



Term 2 | Week 4 | Date: 12th May 2021

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A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Parents and Friends of St Mary's

What if you were told that there was something you could do every day to help your child learn better, feel better, behave better and grow better? What if you were told that it would not cost you a cent? Finally, what if you were told that your child's doctor says it is an essential part of childhood?

So what's the answer?



Play has so many benefits for a child's learning and wellbeing. It helps children develop physical coordination; it helps them to collaborate and sort out problems themselves without adults intervening; it helps them to develop life long skills like never giving up and how to show kindness; it helps them to appreciate nature and develop good maths, science and literacy skills; it helps them to be creative! Not a bad case for the importance of play, right?

As if this is not enough, listen to what Dr Johanna Thomson from Sydney Children's Hospital has to say:

"In our busy world with the pressures of performance and the influence of technology, it is tempting to see play as frivolous or optional. But play is fundamental for optimal child development and the acquisition of skills required to navigate the world in later life. It is our responsibility, as parents and caregivers, to create stimulating and nurturing environments for our children and ensure they are provided opportunities to play every day."

In spite of the compelling evidence that Play is so good for kids (and adults too!) there is just as much evidence that says that children's freedom to play has declined over the last 60 years in countries all around the world. Here's how Boston College professor, Peter Gray, reflects upon his own childhood, growing up in the 50s, playing with his friends:

"...and I played almost every day after school until dark. We played all weekend and all summer long. We had time to explore in all sorts of ways, and also time to be bored and figure out how to overcome boredom, time to get into trouble and find a way out of it, time to daydream, time to immerse ourselves in hobbies, and time to read comics. What I learned through my play has been far more valuable to my adult life than what I learnt at school."

So why are children playing less today than in times gone by? Well, there are no hard and fast answers to this but, at the same time, there are several pointers.



School education is more demanding of children today, for sure; homes are more hectic places; most family members, including the children, have their own digital devices to 'play' with; there is a glut of adult-organised sport and extra-curricular activities into which parents channel their children. While much of these adult-organised sports and activities are essentially good and teach valuable life skills, they should never be a substitute for child-organised free play outside in a natural environment where adults are just passive observers at most and not the rule makers and enforcers.



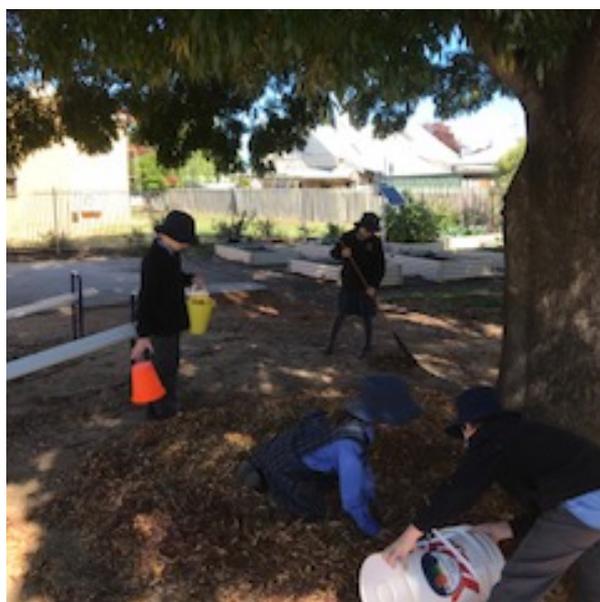
At a staff meeting on Monday, I asked teachers to share what had been high points of their day. Smiling, one teacher commented on the joy of a small group of Year 6 boys, digging tunnels in the sand just like you'd see pre-schoolers do, totally engaged, happy and having the time of their life. Another teacher similarly observed a small group having an awesome time, simply gathering up autumn leaves and collecting them into piles, making up their own little game and so happy. I was delighted to observe both of these child-initiated play episodes myself while on duty. Good character strength spotting I thought to myself, admiring this great example of enthusiasm and zest for life in action. This, in my view, is the essence of childhood fun and is so good for children's learning and wellbeing.

It was Jesus who said, *"Let the children come to me; do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of God. Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it."* When schools can facilitate these experiences, we are doing a great job indeed, I believe.

Wishing everyone a great week!

