



Wednesday 24th January 2017

PRINCIPAL'S NEWS

Dear St Ambrose's Families,



In offering you my best wishes for a happy New Year, I welcome you all to the 2017 school year at St Ambrose's. It is somewhat of a strange feeling in offering a welcome when I am in fact one of the newest community members. I do however share this 'newbie' status with six other staff members, prep students and new families joining a number of classes across the school.

Over the holidays a range of facility improvements occurred, including a new playground and climbing frame. I understand these projects were funded by our active and vibrant Parents & Friends committee. On behalf of the school would like to acknowledge and thank those people for their time and expertise in ensuring these improvements.

With the first change of leadership for St Ambrose's School in almost one decade, I would like to acknowledge former Principals, Sue Branson and Ben Campbell, for being the custodians of St Ambrose's School from 2008 – 2016. We wish Ben well in his new role of Acting Assistant Principal Religious Education at St Joseph's School in Bardon for the 2017 school year. A special welcome to Tania Byrnes, our Acting APRE here at St Ambrose's School for 2017.

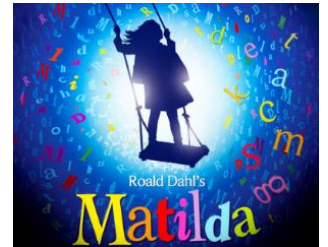
Over the coming days and weeks, I look forward to meeting you and, more importantly, your children.

Warmest regards,

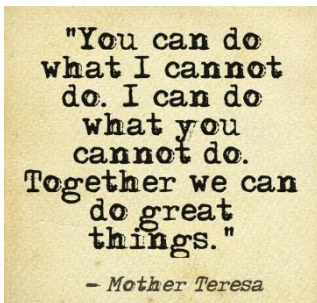
John Hinton

Welcome to 2017!

On the school holidays, I was very fortunate to be able to watch "Matilda", the musical. Being an educator, I couldn't help but reflect on the two extremely different teachers, Miss Honey and Miss Trunchbull. Perhaps we can identify traits portrayed by one or both of them from our past experiences of school, but hopefully our memories are mainly associated with the teaching style of Miss Honey. Predominantly, I remember being treated respectfully and with care, rather than being referred to as a "filthy, disgusting, little maggot".



We are very blessed at St Ambrose to have such a nurturing and supportive staff. Teachers lead, guide and support our students to reach their full potential and gently encourage them to take action and reach out to everyone, regardless of their differences.



I wish you and your children a very positive start to 2017 and we warmly welcome our new families and staff to St Ambrose. I'm looking forward to walking and working with you and your children this year. St Teresa of Calcutta provides a beautiful quote, inspiring us to work together to achieve our common, Brisbane Catholic Education goal, teach, challenge, transform.

Revised Sacramental Policy

By the end of this week, all families will have received a letter and a copy of the revised policy: Christian Initiation for Children.

If you do not receive this communication, please contact the office.

All relevant dates for sacraments will be distributed in the very near future.



On behalf of David Carrigan and the St Vincent de Paul Conference of St Joan of Arc/St Ambrose, thank you to the families of St Ambrose School for providing Christmas Hampers to the needy families in our Parish. They brought some of the spirit and joy of Christmas to these families who don't have much.

Please join us.....



Whole School Opening Mass

9.15am - St Ambrose's Church

Wednesday, 1st February

Peace and blessings,

Tania.

SCHOOL NEWS

Newsletters

Each fortnight, a link to the Parent Portal and/or website will be emailed to all parents highlighting the Newsletter. The heading of the email will be 'News Flash'. Please take the time to read the Newsletter; it is an important communicative device.

We are always happy and pleased to include the personal achievement of students (past & present) in the Newsletter. We rely on parents to inform us of these details and request that it be put in writing to ensure accuracy. We need articles/information for inclusion in the Newsletter by the previous Wednesday afternoon.

2017 School Goals

St Ambrose's is one of Brisbane Catholic Education's community of schools. As such, some strategic direction is provided from BCE for our consideration. There are three broad strategic priorities for BCE over the next few years, these being:

1. Excellent Learning and Teaching
2. Strengthen Catholic Identity
3. Sustainable Futures

Our 2017 School Goals will consider these priorities and make them real and relevant to our school context. Within Excellent Learning and Teaching, we will be focusing on key student learning improvement and performance in writing. In order to accomplish this goal, a comprehensive plan has been developed which will be implemented and communicated throughout the year. Within Strengthen Catholic Identity, we will be focusing on key priorities for improvement from our Religious Education Validation document. Finally, in relation to Sustainable Futures, we will be developing a Master Plan for St Ambrose's School. This Master Plan is likely to be actioned over the next three years, however we will be commencing sustainable (aka affordable) projects this year.

New School Timetable

In 2016, consultation with students, staff and parents resulted in a consensus of changing the school timetable (consensus means a decision that we can all live with – it's about solidarity not democracy). Previously the break times were 3 x 20 minutes per day. Parents and students indicated a frustration in a lack of play. Staff understood this frustration and agreed to the change for the sake of solidarity.

