy, I don’t consider the article paid due recognition to those who brought about the transformation over a number of years. The Catholic Education Office, particularly through Mrs Elizabeth Moroney, the School Community Council at the time, the dedicated staff, previous Principals, the parishioners of St Mary’s Parish and the wider Bombala community were the ones who worked tirelessly to ‘transform’ St Joseph’s and set it on the path to revitalisation that it is so evident today. When I was offered the privilege of guiding St Joseph’s as Principal at the start of 2014 the transformation was well in place with a student population of 40, and which will soon be 47, due to the incredible work of so many people, and my goal has been to continue that optimism. The enthusiasm, spirit, commitment and prayers that must have been evident over a number of recent years are the very ingredients that will ensure the vibrant future of St Joseph’s.

May God bless you,

Phil Stubbs, Acting Principal
We had our first meeting for the year last night, term one will be busy again fundraising wise with the Street Stall, Bombala Show and then the Deb Ball we will be calling for as many people to be involved as possible to make these events a success!

A decision last night was made after parents had expressed difficulty in finding Navy socks for the boys school uniforms to phase in Grey socks for the boys, please don't feel you have to rush out and buy the new colour this can be done next time you are needing socks. A new uniform price list is going home tomorrow with updated costs and will include the addition of the school beanies and fleecy tracksuit pants!

We are planning an open SCC meeting for early March (date TBA) where all parents are welcome to come along, we plan to have one of these each term. We will also be forming a decorating committee for the Deb ball and seeking as many parents as possible to be involved...you don't need to be creative!

Gillian Forrester
Learning Support Teacher

In Learning Support, our students have each taken ownership and responsibility of a Maidenhair Fern. They will water, feed and prune their ferns throughout the year to encourage a connection to the Learning Support Program.

Currently, our students are participating in literacy and numeracy testing to inform their Individual Education Plan targets. In weeks 4 and 5 we will invite parents to meet with the Learning Support Team to provide more information regarding their child's learning. We look forward to getting the program underway once the assessments are complete. I will be at school on Tuesdays and Thursdays and I encourage parents to always feel welcome to discuss their child's learning and development with me.

Gillian Forrester
Learning Support Teacher

The Catholic Education Bulletin is looking for stories about successive generations that may have attended the same school. If you have had family members attend St Joseph's over a long period of time can you please contact Mr Stubbs so that we can do a follow-up story by 6 February.

Bombala Blue Heelers Rego will be held today at the Recreation Ground from 4.30pm till 5.30pm.

We are hoping to be able to nominate U7s, 8s, 10s, 12s, 14s and 16s sides as well as a combined 12-15 year old girls league tag team.

COST: $20 per player which includes shorts, and socks.