

Principal's Post – 31 August 2017

Dear Parents and members of our school community,

Thank you to the 69 families who gave us very valuable information through their responses to the recent Homework Survey. There were responses spread right across all year levels from Pre Primary to Year 6 with the most coming from Year 2.

What was wonderful to read about were the many activities children are involved in after school. Playing, riding their bike or scooter, sport, dance and drama and music were the most popular.

Well done parents for encouraging such healthy choices.

Bedtime was the favoured time for children to do their reading, closely followed by after dinner and "as soon as they get home".

Thank you to our PP, 1 and 2 parents as you tell us that you are listening to your child read at least four times a week. We understand that Years 3, 4, 5 and 6 students are not keen to read aloud and this is shown in your responses with very few parents of these age groups indicating that they do this. A very important question was "How much does your child enjoy reading?" and the average response was 4 stars out of 5. Booksellers of Australia will be happy to learn that 65 out of 69 families reported that their child prefers an actual book.

I have read all the detailed responses and I have also phoned twelve parents who gave me their contact details. There was overwhelming support for the "Reading Only" policy with comments such as "Families are very busy and any additional time for personal connectedness should be supported. No homework makes for a less stressful home environment and allows for more meaningful activities to be enjoyed."

However, there were also comments made about how some homework kept parents more informed on what the children were learning in other subject areas especially Maths. I do take note of this and I will ensure that teachers are more timely in sending home curriculum outcomes at least twice a term.

The reality is that during this year, many teachers have sent home extra structured practice activities as required. This will definitely be incorporated into our Homework policy. Going over key reading words, writing spelling words, memorizing tables or doing a few Maths equations may only take ten minutes but it can bring about positive results.

In brief our homework will be:

1. Home reading
2. Activities that promote automaticity in literacy skills and development – for spelling and sight words.
3. Activities that promote automaticity in numeracy skills and development – for example learning times tables.
4. Additional work may be given by the classroom teacher, especially in Years 5 & 6 in the form of:
 - Oral language presentations
 - Extra exploration of a topic studied in class
 - Investigations arising from a set question

Around a quarter of the respondents were worried that not having set homework would adversely affect students in Year 7 at High School and that our Homework policy is "not preparing them for High School."

I have checked with several of our local Secondary Schools about their homework expectations and High School homework is generally around completing unfinished school work and revision in preparation for a test. One deputy remarked that he wants students who are **on task** during class time as they will be working hard and will complete their work during school time. All secondary schools offer a variety of after school Homework study sessions where staff from various subject areas are on hand to offer 1:1 assistance. However, several deputy principals replied that the very students who need this help are least likely to attend Homework classes.

All secondary schools especially for Year 7's are trying to avoid several assessments being due at the one time. I was reassured from my conversations with CBC, Fremantle, Seton and Emmanuel Colleges that their wish is simply that we as a school cover the Year 6 curriculum. It is their job, not ours, to teach the Year 7 curriculum to students who we hope will be well prepared by being hard working, enthusiastic, creative and committed.

The School Board is currently rewriting both our school Strategic Plan and researching options for a Capital Development Plan. Conversations will take place at Board and P & F level, but we also appreciate the opportunity to chat with groups of parents.

Kindy and Pre Primary parents - you are invited to come and have a morning tea with me on next Thursday 7 September from 9am to 10am.

This is an opportunity for me to listen to you about your expectations, hopes and dreams regarding education here at St Jerome's. Toddlers are also welcome and we'll have a box of toys for them to play with.

"Donate a Book" – Final Results

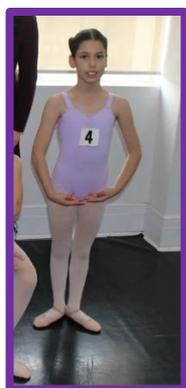
197 books

\$2809

We are now getting these books processed with acknowledgement slips, so children who donated them can borrow them first. This was a great boost to the library from the school community. A huge thank you to everyone that donated!

Lorraine Smith

Teacher Librarian



Alessia C



Olivia D

Congratulations to Alessia and Olivia having each passed an exam for the Royal Academy of Dance in Classical Ballet. Alessia completed her Grade 2 and Olivia her Grade 1. These exams are extremely challenging and demanding on students in the discipline and art form of classical ballet.

FINDING A TREASURE

A treasure is not something we earn but something we find. We can spend a lot of our lives wishing and hoping that some treasure will come our way. We can forget that we already possess a wonderful treasure in our loved ones and in the gift of life itself. And the greatest treasure of all is the kingdom of heaven which Jesus freely offers to us. May we have the wisdom to seek our treasure in God, and not in the glittering goods of a passing world.

Happy Father's Day to all our wonderful dads.

Helen M O'Toole

Helen O'Toole
Principal



Students having fun at lunch time - sport captains organised balloon races and children working in the veggie patch



The CEO of HBF, Mr John Van der Wielen, and uncle to Eva A (5G) came to talk to the Yr 5 & 6s about goal setting and how this can lead to success in life.

Several staff members last weekend ran in the city to surf to raise money and awareness for the Cure Brain Cancer Foundation.