The new timetable will be:

8.10am (Students begin to arrive)

8.40 – 10.40am (Session 1: Includes 'Munch & Crunch' – dry & healthy food only)

10.40 – 10.50am (Children eat in year levels at designated places under the supervision of one teacher per year level)

10.50 – 11.20 (Playtime)

11.20 – 1.20 (Session 2)

1.20 1.30 (Children eat in year levels at designated places under the supervision of one teacher per year level)

1.30 – 2.00 (Playtime)

2.00 – 2.55 (Session 3)

What is 'Munch & Crunch'? Munch and Crunch is an opportunity for children to select a healthy snack from their lunchbox to munch on. The health snack must 'crunch', meaning that is it most likely a dry food and not requiring utensils or a big clean up. To be clear, the expectation for munch and crunch is dry healthy food, such as cut up vegetables, dry fruit, cheese etc. Classroom teachers can provide greater clarity with their students and parents as required.

New Assembly Time

In order to capitalise on the new two-hour morning session of learning time (the best learning time for children), the new assembly time will be from around 2.25 – 2.55pm on Monday afternoons. We understand that some parents may be negatively impacted from this change, however I know our community will understand the need to capitalise on key learning times for children.

Class Weebly

In 2017, all classes will be operating a Weebly as a communicative tool for parents to understand a little of what's happening in their child's classroom. This provides parents, with students in multiple classes, some consistency in relation to obtaining key pieces of information. As a baseline expectation, all classes will place their term overviews for parents, the weekly timetable, important dates relating to the class and a link to the Parent Portal for other school-wide dates on the class Weebly. Furthermore, as a baseline expectation, all classes will provide a snapshot on some of their learning twice per term. This might provide busy, working families with an opportunity to connect in with learning and have positive conversations with their children at home.

Some classes might decide to go above and beyond the baseline expectation. When this occurs, we should celebrate this rather than negatively comment on other classes.

Furthermore, teachers have been encouraged to direct parents to the class Weebly wherever possible.

Parent Information Evening

On Wednesday, 8th February, parents are invited to a parent information evening.

The purpose of the information evening is to provide parents with an opportunity to meet their child's teacher, see the classroom and hear about some of the expectations each teacher has for their students. One of the greatest influences in your child's learning progress is the family. The more interest you as a parent show in what is happening at school, the more influence you have on your child's learning.

Invitation is from 6.30pm. Each class teacher will run two sessions: Session 1 is from 6.30pm; Session 2 is from 7.30pm. Each session is the same. This gives parents who have children in more than one class the opportunity to visit each class. Between sessions, all parents are invited to hear from the Principal, APRE and Learning Leader at 7.10pm in the Bolton Centre regarding school priorities for the 2017 year.

Email Communication

A key difference between St Ambrose's School and many other Catholic and Government schools is in regards to communication. We value communication and place an emphasis on face-to-face communications, particularly when it comes to children's safety and learning. If your child is experiencing difficulties at school, we ask you to make an appointment with your child's teacher to discuss in person. An email can be sent to create an appointment but resolution will occur in a face-to-face manner.

Tuckshop

Tuckshop will commence on Fridays from week 3 (10th February).

Term 1 Swimming

Students from years 3-6 will participate in term 1 swimming lessons on Mondays and Tuesdays from weeks 3-6.

Our swimming carnival will occur on Monday, 6th March at the Marist College pool.

Uniform Policy

All parents and students must be aware of the Uniform Policy contained in the Parent Handbook. This handbook is available on the Parent Portal. Please be aware, Parent Portal workshops will be available for parents in week 2 (please see below for more details).

Medication

A reminder that all medication must be handed in at the school office (not kept in school bags). Paperwork is also required for administering medication. Please see the Parent Handbook and make contact with Mrs Orr at the office for further details.

Student Information Update

If you have changed your address, email, phone numbers or emergency contacts; please ensure they are updated at the school. These details can be updated in the Parent Portal. However, if you do not know how to do this, please contact the office of the changes immediately.

Finance Secretary Needed

Peta Tappenden (Finance Secretary) will be finishing up at St Ambrose's in the very near future. Peta will be spending more time with family. Peta is highly respected within the school and wider BCEO communities. My early impressions of Peta are very positive and I am certainly sorry to see her leave. I am sincerely thankful to Peta for returning to St Ambrose's for a short period of time so that we are able to commence the year with a highly effective Finance Secretary.

The Finance Secretary position has been advertised on Catholic Jobs Online. The position is 24 hours per week (6 hours per day) with continuing status. Please use your networks to distribute knowledge of this vacancy. The advertisement closes at the end of January.

Upcoming Events

Please see the Parental Portal for a semi-complete list of events throughout the school year.

Need More Information?

The Parent Handbook provides more detailed information regarding a range of school matters. The Parent Handbook can be found on the Parent Portal. If you are having difficulty with the Parent Portal, would like to be upskilled or are new to the school, Mrs Chloe Creed (Media and Communications Officer at St Ambrose's School) will be providing parent workshops in the undercover area from 2.45 – 3.15pm on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday in week 2.