Dear St Michael’s College Community,

Parent Evenings
Thank you to all those families who have been able to attend our Parent Evenings over the last week. To date we have held Primary, as well as Years 9, 10, 11 and 12 evenings. Year 8 will complete the cycle on Monday. Clearly, it is not possible for all families to be at these sessions, however it is always a pleasure to see so many in attendance. The purpose of the evenings is numerous, but essentially, they are designed to deliver information for the year ahead as well as providing an opportunity for parents to touch base with some of the staff with whom your sons and daughters will have contact. This partnership has long been a feature of St Michael’s College.

Of course, as highlighted on the night, your involvement is also of very real benefit to the education of your child. Research data quite clearly puts parental involvement as a major factor to improved student outcomes. A recent study (2012) undertaken by North Carolina State University supports this and suggests that “parents need to be aware of how important they are, and invest time in their children - checking homework, attending school events and letting kids know school is important”. I thank you for your ongoing support.

Parenting ideas
No, it’s not a typo, but an online resource for both schools and parents. This site was created by Michael Grose, a renowned author and experienced parenting expert. You will find many interesting and varied resources, articles and links on the site that might be useful in navigating the ever changing world of parenting. From time to time we will also include a Parenting ideas article in The Star that might be of particular significance. This week see the article on “Making a Smooth Start to Secondary School”.

Family Support
Unfortunately, there are times when families within the St Michael’s College Community will be faced with particularly difficult times. As a Catholic, Lasallian Community, we are committed to supporting families who are experiencing situations of illness, death or general grief. Sr Kathryn Travers, in her role of Family Pastoral Care, is a significant point of contact between the school and the home in such cases and we would encourage you to contact her should the need arise.

You might have noticed that we have a section in The Star, where we remember and pray for deceased family and friends of our College Community. Should you wish to have a person acknowledged, please feel free to ring the office and ask that the name be added.

In addition, a Memorial Service is held each year for students who have lost a loved one. This is held at the Secondary Campus in the last week of Term 3 and at the Primary Campus in Term 4. The ceremony is a ritual of about half an hour, involving the students in prayer, symbols and music. Parents and family members are more than welcome to attend. There is also an annual Memorial Service for Old Scholars and the wider St Michael’s College Community. This is held in November and will be advertised through The Star.

Live Jesus in our hearts.

John Foley
Acting Principal
## CALENDAR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TERM 1 (Subject to change)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>FEBRUARY</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 Yr 8 Parent Evening/BBQ 6:30pm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12 Student ID Card Photo Catch-up (S) Yr 7 Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13 Ash Wednesday 2012 Academic Assembly (8-12)</td>
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<tr>
<td>14 Sports Day (Santos) 8:45am (S)</td>
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<tr>
<td>15 New Student Welcome 9:05am (P) Year 7 Assembly</td>
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<tr>
<td>20-22 SAPSASA Wstrn Swimming Carnival (P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 Yr 12 Seminar Day (1) Yr 8 Camp</td>
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<tr>
<td>26 Yr 10 Leader Formation Parent Learning Workshop 7pm (P)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27 Parent Learning Workshop 7pm (P) Yr 11-12 MAD Launch</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **MARCH**                   |
| 1 MAD Launch 11:05am (P)    |
| 5 Yr 7 Lasallian Retreat    |
| 6 Yr 8-10 MAD Launch Parent/Teacher Interviews (S) |
| Students conclude 1:05pm (S) |
| 8 MAD nomination forms due (S) |
| 11 Adelaide Cup Day         |
| 13 Principal’s Tour 9:15am (S) |
| 13-15 Year 12 Retreat       |
| 14 Year 8 & 9 Immunisations |
| 16-19 Yr 10 Italian Immersion Trip Melbourne |
| 17 Primary Campus Family Mass 9am  |
| 18 Catholic Athletics Carnival Santana |
| 19 Assembly (JP/MP/UP)       |
| 21-22 Yr 11 Business Week   |
| 22 Yr 7 Group Dynamics Day  |
| 28 Holy Thursday            |
| 29 Good Friday              |

