Dear Parents,

Next Monday is the day when we remember men and women who have given their lives for our country. We especially remember the ANZACs who landed in Gallipoli in 1915.

As Monday is a public holiday, we will commemorate the ANZACs with a liturgy on Tuesday morning.

_Students will be selling badges for Anzac Day._

_Items available to purchase are:_
- Various Badges $1, $2
- Wrist Bands $3

**NAPLAN**

As part of the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN), national tests will be held in literacy and numeracy for all students in Australia. Students in Year 3 & 5 will sit the tests in the week beginning 10th May on the Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday.

We do expect children to be at school to be part of this testing process. However, students may be withdrawn from the testing program by their parent / carer. This is a matter for consideration by individual parents / carers in consultation with the child’s teacher.

If you wish to have your child withdrawn or would like further information, please contact me or speak with your child’s teacher.

**School Surveys**

Last week, I explained about the surveys we need parents to complete in this our third year of the review cycle.

The first survey is available to be completed now. It is an online survey about our Catholic School Identity. Staff and Year 5/6 students will complete the survey, and we need at least 50 parents to also participate. So far, we have 3 parent responses!

PLEASE, if you can help out call in to the office or email to get the information to take part. It is completed in confidence.

**Condolences**

Please pray for Eamonn Mooney and his family on the passing of his grandfather.

_May he rest in peace._

Have a happy week ahead.

Mrs. Pat McConvill
Principal
We promote the staggered pick up times. Please note that students are supervised in the office until 4pm. The carparks are less congested at 3:45 - 4:00. You will find a park much easier at that time of the afternoon.

Carparking Reminders
We ask that parents park in allocated parking bays at all times. We ask that parents do not park in the no parking areas. The area above the zebra crossing is kept free so that a clear view of the crossing can be maintained. We ask parents to leave the designated disabled parking bays free for those who need to use them. We promote the staggered pick up times. Please note that students are supervised in the office until 4pm. The carparks are less congested at 3:45 - 4:00. You will find a park much easier at that time of the afternoon.

Parenting Tips:
www.wellbeingforkids.com.au

Practice Mindfulness Exercises every day

- Learn how to use Mindfulness meditation exercises and practice them each day. Research shows that mindfulness meditation actually changes the structure of the brain and is one of the most powerful ways to lessen anxiety. Even just 5 – 10 minutes each day will make an enormous difference.

A good App is Smiling Mind. You can find it in the App Store. There is also a website: www.smilingmind.com.au

Smiling Mind; Meditation Made Easy

Have chill out time each day. As well as learning how to relax when there is anxiety present, it is important to also keep anxiety and stress levels low by factoring in time each day to just chill out. As children are often overscheduled and overstimulated through technology, it is vital that there is time to just ‘be’ each day. This can be by playing with a favourite toy, building something, creating art work, playing with animals, playing a board game, drawing, making cubbies in the garden – the list is endless.

Point your child in the direction of an activity that makes them feel good when they are also feeling anxious. An activity that is unstructured and free helps children to engage the creative part of their brain which in turn lessens anxiety. If children are used to spending chill out time each day, then it will be familiar to them if they need to calm down when anxious. If they spend a lot of time on technology and little time with creative play, it will be harder to direct them to creative activities when they are feeling stressed.

It is important to note that chill out time is not time on technology. Although this may appear to be an activity that is relaxing, it is not effective for lessening anxiety or to wind down the brain after a full day of learning at school or after stressful events. Technology at night can also keep children wired up for hours which can affect sleeping patterns.

Maker Space at St Thomas More

On May 2nd, we will conduct our first session of Maker Space. This lunchtime club will utilise a variety of materials and programs to encourage children to make, tinker, invent and create. The club will operate every Monday (during lunchtime) in the MPR and will cater for all ages and abilities. We hope to see many ‘makers’ come along and have a go!

A message from Mr. Stephen Elder

Executive Director
Catholic Education Melbourne

Right across Victoria parents just like you consistently report that Catholic values, beliefs and morals are the prime motivator for choosing a Catholic school. However, I feel obliged to reassure you that our schools are also doing wonderful things academically. Why is it necessary? Last week The Age newspaper published an article centred on so-called ‘research’ comparing 2015 Catholic and government school Year 12 results, which included a ‘warning’ that ‘parents should not be misled’ when considering the academic outcomes of public and private schools.

This report either deliberately or ignorantly ignored several critical factors surrounding student performance. The best way to truly assess school performance is to investigate the progression of individual students based on their specific circumstances – not through simplistic, single year, school-level comparisons. The most definitive study of this nature – published in the Australian Journal of Education last year – confirmed that Catholic and independent schools in Victoria ‘add value’ to student performance relative to government schools. According to the study, Year 12 students in Victorian Catholic schools will achieve an ATAR six to eight points higher than that of students in government schools. This applies to students at the bottom end of the ATAR range, to the very top performers and everyone in between.

The study analysed the best available data on student performance over four years. For the first time, the relationship between the actual Year 9 NAPLAN and Year 12 VCE results of more than 40,000 Victorian students was tracked to measure performance. The other major difference between this and other statistical findings – the reason this study is so definitive – is that University of Melbourne researcher Dr Gary Marks took full account of all known factors affecting student performance, including socioeconomic background and prior achievement. As the leader of 493 Catholic schools in Victoria I was quick to respond to The Age, pointing out that several crucial elements were missing in its article and totally refuting the suggestion that Catholic education did not represent academic value for money. Unfortunately – just like on other occasions when we have tried to highlight Dr Marks’ report – the paper could not find the space to print my response.
MUSIC NEWS

Year 4’s were recently invited to a Junior Choir meeting to hear some information about what is involved in being in a choir. Junior Choir, will run each week during Term 2 for half of lunch time on Tuesdays, for any interested Year 4’s. Junior Choir will begin on Tuesday 3rd May.

