



## Dear Parents, Students and Staff

They say a lot can happen in a week and the past week has certainly had its challenges, joys and sorrows. 'Good schools are strong in the broken places' and one of the challenges has been to try to keep some perspective on the role of the school in supporting a number of our families who are doing it tough.

I doubt that anyone is unaware of the tragic accident at Dreamworld that claimed four lives and changed the lives of others forever. We hold the families involved in prayer and will do what we can to support them in their grief and into the future. We will also do everything possible to support our Year 7 student who lost her mother, uncle and uncle's partner in the accident. We also pray for the other woman who was killed, her young son and family.

We have received many messages from parents, ex-students and ex-staff who have offered to help the family of our Year 7 student. We will do our best to keep people informed

of events and other ways of providing assistance. The school will also do its part.

Early last week I also attended the funeral of the father of one of our Year 9 students. His two older children have already graduated from SFX and his wife used to work here and was a valued member of staff. His life was celebrated with full AFP Ceremonial Honours. Looking around St Christopher's Cathedral I saw many people from the SFX community, hundreds of AFP Officers and members of the AFP who have a relationship with SFX. The service was respectful, dignified and yet sombre. It was even more poignant for me as I taught the dad at Padua Catholic High School, now part of St Mary MacKillop College, in the mid-80s. Canberra is a small place.

I have been careful not to mention names in the above. The events at Dreamworld, in particular, have highlighted the way the media can take hold of what is seen as the story

and unfortunately the 'assumed need for the public to know', the public interest, comes before the privacy and personal grief of the people most involved.

As always the role of the school is to try to offer a safe haven where children and young people can be and grow. The hope is that the adults who work here can also be and grow. One of the privileges of working in schools is journeying with members of our community who experience the death of loved ones.

In the month of November we traditionally pray for those who have died.

It is also appropriate to pray for those left behind.

Be gentle with yourselves.

Best wishes,  
**Angus M Tulley**  
**Principal**





*Building parent-school partnerships*

WORDS Catherine Gerhardt



## Digital social skills

Just as we teach children social skills for real life, there are important social skills for the digital world. It is imperative that parents teach children to follow a few basic rules.

The internet is a portal into some of the most amazing places, and just like any new place we visit, we are likely to make a few social stumbles. If travelling the world, every culture you visit would have its own social nuances that you are likely to have to work your way around. It would be easy to misunderstand what others say or take offence to something that was not intended.

Young people, at the best of times, are still learning social rules and developing their critical thinking skills around collective interactions. Well-meaning personalities can make all kinds of mistakes when they enter this new online culture.

As parents we want to do whatever it takes to minimise the mistakes our children make online. Netiquette is a set of general guidelines for cyberspace behaviour. Here are some basic principles parents can use to help children solve their own 'netiquette' dilemmas.

**Be kind** Remember the human behind every screen. Every user is an independent person with individual thoughts and

feelings. It can be easy to misunderstand another person's intentions or even be rude to others when you are not interacting with them in person and given the grace of viewing facial expressions and emotions. Perhaps the best mantra we can go back to as parents is the golden rule of "Treat others how you would like to be treated." Developing empathy and trying to see that comment, post or photo from many different perspectives takes practice. How would you feel if someone said that to you? Treating others with respect is paramount. Yes, there may be times when you might have to stick up for yourself, however it needs to be done in a responsible and respectful way.

**If you wouldn't do it there, don't do it here** Social standards apply to both online and offline spaces, and standards of online behaviour should be consistent with real life expectations. As parents we put many rules and expectations in place as to how we expect our children to behave in a public place. I know I expect my children to show respect, use their manners, help others out, practice kind language, etc.

Online is the biggest public place your child will ever find themselves, which is all the more reason to work on exceeding those standards of behaviour.

**Respect privacy** With the world wide web being a public place, privacy is paramount. Learning how to protect personal information and the importance of looking at a website's privacy policy can help develop skills around internet privacy. Asking for permission before creating accounts and downloading files, strategies for identifying scams and limiting the type of information kids give about themselves or others can help set a strong foundation for their digital lives. Children do not always appreciate that they may be putting their information in jeopardy, because the warning signs are not always obvious. Respecting other people's right to privacy is also crucial; don't tell other people's stories, spread rumours or give away personal details without permission.

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## ... Digital social skills ...

### Develop their internal filter

Parents may feel that they have some control over their child's use of technology and many use programs and apps that allow for monitoring and filtering content. Despite the best intentions, there are times when filters are re-set, not set up correctly or not even in place – for example when your child goes to their friend's house, gets online and no safety mechanisms have been established. What this means is that we need to help our children develop their internal filter, as this is the one they will always have and may need to rely on. Research is clear that the best way to teach morals and ethics is through example.