| **APRIL**                   |
| 1 Easter Monday             |
| 3 Combined Yrs 8 & 12 Breakfast |
| 5 Mission Action Day (P&S)  |
| 8 & 10 Parent/Teacher Interviews 3:00pm (P) |
| 9-10 Yr 11 Drama Production 7pm (S) |
| 10 Yr 11 Breakfast          |
| 11 Yr 11 Drama Production 7pm Parent/Teacher Interviews 3:00pm (P) |
| 12 Classes conclude         |
| Early Dismissal (P) 12:45pm & 1:05pm (S) |

### REST IN PEACE
Mrs Eileen Kilpatrick
Mother of Ian and Aaron Kilpatrick (Old Scholars) and Grandmother of Oskar Kilpatrick

Miss Georgia Sardelis
Special friend of Olivia Papadopoulos

Mr Brian Madigan
Grandfather of Joshua Haller

Mrs Venita Dinning
Grandmother of Cassie Dillon

Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord and let perpetual light shine upon them. May their souls, and the souls of all the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen

### Year of Grace – Ash Wednesday (13 February)
Next week we begin the season of Lent, in preparation for the wonderful feast of Easter. We often associate Lent with penance or ‘going without,’ a ‘not doing’ time. But in reality Lent is a ‘doing’ time, a time for transformation, a time and opportunity to become a more loving person.

Instead of ‘going without’ something this Lent, what about making it a ‘doing time’, looking for something we can do? What about making that phone call to someone, offering to help with shopping, calling in for a cup of coffee to an older or lonely person, writing that letter or email, visiting that elderly friend or relative in a nursing home, just to think of a few possibilities, all things that can take us out of ourselves and make us more loving and caring people.

‘God is love and he/she who abides in love, abides in God and God in him/her’

The following quote which is from Anglican theologian, Harry Williams’ book “The True Wilderness”, and is an echo of our Lasallian ideal ‘to be the best we can be.’

‘This is what repentance means: discovering that you have more to you than you dreamt or knew, becoming bored with being only a quarter of what you are and therefore taking the risk of surrendering to the whole, and thus finding more abundant life.’

Blessed Teresa of Calcutta wrote

‘Many today are starving for ordinary bread. But there is another kind of hunger – the hunger to be wanted, to be loved, to be recognised. Nakedness too is not just the want of clothes, but also about loss of dignity, purity and self-respect. And homelessness is not just want of a house; there is the homelessness of being rejected, of being unwanted in a throwaway society.

The biggest disease in the world today is the feeling of being unwanted and uncared for. The greatest evil in the world is the lack of love, the terrible indifference towards one’s neighbour’

Lord, warm our cold hearts with your grace, so that we, your disciples, may produce the fruits of love.

### MASS
Parents and parishioners are warmly invited to attend Mass at either Campus each week during school time. Please do not hesitate to contact the College with any queries.

**PRIMARY:** Thursday at 9:05am
**SECONDARY:** Wednesday 9:00am
College Leaders 2013

Congratulations to our 2013 College Leaders who were inducted last week at our whole school Mass. We trust that our College Leaders will embrace the mantle of leadership and support all students to further develop the characteristics which make St Michael’s College a great school of teaching and learning. The College will look to them to set the tone for others, live the Lasallian values of ‘Faith, Service & Community’ and ‘Be The Best They Can Be.’ We wish them all the best for the coming school year.

