



## A MESSAGE FROM THE PRINCIPAL

Dear Parents/Guardians and Friends of St Mary's

*"Everybody is a genius but if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree it will live its whole life believing it is stupid."*  
(Albert Einstein)



For a number of years now I have been very interested in learning about the scientific research on 'Character Strengths' and endeavouring to apply this in schools both with students, staff and, when the opportunity arises, with parents also. In a nutshell, Character Strengths are the positive traits in people such as kindness, empathy, bravery, perseverance, hope, gratitude, teamwork, humility and fairness. They are qualities that are universally valued across cultures and throughout history. The character strengths exist in each of us but here's the thing.....very few of us know and can name our own

strengths. Yet science shows that when we live out and play to our strengths, it leads us to a better life.

My letter to you at the start of the year, asking you to write a short passage on *My Child at his/her best*, was an invitation to you to 'spot' your child's strengths. Many thanks to those of you who have already done this activity and returned it. This little activity will be the conversation starter at our upcoming individual parent teacher meetings to which you will shortly be invited.

As I go around the school I try to routinely engage in 'strength spotting' and use these observations as a 'teachable moment' with students and staff. Some recent examples include a young student who demonstrated the strengths of 'perseverance' and 'bravery' by pushing through her comfort zone to conquer an outdoors physical challenge in the local park. This prompted a discussion around how we can use these same strengths to push through comfort zones in our academic learning and overcome a fear of 'failing' and rather than seeing 'failure' as some sort of deficit, to begin to see 'failing' as an important step in learning - a powerful message for children and adults alike.



Later on in the day I was in a class where the children were learning about the Stolen Generation as part of their studies in Australian history. It was fascinating to observe a number of strengths being deployed by students such as a child showing great *'curiosity'* in her eagerness to seek new knowledge through her questions; *'love of learning'* from the teacher who shared with the class how much more she wished to learn about this part of our history; *'empathy'* from a child who was close to tears at the story of children being removed from their families; *'wisdom'* from a student who, in response to my question, *"Why do you think it's important to learn about the Stolen Generation?"* thoughtfully responded, *"So our country can learn from its mistakes and so we won't make the same mistakes again"* - very wise from a Year 4 student, I thought.

Strength spotting is very engaging and can be a lot of fun for us all. Children can do it with their friends, their teachers, the characters in their favourite books and movies and indeed in just about every facet of their lives. I encourage you to learn more about character strengths yourselves by checking out the Values In Action (VIA) [Character Strength website](#) and maybe doing the short survey to learn about your own character strengths. While all the strengths exist in each of us, we typically mainly focus on our signature strengths, the five or six of our top strengths. The only person in my thinking who consistently displayed all 24 character strengths to the max was Jesus, the good lord himself - a pretty good model for us all to aspire to, I reckon.

God Bless  
 Vince Campbell  
 Vince Campbell



|                                       |                                   |                        |   |   |  |       |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------------|---|---|--|-------|
| Week 5<br>February                    | 22<br>Picnic In the Park<br>@ 6pm | 23                     | 24  | 25<br>Rugby League & League<br>Tag<br>Clinic<br>Students to wear sport<br>uniform to school | 26<br>WF Cricket Trials<br>Parkes        | 27/28 |
| Week 6<br>March                       | 1<br>Diocesan Swimming<br>Trials  | 2                      | 3   | 4   | 5<br>Yr 2/3/4 - Stations of<br>the Cross | 6/7   |
| St Mary's Swimming Program- Times TBC |                                   |                        |   |   |  |       |
| Week 7<br>March                       | 8                                 | 9<br>WF Touch Trials   | 10  | 11<br>Yr 5/6 Stations of the<br>Cross   | 12<br>Back up WF Touch Trials            | 13/14 |
| Week 8<br>March                       | 15                                | 16<br>WF Winter Trials | 17<br>200 Years of Catholic<br>Education Celebration<br>St Patrick's Day Mass -<br>10am | 18  | 19<br>Back up WF Winter<br>Trials        | 20/21 |

# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS



## First Week of Lent

(school week beginning Monday 22nd February)

We begin our annual Lenten Project Compassion journey by learning about the story of Jamila and her family. Jamila, 22, is a Rohingya woman, living in the world's largest refugee camp in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. A single mother, she fled armed conflict in Myanmar to save herself, her elderly mother and eight-month-old baby.

With the support of Caritas Australia, through Caritas Bangladesh, Jamila was able to access emergency food and shelter. She also received counselling, emotional support and learnt sewing skills, to help her earn an income. Jamila now feels less alone, with a sense of community around her. She is able to 'Be More' to her little family.

\* 860,494 people remain in the densely populated camps, in desperate need of humanitarian assistance, especially due to COVID-19. ([UNHCR](#))

**Each classroom is collecting donations of money to support Project Compassion. Every \$5 contributed will give farming families the funds to buy one chicken. Let's see how many chickens we can buy this year!**



# DIO SWIMMING CARNIVAL



Next Monday , 1st March, Archer, Emma, Olivia, Giselle and Jye will represent the school when they compete in the WF Diocesan Swimming Championships in Condobolin. Congratulations on making it to this level and good luck from everyone at St Mary's.

## AFL Trials

Last Friday, Rhett, Brody and Archer attended the AFL Trials held here in Hay. They had a great time working with the other boys from around the Diocese. Congratulations to Archer Gill who will be attending the Polding Trials in Newcastle on Wednesday 24th March.



## WF Cricket Trials

This Friday, Rhett, Prince and Uzair will be attending the WF cricket trials in Parkes.

We wish them well.

**Swimming sessions for the whole school will be held from Monday 1st March to Friday 5th March. These sessions will be from 1.30pm.**

# PICNIC IN THE PARK



Such a fantastic night at our St Mary's picnic! Thanks to everyone who came along



# 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.

## STUDENT'S ON VISA

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



**STUDENT BANKING FOR 2021  
IS ONE EVERY  
TUESDAY**