### Teach them to do the right thing

Parents can nurture moral principles that will guide their children to stand up for their beliefs and act right even without us. Know what you stand for so that your child knows. Parents with clearly identified moral convictions are more likely to raise children that do the right thing. Pursue opportunities to look for moral issues and talk about them as they come up: from TV shows and news events to situations at home, school, and friends. Discuss with your child how you feel about the issue and why.

**Be upstanding** There will be times online when your child will have to be brave and stand up for others, when they will have to go against social pressure to do what is right. When someone they know is being deliberately upset or harassed by another person, expect your child to move from bystander to upstander, because

this is the right thing to do. In most cases many people contribute to the cyberbullying. Many know about the situation, but choose not to get involved. Encourage your child to stand up, speak up and act up against online abuse. They can support the target by letting them know they are there and provide empathy. Encourage your child to report what is happening to a trusted adult; someone who they believe will listen and has the skills, desire, and authority to help.

Technology is moving forward quickly, and it continues to evolve at an unprecedented pace. Taking the time to impart digital social skills at an early age is vital for our children as they move from playground friends to social media and gaming friendships.

These simple rules apply all along the developmental spectrum. They also give us a clear understanding of what we can do as parents, to help our children manage a positive digital reputation.

*Catherine Gerhardt*

## THINK

Using the THINK rule can go a long way in practicing digital social skills. It is a checklist of questions that children must go through before they post or comment online. Is it True? Is it Helpful? Is it Inspiring? Is it Necessary? Is it Kind? Created to emphasise care online, it applies to real world engagement as well.

## TOP TIPS FOR PARENTS

- 1 **PRACTICE MAKES PERFECT** keep reinforcing positive digital social skills and a strong foundation will be laid.
- 2 **COACH** about privacy in a public place.
- 3 **FOLLOW** the social code of good people.
- 4 **MANNERS** are necessary.
- 5 **COMPLIMENTARY** conduct is proper.
- 6 We are **FREE** to follow group rules. We are not **FREE** to hurt others.
- 7 Encourage the **THINK** rules.

**Catherine Gerhardt** is a dedicated advocate of critical thinking skills in children and young people. As a parent of school aged children she understands the commitments and challenges parents face ensuring they provide the right information to young people in a way that empowers them to develop their personal and social capabilities. Catherine is a certified training provider through the Office of the Children's eSafety Commissioner.



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*Building parent-school partnerships*

WORDS Michael Grose

## Earning the right

Earning the right and not assuming a sense of entitlement is a life lesson parents, teachers and coaches must instil in children.

On talk-back radio recently I heard a caller tell a timely story about how as a child she was lucky enough to receive riding lessons from a renowned horse expert.

He had one condition. She had to earn the right to be taught to ride a horse. That meant she had to muck out the stables; brush and feed the horse; look after the gear and do everything else required to look after a horse. Only when she'd proved herself could she earn the right to ride a horse under his tutelage.

This caller said this powerful lesson shaped her entire life. It taught her that there were no entitlements in life; to work hard and value her achievements. She never took anything for granted.

Contrast this with the extraordinary sense of entitlement of Australian tennis players Nick Kyrgios and Bernard Tomic who routinely treat the public, players and the game that serves them well, with utter disdain. Their attitude of entitlement is mind-boggling, not to say embarrassing to reasonable-minded, hard-working people.

### Our kids should earn the right

The talk-back caller's earning the right story is

a fabulous lesson for all parents and teachers. If we want to raise a generation to appreciate what they have, then we shouldn't give children or young people everything on a platter. In an era of small families, child pester power and relative affluence it's tempting to simply give kids what they want.

"Dad, can I have a...?"

"Sure!"

The Rolling Stones were right four decades ago when they sang, "You can't always get what you want!" Those words form a great child-rearing lesson. That is, just because you can provide something for your kids, doesn't mean that you do.

They need to earn the right to have something by saving, working for or simply waiting until they are old enough to appreciate it.

Similarly, kids don't automatically have a right to greater freedoms such as going out at night; those rights need to be earned by proving they are trustworthy.

Also, kids who think they are entitled to use a part of the house such as a living room without cleaning up mess are acting with a false sense of entitlement.

In fact, there are no entitlements, only rights. And rights are earned by being responsible.

A child has a right to use the living room but they also have a responsibility to clean up a rather than leave it a pigsty. A night banished to their room is a reminder that spending time in the living room is not an entitlement. It's a right that comes with conditions.

Earning the right! A simple phrase with so much complexity.