Aaron Manuell  
College Captain

Nadia Loprete  
Vice Captain

Nicholas Francesca  
Vice Captain

Bradley Andrew  
Joseph Arman  
Kathrine Catanzariti  
Adrian Cubelic  
Amber Davoren-Searcy

Leighlan Doe  
Tessa Fowler  
Emma Galimi  
Madeline Ginever  
Andrew Harous

Jack Hooper  
Allan Kappamankai  
Giles Kearsley  
Connor Moore  
Harrison Nelli

Rachel Perla  
Isabella Scappatura  
Simonne Tarzia  
Luke Taylor  
Jesse Toepfer
Term 1 Tuition Fees 2013

Tuition fees have been posted home. Parents are encouraged to make contact with the Registrar at the Secondary Campus if you have not received an account or wish to discuss any financial matters relating to tuition fees, particularly to make alternative payment arrangements.

College Fees can be paid by Cash, Cheque, Direct Debit, Master Card, Visa Card or EFTPOS (withdrawing from cheque or savings accounts). Accounts can also be paid by telephone using credit card facilities. Cash withdrawals from EFTPOS are not available.

Parents can also avail themselves of the opportunity of adopting our direct debit payment system weekly, fortnightly or monthly from a bank account or credit card. This enables parents to spread payment of tuition fees over a ten month period. Arrangements can be made by contacting me at the Secondary Campus.

Term 1 fees are due for payment by Friday 15 February, 2013

A $20.00 administration charge is levied on all overdue accounts, unless alternative payment arrangements have been made before the due date.

School Card 2013

School Card is a government benefit available to parents whose combined gross family income for the 2011/2012 financial year is within the School Card Income Limit.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total No of Dependent Children at all Schools</th>
<th>Annual School Card Income Limit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>$34,747</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>$35,695</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>$36,642</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>$37,589</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>$38,537</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Each dependent child thereafter</td>
<td>$948</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The combined gross family income for the applicant and partner (where applicable) includes:

- Gross salaries, wages and allowances from employer(s)
- Taxable Centrelink Pensions, benefits and allowances
- Non-taxable or tax-exempt pensions and benefits (e.g., Disability Support Pension)
- Gross interest and dividends
- Benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs
- Supplementary income as identified in the Supplementary tax return
- Fringe benefits (e.g., provision of a car, entertainment expenses)
- Foreign income including pensions and employment.

Gross income does not include any amounts received for:

- The TPI component of your Department of Veterans Affairs benefits
- Family Tax Benefits parts A and B
- Child maintenance payments
- Carer Allowance

Any parent who is undergoing hardship or changed circumstances, in some instances, is able to apply for School Card. The College automatically gives a discount on tuition fees to families who are school card eligible. I urge all parents to contact me at the College immediately if you have any questions regarding eligibility.

Family Assistance

Parents who need assistance in paying ANY College Fee during the school year are advised to contact me so that we can come to an arrangement that is satisfactory to all. Where a student receives the School Card, families are eligible for a reduction in the Tuition Fee. In special circumstances, fee remissions may be granted for Non-School Card students. All arrangements must be made annually and parents must complete an “Application for Reduced Fees” Form.

Student Medical, Emergency & Family Information

Parents are asked to please return the Student Medical, Emergency & Family Information form as soon as possible, if not already done so. Both sides of the form need to be completed and signed. If a replacement form is required please contact the relevant Administration Office. This information is vitally important for the safety, well-being and health of our students.

Ms Jane Green, Registrar

Administration Office
Primary Campus Leaders 2013

Congratulations are extended to the following boys who were selected by their peers and staff to assume the mantle of Student Leadership at the Primary Campus in 2013.

Christian Minchenberg  Christian Alexandru  Lachlan Clarke  Jake De Bono

Thomas De Candia  Joshua Featherby  Daniel Fedele  Ethan Marchioro

Safer Internet Day

“Safer Internet Day” was on 5 February. However the need to maintain safe internet usage every day of the year is paramount. The following sites will provide helpful hints under the theme “Connecting generations and educating each other” www.cybersmart.gov.au. Parents are also encouraged to view the guide “Parents Guide to Facebook” www.fbparents.org

Mass

Parents are cordially invited to attend Mass which is celebrated weekly on Thursdays at 9:05am in the Beverley Chapel. This Thursday the Whole Campus will gather in Founders Hall at 9:05 am to celebrate the “Beginning of the Year Mass”.

