Dear Parents, Guardians, Students and Other Parishioners,

On Saturday, my family celebrated the marriage of my son, Nicholas, an ex-student of St Elizabeth’s, to his beloved Angela. What a great joy to see two young people set off on their life together blessed by their community of family and friends. The weather was perfect, the wedding service full of spiritual significance and the venue gorgeous. All their hard work in preparing for their special day was worth the effort.

It strikes me that celebrations of weddings, funerals, birthdays and anniversaries are the glue that brings families together. If you look back over your life, can you pick the significant milestones out as memories in themselves or do you remember them by images of celebrations? Is there a stepping stone walk of memories that you can build on? I asked myself if we as a family had paid enough attention to those celebrations. Thankfully, I think we have, but it hasn’t always been done graciously!

I know when I am planning some celebrations with family that I can have some negative thoughts about the event, concerns about an event will swirl around in my brain. Will so and so talk to everyone, will this member of the family remember and hold a grudge about this incident or will that member of the family manage themselves in company in a good way. When I listened to radio talk back before Christmas, I realised that I am not alone in thinking negatively about some aspects of family get together!

I also know that sometimes I have focused on the negative aspects of planning and delivering a celebration. I compare the effort that others make and get cross if they are not doing enough. I wonder if everyone is helping as much as they can.

All these thoughts are perfectly normal but over the years, I have had to learn to be tolerant and welcoming. Family is family, they are not all of my choosing, but they are all there as my blessing. Family celebrations are very important. They are the spice of life. They are the events which frame my most significant moments. It really isn’t that important about who contributes, as long as everyone who does contribute does so willingly. It doesn’t matter how much you spend on a celebration as long as you live within your means and do so happily. It doesn’t matter if the celebration is in the local park, the church hall, Nona’s back yard amongst the tomatoes or at the Ritz under the chandeliers, as long as everyone appreciates the importance of the moment and is tolerant and caring to all who take part.

When a family celebrates together, the glue of celebration holds you together and you can face the highs and lows of everyday life. Good celebrations build resilience and hold joy. They give you the
strength to bounce back when times are tough. You gather a treasure trove of images where you have shared food and wine, conversations and laughter. Over time, the situations when someone didn’t contribute begin to fade, families forgive, sometimes they forget and often family humour turns what was a problem into a funny story which is shared and celebrated whenever the family gathers.

For Christians, those moments of celebration of everyday events are taken to a spiritual level in the Sacraments - **Baptism**: to welcome the new family member, **Eucharist**: to remember Jesus in a meal together, **Reconciliation**: to help us to forgive and reconnect with our family and community, **Confirmation**: to sanctify our commitment to living a Christian life, **Marriage**: to bless the love of two people, **Holy Orders**: to celebrate a life long response to God and **Last Rites**: to bless and prepare for the final journey through life to death.

So you can see that I have more than a photo to remember the celebration of the marriage of two beautiful people in my family, one old and one new! I have a wealth of memories to hold and to share.

**FEES**

When you commit to giving your children a Catholic Education, you commit yourself financially. We try very hard to keep our fees as low as possible whilst still providing our students with the resources they need. I know that you appreciate that and understand that everyone has to honour their commitment. The fees are payable throughout Term 1, 2 and 3 and can be paid at the office between the hours of 8:30am and 3:45pm. The fee has a very special part called the Parish Levy which you pay at the Parish Office. Cheryl runs the Parish Office and it is open Tuesday to Friday between 9:30am and 3pm. (If you want to pay and the Parish Office is closed we can take it at the office). The Parish Fee is just as important as the school fee as it helps us to keep all the church facilities in good repair. We are part of this Parish and we share in the costs of keeping it in good order.

Christine Ash
Principal

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### Religious Education News...

*“Jesus said ‘Love your enemies’.*  
Mt 5:38-48

Jesus tells us that it’s easy to love those who love us - anyone can do that. The test of Christian love is to love those who seem unlovable or even seek to make themselves appear unlovable. It’s easy to stop saying hello to the person who never returns your greeting. It’s easy to avoid the person whose disability makes you uncomfortable. But Jesus says that it’s these people who we must love. If we are only polite, pleasant and hospitable to our friends then we are failing to follow the footsteps of Jesus.

Jesus tells us that the neighbours whom we are to love are those people who do not like us. We are to love those who deliberately exclude us from their social circles, who talk about us behind our backs. We are to love those who make us feel that we are not good enough for them, those who resent us for our accomplishments. We are to love those who exploit us or do us harm. This is indeed a radical teaching which I am sure each and every one of us struggles with and challenges us.

We teach our children to include anyone who is on their own in the playground to be part of their game and friendship group. We teach our children to forgive their friend and try again whenever they have had a disagreement or fight. I wonder if we, as adults have the same expectations of ourselves. I know I struggle with this and constantly need to challenge myself.

As a family you could discuss these questions. If someone is unkind to you, or takes something that is yours, how do you respond? Jesus asks us to be kind to the person who is unkind to us. Is that easy or hard? What would the world be like if everyone loved their enemies?

### Opening School Mass

I would like to thank all those who came to celebrate St Elizabeth’s Opening School Mass. It was wonderful to see our new families and students being a part of our school and parish community. Congratulations to all our new leaders; House, Sustainability, Tech Angels, Mini Vinnies, Radio, Wellbeing and Altar Server Captains. We have every confidence that you as our new school leaders will work with your school and parish community to make our school a great place to be.