I suspect it's a phrase that neither Nick Kyrgios or Bernard Tomic heard much when they were growing up. Maybe their parents thought their prodigious talents excused them from having conditions placed upon them. If so, they did them no favours as good manners, gratitude and graciousness appear to be lacking in their social repertoires.

It usually takes a parent, teacher or coach to remind kids that they have to earn the right to have things, to do things and ultimately to be respected. That's a lesson that stays for life.

Michael Grose 



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# Year 12s Reflect on their Faith Journeys

It is that time in the school year when Year 12s are experiencing the beginning of the end of their school years. It is a time of mixed feelings - excitement, joy, sadness, confusion and gratitude. Many students write much appreciated letters of thanks to their teachers. There is a palpable sense of relief that they have finished their last assignments and have only exams to negotiate.

In RE we try to develop the opportunity for students, in their final ever College RE task, to reflect on their faith development, social development, influences and achievements in the context of Christian and psychological/academic teaching relevant to the unit they are studying. Many students have said, both now and in the past, that this reflective experience is the best assessment task they ever do. Perhaps this is why the results of this task are usually the best of the cohort over the two years of study.

Congratulations Year 12 (and Year 11) on the quality of your recent creatives. The depth, insight, self awareness and sense of optimism, even in the face of serious personal challenges, give hope for the future.

You can see this optimism, faith journey, gratitude in some of the entries that follow – thanks to the students for their willingness to share their reflections to a wider audience. You may argue that there are some theological inconsistencies and inaccuracies here but our understanding of God and the Christ of the Resurrection in a cosmic context is a lifelong learning experience.



**LOVE:** As a college student it is sometimes hard to grasp the concept of love. I know what it is like to be lonely, or feel isolated. I think at school we all feel these things at one time or another. I know what it is like to feel worthless. I haven't always gotten the best grades but I try- yet some people only see my worth in terms of my grades. This year I have been lucky enough to surround myself with a group of amazing friends, who love me for me. I can safely say that because of this love I have developed hope for my future which I didn't have before. This love, which I learnt from religion, felt from my friends and confirmed with science- is a major reason behind my self-development. With love we as a human race can flourish. **Isaac Schmetzer**

**VOLUNTEERING:** Recently I have started volunteering at St Vincent de Paul in Belconnen. The volunteers and employees of Vinnies are all older in age, they possess wisdom and tell me it doesn't come from age but from experience. I see injustice often when homeless people or struggling families come into Vinnies asking for help, but it is also in these moments when I see the respect the volunteers treat these people with. I am not a person who often steps out of their comfort zone, but in volunteering I have learnt to be courageous with new experiences, to be courageous in going out of my way to help others and courageous in my journey of self-discovery. Psychology enforces ideas of self-love, I believe to love yourself you have to believe you are good and can do good. In the Bible it says 'anyone can find the gold in someone. Be the one that finds the gold.' Volunteering has not only supported my development and flourishing...it has brought me closer to my faith. I believe being a good Christian is about loving each other and serving others without other motives. Like Jesus.

**Isaac Schmetzer**

**PRAYER:** Prayer is an important aspect of human flourishing, as it allows us to have a connected and personal relationship with God. This statement can be further supported through the statement from a Catechism, which says that "prayer is the response of faith to free promise of salvation and also a response of love to the thirst of the only Son of God" CCC #2560). This is stating that prayer further allows us to express our love to God, and to connect deeply with our faith. **Jess Rieger**



**EMPATHY:** Relationships throughout a person's life are vital for them to achieve their full potential. In order to find and develop a sense of love, purpose and belonging you must develop relationships through giving and being there for others. "For it is in giving that we receive" (St. Francis of Assisi n.d.). Relationships form a big part of who I am, whether it is the relationship I have with my mum, dad, sisters, friends or my dog. If I were to say with whom I have experienced a relationship with God through, it would be through my mother. I for one have never met someone so understanding, forgiving, compassionate, non-judgemental and supportive, especially when I needed it the most. **Suzanna McDonald**



**THE IMPORTANCE OF LIVING IN A EUCHARISTIC COMMUNITY:** As a child I lived in Cootamundra, New South Wales, a small town in which religion had a significant role; I was baptised Catholic and attended a Christian school. I feel my faith developed through the completion of my sacraments and participation in parish masses; enabling me to become an active member of the town's Christian community. As a member of the parish I was offered guidance, support and encouragement through personal relationships with the Parish Council, Priest and other members. Through these people I saw God as a Divine and loving being, a prominent figure within my life. **Taylah Wilson**



**CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD:** *For generations humans have found meaning and purpose in life through deeper understanding of the relationship between Mother Nature and humanity, both scientifically and spiritually. In Laudato Si, 2015, Pope Francis explains "Everything is related, and we human beings are united as brothers and sisters on a wonderful pilgrimage". In this way it is understood that there stands no gap between nature and ourselves, and although we are created in the "image" of God we are not autonomous beings. Instead, the generations before us have learnt to see themselves in relation to all other creatures in search for personal meaning: "I express myself in expressing the world; in my effort to decipher the sacredness of the world, I explore my own" (Paul Riceour). **Emma Ryan-Baker***



**FORGIVENESS:** *Over my time, I have learnt not to take things personally. What people are going through in their personal lives may not be obvious to other people, which may be making them react in exaggerated ways. People may be immature, and I witness this as a teenager every day from little things. When looking at it, forgiveness really is a key strength in life when leading to human dignity; it's essential in life. It can help one achieve inner peace, guiding away from guilt and self-loathing. It's the true method of healing.*

*Christianity finds meaning and purpose through connecting and reflecting upon the word of God. When focusing on thoughts such as passages from the Bible, one can reflect on its meaning and personally flourish in partnership with Jesus Christ. I am a religious soul, and I know I find comfort in the presence of my Lord. **Olivia Catherall***



*Do you know what the most incredible thing is? What makes Jesus different from the Tooth Fairy and Santa Claus? There is this undeniable sense of presence that comes with His name; it's difficult to describe but you can just feel it. At particular points in my life so far and one in particular that I can think of, His presence and my love for Him was so strong it was overwhelming. At the altar of a charismatic Mass, I could do nothing but drop to my knees and praise the Lord with tears streaming down my face as the Priest moved around the Church blessing people. I don't know what made me do it but I just had to, I just felt something I had never felt before. I felt Him in me. To say these events and what I have believed for so long could be a big coincidence would be a gross denial of something so substantial. **Olivia Muscat***

You may be inspired by the honesty in the following blogs written by our Year 12.

#### **HUMAN FLOURISHING**

<https://humanflourishingblog.wordpress.com/> **Jess Reiger**

<http://balletdiva1998.wixsite.com/humanflourishing> **Adeline Reardon**

<http://llarehtac.wixsite.com/humanflour> **Olivia Catherall**

<https://letmeflourish.wordpress.com/> **Isaac Schmetzer**

#### **MYSTERY, AWE AND WONDER**

<http://thnaturalwondersoftheworld.weebly.com/> **Emma Ryan-Baker**

<http://mattf2410.wixsite.com/natureandscience> **Matt Farquhar**

#### **GREAT MOMENTS IN RELIGION AND SCIENCE**

<http://www.tiki-toki.com/timeline/entry/715394/The-People-of-Science-and-Religion/> **Emily Nahon** (Emily is in Year 11 but this is too good to wait for the next newsletter!)

<http://andrewgovaars.wixsite.com/mysite> **Andrew Govaars**

<http://flourishinginlif.weebly.com> **Jess Green**

Apart from blogs, Year 12 Accredited students have been exploring their faith and belief through *Religion, Worship and the Arts*. Congratulations to these students for the beauty and personal understanding and engagement with faith expressed in their works.

Finally, a prayer for all Senior students undertaking exams next week – a beautiful mantra to pray before, during and after exams. It is taken from St Patrick's Breastplate and is expressed in a beautiful meditative work by Steven Davey, sung by Angelina at [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zJx\\_Lu4PymE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zJx_Lu4PymE) My Year 12 RE class were very moved by it in class recently.

*"...Christ with me, Christ before me, Christ behind me, Christ in me, Christ beneath me, Christ above me, Christ on my right, Christ on my left, Christ when I lie down, Christ when I sit down, Christ when I arise, Christ to shield me, Christ in the heart of every one who thinks of me, Christ in the mouth of every one who speaks of me..."*



**Anne Armstrong**  
**Religious Education Coordinator**



# Community Announcements

## **B**Firm **O**bstacle **F**amily **F**un **D**ay



**December 10th 2016, 3 - 8pm**

**B**Firm **A**ctivity **C**entre - **S**ymonston **A**C

**\$30 per person or 80\$ per Family**

[www.bfirm.com.au/boffd](http://www.bfirm.com.au/boffd) for all the details - T's & C's

**B.FIRM**

# Attention Year 7 Parents

Your child's vaccinations are due again in Term 4

## Thursday 3 November

The following vaccines will be offered FREE as part of the ACT School Immunisation Program in Term 4



Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Dose 3



Varicella (chickenpox)



**If your child missed a vaccine during the year?**

You will receive a letter in the post with information on catching up through the GP



**Varicella** is recommended for all students who have not had the vaccine, including those that have previously had the disease.