Bus Buddy

If any parents would like their son to have a Bus Buddy to help in providing a familiar face, help ensuring they embark the bus and importantly get off at the right bus stop, please contact Mr Kym Clark to discuss further.

Lost Property

Parents please write your son’s name clearly on all articles of clothing to assist in a speedy return of misplaced property. If your son loses any clothing items please write a note in your son’s communications booklet/diary to the class teacher, so they can follow up as promptly as possible.

Sport Representation - Parental Support

Co-curricular activities have begun in earnest with trials and team selections underway. Students are expected to ensure they have the correct attire for their activity including the appropriate headwear. Training times will be advised by the coach. Students are expected to contact their coach if unable to train or if they are unavailable for team selection. The success of all the co-curricular activities at St Michael’s relies heavily on parental support. This takes many forms from assisting with transport, scoring, helping with the setting up before a match or barracking for your son. Parental support is welcomed and greatly appreciated.
Primary Assembly
Parents are cordially invited to the School Assembly Friday 15 February at 9:05 am in Founders Hall. New students will receive their Welcome Certificate.

Sun Care Protection
The College strongly recommends that, when outdoors (particularly at recess and lunch times) or participating in outdoor activities, all students wear hats which protect the face, neck and ears. A “No Hat, No Play” policy exists throughout Term 1 and from 1 September until the end of the year. Students are asked to ensure they bring their own hat as the College does not endorse the practice of sharing hats. Parents are encouraged to apply or provide SPF 15+ broad spectrum water resistant sunscreen to exposed parts of the body. Sunglasses may be worn, but only those approved by the Anti-Cancer Foundation. Students will be encouraged to utilize shaded or covered areas wherever and whenever practicable. On days of Extreme Heat the “Inclement Weather” procedures will be implemented.

Primary Campus Uniform
To ensure a consistent approach across the Primary Campus, shirts are expected to be tucked in during class time and at events such as whole campus assemblies and Masses. During active play shirts may become untucked; however students are to ensure shirts are tucked in upon returning to class. Note some shirts are now of the design that they can be worn out. The College will be reviewing its Uniform Policy in due course, but in the interim the above will apply as the transition in shirt style is made.

The Sports Uniform, which can be worn on the designated days of sport must be St Michael's College sports attire. A new line of sport shorts which has the College crest on the leg is being introduced. Please note items of clothing made available for Henley Campus students are not part of the Primary Campus Uniform, eg 1st XI soccer shorts or baseball style peaked caps. Please refer to the College uniform policies on pages 16 – 18 in the College diary. Also, students require an SMC crested hat for outside play, a "No Hat, No Play" policy applies. If on occasions your son is unable to comply with the uniform expectations, please write a note to your son’s class teacher with a brief explanation.

Primary Literacy News
Importance of reading
Reading is one of the most important skills a child can have. The joys of reading are crucial to a child’s all round development. Children, the world over, have a fascination for stories and the habit of reading can be instilled through them.

Stories are a good medium for imparting knowledge and information in an interesting and amusing way.

Difficult subjects like history, geography and science become easier to understand when they are presented in the form of a story. Students become curious to learn more and learning becomes a fun activity.

Reading stories about people of different communities and from different parts of the world gives a global perspective to the child. It presents an opportunity to get a close look at various people, cultures and religions. This intercultural understanding promotes respect for all.

Good values and the right attitude are instilled in a child at an early age, through stories for children. Young readers develop a strong character through inspirational stories.

Reading short stories improves the attention level of a child, increases their vocabulary and helps sharpen their memory too. Discussing stories and why characters acted in certain ways encourages critical thinking in the child. It also presents an opportunity for socialising with the child and gives the educator and parents an additional idea about their interests.