The STM Senior Choir (Year 5/6’s) has begun preparations for their participation in a music festival. It’s an exciting opportunity for them to share in an event that brings together community, church and school choirs from all over the Mornington Peninsula. The festival runs over several nights, with each choir performing at one session only. The STM Senior choir will be performing on Wednesday 25th May at 7pm. Parents, friends and families are very welcome to be in the audience.

Recently, Year 6’s have been preparing for their musical production auditions. Auditions are currently being held during morning and lunch recess times. All Year 6’s will be cast in the production whether they audition or not, but the audition process gives interested children a chance to share special talents and interests.

PRODUCTION LOOKOUT ... we are on the lookout for very large sheets of cardboard and several large, strong cardboard boxes, such as those that hot water heaters/storage tanks come in. We would be very grateful to hear if anyone has a contact for us to pursue for this.

Plans are in place for a visit to St Thomas More by two African drumming performers. This visit will be on the morning of Monday 2nd May. The group will perform two concerts/workshops, one for Year 5/6’s and one for Year 3/4’s to help develop their learning about combining musical elements, particularly rhythm, beat, tempo and dynamics, and also about performance techniques and audience participation. It will also help to broaden their experience and understanding of world music. A similar incursion will be organized for the junior school in Semester 2.

If anyone has any questions, ponderings, musical talents/skills that they might like to share with our STM children, access to interesting musical experiences ... please feel free to email me anytime. (kshaw@stmmtliza.catholic.edu.au)

Happy days!
Kathy Shaw

PARENTS ASSOCIATION

The PA meets on the first Tuesday of every month, the next meeting will be on Tuesday 3rd May 2016. Everyone is welcome.
Meetings begin at 7.30pm in the staffroom.
Contact leonieroyall@yahoo.com.au for more information.

MOTHER’S DAY STALL - Thursday 5th May
The Mother’s Day stall is very busy and gets very hard to keep track of payments therefore this year we have made a change. If your child would like to buy a gift from the Mother’s Day stall can you please send $5 to school with each child on Thursday 5th May.

If your child does not have $5 they will not attend the stall during school hours, but can purchase a gift after school from the gym. The stall will be open from 3.15pm - 4pm. Extra gifts can also be purchased after school.

MOTHER’S DAY MORNING TEA - Friday 6th May
Mother’s Day Morning Tea for all our wonderful Mothers, Grandmothers and friends.
The Morning Tea will be at Benito’s, Nepean Highway, Mt Eliza from 10.15am straight after our beautiful Mother’s Day Mass.
Toddler corner available plus great door prizes.
If you would like to attend the Morning Tea please return the slip from the flyer and $15 to the front office by Friday 29th April.

IGA Fundraising
St Thomas More is registered with IGA supermarkets points rewards program, pre-registered key tags are now available for collection. If you already have an IGA key tag registered to another school or kindergarten, please consider popping into IGA to change your registration so that STM receives the points rewards accumulated when you do your grocery shopping. Every little bit helps

SAVE THE DATES - Parents Social Functions
Prep - TBA
Years 1/2 - Wed 18th May - Brunch / coffee at Barmah Park Vineyard (after drop off)
Years 3/4/5/6 - Thursday 2nd June 7.30pm Dinner at Assaddini Wine and Tapas Bar

SAVE THE DATE - Kids Hip Hop Disco (Prep to Year 6)
Friday 17th June - 5pm - 7pm
Optional dinner packs available - More info to come

STM DATES FOR THE DIARY
3rd May - PA meeting 7.30pm in staffroom
5th May - Thursday - Mother’s Day Stall - $5 per gift
6th May - Friday - Mother’s Day Morning Tea at Benito’s
14th May - Working Bee (Co-ordinator still required)
18th May - Year 1/2 Brunch / coffee at Barmah Park Vineyard (after drop off)
2nd June - Years 3/4/5/6 7.30pm Dinner at Assaddini Wine and Tapas Bar
17th June - Friday - 5pm - Hip Hop Disco

Sincerely
Leonie Zammit
President
Parents Association
leonieroyall@yahoo.com.au

Happy days!
Kathy Shaw

Happy days!
Kathy Shaw
MORNINGTON RACECOURSE MARKET
CAR PARK DUTY

Please advise Daniel Ferlin on 0410 184 494 with your confirmed attendance via text (incl your name) ASAP.

Please find the car parking rosters for the coming markets here. Together, this small contribution of our time is raising approximately $14,000 annually for the continual improvement of our school and the programs provided to our children.

If you are unavailable for your rostered month, please organise another family to take your place at least a week in advance of the market, and advise Daniel of the change ASAP.

**All Markets:**
- Arrive at 7:45am (all weather event); exception for Twilight market 1:45pm
- You will be told by the Market Leader when you can leave.
  - This is typically around 12:30pm (6:30pm Twilight) but can alter depending on how busy the market is.
- Enter via the main gates of Racecourse on Racecourse Road, Mornington.
- Park in the designated area (Market Staff will be at the gate to assist you).
- Sign in with the Team Leader (for record keeping and Work Cover).
- Team Leaders must collect a black folder from the school office the Friday prior to attending the market, and return it the following Monday.
- Receive your safety vest.
- Market staff will take you to your location in the car park where you will direct cars accordingly and finish at approximately noon. (On slower days Market Staff will advise if you can leave earlier).

Daniel Ferlin/Car Parking Coordinator
0410 184 494 / daniel_ferlin@hotmail.com

**Please Confirm Attendance ASAP**

^^ Re-rostered due to prior non-attendance

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