**Where can I get more information?**

<http://www.health.act.gov.au/our-services/immunisation/high-school-immunisation-program>



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[www.health.act.gov.au](http://www.health.act.gov.au) | [www.act.gov.au](http://www.act.gov.au) | Enquiries: Canberra 13ACT1 or 132281



## Wellbeing

The Australian Government Department of Education and Training have recent launched a new website, the [Student Wellbeing Hub](#).

It is underpinned by the very successful National Safe Schools Framework. It aims to provide current best-practice, curriculum-aligned resources for educators, **parents** and students on a range of contemporary issues that will help build and sustain the wellbeing and safety of all members of the school community.

Parents will find advice and information to help them support their child, build positive communication with their child's school and contribute actively to the wider school community.

The Student area contains age-appropriate information, advice and games that build students' understanding of topics and issues important to their wellbeing at school and beyond.

<https://www.studentwellbeinghub.edu.au/parents#>

**Healthy Families** is all about giving you the information, knowledge and confidence to support the young people in your life – whether you're a parent, guardian, grandparent, a favourite uncle or an awesome auntie. We're also here to help you take care of your own mental health and wellbeing. This is another great resource from Beyond Blue.

<https://healthyfamilies.beyondblue.org.au>

**MindMatters** Spotlights (a Beyond Blue partner)

A new spotlight has been launched focusing on wellbeing for teaching staff. This acknowledges that our education professionals faces challenges that are unique to teaching.

<http://www.mindmatters.edu.au/spotlights/staff-wellbeing>

Linda Fleming  
02 6287 3538 or send us an email at  
[Executiveofficer@apfacts.org.au](mailto:Executiveofficer@apfacts.org.au)

25.10.2016

Association of Parents and Friends of ACT Schools Inc.

**APFACTS**

[www.apfacts.org.au](http://www.apfacts.org.au)

Voice of non-government school parents in the ACT

Are you free on either of these dates?

**Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> November 2016**

@Canberra Grammar School, Red Hill

**Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2016**

@Emmaus Christian School, Dickson



*Have you figured how you will talk to your children about drugs and alcohol?*



*Do you think it's OK to let them have a taste of alcohol? Think again!*

**Guest speaker:** Annie Bleeker is an expert drug and alcohol trainer.

**Topic:** Parents, Young People and Alcohol

This informative and engaging session will involve a 40-minute presentation followed by an open forum for questions. The event is free to attend however registration is required. Please visit [Eventbrite](https://www.eventbrite.com) to register for the event.

Hosted by ATODA, This community forum is supported by ACT Health, the Department of Education, ACT Council of Parents and Citizens Associations, the Association of Independent Schools of the ACT and the Association of Parents and Friends of ACT Schools.

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**Congratulations** go to the new ACT Education minister, Ms Yvette Berry. APFACTS looks forward to working with Ms Berry to advance education issues in the non-government school sector.

Linda Fleming  
02 6287 3538 or send us an email at  
[Executiveofficer@apfacts.org.au](mailto:Executiveofficer@apfacts.org.au)

01.11.2016





► **Looking for a meaningful gift for your child?**  
**Give them a school holiday experience they will remember - let them explore their potential at Outward Bound Australia.**

**Australian Alps Young Explorer:**

**A unique adventure program custom made for 12-14 year olds and designed to foster confidence and self-awareness in young adolescents.**

**(Rock-climbing/Roping, Hiking, Problem Solving , Guided Reflection and much more.)**

***Dates: Sun. 11th December (4pm) - Sat. 17th (9am)***

***Location: Tharwa, ACT. Pick-up/drop-off from Jolimont Bus Depot OR Canberra Airport can be arranged at no cost.***

***Course Fee: \$990 (all inclusive)***

**1800 267 999 | [www.outwardbound.org.au](http://www.outwardbound.org.au)**

## Youth and Family Support



Connecting Our Community

### What does this program do?

Works in collaboration with children, young people and families to assist them to develop their skills and access resources that support them to be active in and connected to the community.

Support Workers can assist through the provision of information, identification of goals, case coordination, support and groups that promote positive parenting, mentoring and personal development.

### Who is this program for?

Children, young people and families who are experiencing complex issues that are impacting on their lives, and require information and support to enhance their opportunities

### Where does this program operate?

The service is based at Kippax Health Centre, Kippax Place in HOLT. Services are provided on an outreach basis.

### When does this program run?

Monday – Friday

9am to 5pm

50 weeks a year. The program closes for 2 weeks over the Christmas period

### How can I get more information?

Contact Belconnen Community Services  
62640200