It is generally accepted that when kids get involved in anything interesting they learn it faster and also retain that learning. This is where the solution to learning lies.
The Premier’s Reading Challenge
This is the ninth challenge that has been issued to South Australian students from Reception to Year 12 to read 12 books by 13 September 2013.

Last year 83% of our Primary students completed the challenge. We are aiming for even more boys to complete the challenge this year. It is never too late to start! It is easy to get involved:

Students will need a student record sheet (found on the school’s ‘S’ drive in the pick-up folder if they lose the one they have already been given) to write down the title and author of each book they read.

A list of books (R-2, 3-5, 6-9) registered for the challenge can be downloaded from the reading challenge website: www.prc.sa.edu.au. Students need to read 8 books from the list and 4 books can be of their own choice.

To ensure you receive your correct award, please make every effort to fill out the form correctly including the student’s date of birth and any previous schools attended.

Naplan Tests 2013
This year, the National Assessment Program – Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) test period is in Week 3 of Term 2:

- Tuesday 14 May: Language Conventions and Writing (2 tests each for Years 3, 5, 7, 9)
- Wednesday 15 May: Reading (1 test each for Years 3, 5, 7, 9)
- Thursday 16 May: Numeracy (1 test each for Years 3, 5; 2 tests each for Years 7, 9)

The writing task will again be a ‘Persuasive’ text. More information, previous tests and sample text prompts can be found on the NAPLAN website: http://www.naplan.edu.au/. Additional information will be available closer to the dates.

Mr Ray Becker, Key Literacy and Numeracy Teacher

SMC Secondary Athletics Carnival - Thursday 14 February
Athletics Day 2013 is now only a week away. It was terrific to see the students and staff preparing at Tuesday’s House Meetings where House and Community spirit was alive and well. Below are important details regarding the day:

- SMC Athletics Day 2013 will be at SANTOS Stadium, Thursday 14 February (Week 3)
- All students (including Year 12s) should be at school at the normal time of 8:45 am and move to their Pastoral Care class for rolls to be taken
- Please note that Athletics Day is a major College community event and normal attendance requirements are expected.
- Students will be bussed to SANTOS Stadium immediately after Pastoral (from 9:00 am) and will be bussed back to school at 2:30 pm to meet normal transport requirements.
- So as to manage our Student Duty of Care responsibilities, it is asked that all students travel to and from SANTOS on the buses provided. Upon return to the College, students should move to Founders Hall to sign out before being dismissed. Normal school bus services will be operating.
- Students should wear their house colours on the day, be mindful that you will be participating in events and need to wear appropriate clothing to compete. Costumes/Dressing up or body paint are not permitted. Coloured hair/zinc is acceptable, but due to safety reasons, no spray cans are to be brought to school or SANTOS Stadium. Each house will have one designated person dressed up as a “Mascot” to represent their House.
- All students should bring a hat, water bottle and recess/lunch. Canteen facilities are also available at the stadium.
- Both Track and Field, as well as novelty events, will be run on the day. This will allow all students to participate and be part of their team.
- Students have been emailed details of their events. These details are also available on the undercroft noticeboard. Processes for changes to this have been distributed to all students and any questions should be forwarded to Mr Lees, Mr Hicks and Mrs Casserly.
- Spectators are most welcome on the day. Events are scheduled to begin at 10:00 am.

If last year was any indication, the day promises to be a positive and enjoyable experience for both staff and students and will be even more so with the full support of the College community.