### School Choir

Our parish is very lucky to be blessed with many choirs that sing at our Sunday liturgies to enrich our experience of prayer. Music is a large part of our faith experience. We will be giving our Yr3, Yr4, Yr5 and Yr6 students the opportunity to be leaders in our school community by being part of our school choir. It will be a wonderful experience for those interested in music and singing to gather together once a week at lunchtime to practice singing hymns for our school Masses. The choir will then lead our school Masses and encourage the whole school to raise their voices in song! A letter expressing interest to join St Elizabeth’s School Choir will be sent home next week.

### Reconciliation - Wednesday 26th February

Reconciliation Parent Information night 7:30pm for Yr3 families looking to celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation. The children who are celebrating the sacrament **MUST** attend.

### Confirmation Candidates

Students in Yr6 looking to celebrate the sacrament of Confirmation this year should have all received a notice regarding their participation in the Lenten Masses over this term. I ask if all the Mass forms could be returned as soon as possible. The children will be invited to stand with Fr Tad for the final Blessing and then process out with him. Children will then sign their name on the sheet located in the foyer of the Church for me to keep as a record. Keep smiling!

Maria Popowycz / Catholic Identity Coordinator (CIC)
popoma@sedandenongnth.catholic.edu.au
SOCIAL ANXIETY

When children experience social anxiety, they’re afraid of situations where they might have to interact with other people, or be the focus of attention. Often they’re worried that people will think badly of them or that they’ll do something embarrassing.

**Identifying Social Anxiety**

Social anxiety typically affects older children and adolescents. It can also be diagnosed in children as young as four. Its physical characteristics include nausea, stomach aches, blushing and trembling. Also, children with social anxiety typically:

- are shy or withdrawn;
- have difficulty meeting other children or joining in groups;
- have a limited number of friends;
- avoid social situations where they might be the focus of attention or stand out from others.

It’s easy not to notice social anxiety. This is because children who have social anxiety are often quiet and obedient in preschool or school. They might not talk about their fears or worries.

**Shyness Or Social Anxiety?**

Shyness in itself is not a problem. Many shy children develop satisfying, long-term friendships with others and have happy and fulfilled lives. Shyness is an issue only when it interferes with children’s enjoyment in life.

But maybe shyness and social anxiety are stopping your child from joining in everyday activities (such as classroom discussions) and enjoyable events (such as parties) or from making lasting friendships. If so, it’s worth doing something about the issue.

- Prepare your child for situations that make him/her feel worried or fearful. Act out the situation at home and practice things he can do to make it easier.
- Don’t force your child to talk or do things in front of other people. When you’re with other people, avoid saying things like, ‘Come on. Say hello to Jane. Don’t be shy’.
- If your child manages to do something that normally makes him/her anxious (for example, talking on the phone), acknowledge his/her achievement with encouragement. If other people are around, acknowledge the effort made quietly and make a big deal when you’re alone.
- If your child has an anxious reaction to a situation, don’t worry. Try the situation again another time with more preparation. Don’t punish or scold your child for ‘failing’.
- It can be useful to tell your child’s preschool, kindergarten or school about his/her anxiety. Also let them know what you’re doing to help your child.
- Gently encourage your child to join in social situations and start new activities. Avoiding social situations can make the problem worse.
- No matter how frustrated you feel, avoid criticising your child or being negative about his/her difficulty in social situations.
- Read books or make up stories with your child about shyness, bullying and self-esteem.
- Make a conscious effort to foster your child’s self-esteem by complimenting him/her and giving him/her lots of positive attention.
- Avoid labeling your child as ‘shy’. If other people comment on your child’s behaviour in social situations, you could say something like, ‘Actually, he/she’s quite outgoing around people he/she knows well’.

Nan Perazzo / Wellbeing Coordinator
Why Your Child Can’t Skip Their 20 Minutes of Reading Tonight

James
reads 20 minutes per night, 5 times per week

20 mins

Travis
reads only 4 minutes per night ...or not at all

4 mins

In one week:

100
minutes of reading

20
minutes of reading

In one month:

400
minutes of reading

80
minutes of reading

In one school year (9 months):

3600
minutes of reading

720
minutes of reading

By the end of sixth grade:

21,600
minutes of reading

4320
minutes of reading

Which student would you expect to read better?
Which student would you expect to know more?
Which student would you expect to write better?
Which student would you expect to have a better vocabulary?
Which student would you expect to be more successful in school and life?
How do you think each student will feel about himself as a learner?

Greer Genius
YOUTH LEADERSHIP VICTORIA PRESENTS - ST ELIZABETH'S OUT OF SCHOOL HOURS CARE PROGRAM

**Weekly Activities ...**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Day</th>
<th>Activities</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Monday</td>
<td>Crazy Pom Pom Creatures, Marble Games, Balloon Games</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday</td>
<td>Friendship Bands, Celebrity Heads, Tunnel Ball, Soccer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>Collage, Origami, Paper Planes, Kick Ball, Basketball, Volley Ball</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thursday</td>
<td>Chalk Designs, Cricket, Football, Smartie Bingo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Popcorn &amp; Movie, T-Ball, Carpet Bowls</td>
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**Beginning:** Monday 24 February, 2014

**Contact Details ...**

**St. Elizabeth's Out of School Hours Care Program**
111 Bakers Road, Dandenong North
Ph: 0422 803 709 / 0426 282 721

**Before School Care:** Permanent: $12.00 / Casual: $13.00
7.00am to 8.55am Monday to Friday during school term, excluding all Victorian public holidays.

**After School Care:** Permanent: $13.50 / Casual: $14.50
3.15pm to 6.15pm Monday to Friday during school term, excluding all Victorian public holidays.

**Vacation Care / Pupil Free Days:** Per Day: $45.00
7.00am to 6.00pm Monday to Friday

**Late Pick Up Fees:** Per minute: $1.00

For enquiries or further information, please contact Elarine on 0422 803 709 or 0426 282 721 during session times.

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