God Bless

Vince



Religious Education News

Family Mass - Sunday 23rd May

All families are invited to attend a special Family Mass at 9 am on Sunday 23rd May. A note has been sent home today calling for volunteers to read at this mass.



Our Lady Help of Christians Mass - Monday 24th May

We will be holding a whole school mass to celebrate the Solemnity of Our Lady Help of Christians on Monday 24th of May at 9.30 am. Parents, carers, family members and friends are warmly invited to attend.



We would like to wish the following students
and staff a very

Happy Birthday

Jye Scott for 17th May

Mrs Low for 17th May

Brody Stringer for 22nd May



Lunch Order Deal Friday

Pizza Singles

\$2.50



Class Awards

CONGRATS!



**MERIT AWARD
WINNERS**

FRI 7/5/2021

Our wonderful class award winners for last week:

Allyssa Cooke & Lincoln Nelson

Giselle Gill & Usher Stringer

Prince Patel & Olivia Barnes-Heriot

Cluster Athletics Carnival

The Southern Cluster Athletics Carnival is being held on Monday 17th May at the Deni Rams Oval starting with the official welcome at 9.30 am. Notes went home today with those students who qualified, the event information was also sent via Compass. The forms can either be completed on-line through Compass or returned to the front office by Thursday morning.

If you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact the school office.

School Athletics Carnival

Last Thursday's St Mary's Athletics Carnival took place under clear blue Hay skies and the children participated with tremendous zest and enthusiasm throughout. The crack of the starter pistol for the opening event startled the local cockatoo population who took off into distance, creating a raucous chorus that added great atmosphere to the event.

The children, painted in their house colours, cheered, chanted and ran their hearts out, showing tremendous sporting behaviour and ensuring that every competitor received great encouragement for their efforts. The smell and taste of barbecued sausages at lunchtime provided the extra incentive for the athletes to give of their very best in the afternoon as the day's events wound down to a close. All in all a great day and students and staff no doubt did not need any rocking to sleep on Thursday night.

Juvenile Girl Champion: Isabella Martin **Juvenile Girl's Runner Up:** Lola Edmonds & Leah Curtis

Juvenile Boy Champion: Lincoln Nelson

Junior Girl Champion: Giselle Gill

Junior Girl Runner Up: Zoe Handford-Dunnett & Ava Headon

Junior Boy Champion: Samarth Patel

Junior Boy Runner Up: Cooper Barnes

11 Year Girls Champion: Tilly Weeks

11 Year Girls Runner up: Emma Curtis

11 Year Boy Champion: Prince Patel

11 Year Boy Runner Up: Uzair Shahzad

Senior Girl Champion: Olivia Barnes

Senior Girl Runner Up: Sophie Corless-Gee

Senior Boy Champion: Archer Gill

Senior Boy Runner Up: Rhett Mealing



Winning House 2021: Gold

PLANNING MEETING TO BE HELD TUESDAY 18TH MAY @ 6PM



St Mary's Christmas Tree Fete



Yes, it is that time of the year where we start planning the annual
St Mary's Christmas Tree Fete

This event is the schools major fund raiser.

SAVE THE DATE:

FRIDAY 26TH NOVEMBER 2021

Thank you to those who attended last term's meeting where we made a
decision to hold the Christmas Tree Fete this year. I invite everyone
interested to attend a planning meeting to be held at school on



PLANNING MEETING TO BE HELD

TUESDAY 18TH MAY @ 6PM



The more input and ideas we can generate, the better the Fete will be, I'm sure.

Thanks Vince

Weekly Compliance Articles

STUDENT AMBULANCE COVER CONDITIONS

Student Ambulance Cover applies to transportation following a student accident, not an illness or medical condition. School policy is to call an ambulance in the event of a serious injury or illness (eg severe asthma attack, anaphylactic reaction, seizure etc). If your child has a pre-existing medical condition that falls into this category, please be aware that the cost of the ambulance may be at the parent's expense if you do not have family ambulance cover.

STUDENTS ON VISAS

For our families from overseas, it is important that the school has details of your current residency status.

Please provide us with your new visa grant notice or Australian citizenship documents, if:

- there has been any change in your visa sub class or the expiry date, or
- if you previously had a visa but have now become an Australian citizen