Mr Jason Thur, Acting Deputy Principal – Pastoral
Congratulations to the following students who have been selected as House Leaders for 2013:

- **Turon – Purple Tribe**: Carly Reed, Jess Rafanelli
- **Mutien - Green Army**: Tehlara Lovett-Murray, Jack Hambly
- **La Salle - Red Devils**: Rachel Bisset, Ben James
- **Benilde – Royal Blue Monsters**: Carly Jackson, Umberto Caruso
- **Solomon – Gold Tradies (Hi-Viz)**: Samantha Townsend, Tim Zavrl
- **Miguel - Skyblue Police**: Alexandra McCann, Jack Firns
- **MacKillop - White Warriors**: Tayla Seagrim, Michael Mangafakis
- **Jaime - Pink Panthers**: Janice Piscioneri, Alex Maiorana

**MathsHelp**

MathsHelp will be held every Thursday at lunch time, in Room 35. Students from Years 8 to 12 are invited to attend if they wish to catch up on missed work, study for tests, get assistance with assignments/difficult concepts or just want to get ahead with their work. Experienced Maths Teachers will be available to give advice on improving learning styles or work habits and offer great tutoring in Maths, and ... it is free!

*Ms Anne Finlay, Head of Mathematics*

**Secondary Science News**

Year 8 and 9 studies in Science this year will be following the Australian Curriculum guidelines. As part of the changeover, the school has purchased new Pearson Science texts which include a digital pass so that the text can be accessed electronically (via the internet) on any device at home. This should save students having to carry the text home and reduce the weight of their bags. All Year 8 and 9 Science Teachers have the usernames and passwords and will be issuing them to students. I would encourage parents to talk to their children about this if they have internet access at home.

The Science Department subscribes to the Australian produced Cosmos magazine. Students can access this at home via the internet at: [www.cosmosmagazine.com/myschool](http://www.cosmosmagazine.com/myschool). Username smc and password cosmos1. This is a fantastic magazine with the latest developments in Science. A hard copy is also available in the Library.

Students who have an interest in Science can also receive a free email with the latest news and practical activities by subscribing to “CSIRO – Science by email”, simply type it into a search engine and subscribe for free on the CSIRO web site.

*Mr Robert Dempsey, Head of Science*

**Music**

Welcome back to all current and interested music students. 2013 will be another busy year with lots of performances and opportunities for students to be involved in the Music Program. Shortly, students will be inundated with a variety of musical opportunities in the form of co-curricular ensembles as well as individual instrumental lessons. Year 8 students will be emailed the relevant forms to enrol for instrumental music lessons. These forms need to be completed and returned to the Music Office as positions fill quickly. Currently there are vacancies for Piano, Clarinet, Flute, Saxophone (both Alto & Tenor), Bass Guitar, Vocal, Drums, Trombone & Trumpet. If you are interested please be prompt in returning your signed applications. Other interested students in Years 9–12 can request sign up forms directly via email to Pauline.Cutt@smc.sa.edu.au

It is expected that students who had lessons in 2012 will be continuing lessons with their instrumental teachers in 2013 and will be automatically scheduled on timetables for Term 1, 2013.

Lessons will generally commence from Week 2 and it is expected that students will check timetables on the noticeboard located in the Music Centre. Any students wishing to discontinue lessons in 2013 need to contact Mr Donovan or Mr Musci directly during recess or lunch. If you have any other queries please do not hesitate to contact the Music Office on 8356 5966.

Congratulations to Monique Calabro and Con Piliouras for attaining music teaching contracts in Port Lincoln and Adelaide High School respectively. Replacing these teachers we welcome our new instrumental instructors Phil Barbuto (guitar), Matt Shakeshaft (guitar) and Alex Iokaim (Clarinet/Sax/Flute) who will fill these roles. Those students who were taught by Miss Calabro in 2012 will have Mr Iokaim as their new instructor. Unfortunately these students will have a late start to their lessons this term due to Mr Iokaim studying overseas in Germany. Please note Mr Iokaim’s lessons will start in Week 6.

*Mr James Musci, Head of Music*
COLLEGE INFORMATION

Dobsons Uniform Shop - 1 Lawrie Street, Henley Beach
Trading hours – Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday – 8:00am–4:15pm
Please contact Mary or Margaret on 8150 2306 to arrange an appointment.
Ms Mary Firth, Manager, Dobsons Uniform Shop

For Online Selling & Buying
Please refer to the College website:
for information relating to the sale of second hand uniform items.

SPORTS CENTRE
SCHOOL WEAR
For supplies of co-curricular uniforms.
142 Port Road, Hindmarsh
www.sportscentres.com.au
Telephone: 8346 3411

SPORT

Congratulations
Nikolas Kartas who will be competing in the Secondary School Sport SA Boys Cricket Championships in Perth.

CO-CURRICULAR RESULTS

Students can access fixture information via the College intranet
All enquiries to Daniel.Lees@smc.sa.edu.au / Kellie.Casserly@smc.sa.edu.au / Lachlan.Bartlett@smc.sa.edu.au

PRIMARY
Primary A Water Polo: SMC 13 v Eastern Saints 8

SECONDARY
Tennis Drive: SMC 5 v 4; Doubles: H Johnston/B Pratt 6-2, R Johnston/J Hambly 6-3, C May/J Mittiga 4-6; Singles: H Johnston 3-6, B Pratt 6-4, C May 6-7, R Johnston 6-0, J Hambly 6-0, J Mittiga 3-6

COMMUNITY NEWS

Southern Cross Newspaper
Go to www.thesoutherncross.org.au to view the latest issue of The Southern Cross.
Making a smooth start to secondary school

Getting used to new subjects and new teachers, as well as forming new friendships are just some of the requirements of this period.

Starting secondary school is a time of change and uncertainty, which places new demands on young people. Being at the bottom of the pecking order where they are unsure of the playground hierarchies is just one adjustment that they need to make.

Some kids take these new experiences in their stride but it is natural to experience some difficulty, particularly when it’s accompanied by the potentially unsettling transition from childhood to adolescence. It’s no coincidence that many research projects indicate that children’s learning levels out in the transition year, presumably because the social tasks of adjustment take precedence over academic performance.

It helps to remember the Four P’s to help your young person settle in:

1. Promote friendships: The quicker kids form new friendships the sooner they’ll feel comfortable in their secondary school surroundings. Encourage your young person to be open to forming friendships with all sorts of kids; to be accepting of others who may be different to them; to take social risks by joining in activities even though they may feel uncomfortable; and to be friendly, approachable and positive!

2. Practice patience: Patience and understanding in the early weeks is essential. Brush up on your listening skills as you help your young person adjust. Talk to your young person about change and reassure them that it is normal to feel unsure or nervous in new circumstances. Let them know that many difficulties they face will be temporary.

3. Pursue a positive attitude: Confidence is catching so make sure you see this transition time as an exciting challenge that your child can handle rather than an event to be feared. Ask them about the new subjects or interesting activities they are doing, and try to shift their focus to the positive aspects of school. Discuss settling in issues with the appropriate person such as a year level coordinator, but give your young person time to handle them on their own before seeking help.

4. Process their day: Some young people may come home with fairly exaggerated accounts of secondary school and may not always paint a fair picture. They may become sensitive to things that they might have shrugged off in primary school. Listen without judgment and show a real interest in their new school, while providing them with the space they need to get away for a while. Expect some behaviour blowouts as many kids let off steam in the relatively safe and stable environment of a loving family.

If your eldest is starting, then secondary school will be a relatively new experience for you too. It will take some time for you to adjust to the school’s culture and communication methods.

Although secondary schools may seem a little foreign for those used to the relative intimacy of primary schools, one aspect is the same – outcomes for students are maximised when schools and parents work together in the best interests of the student.

One way to support your young person’s school is by actively promoting the school’s values. For instance, if respect is a prominent school value then you can discuss this in relation to the way your young person behaves around friends, relatives and family.

Most importantly, talk up your young person’s new school, rather than talk it down, as kids of all ages take their cues from the most significant adults in their lives – their parents!